

Letters

Send your letters to the editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firle Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

Attitudes must change

On a recent visit to Lancashire I played some great golf courses, all of which were in very good condition. I was warmly welcomed at Hoylake, Hillside, Formby and Ormskirk, a courtesy afforded me through my BIGGA membership card.

On visiting the Southport and Ainsdale Golf Club I was refused courtesy, but on speaking with the secretary I learned that this facility is granted to visiting golf club secretaries and professionals. I appreciate that golf clubs have differing policies and are not obliged to grant courtesy, but surely if a club adopts such a policy how then can it discriminate between the three associations.

Whilst I accept their decision, I am unable to comprehend their reasons. Much knowledge can be gained by playing other courses and talking with the green staff, particularly when visiting outside of one's immediate area. This practice is of course one that is adopted by many club secretaries in order that they may enhance their own knowledge and experience. The impression I gained was that greenkeepers, in the eyes of some club administrators, are still regarded as second class citizens.

One can only hope, as time goes by, that the draconian attitudes still prevalent in some clubs will eventually change and that all personnel involved in the successful organisation of a golf club will be respected and treated equally.

BRIAN K TURNER

Head Greenkeeper, Worplesdon Golf Club,
Woking, Surrey

BIGGA in Europe

As course manager of the Vereniging Golfclub in the Netherlands I was pleased to learn in Neil Thomas's AGM report of the interest shown in achieving greater co-operation with associations in Europe, indeed in many instances I have tried to promote BIGGA in Holland. Further, I have no wish to take away anything from my Dutch colleagues, who in the last few years have formed their own association which is growing very vibrantly and successfully, and I would take this opportunity to wish them all the best for the future.

Nevertheless, as a Scotsman working for nearly six years in Holland, I feel somewhat left out of BIGGA because I cannot relate to an individual section/region, i.e. Scotland, England, Ireland or Wales. Understanding that BIGGA stands for the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, and knowing that in the Netherlands alone there must be a dozen or so fellow greenkeepers who may feel of a similar disposition, I wonder if there are any future plans for a European section of BIGGA? I would personally be glad to be part

of such a section and if necessary I would get directly involved. If interest from Dutch members was not strong enough, I am sure there could be justification for combining members from Holland, Germany, Belgium etc. I therefore would be interested to see what kind of response our members here on the continent might give, either by writing to BIGGA headquarters, or to me at the club address below.

COLIN FAIRLEY

Course Manager, Vereniging Golfclub,
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• *Executive director, Neil Thomas welcomed Colin's letter, lately having been active in following up on the successful European Forum held during last January's BTME. He commented, 'The Association is very much aware of the problems experienced by our international members and is planning a second European Forum at the 1994 BTME. We are extremely anxious to make positive progress in establishing a sense of 'belonging' for our European members. I am currently seeking contributors for the forthcoming forum and would urge our members in Europe both to attend and also, should they feel inclined, make a short contribution to the proceedings. Anyone willing to speak at the forum should contact me without delay, as the BTME seminar programme will be finalised shortly. The seeds have been sown during 1993 for BIGGA's development in Europe - there must now be a concerted effort to meet the aspirations of those of our members at the forefront of greenkeeping in Europe'. - editor*

Working Down Under

The May article 'Future of the Fescue' was most interesting to me, an Englishman working and studying in Western Australia. I plan to return home to Kent in 1994.

I work at Cottesloe Golf Club, a prestigious course in Western Australia, and I am also studying a course in Turf Management. As part of this course I am preparing a report and will subsequently talk on the varying aspects of cool season grasses.

In the UK, cool grasses are obviously used throughout the industry, whereas here in W.A. their use is limited to some occasional overseeding of fairways during the winter, usually with creeping red fescue. However, all the greens in W.A. are seeded with pure creeping bent, mostly of the Pennncross variety, though new constructions are now tending toward the use of variety 1019. We also have problems with *Poa annua*, mostly in older greens, so naturally I have an understanding of how this can affect playing surfaces.

Returning to the article, my understanding is that even if one is fortunate enough to have ideal construction methods and a sympathetic management team (one that allows for limitations in play to provide full establishment and

training of the fescue), there is still nothing to confirm the elimination of *Poa annua* from the greens. However, the most desirable qualities of fescue are its ability to withstand and recover from drought and its tolerance to heavy wear. This undoubtedly requires further testing and investigation in order to find out more of the management practices necessary to encourage its growth, and how well it stands up against the *Poa annua* invasion.

I would be most interested to learn more regarding fescue or its alternatives, also I have an interest in fescue/bent mixes for greens and wonder how these work, especially as bents have a high fertility requirement and fescues have a low fertility requirement, also I am curious to learn which varieties (of each) are generally used?

Finally, I really enjoy Greenkeeper International and find it most informative. If I can be of help to anyone regarding greenkeeping practices in Western Australia, please don't hesitate to contact me.

LEE SAYERS

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• *A highly respected agronomist commented on Mr Sayers' letter thus: "I don't think we need more research testing or investigation into the management practices necessary to encourage fescues. With bent/fescue mixtures, often the fescue acts as a nurse until the Agrostis takes over - but which one dominates depends on the soil and management, and maybe if both are less than ideal Poa takes over". No doubt there are others, seed breeders perhaps, who will be tempted to offer Mr Sayers the information he seeks - editor.*

Praise for team

Through the letters page may I express thanks to my team at Carden Park for their tremendous efforts in seeing the Carden Academy open ahead of schedule. The level of skill and commitment they have shown, particularly for young men, is heartening in these times and certainly augers well for the future of greenkeeping.

The conditions in which they have worked have been more than arduous and it is to their eternal credit that they have achieved such results.

The team comprises Rob Bryant, Justin Cheung, Peter Gabriel, Ian McDougall, Dave Wates, Chris Bryan, John Lightfoot, Chris Halton, Tony Wellings, Len Sproston, Andrew Woodcock and Jamie Poole. To a man, they fully deserve the recognition they have earned. Hopefully they will draw deep on the experience and I am most grateful for their help and support.

ANDY CAMPBELL

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Cheshire