

# The worm has turned...

Dear Sir,

Having read the article on worms and having been a groundsman and greenkeeper for a long time I can assure everyone that the problem cannot be overstated as Nick Park, so rightly says.

I took over a course in 1976 that was considering spending vast sums of money on drainage and managed to persuade them to spray the fairways with Chlordane, the difference was nothing short of miraculous. We ended up putting in two drains in low places and mole ploughing one fairway. The course became playable right through the winter and the grass was springy and clean to play off.

In the 60s I worked at a course

where a shovel was kept in the cab of the tractor to scrape the mud off the rollers of the gang mowers, after cutting half a fairway. There was no point in matting or brushing the casts first as it is never dry enough on a parkland course in winter and the casts are only smeared and spread.

What I'm leading up to is why did BIGGA, the IOG, the R&A, the Golf Unions and the chemical companies not take a stand against the banning of Chlordane?

It is deemed an environmentally unacceptable form of control, but why? It is persistent in the ground and therefore does not need to be used more than every five to ten years. Why is this a problem?

Do people think after another war, perhaps nuclear, that they will need to plough golf courses up to plant vegetables? I read once that golf courses take up less than half of one percent of this country. Not a large amount is it?

After spraying Chlordane I've never seen golfers (or spray operators) dropping like flies, so one could only assume that it did them no harm.

The most important fact about Chlordane was that it stayed put and did not spread. Worms would live and work quite happily right up to the line where the Chlordane had been sprayed. Indeed if a piece, even a metre by half a metre was missed in the middle of a fairway worms would

be found casting in that slither of ground with clean areas all around!

Is it too late for BIGGA and the other bodies, to move in the right channels for a reversal of this decision?

I am sure if it was overturned a company would have a ready market for its product - or are the chemical companies making too much money from the short lived, vastly overpriced, alternatives?

When courses are closed for three or four months a year (and golfers only pay a three quarter sub?) will the sport's governing bodies hold up their hands and say "We allowed this to happen"?

William Pile

Fingle Glen GC



In the first of a new series of articles, Sweden's Per-Olof Ljung gives some of his thoughts on Greenkeeping.

# HOW PROFESSIONAL ARE WE ALLOWED TO BE?

During my years within the greenkeeping trade I have experienced - both national and international - colleagues that have been maltreated by "their" Golf Club and its elected members (Board Members or Members of the Green Committee).

Most often the disagreement has started when the Head Greenkeeper has insisted on certain steps as regards the maintenance programme, steps that have not been approved of by the elected Members. In most cases it is the greenkeeper's working experience in combination with what his has learnt at seminars, courses etc. that tells him what to do at a certain point in order to keep the quality of the golf course at the highest possible level. The steps taken may sometimes inconvenience the players and it is here, that most often, the problems occur.

When the Head Greenkeeper insists on taking the necessary steps, contrary to what the Elected Members seem fit, the Head Greenkeeper is looked upon as a stubborn member of the staff, instead of looked upon as a professional who knows what measurements are needed in a cer-

tain situation. When this situation occurs, the Head Greenkeeper often has to leave the Golf Club owing to "difficulties in co-operation", unless he turns a blind eye to his experience and his own knowledge and comply to what the Elected Members say. In doing so, he is also aware of the fact that when it goes wrong he is to be blamed, although he just "followed orders". The Elected Member is always right.

When I started in the greenkeeping trade some 30 years back, a behaviour like the one described above would be, if not acceptable, it would at least be understandable. But that it still happens and besides, is quite common, is unbelievable. The Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager of today is a well educated person, not only in "grass-knowledge" but also in leadership and Health & Safety. Furthermore his attendance to seminars and courses are often supported by the Golf Club, but still, the Elected Members do not look upon him as a professional within his trade.

One can rightly ask oneself why do I educate myself within my profession, when I continually

meet Elected Members of the Golf Club who have a better knowledge of greenkeeping than myself?

When will a serious discussion start whether it is necessary with a Green Committee in the Golf Club? Why do we not have a Committee whose task it is to overlook the way the Golf Professional at the Golf Club teaches how to grip the golf club, how to swing the golf club etc., or a Committee that overlooks the Club Secretary to see that he/she is doing their work in a right manner and with the right tools?

As I see it, FEGGA can play an important role in helping its Member Associations with their educational programmes and trying to reach, on a European level, International standards within our profession. This would be an essential part in influencing Golf Clubs to look upon its Head Greenkeeper as a professional, who has a back up by colleagues all over Europe.

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