

One truism totally applicable to the world of greenkeeping is the old saying: 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. Few would argue that this is best demonstrated in golf green committees up and down the country, where a farmer member who grows vegetables, or one who can maintain a pretty lawn, is often seen as the perfect choice for the lofty role of green chairman. The results of such 'expert' infiltration, where scant knowledge of real golf course problems is obvious and dictatorial edicts are frequently issued – often coloured by experiences that are light years away from modern practices of greenkeeping management – can be seen long after the offender has departed to bask in false glory, though the consequences remain.

Such a rod for the back is one that most greenkeepers are forced to bear, since the added problem of lack of continuity in committee structure, where an element of real learning may be gained by a long standing committee incumbent who has the will, the desire and the capability of gathering knowledge from his greenkeeper, is one problem that will not go away!

It's a situation greenkeepers learn to come to terms with, but a further question begs askance: must they also come to terms with the 'little knowledge' emanating from a noted turf management magazine, which in its most recent issue (written as if the writer had come up with The Original Thought) suggests that if greenkeepers were to stop whinging and offered a united voice in stating the facts concerning over play, that golf managers (for managers, read green committees) will get the message!

My own experience suggests that greenkeepers have been shouting this very message from the rooftops for years, with about as much effect as trying to drain the Atlantic Ocean with a bucket. Further, the offending piece suggests that only the fear of members quitting in disgust at not being permitted unlimited play, irrespective of conditions, makes 'management' allow play in even the most unsuitable conditions.

What arrant nonsense! In over forty years I've never once heard of a Club member walking out for this reason, since mem-

bership to any private Club is not easily gained, is certainly a privilege, and is one to be guarded at almost any cost. I venture to suggest that many Clubs would welcome a walk-out from such grumblers, since new members bring with them additional income in the form of premium payments – usually twice or three times the annual membership fee – upon being elected.

There's more, for the magazine offers yet another turf management recommendation: that where a Club does not nurture thoughts of holding the Open Championship, it would make more (economic) sense not to plant bents and fescues, but to plump straight away for planting that most ubiquitous of weeds, *Poa annua*!

Ye Gods! What a suggestion. Out of the door go years of sound management practices, replaced overnight with the nastiness of *Poa annua*, along with the soggy misery it brings in its wake every winter. I doubt the author of such a thoughtless edict has ever walked the fair greens of the many delicious courses blessed with a dominance of either bent or fine fescue, but if I am mistaken, I fancy that rose tinted spectacles were worn. No doubt those seed companies who spend fortunes in striving to produce improved strains of fine turfgrass – and who advertise their fine products – will register protest at the offending statement, as no doubt will all greenkeepers who labour for perfection in the battle against 'the most noxious plant'.

As if the above gaffs were not enough, the magazine further failed in its most elementary homework, demoting British Empire Medallist, Walter Woods, probably the highest profile course manager in the world, to the humble status of 'groundsman' at St Andrews and wrongly titling our esteemed ex-chairman, Jack McMillan, who has been running his own successful consultancy company for more than a year, as both head greenkeeper at Sunningdale and 'Sunningdale Chief'. One wonders what Lawson Bingham will have to say about that? Not good enough say I, such little knowledge is most certainly a dangerous thing!

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