



Welcome

YOU KNOW WHERE TO COME

Do you ever listen to those radio phone-ins that give football supporters the opportunity to vent their spleen and proffer advice to their club's Chairman or Manager?

It always sounds so simple. Drop so-and-so; buy Roy of the Rovers; change from the conventional 4-4-2 formation to the more fluid 3-4-2-1 and Robert's your uncle. It's all so easy how can anyone not see the sense in it? Surely it would be dereliction of duty if the Old Trafford Board weren't to sack Sir Alex and appoint Kevin, a Manchester United supporter from Islington, in his place?

However, those at the sharp end might have already explored Kevin's, and many other, options, but for one reason or another discounted them. What Sir Alex and the Board agree will have emerged as the best course of action, given the set of circumstances they had at the time.

It is easy to sit on the sidelines and criticise without being in full possession of the facts. It's all part of the fun of being a sports fan, but we should never become so arrogant to presume that we are all knowing and those in charge are completely incompetent. No matter how black and white it appears from the outside.

It's a bit like a jigsaw. You may know everything about one part of it. You may even know how that one piece fits onto those next to it, but the only person capable of completing the whole picture is the one in possession of all the pieces.

You can see similarities with BIGGA. Running an Association is a complicated business with many, often conflicting, interests to juggle. But just like those football fans there are people who think they know the answers and could come up with something more in tune with the needs of the industry. Some of these people do so with the best wishes of the Association at heart, but others are perhaps looking after number one.

I hear it when I'm out and about, sometimes first hand but more often than not second or third hand. Why does the Association do this? Why doesn't it do that? The magazine is this, or the magazine should do that.

Some concerns are justified and cover areas we are already working to improve. Others are laudable in isolation but become less valid if viewed in possession of all the facts. Then there are others which are just so far fetched as to stretch credibility to breaking point.

The BIGGA staff are more than happy to chat with everyone, member or non-member alike who comes up and offers suggestions, raises concerns or even has a jolly good moan.

If people have ideas about improving BIGGA, or the industry generally, there are opportunities and avenues available to them within the Association at Section, Region and National level which give them every chance of being adopted.

You know where to come.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

DEREK GREEN 1946 - 2005



The sad death of Derek Green has been devastating not only to his family, close friends and the Royal Liverpool Golf Club but to the greenkeeping profession as a whole.

I had the great pleasure of knowing Derek for over 20 years, beginning our friendship when he was still Head Greenkeeper at Woburn Golf Club. A short time later he moved to his beloved Hoylake, just a few miles down the River Dee estuary from my own club at Heswell and we became even closer.

At Derek's funeral, Mr Brian Gourlay, who spent many years as Green Chairman at Hoylake, said that when he walked the course with Derek for the first time he stopped on the 18th green to ask: "Do you think we could get The Open back at Hoylake?"

Derek's answer was swift and to the point: "How much do you want it?"

It was not long before Derek's expert greenkeeping knowledge began to transform the famous old links. New greens, re-lined fairways, tees rebuilt, bunkers all revetted. Royal Liverpool began to look Royal again.

Then came the great news that The Open would be played at Hoylake in 2006, 39 years since the last Hoylake Open. Derek and I spent many hours in discussion - two good friends talking about greenkeeping and how he would present the course for The Open.

I was fortunate to spend a lot of time with Derek when he was in hospital. He would talk about his time at the Welsh College of Horticulture and of students who had gone on to become Head Greenkeepers - always telling them: "If you need me, phone me." It was typical of this generous man.

Derek's other great passion was steam trains. His great knowledge of the steam engine meant he could rebuild some of the old engines, which hadn't worked for years, and many of these he drove at weekends after work.

In the last few years he went to Beijing and South Africa to see steam trains making their last journeys before going on to diesel power. Derek's passion is now being kept going by his son, Richard.

Time spent with Derek was never wasted. We would walk over each other's course and talk about football, cricket and, for me, fishing, but we would always get back to greenkeeping.

I will always remember the help I had from him. It was always dressed up as a suggestion - he would never make you feel inferior.

Over 200 people attended the funeral and all were invited back to the Royal Liverpool Golf Club. I think it says a lot about what our profession thought of him while in the clubhouse's Derek's Green Chairman had put a tribute to him on the noticeboard.

Tragically, Derek will not be with us to witness the world's finest golfers pit their wits against a links which represents his professional lifetime's devotion and achievement. But his lasting legacy to the world of golf is a links in outstanding order for present and future generations.

I will be at Hoylake for the 2006 Open. I have no doubt the links will be fantastic but at the back of my mind I will think - If only...

Derek Green. It was a pleasure to know you.

Bill Lawson