

# As Easy as ABC



You never stop learning so, in conjunction with the GTC and lecturers from some of the UK's top greenkeeping colleges, GI has launched a new series which gives the developing greenkeeper the chance to add to their knowledge with some useful advice.

## DEVELOPING A WORK ETHIC

Andy Turnbull, Course Manager for Sports Turf at Warwickshire College offers his advice.

The most important thing any young greenkeeper needs to learn is a work ethic and willingness to learn. When I was a Golf Course Manager, my biggest frustration was the attitude of some young greenstaff. Turning up late, finding any excuse to sit on their backside, having to always get them going after break times - all contribute to the conclusion that this person does not want to follow a career in greenkeeping.

So, how can young greenkeepers show that they can work hard, are reliable and would be missed if they left?

1. Be the first at work waiting for the gates to be unlocked, showing you want to be there.



Clipping edges - a simple job but one that has a great effect on overall course presentation if carried out conscientiously



2. When allocated a task don't moan about it but do the best you can.
3. If you finish the job early and no one is around find something else to do, for example, pick up a broom and sweep the shed or yard or clean some machines and check oil levels.
4. Ask questions, showing you want to learn about the job.

Golf greenkeeping can provide a worthwhile and rewarding career. Wages for a Course Manager are generally above many other professions, e.g. teaching, and the opportunities are available to achieve any level of qualification you are capable of - from NVQ to Masters Degrees. However, the higher you progress in greenkeeping the fewer the opportunities for advancement. By showing initiative and gaining a reputation for working hard and being reliable, you will give yourself a good chance to progress in your career.

## Thank you Hoylake!

I am sure that many of my colleagues, like myself, suffer from Augusta Syndrome. It always strikes during that awful hiatus between winter and soil temperatures rising. Suddenly we are besieged by telly watching members all asking "Why aren't our greens, tees shrubs et al like Augusta?"

My stock answers of,

a) "We are on 300 feet of clay and have a climate more akin to Alaska than Augusta", or...

b) "We don't have six members, a course closed for half the year for preparation or a 20 zillion dollar budget", just don't seem to cut the ice.

This year at Hoylake we were treated to a fantastic display of golf. The best man won, not just because he is technically great, but he also worked out the nuances of links golf better than any other player.

So I say God bless you Hoylake. For the great golf? Well, yes for that, but more for producing a brilliant course where, to this date, not one of my members has asked, "Why can't our course look like that?"

A very grateful Greenkeeper!

Tony Leinster

Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Bearwood GC

## Letters ▶▶

### It Need Not Be Green To Be Good

I just wanted to write to you to thank you and the Association for selecting me to be part of the BIGGA Open Support Team, for the recent championship at Hoylake.

The five days were everything that I hoped they would be and more. From the moment we turned up, the level of expectancy and professionalism was to the fore, as one would expect for such an event. The organisation was first class for the whole week. The catering arrangements were excellent - the ladies in the cathedral kept us well stocked.

As this was my first time, it was very good to have seasoned Support Team workers to encourage us along. The level of professionalism shown by all attending the championship was very encouraging for our Association. The camaraderie of all the volunteers was wonderful and added to the experience.

The work was hard and the hours long, but the opportunity to walk inside the ropes in the Open Championship eased the pain of the blisters and the heat. If anyone is considering volunteering for next year's Open, I heartily recommend it, it's an experience quite unlike any other.

On a final note, congratulations must go to Craig Gilholm and his team for giving us a traditional golfing experience of the highest calibre. The work of the green staff at Royal Liverpool should go to exemplify the fact that it need not be green to be good.

A great many thanks once again.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Scruton

## 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](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk).

# Letters ▶▶

## Seasonal Planning

I've read a lot recently, saying that you don't have to starve your greens of fertiliser to grow fine turf. I wholly agree with this but feel that if you can get fescue to link with its mycorrhiza, you'll need little or no fertiliser and, done properly, your grass will thrive - not starve.

Mycorrhiza won't establish sufficiently if you've got high phosphate levels or if weedkillers are drying it out. However, if you have the right conditions for mycorrhiza, my methods to maximise the link with fescue are as follows:

Start your efforts in the spring.

### In spring:

1. Apply wetting agent.
2. Cut as seldom and as high as possible (above 6mm).
3. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain.
4. Delay cutting for as long as possible after this application.
5. Lower height of cut gradually and increase frequency in response to grass growth.

### In summer:

1. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain in June.
2. Again, miss out mowing for as long as possible after this application.
3. Cut as often as needed but no lower than 5mm.
4. Verticut between June and August as required.
5. If needed use nitrogen fertilisers from the end of May until the end of August.

### In autumn:

1. From September, start to raise the height of cut and reduce mowing frequency.
2. If you've suffered a dry summer, re-apply wetting agent.
3. Spray sulphate of iron after heavy rain, remembering to put off mowing for as long as possible.
4. Adopt your winter cutting height and cut as seldom as possible.

### Notes:

- I spray sulphate of iron about three to five times a year.
- I use long term wetting agents.
- Top dressing, heatherjacket control and hand weeding, are carried out in addition to the above.

This plan is based on the ideas that mycorrhiza: grow actively in spring and autumn and should not be disturbed then; provides nutrients to grasses during their growing season; uses carbon (carbohydrate) which grasses store in their roots; are moisture dependant and encourage grass root growth.

Sulphate of iron boosts photosynthesis and carbon production; spare carbon is stored in the roots; mowing uses up the plants carbon; fescue doesn't use applied nitrogen until late May and after the end of August; nitrogen applied before the end of May will boost competing grasses; fescue can tolerate aggressive mowing and verticutting when growing actively between June and August - but only then.

I've based what I'm doing on long established greenkeeping principles and seem to be achieving good results. I'd be happy to hear from anyone working along similar lines or anyone who has any thoughts on the subject.

*Yours faithfully,*  
David Woodbyrne  
Dumfries

## Thank You

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of the BIGGA Support Team at this year's Open Championship.

It was a wonderful experience and it was a privilege to be able to work with such a brilliant team.

I met some great people and it is a memory I will treasure.

*Yours sincerely,*  
Shane Wells

## Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich

The Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich competition took place in July and Belleisle GC never looked better. I can't say what Kevin Thomson and his dedicated staff did but it was equivalent to waving a magic wand over the course.

The weather wasn't the usual sun baked Costa Ayrshire, still, the swallows were skimming the fairways while the light drizzle kept the golfers cool. It was obvious that the sun was just peaking from behind silver linings, awaiting the lovely afternoon to come.

It was a very successful competition enjoyed by young and old. I can't say that my own golf was up to any standard, I did however manage to secure a few points for my team in the Stableford. Harry's wife Jessie presented the presentation of the quaich and second and third prizes, to the winners. The winners of the quaich were: S Mitchell, D Gemmell, N Hannon and J Brooks. The quaich remains with Harry's family - each winner received a miniature replica to keep, together with a prize of some description.

All the Diamond family were busying themselves with handing out free raffle tickets and seeing that everyone was supplied with a free drink of their choice. Two of Harry's brothers - Neil and Campbell were there to assist when called upon, together with all the Diamond grandchildren. It was a pleasure to see the girls growing up into young ladies and still attending at their grandpa's memorial quaich.

The competition is so well organised that it seems to run itself but I know that a lot of effort, both by the family and the club, goes into the setting up of the competition each year. Finance is always a problem, the family would like to send a special message of thanks to all the sponsors and others who contributed towards making the competition the success it was. They also send a big thank you to all the golfers who took part in the quaich and wish them a great golfing year, keeping fit to play in the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich in 2007.

*Kindest regards,*  
Cecil George