

Letters

To The Editor

Please let me give you my view on a recent visit to the GCSAA Show in Las Vegas. There will be some greenkeepers who may want to skip this piece – that is called freedom of choice – but I would like to emphasise the importance of BIGGA's role in the States. Many will be unaware that the Association had a stand at the exhibition and I witnessed the determined marketing of our Association – I even had a go myself and let me tell you it's not easy.

For example, whilst manning the stand, interested parties would approach, pick up Greenkeeper International and casually browse through it. Then the voice of BIGGA would speak: 'having a good time, Sir?, please feel free to take a complimentary magazine; what line of business are you in?; have you ever thought of advertising in the British market? – you have – well we have a special package for overseas clients...'

This would continue all week long and I must admit that whilst on the stand I was certainly glad that Neil and Debbie were there to back me up.

BIGGA took over 2000 copies of Greenkeeper International with them and I can honestly say not one was wasted – they went like hot cakes. Americans, Canadians, Australians and many more all wanted to know about British greenkeeping and there was nowhere better to look than in our magazine. And of course from all this our organisation can only benefit.

I certainly enjoyed my trip to the States and would encourage anyone to enter for Premier Greenkeeper and be given the chance to visit our counterparts in America.

During my trip I had the pleasure of meeting the Master Groundsman, Alan Lewis, which brings me to raise another point. Some will have read recent issues of Horticultural Weekly or The Groundsman in which Alan Lewis expresses his opinion that all sporting bodies should come together, i.e. The IOG and BIGGA should be known as The Association of Turf Culture or something similar. However, in my opinion IOG and BIGGA should remain as two separate organisations. The Institute of Groundsmanship, of which I am a member, has been established since 1924. Most of its members are a highly motivated group of professionals – their tasks covering a wide range of skills. BIGGA has been established since 1987 and is growing from strength to strength. It has experienced small hitches like any other new organisation, but look what it has done for greenkeeping.

We use separate skills, we need separate organisations. It would be interesting to hear other views on this matter.

Anthony Davies – Premier Greenkeeper

To The Editor

My first assistant and I attended the recent Kent Section BIGGA seminar, thoroughly enjoyed our day, and look forward to more of its kind. I would like to reiterate the comments of Danny Godfrey concerning Poa annua and the unfortunate greenkeeper who had 95% of dreaded Poa annua on his greens, but was keeping the clients happy.

I have been attending meetings of this nature over the past 32 years and there have not been many times when this ugly beast has not reared its head (I don't mean Danny!) and must add that we do not seem to be making any progress in getting shot of it! Danny might have been talking about our greens.

As far as I am concerned, I am stuck with what I have and I'm surely not alone, for most greenkeepers in this country are in the same boat. Apart from the limited budgets we must work to, there is also the common problem of traffic. When can we do all the necessary basic work to alleviate the modern problems?

Our greens are in the 95% 'garbage' category, but we know what we have and treat them accordingly, for with modern machinery it is possible to keep the customers happy. We do not use temporary greens and members play in frost and wet throughout the winter. We are told by both pro and amateur that our greens are the best around.

I do feel we tend to 'make mountains out of molehills' on this subject and must declare that the greens we have satisfy me.

Mike Travers – Lamberhurst GC

■ Mike Travers served an apprenticeship as a greenkeeper in Scotland for six years before becoming a professional golfer 22 years ago. His multi-role at Lamberhurst is that of PGA Professional, Course Manager and Chairman of Green.

To The Education Officer

Having recently completed a two year YTS Scheme in Greenkeeping, based at Barony Agricultural College and seconded to Castle Douglas Golf Club, I hope to make greenkeeping my career and write to seek your help.

I am nineteen, single and have a clean driving licence. I was educated to 'O' level standard at Castle Douglas High School and my hobby is golf, with a handicap of 4 at Castle Douglas GC.

I have sought employment at numerous Clubs in this region but have not been successful, thus I am prepared to consider employment within greenkeeping anywhere in the country.

Stuart Brydson

■ Stuart, who passed out from Barony with flying colours and has excellent work experience and college references, may be an innocent victim of the YTS two year system. Can any Club help? – David Golding

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