

Thank you 1

During October I travelled more than 1400 miles on two separate visits to Aldwark Manor.

My first trip was for the official opening of the Association's new Headquarters by HRH The Duke of York. I felt that the day was a great success and I would like to congratulate all our staff for their efforts in making the day run so well. We will look back in years to come with great pride.

My second visit was as one of the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping finalists and, although I didn't win the top prize, I found the whole experience very educational and rewarding.

I couldn't believe the camaraderie shown by all the finalists and look forward to renewing friendships at this year's BTME.

I'd like to thank Toro for sponsoring the awards and to the judges Bob Buckingham, Graham Dale, from Toro and Lely, and to Walter Woods, who had to travel the length of the country to assess each finalist's course. Not forgetting Ken Richardson and Sami for all their hard work in organising the awards.

**Richard Whyman,
 Bude, Cornwall**

Thank you 2

On behalf of the Canadian participants at the Hayter International Cup in Atlanta in October I want to tell everyone how much we enjoyed the friendships developed, the social events shared and the friendly, yet competitive, golf.

Canadian golfers, Sylvain Alarie, Mike Baden, Doug Meyer, President; Dean Piller, Vice President, along with myself and Past President, Pelino Scenna, benefited from this outstanding international event which was organised and funded by the Hayter Company. We acknowledge with gratitude Hayter's commitment to this event and we appreciate their efforts in making it such a great event for all of us. We also acknowledge the assistance and support provided by GCSAA, as representatives from the host country and all the related golf clubs, and other service providers. Often, the full significance of events such as the Hayter International Cup is not realised at the time. Certainly after two such events now having taken place, it is clear that the concept is valid and worthwhile.

We hope that such an event can be continued and we in Canada (GCSA) stand willing to do what we can do to assist in finding the wherewithal to continue this outstanding exchange between, and among, superintendents from many parts of the world.

**Vince Gillis, Executive Director,
 Canadian Golf Superintendents
 Association**

Setting the record straight

With reference to your October letters, may I comment without unnecessarily prolonging acrimonious debate.

First to Ian Tomlinson. The Ghost grass syndrome has been known (in cereal crops too) for at least 50 years and the general consensus is that it is caused by a virus. Some have suggested nematodes (which it certainly is not). There is no cure so, rather like Take All Patch, lie back and accept that the condition will cure itself. Poa is the chief victim, so try to swing the greens back to a better balance - easier said than done, but not impossible.

Joe Paulin's letter rightly condemns writing in misleading generalities, (but writers in journals are always subjected to the handicap of the strict limitations on words). I share his view that greenkeeping is the art of applying science - echoing my own sentiments exactly.

However, I must take issue on the subject of "the USGA green". Strictly this was the USGA Green Section's specification for putting green construction, devised in 1960. Today it has been so regularly and drastically modified and the parameters have been so widened as to include almost everything (in an attempt to please everyone and avoid litigation) that in their own words it is no longer a specification, but a guide.

For the record, we should really refer to perched or suspended water table green construction, of which the USGA's is one version. The principle hinges on soil drainage physics - the essential point

I thought that I would write to express my personal opinion on what has happened in the last six months regarding local distributor changes.

Having spoken to several local Course Managers I am not alone in my dismay with the way the multi-national companies think they are benefiting Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers by getting bigger and taking competitors out of the market. The net result in 24 months time will be a steady rise in prices, they hope.

My job as a Course Manager at an average members club south of Birmingham is to get the most out of the budgets the golf club can afford. This means I have to build up a relationship with a representative from companies and this is built on trust, service and competitive prices. When the representative I

I would like to answer the letter from Mr Ross in the October issue. Having just returned from the official opening of BIGGA HOUSE, and seeing just what first class offices we now have, (in surroundings that are second to none) I would like to point out several facts to him.

Firstly our Association is to represent the greenkeepers and the greenkeeping profession (which includes you Mr Ross), and not to donate money to charities. While I'm sure we all agree with Mr Ross that Scope is a real charity, I think Mr Thomas and the Board of Management

being to balance the retention of water (and nutrients) by the surface tension of the soil particles against drainage dependent on the head of water. The finer the soil the deeper the root zone to achieve that drainage, but in any case there is a fixed and proven ratio between the average size of the particles in the three strata, (stone carpet, blinding and root zone) of 1:8 to 1:10. Below or above this ratio, disaster is inevitable.

