

Free the Titleist One?

Last month saw a great deal of news print devoted to one John Collinson. Does the name ring a bell? Well he is the guy who was jailed for three months for gathering thousands of golf balls from golf club lakes up and down the country.

His case was highlighted as one of these situations where this country gets things so wrong. How could a guy who collects lost golf balls be sent to prison while so many more heinous crimes go unpunished? The fact that he declared his earnings to the Tax Man was also made to reinforce the point that here was a legitimate business and that Mr Collinson was a legitimate businessman.

There were radio phone-ins devoted to the case while a website ran a poll which found 90% of those who registered wanting him to be released. From memory even the Prime Minister got involved.

By the end he was being seen as a sort of Robin Hood figure providing lake balls for the poor impoverished golfers at the expense of the wealthy ball manufacturers.

Well, in the end such as the weight of opinion the Titleist one was released and justice was seen to be done.

But what did you think?

I must admit, without seeing all the facts, I did feel the sentence was a bit steep but that he did deserve punishment. He was going into golf clubs in the dead of night without permission from the clubs and taking balls that may have been declared lost, but were certainly not his property.

Trespass is just one of the crimes he committed and the fact that he was seen to be making such a decent living from his chosen career might well encourage others to take the same action and our golf courses could end up busier in the middle of the night than they are during the day. Where would that leave us?

With so many ecology and environmental projects being carried out on our courses the last thing we want is rubber clad, flipper wearing ball collectors damaging our flora and scaring our fauna, never mind our greens and bunkers.

And another thing...

What would you think if you arrived at the course early one morning to find a submerged body tangled up in weeds at the bottom of one of your lakes? I'd say that would be quite traumatic, and with the diving going on in the middle of the night together with the levels of stealth required it is not outwith the realms of possibility.

Yes, perhaps Mr Collinson didn't deserve his prison sentence but he certainly isn't an innocent party in the whole affair.

This is the final magazine to be designed by David Emery who is leaving the Association to further his design career with another company. David has worked on every magazine since February '98 and done much to ensure a professional look to the rest of the Association's literature. I would like to wish him well for the future and thank him for his outstanding work over the last four years.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Continuing to set high standards

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) is smoothing the path to the introduction of revised Sports Turf vocational qualifications in July. National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in golf greenkeeping and ground maintenance are being updated to take in the latest advances in technology in the amenity horticulture world. The GTC has taken a lead role in this in collaboration with the two Awarding Bodies, City and Guilds

and the Scottish Qualifications Authority. A network of training providers guide students to the qualifications and it is essential that these providers all work to the same standards. The GTC has therefore been encouraging the Awarding Bodies to develop standard documentation covering the learning programme.

The GTC's Education Director David Golding said: "The GTC is committed to setting high and common standards in the UK and Ireland. This is why we have

been at the forefront in setting out the knowledge and practical standards for the revised NVQs and SVQs "

The GTC is golf's independent advisory service for both employers and employees with regard to greenkeeper education, training, and qualifications. It aims to persuade employers of the necessity for learning and acquiring new skills throughout life and encourage more people to get the qualifications they need for working.

Chipping Norton GC wins first Deere qualifier

A four man team from Chipping Norton Golf Club is heading for the famous Brabazon course at The Belfry, having won the first British regional qualifier in the inaugural 2002 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament.

The team - consisting of Club Secretary Simon Chislett, Club Captain/Chairman, Keith Willis, Greenkeeper, Steve Doyle, and Club Professional, Neil Rowlands - beat off the challenge of 14 other teams in the competition, which was organised by Peter Helps, Sales Manager at John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Bledlow, Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

He was assisted on the day by John Deere representative Henry Bredin and BIGGA's Midland Regional Administrator Peter Larter. The winners finished on 20 under, two shots clear of the field. The competition is based on a modified scramble, with the professional playing his own ball throughout the 18 holes, and the other three players forming the scramble. The team then takes the lowest score at each hole of either the professional or the net scramble team. Chipping Norton GC made the most of a little local knowledge - the qualifier was held at the club's own course in Southcombe, Oxfordshire on April 25. The team now goes through to the Great Britain and Ireland national final at The Belfry



From left to right: Henry Bredin, John Deere Limited; Simon Chislett, secretary of Chipping Norton Golf Club; Peter Larter, BIGGA Midland regional administrator; Peter Helps, sales manager of John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare (Aylesbury branch)

on August 19, to play for a place in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA in November.

"We've run a great many tournaments here, but never one quite like this, or with teams made up in this way," said Club Secretary Simon Chislett. "It was a long and nervous wait to see who won, as we teed off first, but it was worth it - and I have to say, we'd happily host the competition again! We're all looking forward to playing at The Belfry, but there won't be any advantage for us this time as none of the amateurs have played it before."

Now in its 16th year, the John Deere Team Championship has traditionally been open only to

teams from the USA and Canada. Last year invitations were extended to Germany and Australia, and this year teams from Great Britain and Ireland are also included. After the national final at The Belfry, two winning teams - one from Great Britain and one from Ireland - will travel to the USA with the chance to be crowned John Deere World Team Champions 2002.

John Deere Limited is also making a donation of £25 for every British and Irish team entered, to support the educational activities of BIGGA (British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association) and GCSAI (Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland).

Twenty years of success for Charterhouse

Charterhouse Turf Machinery recently celebrated 20 years of supplying equipment for greenkeeping and grounds maintenance tasks. The company is best known for the Verti-Drain range of deep aerators, manufactured by Redexim of Holland. This product revolutionised turf management when it was introduced to the UK in the early 1980s.

Charterhouse subsequently expanded into emergent niche markets, with ranges such as overseeders, scarifiers, corers, core collectors and pedestrian turf aer-

ators. The company also diversified into consumer-orientated products, including DR wheeled trimmers and brushcutters. In 1999, Charterhouse bought the Michael Richmond Ltd business, specialising in the supply of arboricultural and forestry equipment, broadening its market reach still further.

Most recently, Charterhouse added the Antonio Carraro 'supercompact' tractors and the Rogers Windfoil shrouded boom sprayers. To mark their 20th anniversary, Charterhouse recently held a special dinner attended

by past and present employees. A special feature was a commemorative cake baked by Secretary Barbara Jarman.

"Having identified the turf equipment market as a specialist sector, and sourcing high-quality products, Charterhouse quickly became recognised as experts in our field," says Philip Threadgold, a founder of the company. "Our ongoing flexibility has enabled us to develop the business to meet trends in new and existing markets, and we can look forward with confidence and excitement to the next 20 - and beyond."