

**"Oh no! They've recruited another idiot for me to train!" A cry from the heart of far too many experienced greenkeepers who are expected by their clubs to make a 'square peg' recruit into a 'round hole' greenkeeper and are mystified as to why entirely unsuitable people are being taken on by golf clubs every year. Frank Newbury, who has been running management courses for BIGGA members since 1989, turns his attention to how, in many respects, only greenkeepers can help their clubs remedy many of the unnecessary problems associated with recruitment and selection. Frank makes a strong case for the essential involvement of greenkeepers at some or all of the key stages in the selection process and offers an essential list of '10 how to's' or key ways in which greenkeepers can help themselves and their clubs to start getting recruitment right in future.**

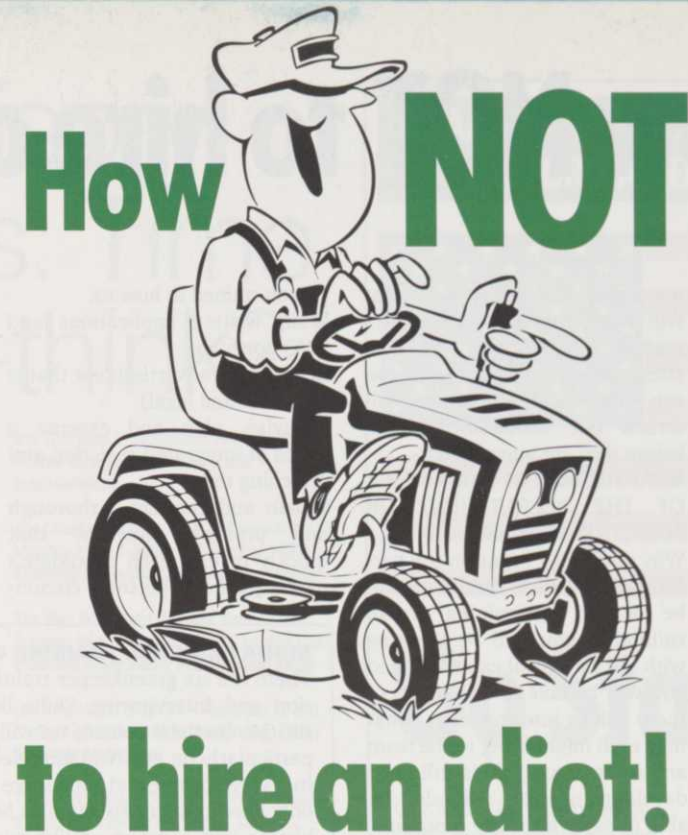
**"Recruiting someone is a £1 million decision - we had better get it right"**

Some years ago it was calculated that the average cost of a skilled worker over an entire working life amounted to £1 million or more. All costs were taken into consideration including 45 years salary and employer's pension and N.I. contributions as well as accommodation, equipment and training costs. If recruiting someone is a £1 million decision - we had better get it right.

Some employers are apparently happy to make this very expensive decision on the strength of an interview lasting only 20 minutes! Some have longer interviews but clutter them up with information about the job and the club. This less important "telling" part of the process takes valuable time away from the "asking" part when really probing questions can be posed and other methods used to test the suitability, resilience, durability and potential of each candidate.

**"The candidate was really good at the interview but only lasted a week in a job."**

Unfortunately a candidate's unsuitability is not always evident at the time of selection. They may do well at the interview, they may seem keen and enthusiastic, they may have an impressive list of written qualifications and the candidate may even be a great golfer! All persuasive reasons for taking someone on - and all wrong as far as suitability for the



**to hire an idiot!**

**BY FRANK NEWBERRY**

job is concerned. Many greenkeepers speak to me of their so-called best qualified people: "The candidate was so good at the interview but only lasted a week in the job". Some did not even last a week in the job and some left after only one day!

**"Interviewing is the least effective method of selection"**

People behave differently when being interviewed. Many are on their best behaviour, they want the job and will say anything to reassure the selectors. Many excellent greenkeepers are not so good in interview situations and do not present themselves as well as much less able people who have the gift of the gab. Result? Too often we hire the ones who "did well on the day" ie the good talkers. Over the years personnel professionals have gradually formed the opinion that interviewing is the least effective method of selection. Aptitude tests, group work (where appropriate) and practical exercises have proved to be a much better indicator of a person's suitability for a particular job and thankfully, as many clubs promote people from within, the right tests provide a good test of a person's future potential as well. Interviewing, for all its limitations will always be a part of the selection process. People will always want to meet and talk to the person they may well take on as an employee. However, it should be noted that a secretarial recruitment agency in London once claimed that seven out of eight people get through the job inter-

view because the employers felt "the candidate had a nice face". This "nice face syndrome" goes beyond appearance and probably includes social skills. Whatever it is it seems to persuade people that a "nice face" is one that will fit easily into a work team. Heaven help those of us who do not have particularly nice faces!

**"He's useless but he is the Chairman's son - how could I have rejected him?"**

Other issues can cause the wrong candidate to be taken on. For example what should you do if only one or two candidates apply and neither is really much good? What do we say to the Course Manager who said to me once "He's useless but he's the Chairman's son - how could I have rejected him?" The answer to the first question is easy. If we are investing up to £1 million we may just need to look at our advertising and try again.

