

No way to treat valuable staff

I became interested in greenkeeping late in life – I was serving Queen and country at the time but I became so interested that I used to work part-time to learn as much as I could. Being an Associate Member of BIGGA at that time I read in *Greenkeeper International* that education was the way forward for greenkeepers so prior to leaving the Armed Forces I took and passed City and Guilds Phase 2 Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management plus PA1 and PA2A to go with the experience and knowledge I had gained.

On returning to "Civvy Street" I worked as an Assistant Greenkeeper at a golf club for almost two years and, despite several requests was never given proper written terms and conditions of employment. The golf club ran into financial difficulties and had to be sold, and, as I understand it, all greenstaff had to be made redundant before buyers would complete the purchase. Course Maintenance was then contracted out to the owner of another club

who would interview the existing greenstaff for the vacancies that now existed, plus I found out later, outside applicants. On the day of the interviews I was unfortunately sick and sent my apologies and to say that I would contact them when I recovered. I rang to arranged a new date for the following week to be told that they had selected the personnel required and that an interview would be a waste of time for both parties! Is this what is known as Equal Opportunities?

I am actively seeking employment in greenkeeping but can't help wondering if it is worth it? From my experience the wages offered are below BIGGA's recommendations, terms and conditions aren't offered as per the article on July's *Greenkeeper International* and if people are treated as I have been how do clubs expect to get the best from staff?

Surely golf clubs have a duty to give their members the best course conditions possible and they should realise that they will

only achieve this by employing dedicated qualified, well treated, happy staff. Mine may be a "one off" case but I'm curious to know if any other members have experienced similar problems or treatment.

Michael Kimber, Oundle, Peterborough

Many thanks

Through the pages of your magazine I would like to thank all those concerned who have helped and supported me over the past two years as Chairman of the Scottish Region and the four years I have served on the Board of Management.

Although perhaps it may be inappropriate to mention some people in particular and not others, special thanks must go to my wife, Pauline, and my family who have been more than understanding with all the time it has taken up. Also my employers, St Andrews Links Trust and Management for their encouragement, Elliott Small in the Scottish Region and Neil Thomas and all the staff at Aldwark.

The list is endless, there are so many others throughout BIGGA, too numerous to mention individually but I offer my sincere thanks for all they have done and their friendship.

Some of the time has been hard work and difficult but this was more than compensated for by the good times I've had and friends I have made, things I hope to continue at many different events in the future as our Association goes from strength to strength.

Gordon Moir, St Andrews

A great honour

May I through you express my sincere thanks to all concerned who made my trip to the GCSAA conference in Orlando, such a memorable one.

I was absolutely delighted when my husband Mike won the 1995 Miracle Professional Greenkeeper of the Year Award. Having seen his total dedication to his profession, I felt at last he had been suitably rewarded for all his efforts.

I did begin to wonder as to whether I personally would have preferred for him to have been second or third in the competition when I realised that these

prizes were for two people whereas the first prize was, in fact, just for Mike! I needn't have worried though as The Tytherington Club which is owned by Club Partners International where Mike is Course Manager decided to reward Mike's efforts by sending me on the trip to Orlando. To them I am eternally grateful.

I feel extremely privileged to have been a part of the conference in Orlando as it has given me a far greater insight into the greenkeeping profession.

I must commend the BIGGA team Neil Thomas, John Pemberton and Sami Collins who were all great ambassadors for British greenkeeping and who worked extremely hard throughout. Also to the BIGGA Chairman Dean Cleaver and not forgetting last year's Chairman Barry Heaney and his charming wife Joan. Barry is a great inspiration to us all.

There were so many other people who made the trip a huge success including Nick Bissett, Senior Lecturer at Askham Bryan College; Craig and Mhari Stewart from Germany; Mr and Mrs Bott, from Portugal; Lawrence Pithie and Mark from the American Golf Corp; Peter Todd, the London Club; James Braithwaite, who deservedly is the current Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year and not forgetting BIGGA's great supporting gentleman Jim Fry.

My thanks to each and every one of you and to Miracle Professional for supporting this excellent award and to the Tytherington Club without whom it would not have been possible to share in Mike's success. This was a trip of a lifetime which I shall never forget.

Karen Goodhind, Macclesfield, Cheshire

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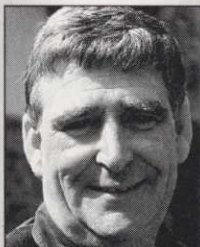
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