

No news is bad news

Elsewhere in this issue, if you have not already done so, you can become involved in the great Daily Telegraph debate which revolves around an assertion from a well known golf writer that golf course standards have fallen over the last 20 years.

Overall the piece was a positive one about the wonderful work being carried out at Temple Golf Club, near Maidenhead, the current holder of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and Grass Roots, but it was this one statement which has put the cat among the pigeons.

Part of my job within the Association is to encourage journalists to write about greenkeeping matters and to raise the profile of the profession to the wider golfing public. In doing so it can lead to things appearing in the press which we don't altogether agree with. This happens in all walks of life and you have to learn to live with it so you can also enjoy the benefits you get from good publicity which is also generated.

The alternative is to try to manipulate the media and steer the press to write what we want them to write. This rarely succeeds. Look at the trouble the Government gets into in its supposed attempts, through Alistair Campbell, to dictate what the media writes or broadcasts.

It is far better that the subject is carried, warts and all, than be ignored totally because what tends to happen is that even negative comments ignite a lot of more positive feedback which is ultimately to everyone's benefit.

I do know that the Daily Telegraph received a load of mail after the piece appeared. They may not have appeared in the letters' pages, but I know that the response impressed the powers-that-be on the Telegraph Sports Desk and I'm assured that we will be seeing more greenkeeping issues being covered in the forthcoming weeks and months... hopefully highlighting the great work that is being done out on the nation's golf courses to keep on top of the modern stresses and strains.

I also know that the article in question is currently on noticeboards up and down the length and breadth of the country and you may be tackled about it by members.

In most cases it shouldn't be something to worry about. Take it as an opportunity to pass on some words of wisdom to individuals or groups who may then educate some of the other members in the club.

It may be a catalyst for Open Nights or Workshops at clubs which have never previously held such occasions and it will give many a chance for the first time to see what a great job is done by the nation's greenkeepers.

If that does happen and relationships are improved between greenstaff and golf club members how much better it will be all round.

We will then perhaps look back at The Daily Telegraph article and see that out of some negative comments a real positive advance has been made.

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