

Key Skills corner

"Wear your learning like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not merely pull it strike it; merely to show you have one."

Philip Dormer Stanhope,
 Earl of Chesterfield

A great theory, but I am beginning to feel that the greenkeeping industry should start to wave the tune-piece in its pocket around a little more.

I am referring to the new Key Skills Corner in Greenkeeper International.

I was so embarrassed to read Ken Richardson's article telling members where to place capital letters in a sentence, grammatical basics we were taught at the age of six.

It is time to stop dumbing down and rid ourselves of an unwanted stereotype. Greenkeeping is an industry rightly committed to education and training, however it is my opinion it should be setting its standards and pitching its levels higher than this. To explain to readers the function of a capital letter is little short of condescending and frankly insulting, and considering the Association is implementing a minimum NVQ entry for membership I find it somewhat bewildering.

Daniel Lightfoot, Deputy Course Manager
 Gatton Manor Hotel Golf and Country Club,
 Surrey

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quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!

A big thank you

As a recipient of the Scottish Patrons' generosity, I spent a very interesting trip to BTME at Harrogate. To be able to attend so many seminars and listen to some of the most knowledgeable speakers in the world of golf was certainly a revelation. As usual on display were the best machinery and other course necessities which were of the highest order. The camaraderie among fellow greenkeepers was also very much appreciated. In closing I would like to thank the sponsors for their generosity and also my East Section for their kind nomination.

Ian Aitchison

Our members are leading the way!

To say I am proud to be a part of our profession at this moment in time is a considerable understatement.

As you will see from the publicity in this month's magazine, BIGGA, our professional Association has just approved a very exciting initiative, which will ensure that our profession, and with it our professional futures, are secured.

From a personal and professional low point, when I first penned the article "Should we lead or should we be led" some six months ago, I am now extremely excited for all of us now and in the future.

BIGGA officials and Board members had already been looking at areas of concern among the profession (not least apathy), and my article helped to galvanise members' concerns into well reasoned and thought out reaction - your response was admirable.

You will no doubt have read many of the replies and spin off subjects and debates published in the pages of our magazine over the past months - it is still going on!. But there have also been

many discussions behind the scenes, involving a broad spectrum of greenkeepers from within the profession, offering positive opinions and suggestions, which I have found extremely heartening.

Get-togethers were arranged during "Harrogate Week" to discuss various issues further, in a more structured way, and recommendations were discussed with BIGGA officials.

BIGGA's Board of Management has subsequently approved the setting up of a group to be named the "Futures" Sub Committee, which will be made up from a wide selection of differing denominations within greenkeeping and golf course management from our membership, who will sit and recommend action regarding the future of our profession.

The terms of reference for this group, which will be finalised at the inaugural meeting, are itemised within our Executive Director's article elsewhere in this issue.

Action on various issues will, I am sure, filter through fairly soon so watch

this space as they say - in fact the first meeting should have already taken place by the time you have read this letter.

I would also like to use this opportunity to impress on every member the importance of voicing your opinions and ideas for the future of our profession - don't sit on it or just talk amongst yourselves - get in touch - any problem or grievance can be solved by discussion and debate.

As a Course Manager I have received valuable comments, ideas and opinions from apprentices through all designations of greenkeepers and managers, to even Captains of golf clubs (honestly!).

Please talk to our professional Association and let them know your feelings - only then can they do something about it.

Through your response, over the past six months or so, I am now convinced there is a secure future for us all.

Duncan McGilvray, Course Manager
 Potters Bar Golf Club

Clearing the cloudy waters

For many years BIGGA has worked hard to implement a workable plan for the education and training of greenkeepers and to achieve this in conjunction with the GTC. It has all too often been hampered by a lack of adequate funding and a differing of views as to the respective responsibilities for such education and training.

I am pleased to report that in recent months much has changed for the better and there is now a much greater sense of cooperation and working together, brought about by the willingness of all involved to pull in the same direction. Gone forever, I hope, are the old suspicions of doubt, which clouded the waters of progress for education for all. The GTC and BIGGA education sit closely together, largely due to a good working relationship between David Golding and Ken

Richardson, and it's building on that cooperation that has made the present positive thinking possible.

At the last GTC Management meeting, it was agreed that Ken Richardson should be asked to attend the GTC Technical Panel meetings, and at the same time I agreed to ask the BIGGA Board if they would agree to David Golding being invited to attend the BIGGA Education Sub Committee meetings. I am pleased to say that our Board to a man agreed that it would be a big help for further relations and communication between both bodies. So, it's from a very positive and cooperative mood that I am able to inform members that we can go forward from here knowing that BIGGA, GTC, R&A, and all the Home Unions are pulling together, which must be good news for everyone.

Greenkeeper education is the one most important issue for us all, and we are now in a better position than ever before to make big strides forward. We need the input of all bodies within our industry, not just for funding, but also for new and better ideas. Each and every one of us wants the best that education and training can offer from colleges, BIGGA and GTC, and with the support of the R&A and Home Unions the future looks very healthy. Now it's time for cooperation and moving forward.

I for one feel very optimistic for the coming years. Good luck to you all and thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Gordon Child, BIGGA Past National
 Chairman and the Association's GTC
 Representative

Clarification

I am writing to clear up any confusion that may arise from your presentation of my article "Changing the Nature of your Greens" in the April edition of Greenkeeper International.

Firstly, the photographs were designed to illustrate the characteristics of each of the primary growth strategies should have been captioned as follows...

- Common mouse-ear (Ruderal). Rapid life cycle and seed production in anticipation of disturbance.
- Mono-stand of competitive species (Ragwort and Rosebay willowherb) in a



productive environment. The greater proportion of time here is devoted to producing biomass for resource capture. A picture which was not included would have illustrated the following:

- Heather carry, a good example of a stress tolerator. Trampling disturbance or competitive exclusion from invasive grasses will serve to eradicate this important species.

Also, the conclusion to the article ("Feeling the Pressure?") was for some reason placed in the middle of the article. I realise that the article was quite complicated in nature but feel that it was not presented as written. I hope you will print these comments to help clarify any confusion that may have arisen as a result.

Henry C Bechelet, Turfgrass Agronomist, STRI

