



Welcome

START OF A CAMPAIGN

I know most of us like to believe that we don't really care what other people think of us. Why should we? We are paid to do a job as well as we can and invariably have more knowledge of what we are doing than the people who are doing the criticising. Best to ignore such comments - water of a ducks back and all that.

However, if we are completely honest, none of us like criticism, particularly the uninformed variety.

So what should you do when the criticism becomes deafening? Bend to public opinion in the hope of a quieter life? Amending your ways in response to the opinions of a few, never mind an entire membership, is a sure fire way tie yourself in knots.

Tackling it head on is perhaps the best way. If you can't justify your actions you probably are in trouble. Having said that, admitting an honest mistake can also win friends and often respect. The perfect person hasn't yet been created and every one of us makes mistakes once in a while.

To make it work critics have got to be prepared to listen but, in many cases, they were at the front of the queue when mouths were being dished out but nowhere to be seen when ears were being allocated.

In the absence of all else a thick skin is definitely a help.

At the same time, it is useful to know how you are perceived by others.

Next month the magazine will feature an article by Colin Callander, a former Editor of Golf Monthly magazine, under the heading "See Yourself as Others See You" which is aimed at giving you an idea as to how someone in the golf business sees you, the greenkeeper. Colin is a former Greens Convenor at a club in Scotland so has seen your role from "inside the ropes", as it were, and he does have some interesting things to say about the greenkeeping profession.

I'd be delighted if you could contribute to the feature. Write to me at BIGGA HOUSE or email me at scott@bigga.co.uk giving some examples of how you have been treated by golfers or club members - anonymity will be preserved if requested! That way I can paint a picture of what life is like for the nation's greenkeepers.

Without anticipating what will be said I know that the cloth cap and wellies image of greenkeepers is as hackneyed and out of date as the image of professional footballers wearing clumpy boots, baggy shorts and kicking heavy laced up leather footballs.

I'm also hoping to speak with a few other people from different elements of the golf industry to see what they think of greenkeepers.

I see it as as starting point of a campaign to educate the golfer into what you, the greenkeeper, actually does with the aim that in time you will be treated by golfers as the professionals you undoubtedly are.

It will be a difficult task but any signs of improvement will more than justify the effort.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

A WIN FOR BIGGA

The annual fixture between the Secretaries Association and BIGGA Scottish Region took place over the West Links, North Berwick Golf Club, on April 14.

This year was the turn of BIGGA to host this match and we are grateful to the Captain and committee of North Berwick for granting us courtesy for the day.

We have been successful in winning this match for the last few years and no doubt the Secretaries' Association were out for revenge and hoping to regain the trophy.

With the course in superb condition and with very favourable weather conditions everyone was looking forward to the match.

Our number one pairing of Iain Barr, our Chairman from Largs GC, and Stewart Greenwood, Course Manager, North Berwick GC faced Allan Osborne, Captain of the Secretaries' Association, and Norman Wilson, Secretary, North Berwick. Unfortunately our top pair failed to lead the way and lost by 5&4 but this was our only defeat, as we either halved or won the remaining matches, eventually winning by seven and a half to two and a half.

Wins for C. Yeaman and A. Holmes, G. Thompson and P. Boyd, J. Manual and G. Jarvis, A. O'Hara and D. Scott, D. Tweedle and B. Aitken and finally B. Bolland and E. McGhee, with halved matches for A. Dunn and D. Wilson, S. Sullivan and A. Williamson and S. Cruickshank and J. Mair. Congratulations to everyone on a splendid result.

The scenic views from North Berwick are truly outstanding with the East Lothian coastline and the Bass Rock providing a truly splendid backdrop and the Kingdom of Fife in the distance made for a superb day.

Our grateful thanks to the Captain and club for allowing us the facilities of the club and course for the day. Congratulations to Stewart Greenwood and his staff for the excellent condition of the course.

Our thanks also to Alex Beveridge, Secretary of the Secretaries' Association, for his assistance and help in organising the match. We are all looking forward to renewing our friendship in 2005.

Peter J. Boyd
Regional Administrator

DESIGN WITH WATER IN MIND

Independent irrigation engineer Giles Wardle of IrriPlan has called on golf course architects to make efficient water use a key design feature at the European Institute of Golf Course Architect's AGM in Italy.

Speaking at the invitation of Ken Moodie, the Institute's Vice President at the historic Castello Di Carimate, he told members that the uniform application of water is often overlooked as an objective in the design of irrigation systems.

"Maximising the efficiency of an irrigation system through good design has aesthetic, agronomic and golfing implications for the course.

