



Address your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to reception@bigga.co.uk

Story left me in floods of tears!

After reading Elliott Small's final "As I see it" where he said he would like us to write in with something humorous about flooding it brought to mind something which happened at Lenzie Golf Club some years ago.

In the distant past the area around Lenzie was known as the Loch lands. Most of the smaller stretches of water were drained into man-made ditches, hence to burns and rivers. Now the one remaining loch is the Gadloch and 200 years ago this was reduced to a mere pool by building a 1,000 yard tunnel and taking the water to a burn running into the River Kelvin.

Now the tunnel is collapsing in places and silts up so the Gadloch can rise six to eight feet. Part of Lenzie Golf course is built on reclaimed land from the Loch. As far back as I can remember parts of the course have been under

water in exceptionally wet weather.

As the years wore on and nothing was done about repairing it the Gadloch is spreading out back to its old locations.

One night, after my day's toil on the course and during a very wet period, I was having my usual refreshment in the bar when one of our members rushed in and breathlessly told us that 'they' were pumping out the loch. As you can imagine, everyone stopped talking and awaited the next utterance from the very welcome messenger. "Yes," he said, "the Fire Brigade are up at the head of the loch where the road is flooded and they are pumping out the Loch."

I think I was first to jump in with "Pumping out the Loch?", "the Loch has risen some six feet in the past week, no one could pump that amount of water out". There was murmuring all around that a start had to be made

somewhere. I felt I had to stop all this wishful thinking and stupidity. I asked what size of hoses they were using and, more importantly, where they were pumping the water to. The answer was "I don't know. I just know that the Fire Brigade are starting to empty the Loch."

I could not listen to any more of this rubbish so I jumped in my car and arrived to see the Fire Brigade clearing up their hose pipes. They had been requested by the Police to clear the drainage system which was blocked and causing the road to flood. I told to him that one of our members had just come into the Clubhouse and said they were pumping out the Loch. We looked down the Loch, and looked at his equipment and we both just laughed.

Cecil George, Lenzie

Thanks for Canadian trip from Andrew

I would like to thank BIGGA and Bernhard and Company for being one of ten delegates from the UK chosen to visit the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference in Vancouver in February. I find it an honour to represent the Association and the Scottish Region at such a big event, and I am looking forward to the trip abroad and meeting many new friends while over there.

I will be able to share the knowledge and experience that I will gain while in Canada with my colleagues on my return, whether it be through the pages of Greenkeeper International, or giving a talk to fellow greenkeepers in the near future. I think that I speak for all 10 delegates that this should be a trip of a lifetime and personally I am really looking forward to it.

Once again I would like to thank BIGGA and Sam McLean, of Bernhards and Company for being selected for this trip.

Andrew Forrest, Head Greenkeeper, Oatridge GC

A plea for help

I am putting together a presentation showing some of the unusual situations or problems which can occur on a golf course - oil spillages, machinery in lakes; animal damage, land slippage etc and was hoping that fellow members might assist me by sending photographs of some of the things which have happened on their golf courses.

I would scan the photographs and return them straight away.

Terry Crawford, Clondeboy GC, Conlig, Newtownards, Northern Ireland BT23 3PN. Email: terry@crawford1.totalserve.co.uk

Help needed with sandy dilemma

We have two golfing hotels in the Midlands: the Abbey Hotel Golf & Country Club near Redditch has an 18 hole golf course and we have just developed a new 9 hole golf course at Lea Marston Hotel & Leisure Complex. The latter was built between February and July last year by Contour Golf under the leadership of Ingrid Eichler. Contour have done a fabulous job and the golf course has grown in extremely well and is virtually fit for play already. We actually won't be opening the course to the membership until April 1 this year.

The course at the Abbey is 15-years-old now and was constructed to a fairly high standard such that tees and greens drain

beautifully. However the clay content of the sub soil and top soil means that water retention is a serious problem. Indeed, as like many other clubs, the course has been shut for approximately half of October and November. Over the last 18 months we have installed around £100,000 of fairway drainage - so we are trying, but the recent rain has not been able to get away effectively from the surface. Last year we bought a vertidrain machine which is proving to be of some use. However we really do need to transfer some large quantities of sand into the fairways.

I would be very pleased to hear from other BIGGA members whether they have come up with a cost effective solu-

tion for spreading large quantities of sand effectively over an area with preferably a relatively low ground pressure being applied. This I would imagine is a fairly universal problem and I do feel that a survey would be most beneficial not only to us but to other members, ie including best sand, type and cost and machinery used and/or third party contractors.

M I Blake, Managing Director, Lea Marston, Haunch Lane, Lea Marston, Sutton Coldfield, Warks B76 0BY

Editor's note: Anyone with information to help should write to the Letter's Column or direct to Mr Blake at the above address

New-look Membership packs are a great success

I have just received my BIGGA Membership Pack. Congratulations indeed, you have outdone yourselves. What a fantastic surprise to receive in the post. In this part of the world we never get anything as comprehensive as this, so it was very welcome. Also in Africa we are not used to receiving something dated 5th January by the 11th January. In Harare letters posted today may arrive 8 kms down the road 3 months later! Best wishes for 2001

Doug McClymont

Tribute to Fred Hawtree

Fred Hawtree's passing reported in your December issue, was to me very sad reading, primarily because being unaware of his death, I was not able to pay my respects earlier to one of the industry's true gentlemen.

When I took over the publishing of Golf Greenkeeping for BIGGA in 1982, Fred was one of the first to offer his support offering produce for me a series of articles on golf course architecture. They were always amusing, written with style, had a sound message for greenkeepers, but never preached in a manner that others who put pen to paper, were so inclined to do.

Not that Fred accepted fools lightly. There were several occasions when either I or my typesetter had altered a word or phrase, worst still, subbed out a few paragraphs to fit the page and then the 'gods of wrath' descended almost before his copy of the magazine had fallen through the letter box.

I still have all the original manuscripts he typed out in clean double spaced

copy, totally free of any grammatical errors or spelling mistakes and what is more he never charged or accepted a penny payment from me or the Association.

Our most precious memory of 'Uncle Fred' as he was known to my wife, was an invitation to lunch on a fine summer day at the Hawtree office in Woodstock.

Driving down a crowded Oxford Road, every car parking space was taken, except for one right outside number 5. There was a large board with just three words in capital letters on a white background. It read - RESERVED FOR LELEAN. What a welcome!

I have had the pleasure of playing many of Fred Hawtree's courses over the past 18 years. Always demanding, of impeccable standard, distinctive, but fair. That precisely sums up the man and is a fitting tribute to a long and distinguished life.

John Lelean, Wetherby

Thanks for BIGGA education packages

While reading Greenkeeper International this month, I came across a letter from Antony Kyle giving praise to BIGGA for their training courses. I also had the good fortune to go on a course with my Head Greenkeeper, at which Brin Bendon was lecturing, and I too, thought it brilliant.

When I arrived back at work, my Club Secretary asked me how I got on. Well I didn't shut up telling him about it! I have only been in greenkeeping for a year now and I really took it all in because I want to try to better myself for the future.

I hope I have the opportunity to go on more courses because Brin has a gift of keeping you listening throughout the whole course.

Derick Forster, Cosby Golf Club

PS. Thank you also to Greenkeeper International for also helping me learn more about greenkeeping. I have benefited from some of the articles in the last year.