**"The wrong person in a job can have a catastrophic effect on the work performance and on the morale of the entire work team"**

As far as the Course Manager (above) is concerned the problem is much bigger (for him) now than it was at the time the interviews took place. The wrong person in a job can have a catastrophic effect on the work performance and on the morale of the entire work team. Sadly, these serious problems can be long lasting if the unsuitable person is not removed quickly or put onto work he or she can do reasonably well. Work teams do not

like passengers so it is vital to get the right person for each job.

**"TOP TEN things greenkeepers can start to do IMMEDIATELY to help themselves and their clubs to get the RIGHT people in the RIGHT jobs"**

You may already be doing some or all the 10 activities listed below. If not, and you would like to develop your abilities in each of the areas mentioned, then you should consider attending one of the RECRUITMENT, SELECTION and INTERVIEWING Courses currently being run locally by BIGGA. See the list at the end of this article for venues and dates in October and November 1997.

**GREENKEEPERS SHOULD:**

**1 HELP THE CLUB TO DEVISE JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR EACH GREENKEEPING JOB**

Why you? Who knows the demands of the course and the job better than the person doing the job?

**2 HELP THE CLUB TO DEVISE THE EMPLOYEE SPECIFICATION FOR EACH JOB?**

Why you? The employee specification lists the qualities and skills of the ideal candidate for the job so the interviewer has something to compare the candidates with, and who else knows the type of person for the job better than you?

**3 HELP THE CLUB WRITE THE ADVERTISEMENT**

Why you? Well, you will have helped write the job description and the employee specification upon which the advert will be based and you know what would attract you to a job. A warning for you - do not just copy anything from the back of this magazine. Some of the adverts are very good but not all of them.

**4 SCOUT THE COLLEGES FOR GOOD STUDENTS**

Why you? Well you want the best people coming through and the good students want to work at a club where they know someone, and where they will feel valued. You may have attended one of the colleges or you may have friends, relatives or work-mates there now. Same goes for schools, sports clubs etc.

**5 GET TO KNOW THE GOOD GREENS STAFF IN YOUR AREA**

Why you? Well they may be more likely to confide in you (not in their club) about their career aspirations. Are they looking to move? If not then when might they be interested in a move (to your club when a vacancy arises)?

**6 HELP THE CLUB TO DEVISE A SUCCESSION PLAN FOR ALL KEY POSITIONS**

Why you? If the club has an idea



# How NOT to hire an idiot!

who will fill vacancies internally they can keep external recruitment to a minimum. Each job will have an understudy waiting in the wings if anything should happen ie the current job holder gets promoted or leaves the club. If you help devise the succession plan then you can plot your own career path in the club.

## HELP THE CLUB TO DEVISE A MANPOWER PLAN

Why you? Well if you are helping with the succession plan the obvious development is to be one step ahead looking at when vacancies are likely to arise and how long it will take to train people up to the required standard at each level. You will also be in a good position to indicate what needs to be done to enable everyone to be able to do everyone else's job - which brings us back to your career path. Which job do you really want?

## HELP THE CLUB TO DEVISE SUITABILITY TESTS FOR CANDIDATES

Why you? Back to your knowledge and expertise again. There

are simple suitability tests that will demonstrate a candidate's manual dexterity, physical strength and mobility that you can put together which will screen out unsuitable people before they are interviewed.

## PARTICIPATE IN EACH STAGE OF THE RECRUITMENT OR SELECTION PROCESS

Why you? Your input on the performance of each candidate will be vital in determining overall suitability. You will be working with the successful candidate and you will be able to tell which of them will fit into the team, what they each might bring to the team and what (if any) skills still need development. You will also be able to say who is the most suitable person when a number of candidates are qualified ie a tie-break situation.

## LEARN INTERVIEWING AND SELECTION TESTING SKILLS

Why you? Three reasons:

First, so you can help the club by taking your full part in the £1 million decision.

Second, you may be the only

person trained in how to:

- sift written applications and NVQ portfolios
- devise an advertisement that is effective (and legal)
- devise, plan and execute a series of integrated selection and screening tests
- plan and conduct a thorough and probing interview that quickly reveals each candidate's past experience, personal circum-

stances, individual disposition, relevant skills, reasoning ability, problem solving skills and social skills, including those times when the candidate is under pressure

review and evaluate each candidate and rank them in order of suitability, prior to job offer. Third, with the skills listed above you will also make yourself a much more attractive candidate for better paid jobs!

### BIGGA REGIONAL TRAINING COURSES

There are six greenkeeper training courses on Recruitment, Selection and Interviewing Skills being run locally this Autumn by BIGGA. On these courses we will cover the ten areas above focusing particularly on practical interviewing skills, and selection methods. In a very positive and supportive atmosphere greenkeepers learn not only how to interview but also how to be interviewed! If you would like to join a group of like-minded greenkeepers on one of the regional courses listed below contact the BIGGA Education Officer Ken Richardson at BIGGA HQ as a matter of urgency.

Good luck and happy recruiting!

Regional Course Dates.....	Town
21-22 October 1997.....	Crawley
3-4 November 1997.....	Moretenhampstead (Taunton)
10-11 November 1997.....	Corby
18-19 November 1997.....	Dublin
26-27 November 1997.....	Accrington

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND



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### CAN YOU AFFORD TO MISS IT?

Dates are 5th and 6th November 1997

Phone, fax, e-mail or write for your free invitation to:

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