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Effingham facing a spiky problem in winter

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the introduction of more and more soft spiked golf shoes onto our golf courses.

Here at Effingham Golf Club we have a policy that whenever the course is open, then the greens are always in play ie. no frost holes etc. This has never caused us any serious problems in the past yet during this and the previous winter, the spike damage that has been occurring around the hole cups has increased tremendously. This happens

especially during frosty conditions. The problem I have found, is that the frost/ice builds up on the soft plastic spikes more readily than the metal spikes, the plastic spikes resemble a 'football type' stud after only a short time of walking across frosty greens, then damage to the putting surfaces soon becomes apparent.

At Effingham we are now actively encouraging our members to return to using the traditional metal spikes during the winter months. Although this is causing a problem as now the vast majority

of new golf shoes are sold fitted with soft spikes.

I look forward to hearing from other Course Managers who have experienced similar problems or vice versa as I feel that the introduction of these soft spikes are now as much damage to the traditional British Golf Courses as the misuse of the electric trolleys has done so over the past decade

Peter Broadbent, Course Manager, Effingham Golf Club

A cautionary tale: Getting mobile got me in a real flap

Now that the "Twelve Days of Christmas" are well and truly behind us, I wondered if you could make use of the following cautionary tale although it has little to do with serious greenkeeping.

Several days ago I happened to be working near to the lake on our Avening Course when my attention was distracted by the sight of a magnificent white swan swooping low across the course. As I watched, spellbound, it made a majestic landing on the lake. I stood there in awe, thinking just how lucky I was to have witnessed this, and how glad I was not

to be cooped up in an office etc etc, when my reverie was broken by the jarring tones of my mobile phone. (Not a rhythmic Brr Brr, but more a sort of biddle-liddle beep, biddle-liddle beep.) Unfortunately this alien noise seemed to enrage the swan causing it come marauding from the water flapping its wings and hissing menacingly.

So there I am in full retreat trying to keep a respectable distance between us, and, for some reason, trying to field the phone call. On the other end of the phone is an even bigger menace — Sonia, from Alpha-Line Paints

(name changed). By the time I could get the receiver anywhere near my ear, Sonia, bless her, is well into her sale's spiel and I can hear disjointed phrases such as "another two boxes before Christmas" and "ten percent discount".

I managed to blurt into the phone, "I'm terribly sorry, I'm terribly sorry, I'm out on the course at the moment and I'm having a bit of trouble with a swan."

"A swan" she said — "oh no - what is it?"

"It's a stonking great white thing with a wing at each corner and at the

moment it's running across the grass towards me," I panted hoarsely hastily looking round for somewhere to hide.

"My God" said Sonia sounding quite concerned, "You want to be careful, they're strong enough to break your arm."

"I couldn't care less about my arm" I screamed, "It's certain other parts of my anatomy I'm more worried about at the moment".

And she hung up - Some people!

Paul Worster, Course Manager Minchenhampton GC, Glous

Elliott Small: National Chairman of BIGGA

I must congratulate Elliott Small in becoming our new Chairman for 2000, a great honour indeed. Unfortunately at the BTME Banquet it was made quite clear that Neil Thomas thought Elliott was the Scottish Chairman of BIGGA by asking all the Scottish contingent to be upstanding and welcome their new Chairman. I wonder if next year when Clive Osgood is Chairman you will ask

all the English to be upstanding to welcome their new Chairman.

The general feeling among the rest of the members is that Neil made an error of judgement on such a special occasion. I hope this matter can be rectified by Neil in our magazine.

Brian Turner, Course Manager Sunningdale Golf Club.

Neil Thomas replies: My intentions were merely to raise a real Scottish welcome for one of Scotland's sons in a relaxed social atmosphere. Elliott is essentially the National Chairman of BIGGA, heading a National Association. I thought at the time that my unrehearsed introduction was in keeping with the spirit of the occasion.

BTME tops

After just returning from an excellent three days at the BTME 2000 at Harrogate I would like, through the pages of the magazine, to thank everyone involved. I was one of the lucky winners of the Patrons' Awards in the Ayrshire Section. It being my first year at Harrogate I was made to feel so welcome by everyone.

I also made a lot of new friends through the social side of the exhibition.

To all I thank you very much.

Roland Blackburn, Southerness GC

A Yankee Doodle thank you for BTME

If you could afford me a little space in the magazine I would like to comment on my perspective of the BTME 2000.

First and foremost "Thank You" seems like an understatement for all the hospitality that was extended to both myself and my wife by the entire BIGGA staff, the Chairman and each and every member I was fortunate to spend time with in Harrogate. For an American to feel so welcome and included in the activities at BTME leaves me at a loss for a way to express how much I value the friends I have made through my association with BIGGA.

The National Education Conference was excellently planned and carried out. The Trade Show was bigger and better than ever. The talks were superbly done in a variety of subjects and the banquet was the best I have ever attended in any country. My compliments to the Staff and all the speakers.

Prior to our departure from Harrogate, I told my wife that it seems more difficult each time to say goodbye to all the friends we have made over the years in our visits to the UK. I have experienced what few people here in the States would understand.

To have made friends from around the world and have such legends in the business as Walter Woods and Jack McMillan know you by name, makes one feel honoured and proud to be a member of BIGGA and part of BTME.

In closing I would like to thank Neil Thomas, the staff of BIGGA, the Chairman and all the attendees of BTME who made us feel so welcome at the Conference and gave us such wonderful memories to take home.

William P. Montague MG, CGCS USA. Via email