

Happy Greenkeeper responds

It's the 8th of April 2002, I arrive home from work at approximately 4pm. Yippee! The excitement of the new issue of Greenkeeper International sitting on the door mat, I can't control myself any longer and rip open the plastic envelope. First things first let's look at the jobs' page to see who has been moving around. Nobody I know has moved so on to the second part of the magazine that most people look at, the letters page. One heading caught my eye, "A Right to Replay from Denmark".

This could be interesting I thought. A quick skim through the letter and "Oh my God!" my name at the bottom of the second column. A more thorough read was required. It starts off well with a thank you from Mr Ian C Tomlinson for my letter in the February issue but it quickly took a downturn, and by the time I had read to the end of the third column I was the worst greenkeeper in the world. I should have been burnt at the stake like an old medieval witch, or put in the stocks at BIGGA HQ so all greenkeepers could throw bags of rotten seed or sponges soaked in Farmura at me. (Only joking I know they don't burn witches any more).

Once I stopped the tears after this violent attack of words I read through the letter again then I read my own letter again. I believe that Ian missed the whole point of my original letter. The whole point was that more communication is needed from Greenkeepers to members, committees and other members of the golf clubs management team and vice versa to ensure that the needs of the golfers are met without compromising the condition of, or the maintenance of the golf course. The education of greenkeepers is now so

much improved it could now be the time to start educating the golfers.

Ian may well be fluent in French and have a working knowledge of German but he can not copy a simple passage of English from another issue of this magazine as I was misquoted in Ian's letter. Ian's version of my letter changes the context in which it was written. But don't worry Ian I won't sue you for liable. (BIGGA legal help line advised against the long and expensive court case).

Having read Ian's article in the January issue, which was both interesting and well written, it became apparent that we have very similar problems to deal with at work, in both cases inherited, and both deal with them in a very similar ways. So why this clashing of the pens? Maybe the pen truly is mightier than the sword.

We are all fighting for the same cause but we have different ideas how to achieve the final goal, perhaps some of us should sit down with some of the National board and throw some ideas around for the way forward and stop all this internal arguing, among us, the greenkeepers.

If Ian or any other member of the association would like to discuss my first letter or any other matter with me in person I can always be contacted on 07702 435122 and would be more than happy to chat.

PS. As a final point we hollow or solid tine and top dress every month from April to October and Slit tine almost every week as the weather allows through the Winter months. So we do aerate at Cleethorpes.

Leslie Howkins, "STILL HAPPY" Head Greenkeeper, Cleethorpes Golf Club

Sharing the knowledge 2

Ian Chenery's comments ("Sharing the Knowledge," April, 2002) regarding informing golfers, whether members or fee paying guests, about maintenance operations are absolutely right. Explaining maintenance operations, why they have to be done, how they will be carried out, and when, further improves greenkeeper/golfer relations through improved communication. This also demonstrates to the golfer that the greenstaff are knowledgeable and fully conversant with all aspects of golf course maintenance.

A better educated golfer will be more understanding of the problems and difficulties that can arise at any given time. Those greenkeepers that feel golfers shouldn't know about the maintenance operations may only be masking their own lack of knowledge, or inability to explain or justify their maintenance regimes.

Like Ian I too believe that there are qualifications to suit the individuals career aspirations, and that BIGGA is putting too much emphasis on NVQ's. In the article Education and Training Update (February, 2002), Ken Richardson as the Education and Training Manager of BIGGA spoke

as briefly as possible about qualifications such as national certificates through to post-graduate degrees. He stated that "these qualifications show what the holder knows and not necessarily what they can do" which may or may not be true. But in the context of the article he implies that these qualifications are not as good as NVQ's. Ironically, these are the qualifications (NC, HNC, BSc (Hons) etc) all of which can be taken on a part-time basis, that BIGGA should be promoting if it wants the industry to be taken as a serious profession.

Finally, before everyone writes in to say that there is no substitute for experience, I completely agree, but only if this is experience of the correct management techniques. We don't have to look too far back in history to see the problems that resulted from the feed and water brigade, which thankfully is a dying breed.

Colin Mumford

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'THE TURFTIME TEASER'

DETAILS ON PAGE 48

Review: Turf Management for Golf Courses

Jim has drawn on a wide range of experts from across the US to help produce this updated version which covers: Golf and Turfgrass; Designing and Building a Golf Course; the Putting Green; The Tee; The Fairway; The Rough; The Bunker; Golf Course Equipment and Facilities; The Irrigation System; Pests and Stress; Golf Course Management and other Golf Course Operations.

Although aimed at the American market and written in American English, this book contains a vast amount of information useful to the British Greenkeeper. It includes a large number of colour plates, diagrams and flow charts to illustrate the well written text. Indeed, the Chapter on Pests and Stress introduces you to pests and

diseases that you may never encounter. However, if you do, then you will be able to identify and control them using the information in this book. A word of caution, however, not all chemicals approved for Golf Course use in the US are approved in the UK.

The Chapter on Management gives an insight into the way that golf courses are structured in the US, giving Job Descriptions for a range of staff. The specifications for Superintendent and Deputy closely resemble those of Course Managers and Deputies. However, not many British courses have a Fertiliser Technician and I think that we call a Landscape Horticulturist a Gardener. Joking apart, this Chapter contains useful information on Staff Training, and Appraisal, Communications, Grievance

and Discipline and Record Keeping.

The final chapter of the book looks at Championship and Tournament Preparation, Water Features and Landscaping, including a vast range of trees that can be used on golf courses.

The book closes with information on Grass Identification. Seeding and Planting, the Measurement of Areas, Conversion Tables and a Glossary of Terms.

Despite the cost, this book is a useful guide to greenkeeping and golf course management. Care must be taken to interpret its guidance into local language and apply it to the rules and conditions of your country. A useful addition to any bookshelf, it would sit well alongside Jim Arthur's 'Practical Greenkeeping'. **KR**

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Books

Turf Management for Golf Courses

Second Edition by Dr James B Beard

This new edition of **Turf Management for Golf Courses** is now available from the **STRI** priced at **£90 plus £8 post and packing**. It represents a **major update on the First Edition but retains a similar format and organisation**.