

YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: scott@bigga.co.uk.

Letters

Congratulations to Nick

What a pleasure it was to see a picture of Nick Bisset, in the GTC News. How it brought back happy memories of committee meetings of the GTC, way back in the days when, we as greenkeepers with some future outlook for our profession, held the GTC meetings at Askham Bryan College. Nick was stuffing theoretical knowledge into the heads of the few enlightened assistant greenkeepers, whose clubs had the foresight to send them to college. Nick held the GTC committee together for many years.

I can't remember where the money came from to run the GTC but somehow through perseverance and dealing 'quietly-quietly' with awkward committee members, he pulled the strings in the right direction. The one thing which is still clear in my mind, was the Certificate of Registration – Conditions of Registration:

1. Employment of the greenkeeping staff at a golf club or a public course for at least six month's prior to registration.
2. Undertaking to attend course approved by the training committee.
3. Membership of the BIGGA.

I pulled out my old folder on the GTC and saw that Nick's title in those days was Administration and Secretary – unpaid of course. All your friends in Scotland Nick, and that includes greenkeepers, wish you all the best as Chairman of the Technical Committee (we know it makes sense).

C H George

New Grass leaving its mark on Spain

Malcolm Huntington, a freelance golf writer from York, recently visited Gran Canaria for a golfing holiday, it was there he discovered the remarkable transformation of the greens - thanks to a virtually unknown type of grass - at Campo do Golf in Maspalomas.

It is more than 10 years since I first visited Maspalomas in Gran Canaria, the venue for two European Tour events won by the Swede Jarmo Saridelin in 1995 and by Jose Maria Olazabal in 1997.

I have returned each year to find that the greenkeeping team were always struggling with the same problem - how to find a solution for keeping the club's greens in good condition in the face of changing temperatures.

Greenkeepers in Britain have had problems of their own with recurring diseases, so they will be sympathetic to the problem, which has faced Juan Bosch General Manager at Maspalomas, who has had overall charge of the golf club for the past 17 years.

Juan has been to a number of conferences in the United States to learn more about warm weather golf - but for 15 years was no nearer to finding the answers - until he discovered a new type of grass.

Let Juan take up the story. "When I first came to Campo de Golf 17 years ago, the greens were made of Bermuda, but we always struggled with it because it hibernates in winter and the amount of traffic on the course meant that the greens became sandy and there was hardly any grass to be seen.

"I switched to Pencross, but that didn't solve the problem because we are a pay and play course and I couldn't close the course for the minimum of 45 days which was needed for the change.

"In the summer of 1998 there were water restrictions. We use re-cycled water - about 500,000 cubic metres a year - the local parks needed water for their plants and trees. The result was that our greens were burned for two or three years.

I had first heard about Paspalom at a conference and when someone mentioned it again at another meeting in Cadiz, I began to seek out some facts and after talking things over with several experts decided, as an experiment, to make our 15th green from spindles (roots) of this grass.

"I ordered boxes and boxes of it and I have to say that for me Paspalom has been a miracle because it has solved all our problems in winter and summer. It is not affected by the seasons and we use fewer chemicals and less water. It's not fussy about quality of water either and puts up with everything, even a little salt from the sea winds.

"We were so pleased with the outcome that all our greens are now Paspalom and as you will have seen they are 100 per cent better."

I can certainly vouch for that with the truly magnificent practice putting green next to the excellent clubhouse restaurant, the best I have seen anywhere in the world, being as fast and true as a snooker table.