"In the quest to save water, appropriate design is arguably more influential than merely adopting technologies such as valve-in-head sprinklers, computer controls and weather stations," stressed Giles.

While the appearance of wet and dry patches on a golf course can be caused by wind or variations in root-zone, drainage or topography, it's often poorly uniform irrigation application that's at fault, he said.

"Having emphasised that, achieving a uniform application of water from an irrigation system is a far more complex issue than just specifying a head-to-head sprinkler spacing."

Giles went on to explain the scientific principles of uniformity and the approaches available to the irrigation designer to optimise it.

Using densograms generated by SPACE (Sprinkler Performance And Coverage Evaluation) software, he illustrated the dramatic effect that seemingly unimportant design options can have on the efficiency and uniformity of an irrigation system.

"The EIGCA arrange Continuing Professional Development seminars on a regular basis to keep our members up-to-date with advances in technology. We were very pleased that Giles agreed to speak and he delivered an excellent talk. With growing environmental awareness, the need to conserve water and apply it efficiently has never been more important," said Ken Moodie, who's also Chair of the Institute's Professional Development Committee.



TOP DEMONSTRATION SHOW

Organisers of the Reaseheath Sports Turf Machinery Show are predicting that it will become the best demonstrative event in the turf professionals' calendar.

With demand from exhibitors exceeding expectations and several national manufacturers planning to launch new machinery, the show, in Nantwich, Cheshire, on Wednesday, July 7, is set to be twice as successful as the 2003 inaugural event.

Last year the event attracted over £6 million-worth of cutting edge equipment, including the latest ride-on, trailed and pedestrian mowers, aerators, scarifiers, top dressers and line markers. All were demonstrated in a working environment on Reaseheath College's varied sports turf facilities. Potential buyers were attracted from across the north-west and the midlands.

"This is the only show of its kind in the country and we are intending it should become known as a 'show not to be missed,'" said Phil Sharples.

"We are excited about the positive co-operation and support we have received from the industry. We will continue to develop the show to give maximum benefit to exhibitors and visitors. We have acted on feedback from those who attended last year and are confident this year's event offers even greater value."

Entry is free to visitors.



HE WHO DAIRS...



BIGGA member, James Dair, an Assistant at Oundle Golf Club has set off on a professional career which could see him teeing it up with Europe's finest.

James was successful in the Euro Pro Tour

Qualifying School, the third tier Tour after the main European Tour and the Challenge Tour and will be competing in events throughout the summer.

If he does well and finishes in the top five in the final Order of Merit next season he will compete on the Challenge Tour where success could lead to a place on the main Tour.

But one step at a time and James, who is a member of Toft Golf Club, is delighted to have the chance to play in events which offer a top prize of £10,000.

"To qualify I had to pre-qualify at Forest Pines initially before playing three rounds at Bedford Golf Club where, out of a field of 240, I finished in a tie for 30th," said James, 31, who had a handicap of scratch when he turned professional.

He is delighted that Oundle Golf Club have kept his job open to him so he can return to greenkeeping between tournaments, but in the meantime he can look forward to events in Spain and Portugal as well as playing some of the finest courses in the UK.

WELL QUALIFIED

Since January a further 12 technicians have qualified successfully as Briggs & Stratton Master Service Technicians. This brings the total in the UK to over 200 and 3,000 worldwide.

This internationally recognised qualification is only given to those who can attain the highest levels of excellence when it comes to servicing and repairing small engines.

Each year entrants undergo an intensive course in theory and practical engineering practices, at the end of which they set a series of rigorous examinations.

The MST course is held annually and is open to workshop personnel of garden machinery specialists, hire outlets, golf courses, contractors and local authorities that wish to increase their skills and gain more recognition for the important work they carry out.

Anyone interested in attending the 2005 course, should contact Briggs & Stratton's Service Department on 01708 335616.

RECOGNITION FOR STRI LAB

STRI has been awarded accredited laboratory status for the testing of rootzone materials specified by the USGA in the construction of putting greens.

The American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) certified STRI's soil laboratory at the end of April. It is the first laboratory in England and only the second in Europe to gain accreditation and a place on the USGA's approved list of physical soil testing laboratories, which recommends laboratories carrying out testing under the high levels of quality control required by A2LA.

STRI has been involved in research and the testing of rootzones and construction materials for golf courses since 1929. In 2001 BRTMA (the British Rootzone and Top Dressing Manufacturers Association) appointed STRI as their official Testing House to improve standards within the industry.

STRI's association with the USGA also has a long history. The work of the USGA Green Section, formed in 1920, was influential on the early turfgrass research programmes carried out at STRI in the 1930's.

