

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

A need for continuity calls for a plan

I have recently read the comments of Duncan McGilvary, and agree entirely with his comments. Many greenkeepers I know have become disillusioned with the industry including myself, having moved abroad in 1995 after starting in fine turf in 1983. I have tackled things in the same way as Duncan, with education of the members. The root of the problem starts with most Greens Convenors (Chairman of Green) or change of this post. You have to basically start again, this can happen in some clubs every year.

As a Course Manager, it's your duty to try and formulate a Course Handling Plan and submit this to the committee. This should encompass all aspects of the course; Greens, Tees,

Fairways, Bunkers, Woodland etc. Everybody has one don't they?

I have found that this is the only way in which you can hold continuity on the course in all areas. This way you combat the next power crazy Green Chairman who incidentally hates you because you ran over his new pro VI Titleist when you were cutting semi rough four years earlier. Seriously, it begins to bring much more ease to decision making on changes on the course, machinery investment and more manpower etc, in fact everything which makes our job more difficult. It also eliminates greatly personal clashes which inevitably leads to the greenkeeper being dismissed and rarely the Green Chairman.

There are those who say a little

knowledge is dangerous, however, we have been so successful with this method that in association with the Danish Golf Union we operate courses in all aspects of greenkeeping, so our employers better understand how complex our job can be. We also try to teach them that it's fine to expect a certain standard but this must be realistically related to our budget. You can't expect to pay for Sludgecombe Pay and Play and expect Augusta.

Have you done your plan yet? And not just for in the morning, or even the next two years but for the long term future of the course if not it's fair to ask Should we lead or Should we be led? Inspiration starts here!

Chris Haspell, DGU Denmark

Bernhard and BIGGA Thanks 1

I write primarily to thank you for enabling our organisation to produce an educational vista through which, several greenkeepers were given the chance of a lifetime to visit another country to compare and exchange views within our chosen field.

It proved to be a sensational experience, one that will be with me for many years to come. Our group met so many interesting fellow greenkeepers it kept the mind occupied at all times.

Already my own golf course team have enjoyed hearing and reading the literature on a world quite different from ours. I am sure in the coming months there will be many interesting discussions held up & down the country, inspired by the group, on the elements involved in greenkeeping American style.

I was pleased to see the BIGGA stand busy whenever I viewed it, so Tracey must have been asleep on her feet by

the end of the day. We certainly do have a very special relationship with the GCSAA that I feel will continue to grow in the oncoming years. The President of GCSAA, his board members and the President of the local Florida Chapter, Geoff Coggan, deserve a special mention for all their help in making us so welcome in their country.

I now understand why you forged close ties with Bernhard & Co to allow some of our members out to America. Sam and Stephen are certainly dynamic, charismatic fellows with strong beliefs on what greenkeepers should be doing to enhance themselves and this industry. They are great trade ambassadors for our Association and I will be thanking them for all their time and effort to ensure our stay was educational, with never a spare moment to rest!

David Winterton, MG, DM
 Course Manager, Maidenhead GC

WIN!

Don't miss your chance to win this fantastic jacket worth £60 in our exciting new Buyers' Guide competition in association with Allen Power

'THE TURFTIME TEASER'



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YOU'VE GOT M@IL!

If you've got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turfcare industry, drop us an email, and we'll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers. We'll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to: updates@bigga.co.uk quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!

Bernhard and BIGGA Thanks 2

I would like to thank Bernhards and BIGGA for the opportunity of attending the GCSAA Show in Orlando. The visit was most beneficial and I was privileged to be part of the visiting delegation representing the Association. I appreciate the time and effort involved in organising such a visit from all concerned.

I will be feeding back to my membership at Mill Hill Golf Club on what I learnt during the trip while I have distributed floppy discs to my contacts in the States and have asked them to complete my survey with regards to the comparison of golf course maintenance techniques between the USA and the UK. Over the coming months I hope to collate my findings in order to make a presentation to the members of the London Section.

During my visit I took over 200 photographs which have been put on to a CD for distribution to the delegation members.

Technical information recorded will also be shared with the delegation group in order to maintain the available data for us all.

Once again I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to be part of the visiting delegation.

Tony Dunstan,
 Course Manager, Mill Hill GC

Managers are not getting the respect they deserve

I had been in greenkeeping for 16 years and did enjoy the work very much. I decided at the end of 2001 to leave greenkeeping due to some overwhelming factors.

As the years went by I gained a fairly good insight of the running of a golf club, as far as the committee and senior club officials are concerned. I had been a First Assistant since 1987 and felt that I had played a fairly key part in the upkeep of the course. I did not consider myself to be just an ordinary First Assistant as a lot of the roles I played over the years where certainly more than that! But I shall not go into details. I did everything that was asked of me and that includes getting as well qualified as I possibly could. This includes: phase 2 & 4 City and Guilds with a double distinction, NVQ level

3, pa 1,2 & 6, first aid and a few other related qualifications.

One would think that this plus years of experience would equate to an equally respectful wage packet. Well this was not the case for me at least. I am sure there are others out there in the same position. All one hears as an excuse is "You should move on to get better money and more responsibilities". Well I say phooey to this.

There are only so many jobs out there for Course and Deputy Managers. Golf clubs very rarely promote from within, quite why I really don't understand. Who else is better qualified than a person who has all the qualifications and knows the club inside out. Surely it is the way forward to promote your own staff. When the time comes they will move on having gained real experience

as a manager, and if all were in the same boat then it stands to reason that when a manager moves on, selection would be far simpler for clubs when appointing a new one. I don't think I have to spell out why this is the case.

But this apart, I honestly believe that managers are not getting the respect they deserve or are financially rewarded enough. Golf clubs, in the most part, do not appreciate the stress and difficulties involved in the day to day running of a course. Committees always seem to know best it seems, well at least they think they do! How on earth can a club keep any sort of continuity when on an annual basis the committee and captaincy changes. Every year the poor old Course Manager gets barraged with the latest "opinions and great new ideas" from a

body people who all have their own ideals of which 99% is purely because they feel they have to "contribute", and now they are in a position of authority, feel they must be right.

The Course Manager has a policy and that is to maintain the course and manage the staff to his or her best ability. To do this they must be left to their own devices as much as is practical.

There are a lot of excellent greenkeepers out there and if clubs want to have great courses then there needs to be a realisation that the course maintenance crew are essential and must be treated so.

On a final note, I believe that the way things seem to be going, more people will be leaving the trade.

Barney Wright