

AUTUMN LEAVES

Don't you just love the autumn, as we blow, rake, vac and do just about anything you can imagine with leaves at Tyrrells Wood, I can't but stop sometimes and just enjoy the explosion of colours, it looks absolutely amazing this year. We have had a good run with clearing the course up from a golden carpet of splendour that golfers so hate as it gobbles their balls never to be seen again.

That reminds me of a time as a wee boy, laying turf during a job on the course and, with some glee, I had been working on a chain gang kinda line with my brothers. I stopped to have a look at what we had achieved, only to be on the receiving end of a timely reminder to get back to my toil and that I would have plenty of time to look at the grass when I was cutting.

One of the pleasures of greenkeeping, I think, is the ever-changing seasons. They provide a huge contribution to making the golfing and greenkeeping experience what it is, here in the UK. Just as you have had enough of one seasonal feast then another comes along and lifts your mood, charges your batteries and enthuses us all for the next. To quote Scott's column last month, 'It's not such a bad life being a greenkeeper.'

With that in mind, we've arrived at that time of year which allows us to take onboard some education. This month I've been to both the southeast and BB&O Section seminars. Both were fantastic with some great papers on offer. I was able to meet lots of members, and see some who I had not seen for quite a while. I was delighted to be part of both days and, of course, share some valuable education opportunities on offer to us all. The speakers gave an impressive insight into greenkeeping as they see it and shared with us some of their experiences gained over the years - Having won over the elements of weather and some very tight deadlines, it was a wonderful experience for me to be part of. Well done to all those speakers that gave of their time to enlighten us all. I wish I was able to quantify the feeling I have when I am in the company of fellow greenkeepers. I have tried over the years to do just that and struggled to pin it down other than to conclude this thought - It's an absolute pleasure to be in their company and share their



views experiences, there is an overriding bond that makes us all the stronger for sharing our time together.

Linking me nicely onto thinking about the soon to be with us Harrogate week, now would be a good time for you to start thinking about booking a visit to your show. There is so much education on offer, with a diversity that would be of interest to anyone involved in the fine turf industry. So with a full programme of events, the chance to mix it with individuals involved within the game of golf and a trade show that can boast everything that is just about required in the turf industry, it's surely not an event to be missed.

I would like to ask you in sharing with me the achievements of others during that week as those that have worked hard to make their life a little better with continued qualifications and reached new levels of attaining a recognition of their peers and association from the education opportunities afforded to us all today. Let's together make all the hard work and commitments they and their families have made for in some cases many years all the more special when they receive a well earned milestone in their own and clubs development as they should be applauded and are for us all a shining light for what can be achieved.

I recently attended my son's graduation. That's a first for me and it made me feel, as you can imagine (old I hear you thinking) a warm glow of pride. We are not a rich family and like many sometimes struggle with demands of paying bills, so it makes it all the more pleasurable for me to congratulate Lewis on his hard work over the past few years and to say I am the proudest father around would be to underestimate his achievements in gaining his new found qualifications. I also have to report that having a daughter of 15 is not as bad as first thought as she has now passed that hellish shaky bridge and is becoming quite a young lady in the process.

As for the twilight of my term as Chairman - Well, as I said at the beginning of the year, I was keen to meet with and share the views of you, the members. To this end and having travelled many miles doing just that, I have to say there are some very special people that work on your behalf up and down the country which have impressed me with their hard work and dedication for the well being of you all. They arrange open forums, educational seminars and opportunities to get you all to a venue to share time together. It's a thankless task sometimes and it might be a game of golf or some in-house training for you and your staff. But this you should know, without their passion, hard work, (that you sometimes feel free to criticise) we would all be the poorer I'm sure. So to those stalwarts within our Association, and I mean those that have had the courage, wisdom and passion to make a difference - Namely your Section committees, your Section Secretaries, your Chairman and section officials. They all have my heart felt congratulations because without these people working on our behalf we would not have a fraction of the job security and benefits derived from being part of a vibrant living Association. Next month will be my last opportunity to wind up my year in terms of highs and lows so I will stop now and say just this to finish - I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas. Take time to enjoy yourselves during the festive season, as a family we all get together at this time of year and I can assure you that that is always a greenkeeping feast and a half.

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