



Welcome

MORE THAN JUST NAVAL GAZING

As I promised last month the July magazine looks at how you, the greenkeeper, are perceived by others. It may appear to be an exercise in little more than navel gazing but it is actually extremely important. If you don't know how well, or otherwise, you are considered by the people around you then you are in no position to do anything about it. It's as simple as that.

And let's face it even your biggest supporters, those who fight the greenkeepers' corner when push comes to shove, don't always really know the levels of expertise required to do the job to its fullest. They may know that there is more to it than cutting grass. They may even know it involves identifying diseases and introducing the cultural practices to prevent them. But very few will know the complete range of skills required to produce a well maintained golf course.

And no, the complete greenkeeper doesn't - or to put it into the language of my birth "disney" - attend "Mickey Mouse" courses in the country's educational establishments and pick up meaningless qualifications. I've harped on about it on more than one occasion but when the former Chief Inspector of Schools, Chris Whitehead, routinely devalues the work of greenkeepers by grouping the training courses with those of Beer Making, Flower Arranging and Circus Studies, it shows the size of the task we have ahead of ourselves when it comes to increasing the respect you should have for doing such a complex and involved job.

The people who have kindly taken part in the "See Yourself as Others See You" feature are all golf people and they do have a positive opinion of your work but they are aware of the problems and I would bet that if you were to ask them detailed questions even those who spend their lives writing about golf and golfers would struggle a little.

A concerted approach to promoting the qualities and skills of BIGGA members is what is required, and over the next few months plans will be put in place to make that happen.

Please take part in the exercise. If you have any examples of greenkeepers being treated badly by golfers, or indeed the converse, please write to me at BIGGA HOUSE or email me at scott@bigga.co.uk. It will all help when it comes to putting a campaign together. Obviously anonymity will be respected if requested. We don't want to make too many martyrs!

I genuinely believe that this is the key to everything. If you are identified and seen as professionals you will be treated as professionals

I close with some good news. Gordon McKillop, of the STRI, is back behind his desk in Bingley. Doesn't sound too significant on the face of it but Gordon suffered a health scare recently and the fact that he is back shuffling papers around his desk again is very good news indeed.

Scott MacCallum, Editor



The Devon and Cornwall Section held a Machinery Maintenance Workshop last month at Seale Hayne College, Newton Abbot. Over 60 members were in attendance, in what proved to be a tremendously successful event. All attendees received certificates from Toro and Ransomes Jacobsen. The Section would like to thank Clive Pinnock and Toro, Alan Dommet and Devon Garden Machinery, Glen Forsdyke and Ransomes Jacobsen and Patrick Flegg, of P.J.Flegg Ltd, for their contributions in making the day such a success.

HISTORY LESSON

New guidance on golf courses in historic landscapes is to be produced by Land Use Consultants for English Heritage. This will review the past, present and future effects of golf course development on historic landscapes, provide criteria for assessment of golf course developments and best practice advice on design, management and planning control and policy.

The project will question assumptions on developments such as golf courses in the historic environment and will thoroughly examine the current situation and future trends to produce a positive and practical guidance document of use to a wide audience from golf course architects to developers, local planning officers and golf course owners and managers.

The study will focus on golf within nationally designated landscapes in particular those on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, but it will also consider best practice within the wider historic environment including World Heritage Sites, Listed Battlefields, Conservation Areas, National Parks, and on the

settings of Listed Buildings within these landscapes.

Working with Land Use Consultants on the project will be the landscape historian David Lambert, formerly Conservation Officer for the Garden History Society, and golf course architect Tom Mackenzie of Donald Steel and Company.

Consultation will be an important part of the process of developing the guidance and initial input is sought from individuals and organisations involved in golf course development, management and the historic environment.

Details of good practice in design, planning policy and practice and landscape management would be particularly welcome. A consultation form is available to be downloaded from www.landuse.co.uk or english-heritage.org.uk/parksandgardens or by contacting Jane Wilson of Land Use Consultants on 020 7383 5784.

A full consultation on the draft document will take place in Autumn 2004, with final publication planned for early 2005.



The Kent Section held a well attended golf day at Hever Castle GC, hosted by Course Manager, David Wood. For report and results see Around the Green.