

Letters

Dear BIGGA

This is a short ode that my good friend John Small put together for my greenstaff, John is my Greens Convenor, he read it out to us at our Captain's Day Breakfast, he usually would tell a joke but this year he had a poem. John loves golf and the course, he's one of the good guys, and during this wet year in Northern Ireland we need them all.

**Terry Crawford
Clandeboyne GC**

ODE (AND OWED) TO THE GREENKEEPER

All over the world greens staff labour and toil
To conjure perfection from sand grass and soil
They should be receiving due reward and praise
For producing great surfaces, sward just like baize
But the real of it is that despite their devotion
It is plain that some critics don't have a notion
Of the effort applied, so they're able to say
"Now wasn't the course in fair order today?"

You'd wonder how they can be quite so crass
Do they think it is elves manicuring the grass?
They golf away happy, impressed with that feat
Since the wee mites keep keeping it perfectly neat
But the truth must come out, it does bear correction
Neither elves nor good fairies have any connection
With creating the beauty and all that they ask
It's the Greens Team who simply get on with that task

They're the ones out there working in rain hail or blow
Cutting, digging, sweeping, grubbing, although
Some members get edgy, indignantly ruffled
If the sound of the mowers isn't totally muffled
And the sensitive players can't bear any noise
So when with pure viciousness one of the boys
Wipes the trickling sweat from off his hot brow
And shatters the silence...now here comes a row!
Before dusk they're writing a long wordy letter
Saying he/she would play colossally better
If the greens work and cutting was all changed around
So that others could be put off by the sound!

Next up are our experts, so clever, so sage
Two toots in the bar and they rail rant and rage
It is boundless, amazing, just how much they know
About drainage and tining and making grass grow
No matter its March and the winter's been tough
It's a total disgrace that the course looks so rough
You'd wonder how "Fit for Purpose" they'd be
Lying out there all night with the temp minus three!
Yet on the rare days they've played well and won
The Course Manager's lauded, a favourite son
But soon they return to their topping and hacking
Crying "Discipline! Punishment! Sacking!"

Now this note is one Convenor's way
Of raising a smile, while going on to say
That even the moaners and the over-smart

Must really and honestly know in their heart
That fighting the elements pests and disease
Is something that cannot be coped with with ease
And even the cynic who it seems can't be sated
Can surely not fail to be thrilled and elated
When they step on the first tee, the sun shining bright
And stretching before them, a wonderful sight
No nagging computer and no traffic's roar
God's in his heaven! All nature cries "Fore"!

To the Greens Team for all of your work and the way
That the course is prepared for us every day
This ode highlights the praise and respect that is due
And closes with an honest and mighty "Thank You"!

ROYAL BIRKDALE

The 2008 Open Championship at Royal Birkdale GC was a very memorable experience for me, one that I will never forget. I was privileged to have been selected to be a member of the BIGGA support team. Everyone I met throughout the week, from BIGGA staff to fellow Course Managers (GC Supt's) were very friendly and hospitable towards myself and my family which made my experience even more special. Conversations during the week and over drinks in the evenings with fellow "bloats" were very enjoyable as well as informative as we talked about maintenance practice and life in Europe as well as Hawaii. It became obvious to me that regardless of Course Managers working in the UK, USA or elsewhere around this world we all share a common bond and interest to share ideas and support each other.

I have been a volunteer for the Masters Tournament for the past nine years and Augusta National GC is no doubt a very beautiful and special venue. Royal Birkdale GC and other Open venues on the other hand also have a very special beauty of its own. It may sound crazy but I actually enjoyed the first day of the Open Championship with the rain, wind and cold conditions as well as the extremely windy Saturday round. I realize that type of inclement weather can be typical playing conditions for The Open, one that tests the skills and determination of the players. I know it tested me but throughout the Open Championship I stood tall, tried to do my task as expected and carried my rake in proper position (as instructed by Paul Jenkins) every step of the way.

Thank you again Rachael, Scott and countless others for making us feel at home and I look forward to you coming over the visit us in Hawaii one day!

**With warmest regards, cheers and aloha,
Curtis Kono
Oahu Country Club
Hawaii**

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