I have been building perched water table greens since the mid 60s, in blissful ignorance initially of the "USGA spec" of those days.

Joe maintains that excellent results can be achieved with most things provided all other management was correct. The accent is on the most - and certainly some root zones in pasta disasters have been so bad that they could never be improved by good management, primarily because of excessive "fines".

I fully agree with Joe that the percentage of soluble fertiliser finding its way by drainage from greens to water courses, except in the case of frequent massive applications of NPK needed by sand-only greens, has been proven to be virtually nil. I need not stress that pure sand greens (an anachronism for desert conditions) are emphatically not "USGA specification".

Let's have some more healthy debate on a head to head basis and in good humour. I suspect that this would be far more to your readers' liking than thinly disguised trade advertisements masquerading as

deal with loses a product line, most of the time I would change to a similar product that the representative starts to promote as an alternative.

With recent changes I have altered my six year machinery plan so as to avoid the problems I experienced four years ago. It amazes me that the people who make the decisions on dealer or agent look for completely different qualities compared to the end user. Big premises, fleet of vehicles and big stock orders are not what Course Managers look for. We want good delivery, good back-up from the manufacturer and competitive prices. If this can be achieved from a garden shed then it would not stop me dealing with that company.

My latest capital purchase is going away from what companies say that we

would not be thanked by the members for spending our money in this way. As for the princely sum of money paid to Lee Hurst, for the BTME banquet, I'm confident in assuring you, Mr Ross, that a good fair price is always sought by the Association for these events. Linda Nolan (or the fourth rate singer as referred to by Mr Ross), was brought back by popular demand from the members. I think all members would agree that golf clubs who have supported the Building Fund did so to help further the development of the Association. This in turn improves the education of the greenkeeper, and who

articles.

May I take this opportunity to clarify my comments on the Forest of Arden article. First and foremost, the last thing in my mind was to imply any criticism of Raymond Hunt, who after all came first to Whitbread on my say-so at Goodwood, and who has been a staunch advocate of sound greenkeeping since he first learned it from my old friend Bill Lawson.

I can recall several occasions when I was consultant to the Group when I had to rebuke their hotel managers (including one long departed at Forest of Arden) for interference. "You don't tell your chef how to cook his greens so don't try and tell us how to cook ours".

As for Steve Clement, the facts as known are at variance with his claims and if he did not mean it he should not have said it, but to say "the bunkers acted as swimming pools when the irrigation system was on" implies over-watering to most knowledgeable greenkeepers - or is it not true. I have a card in my office which says "I know you believe you understood what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realise that what you heard is not what I meant". The written word is there for all to read.

What is inarguable is that Raymond has produced excellent conditions over the years for both his employers and the Tour.

**J. H Arthur
 Budleigh Salterton, East Devon**

should be buying and more to agricultural engineering where the machines are expected to last twice as long and spare parts are available within 24 hours, not four weeks.

It would be interesting to hear how many Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers are happy with the way the big companies keep changing dealers, whether for machinery or sundries. I prefer to deal with individuals who visit my course, not multi-national names in adverts, so if the local representative has an alternative product to sell then I will change too. In turn I keep the good working relationship that I have built up with the local representative.

**Kim Blake, Course Manager
 Fulford Heath GC, Wythall**

benefits most from this? The golf clubs. A cheap price to pay for success, Mr Ross.

I would like to thank Mr Ross' Laleham Golf Club who are in the 60% majority that pay the greenkeepers' subscriptions, and obviously a lot more supportive to the profession than Mr Ross himself.

Finally, if you haven't seen our new offices yet Mr Ross, please take the time to do so as I'm sure, like all those members who have already seen them, you will be proud of what we have achieved.
**Antony Bindley, East Midlands Section
 Secretary, First Assistant Kirby Muxloe
 GC, Leicester**