



Welcome

NO KNOWN CURE

Most years around this time we allude to Augusta Syndrome in the pages of Greenkeeper International. This month, however, we have gone one stage further and featured it as a major issue. Incidentally I hope you like our cover, drawn by award winning cartoonist Tony Husband. We have an article with highly respected golf commentator, Peter Alliss, who has been visiting Augusta National for almost 40 years and who has strong views on the course, while Assistant Editor, Gareth Jones, has been canvassing opinion on the subject for this month's Talking Heads.

You may ask why it has taken until 2005 to tackle an issue which has been at the forefront of the minds of many greenkeepers for many years, and which genuinely does cause headaches within the Maintenance Facilities of clubs up and down the country.

You'll be glad to hear that I can answer that. As it is discussed in our own magazine there is a danger that we would leave ourselves open to the line, "We would say that wouldn't we". In other words it could be seen as the magazine equivalent of whinging to each other at the back of the class and not taking our concerns through the proper channels.

However, having had the chance to speak with Peter Alliss, a man who is known and respected by television-watching golfers the world over, his views, as expressed in Greenkeeper International, would be of real interest to golf club members.

With that in mind it might be worth leaving your copy of the magazine in the clubhouse for a while or photocopying the front cover and the Peter Alliss and Talking Heads pieces and pinning them to the notice board.

You never know, it might allow for some balanced discussion within the membership at a time when the usual Augusta debate rages and perhaps it may raise awareness of unrealistic expectations within golf clubs. If the articles are seen by the membership you might just make a few converts, or at the very least silence a few critics for a while.

Unfortunately Augusta Syndrome does exist but I don't believe that many club members - although they are a major factor in its existence - have ever heard of it. Perhaps that's no surprise as they are not the people who succumb to AS, it's only greenkeepers who are afflicted and there is no known cure.

However, having Peter Alliss talk about it and say that expecting a regular British course to be like Augusta National is about as realistic as thinking you can live in Buckingham Palace carries much more weight than Kerran Daly, John Pemberton or Scott MacCallum saying exactly the same thing.

To many golfers, "If Peter says it, it must be true." That says much for the esteem in which Peter is held.

So if the going gets heavy later this month make people aware of these articles. It might just help change opinion and lessen the impact of a depressing condition.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

PRIZE GIVING TRACTORS



Stephen Cabrol (left) with BIGGA's Rosie Hancher and John Pemberton and the Carraro Tractor

The BTME & ClubHouse Banquet had a unique twist this year, as all the guests were given a model of a Carraro Tractor, as part of the company's sponsorship of the evening, which marked the end of the Exhibition.

Tickets were hidden in three of the tractors and Stephen Cabrol, of Carraro UK, was on hand to present the three lucky winners, who found these tickets in their tractor, with their prizes.

EXTRA POSITION FOR GTC DIRECTOR



The Greenkeepers' Training Committee Education Director, David Golding, has been appointed Vice Chairman of Lantra's Landscaping Industry Group.

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector and the GTC has been a member of the landscaping industry group for nearly 10 years. David's appointment follows former vice-chairman Eddie Wardrobe's promotion to Chairman of the group.

"I think the nomination is recognition for the GTC in its commitment to the promotion of education, training and qualifications to the golf club employers and greenkeepers it represents," said David.

"The GTC has worked with Lantra to develop, promote and implement the government framework of qualifications and apprenticeship schemes.

"On behalf of the sector I will continue to work with all the relevant bodies and organisations to ensure that both employers and learners can access a quality range of qualifications from the increasingly popular vocational to the more academic awards."

THE RUNNING MAN

While many consider Sunday to be the day of rest, for one man Sunday April 17 will be anything but that. As countless people will be sitting down and tucking in to their traditional roast dinner Billy Merritt, of Beacon Park Golf Club, will be pushing his body to the limit as he runs the London Marathon.

Billy last ran the 26 mile course in 1997, completing it in just three hours and four minutes. The Beacon Park Head Greenkeeper is part of the Liverpool Running Club and is raising money for Marie Curie Cancer Care. Donations to this worthy cause are welcome and can be made by logging on to www.justgiving.com/daffodils.

Billy, 43, has now been running for 10 years and in that time has entered hundreds of races, including 10k, 10 mile and half marathons. The Marathon in the English Capital received a record 98,500 applications for the 2005 race, and Billy was one of the lucky athletes who successfully got through. The international event has been running since 1981, when just 7,747 individuals were accepted to race.



Billy has competed in numerous races in his 10 years of racing