Dr Stephen Baker who is Head of Soils and Sports Surface Science at STRI was a member of the USGA advisory committee that drew up the current Recommendations for a Method of Putting Green Construction.

These recommendations have been recently revised and details of the changes, which are all intended to help make the construction of USGA greens less expensive and less complicated, can be found on the USGA website; use the links page at www.stri.co.uk

Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



'FREE ENTRY' TO GLENEAGLES

The Diageo Championship at Gleneagles will be held over the PGA Centenary Course, The Gleneagles Hotel from June 10 to June 13.

The Gleneagles Hotel have kindly offered free admission over the four days of the tournament to full BIGGA members on production of their current BIGGA membership card.

The event is being played over the Jack Nicklaus designed course, part of the 'The Gleneagles Hotel, which includes the King's and Queen's courses. The venue is situated in rural Perthshire with stunning views over the hills and glens that surround the magnificent location.

The Association are extremely grateful to the Gleneagles Hotel and Scott Fenwick Course Manager at Gleneagles Hotel for this generous offer and encourage members to make the journey to Gleneagles and see the best of Europe's golfers taking part in this tournament over a challenging and superb golf course.

RAISING STANDARDS

"We've got there," said Duncan Russell, Manager of the National Sprayer Testing Scheme, reporting that at the end of the first target period over 5,000 sprayers were tested by the Scheme.

Farmers and contractors across the UK met their target established under the Voluntary Initiative. The VI is a joint initiative with the supply industry aimed at reducing the impact of agrochemicals on the environment.

NSTS has raised the standard of application machinery by introducing a simple test to make sure the sprayer is functioning properly. A network of over 500 test centres with approved testers have been established around the country since the launch at Smithfield in 2002.

Testing shows that leaks and drips, worn nozzles, faulty pressure gauges and poor hose condition are the main reasons for sprayers needing repair or rectification to bring them up to the standard required.

"Operators are crucial to the condition of sprayers," said Duncan.

"If they have a regular checking and maintenance regime in place then the faults we find are significantly less. Machine purchasers should always ensure that new and second-hand sprayers they buy are certificated by NSTS."

"Having achieved the first target the next is a big one. 10,000 sprayers tested by March next year is going to be a real hurdle, but I am confident that with the support from all sides of the industry we can get there. We have a good coverage of testers across the UK and, with more coming on stream, we can manage 10,000 sprayers," explained Duncan.

A STAGGERING RATE OF PROGRESS

When Mo Bah arrived in the UK from Gambia in 1998 he knew nothing about the game of golf. Now, six years, on he is an assistant greenkeeper at Coombe Hill Golf Club with an NVQ Level 2 from Merrist Wood College under his belt and plays the game to a handicap of 5, although by the time you read this he may have dropped to 4.

"I was a bicycle mechanic after I arrived in Britain but I was living just opposite Coombe Hill Golf Club and liked what I saw when I walked around the course," explained Mo, 27.

Through friends, he first swung a club and was immediately hooked. It wasn't too long before he approached Murray Long, Course Manager at Coombe Hill, to extend his love of the game to working on golf courses as well.

"I absolutely love my job and the game and I hope to go as far as I can in both. I play three times a week and practice every lunch time," said Mo, who has aspirations to reach scratch, take the PGA exams and become a teaching professional.

"I really do appreciate the chance that Murray has given me and we have a great team here at Coombe Hill," said Mo, whose very appreciative of the fact that his BIGGA card has allowed him to play some of the finest courses in his area.

Virtually the same age to the day as a certain American, Mr Woods, Tiger is very much Mo's hero and those who saw Mo at last year's National Championship, when he was playing off 10



incidentally, could not have mistaken the similarities between the two, down to the Nike gear both wear.

At his current rate of progress, in another six year's time, Mo might be the first man to prepare an Open venue and play in the Championship as well!

OK FOR ETL FROM USGA



European Turfgrass Laboratories Ltd (ETL) has been reaccruited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA). ETL is still the only laboratory outside of the USA to be accredited by the A2LA, the USGA approved accreditation body. The laboratory is now in its seventh year of accreditation.

"Accreditation for us is just part of the day to day process of Quality Management within the laboratory," said Anne Murray, the Lab Director.

SWANS IN RESIDENCE!

Golfers at Longhirst Hall, near Morpeth, are having to cope with much more than a case of the duck hooks at the moment. Several swans have taken up residence and can often be found sitting right in the middle of fairways, slightly off putting for anyone faced with a tough 3-iron into a cross wind or a delicate sandwedge over a lake.

Course Manager, Graham Chambers, got close enough to one of them to supply us with this picture.

