

Tackling pig problem

In reply to the article 'Wild boar wreaks havoc' in January's edition of Greenkeeper International, which featured Sennelager Golf Club, Germany, coming under attack from wild pigs. This is a typical problem we greenkeepers have over here that does not enter into green-keeping in England.

The wild pigs peel the turf back with their snouts and dig deep holes looking for grubs, larva and the occasional tasty root. They generally disrupt ground that is very wet and peat based, the devastation they can cause in one night is amazing, a herd of four-six can make 6,000 qm totally unplayable and repair work takes up the whole day, only to return the next morning to find the same thing has happened again.

Sennelager GC chose to erect an electric fence to cure the problem, but there is a much cheaper way to stop these ravenous beasts without any detriment to other wildlife and to remain on the friendly side of the Natur Schutz and the green party who, might I add, think greenkeepers are just gardeners who put lots of chemicals and other things on the grass rather than just letting it grow naturally. So, back to the pigs, when I was confronted with the 18 tee, fairway and 17 green looking like a herd of wildebeest had stampeded across them every night, I chose to consult the old men of the local village. When I put my problem to them their answer was quite simply: "Harr mein Junge." (Hair my young one.) Further explanation revealed that I was to collect as much cut hair as possible from the local hairdressers, purchase some small net sacks then put a small quantity of hair in each sack and place the sacks 10 metres apart around the affected area.

The old men say that the scent of humans on the hair stops the pigs and they will not go anywhere near the sacks.

I did as instructed and sure enough no pigs. The problem has gone and has not returned. The old men say that to be effective the sacks must be changed once per year - we have had our sacks out for 10 months and we have not had one visit from a pig in that time. So it seems that the old methods still work the best.

Simple I suppose - when you know.
Stuart Bishop, Havelweg, Germany

A hidden agenda?

I refer to 'Greenkeepers Association Under Scrutiny', a recent diatribe published in the Jan/Feb issue of Amateur Golf and highlighted last month in Greenkeeper International.

It would appear that the English Golf Union are clearly misinformed concerning the health of BIGGA, our professional association. One wonders if the venom of their attack was designed to conceal some hidden agenda?

The snow is on the ground
The golfers are frustrated
The greenkeeper's in the shed
Lying there sedated

The secretary's mad, the treasurer's sad
And the chef's going off his head
The greenkeeper sighs and wonders why
Then decides to go home to his bed.

Walter Woods, links supervisor, St Andrews

Possibly the rationale is evident in only their minds?

The assertion that British greenkeepers have "not until recent years acquired a reputation for enhancing their image" is a gross distortion. The truth being that for a great number of years too many clubs, committees and employers denied the greenkeeper an opportunity to enhance his or her image.

Improved status, working conditions, training, education and image have evolved directly from the combined efforts of BIGGA and its membership. R&A funding and support in addition to other direct industry input has assisted our growth but, above all, it has been the Association membership's desire and commitment to professional excellence that has seen rapid improvement.

The EGU criticism of our expansion is an unfortunate example of ignorance raising its ugly head.

In industry, expansion indicates growth (no pun...), the speed of which reflects accordingly with positive support and not negative kneejerk reaction.

Expansion and growth also involves change (including editorial!). This is more than ever true in today's highly competitive marketplace. The process of handling change in a pro-active manner is an objective we all seek to achieve and the notion that the Greenkeeper Training Committee should function as a separate education medium, allied to BIGGA, is an example of progressive initiative. As is the move to partially fund training "through a levy on every club golfer". Not before time in my mind.

The offending EGU article certainly makes for sad reading - the old, nay jurassic, belief that we were ever 60 years behind our American counterparts is a complete fabrication. The fact that three recent Master Greenkeeper Certificates were gained by American superintendents supports the view that the highest qualification attainable in Britain is recognised as one of truly international stature.

I suspect that any professional image that may indeed have been many years behind the USA is that still perpetrated by certain clubs, committees, employers and allied associations in their attitude and disregard to the standing of greenkeepers in Britain.

It is hoped that sooner rather than later, the EGU will get up to speed with our role and achievements within golf course management,

because their current understanding seems barely peripheral.

And while Neil Thomas ponders the motivation not only for the attack but also the reasoning for Amateur Golf's publication of such vitriol - it may just be all down to the hack journalists search for a winter 'filler' - Jan/Feb being particularly slow news months.

Anthony Black, (golf course manager),
Royston, Herts.

Thanks for your help

I would like to use your journal to express my thanks to Nick Rigden of Cannington College, Geoff Yelland of Rigby Taylor and Ed McCabe, course manager at Brockenhurst Manor, for their help and advice in my preparation for a presentation evening at North Wilts Golf Club which was followed by a question and answer session.

The evening was a great success and the first of what, I hope, will become an annual event.

Jon Boorman, head greenkeeper
North Wilts Golf Club, near Devizes

BTME congratulations



To the Executive Director

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sheffield Section to thank you all at BIGGA HQ for the way in which you organised the BTME and seminars. Everyone I have spoken to in greenkeeping and the trade thinks the exhibition gets better every year. As we all know the hall is only booked until 1996 but we all hope it goes on for years to come.

R Ullathorne, Goole North, Humberside



To the Executive Director

Excellent BTME gets BIGGA every year, it also gets better. Congratulations to you and all staff.

Dennis Mortram, Course Development
Manager, Reaseheath College, Cheshire



Through the pages of the magazine I would like to thank all the members of the Northern Regional team who were on duty at Harrogate this year (and especially the lads who helped out at the last minute when things became hectic).

Our staff were manning the doors, pre-registration desk, seminar door, roving microphone, Northern Regional stand and even chauffeuring VIPs! All were smart and efficient and helped to project a professional image for the Association as well as assisting in the smooth running of this exhibition.

Many thanks for your time and effort lads!

Bob Lupton, Northern Region
Administrator, Madeley, Cheshire