

Feature listing from May 2003

May 2003; Cardrona Golf & Country Club; Poa Annual; Rough Mowers; Mole Control; Rootzone; Green Construction

June 2003; Irrigation; Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarships; Fertiliser; Fairway Mowers

July 2003; Irrigation Water; Greens Mowers; Bent Grasses; Course Management; Rakes

August 2003; Aeration; Open Review; Saltex Preview; Waste Water; Toro Student of the Year

September 2003; Hanbury Manor; Irrigation; Disease; Integrated Pest Management; Communication

October 2003; Construction Machinery; Pay Recommendations; Saltex Review; Pesticide Legislation; Finance

November 2003; Temple GC; Trees; Environment Competition Results; Sandy McDivot; Drainage

December 2003; BTME & ClubHouse Preview; Downfield GC; Compact Tractors; Architecture; Bio-tech

January 2004; Ipswich GC Profile; Grass Seed; Environment Competition Awards; Utility Vehicles (sit in)

February 2004; Harrogate Review 2004; Tyneside GC; Utility Vehicles (sit on); Irrigation

March 2004; R&A Best Practice; Trentham Park GC; Drainage; Spraying

April 2004; Know your Rules; Tournament Preparation; Landmarks in Greenkeeping; Security

May 2004; Goodwood Club; Seed or Turf?; Biological Product Survey; Water Features; Recycling; BIGGA Environment Competition

June 2004; Fairy Rings; Biologicals; The Grove; Kubota Profile; Turf; Sand and Rootzone

July 2004; Royal Troon Open Preview; Mowing, Disease Analysis

August 2004; Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day; Open review; Royal Cinque Ports; Irrigation; Mowers (2); Saltex Preview; Best Practice; Top Dressing

September 2004; Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Preview; Ravensworth Golf Club; Turf Disease; Royal Holloway College; Tractors; The Greener Approach to Greenkeeping

October 2004; STRI 75th Anniversary; Kenwick Park GC; Ecology; John Deere National Team Championship; Best Practice; Top Dressing; Saltex Review; Aeration

November 2004; Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Final; The BIGGA National Championship; Comrie GC; CV Advice; Drainage; Construction; Fences

December 2004; BTME & ClubHouse Preview; Henley GC; Grass Identification; Trees; Environmental Winner; BIGGA Delegation; Interview Advice; College Listings

January 2005; Sir Michael Bonallack; Parkstone GC; Machinery Servicing; Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship; Recycled Products; John Deere Team Championship; Tees; Negotiation Advice

February 2005; Harrogate 2005 Review; Meet the Chairman; Environmental Competition; Tyres; Coombe Hill GC

March 2005; Alwoodley GC; Difficult Areas; Drainage; Irrigation; Greens

April 2005; Augusta Syndrome; Thornhill GC; Difficult Areas Part 2; Turf Tonics; BIGGA Delegation; Fescue Grass

Chairman's Column



'Can ya tell me where we're heading'

As Chairman, my duty is to steer the ship for 12 months until the Vice Chairman takes over the helm. There are two essential things you need to know when steering a ship. One is where your destination is and the other is the best route to get there. I am rapidly finding out that our destination is not at all clear in all aspects and that 12 months is not long enough to find the best way to reach it.

My task over the rest of my Chairmanship will therefore be to try to get a better picture of where the membership would like us to go and for the Board to lay down markers as a guide for the future. To this end we are reviewing current policy in an effort to have specific aims and objectives for the next five to 10 years for the Chief Executive and his team to fulfil within the specified timescale. Rather like at the golf club, if there are no aims, objectives and policy or they are not adequately reviewed then much resource will be wasted by ever changing committees and personnel.

Up until now, our main goal has been to raise the profile of greenkeepers and our Association within the industry to gain recognition and respect through the education of Course Managers in particular. This has been tremendously successful and we now have a strong Association with a powerful voice. The question now is, what do we do with that strong foundation? What are we going to build on it?

There are extremes of opinion on this matter and I have my own personal view. These are not the views that matter however. The views that matter are the majority views of the bulk of the membership. My responsibility, as Chairman, is to try to satisfy as many members as possible, while readily acknowledging that it is impossible to satisfy them all.

Another responsibility as Chairman is to stimulate debate so that a consensus view can be arrived at. To this end I would like to briefly outline my own philosophy on just two of our many pressing concerns. I stress that these are personal opinions and are not to be taken as any indication of policy. They are merely a starting point for debate and, though I am sure they will ruffle a few feathers, I am secure in the knowledge that a Chairman who did not occasionally ruffle a few feathers never achieved anything.

I would put my main priority at the moment as the need for greater support for core greenkeepers at local level. I would tip the balance in favour of Section and Region activity and education in an effort to secure early involvement and interaction of members and a higher profile for BIGGA. The best tool for recruitment of new members is happy current members and retention rates will be high if we are seen to be active in assisting where our help is needed most.

At the same time we must continue to improve our professional image. While we have a stipulated NVQ Level 2 designation as a qualified greenkeeper member, we do not have any specified certification for a Course Supervisor

member or a Course Manager member. I would like to see, at some stage, separate categories of membership for each progressive stage in our careers, with defined qualifications and subscription rates to match.

It is very noticeable that you cannot practice as a golf professional unless you are a qualified member of the PGA. Currently anyone can operate as a Golf Course Manager without any qualification. Rather paradoxically this will begin to work against those who are technically gifted and can produce fantastic golf courses but have no formal qualification.

They will be the ones who are more likely to miss out, as formal qualifications in all industries become increasingly the norm. I would consider such a trend as a sad loss to the profession as a whole. Making all members certified through a standard minimum qualification would level the playing field and improve the professional status of us all.

Incidentally, just to throw in a current topic of debate, I do not see Master Greenkeeper as the best title for any future Course Manager qualification. The MG scheme was brought in to enable individuals to improve their performance and gain recognition. It also resulted in standards of training and staff welfare on MG run courses being driven up and so benefited other greenkeepers. It has much to commend it and as an MG myself I have much admiration for those who have achieved it.

My own opinion is though, that 15 years on, the title Master Greenkeeper is less than helpful. It sounds archaic and does not best describe what Course Managers do. We do not have Master Architects or Master Secretaries or Master Agronomists and even the titles Master Butcher and Master Baker are fast fading. I stress again that I do not question the validity of the award but do have reservations about the name. I can hear the feathers ruffling from here!

Having said all that, I believe that our Association will ultimately be judged not by the successes of its individually gifted members, whoever they may be, but by the manner in which it assists those members who need its support the most.

Kerran Daly
Chairman