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JANUARY 1992



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Phil's away to Northern Ireland, Tom's about to retire and David's a silver medal winner... All this



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EDUCATION OFFICER

Editorial Comment

One truism totally applicable to the world of greenkeeping is the old saying: 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing'. Few would argue that this is best demonstrated in golf green committees up and down the country, where a farmer member who grows vegetables, or one who can maintain a pretty lawn, is often seen as the perfect choice for the lofty role of green chairman. The results of such 'expert' infiltration, where scant knowledge of real golf course problems is obvious and dictatorial edicts are frequently issued – often coloured by experiences that are light years away from modern practices of greenkeeping management – can be seen long after the offender has departed to bask in false glory, though the consequences remain.

Such a rod for the back is one that most greenkeepers are forced to bear, since the added problem of lack of continuity in committee structure, where an element of real learning *may* be gained by a long standing committee incumbent who has the will, the desire and the capability of gathering knowledge *from* his greenkeeper, is one problem that will not go away!

It's a situation greenkeepers learn to come to terms with, but a further question begs askance: must they also come to terms with the 'little knowledge' emanating from a noted turf management magazine, which in its most recent issue (written as if the writer had come up with The Original Thought) suggests that if greenkeepers were to stop whinging and offered a united voice in stating the facts concerning over play, that golf managers (for managers, read green committees) will get the message!

My own experience suggests that greenkeepers have been shouting this very message from the rooftops for years, with about as much effect as trying to drain the Atlantic Ocean with a bucket. Further, the offending piece suggests that only the fear of members quitting in disgust at not being permitted unlimited play, irrespective of conditions, makes 'management' allow play in even the most unsuitable conditions.

What arrant nonsense! In over forty years I've never once heard of a Club member walking out for this reason, since membership to any private Club is not easily gained, is certainly a privilege, and is one to be guarded at almost any cost. I venture to suggest that many Clubs would welcome a walk-out from such grumblers, since new members bring with them additional income in the form of premium payments – usually twice or three times the annual membership fee – upon being elected.

Internation

There's more, for the magazine offers yet another turf management recommendation: that where a Club does not nurture thoughts of holding the Open Championship, it would make more (economic) sense not to plant bents and fescues, but to plump straight away for planting that most ubiquitous of weeds, *Poa annua!*

Ye Gods! What a suggestion. Out of the door go years of sound management practices, replaced overnight with the nastiness of *Poa annua*, along with the soggy misery it brings in its wake every winter. I doubt the author of such a thoughtless edict has ever walked the fair greens of the many delicious courses blessed with a dominance of either bent or fine fescue, but if I am mistaken, I fancy that rose tinted spectacles were worn. No doubt those seed companies who spend fortunes in striving to produce improved strains of fine turfgrass – and who advertise their fine products – will register protest at the offending statement, as no doubt will all greenkeepers who labour for perfection in the battle against 'the most noxious plant'.

As if the above gaffs were not enough, the magazine further failed in its most elementary homework, demoting British Empire Medallist, Walter Woods, probably the highest profile course manager in the world, to the humble status of 'groundsman' at St Andrews and wrongly titling our esteemed ex-chairman, Jack McMillan, who has been running his own successful consultancy company for more than a year, as both head greenkeeper at Sunningdale and 'Sunningdale Chief'. One wonders what Lawson Bingham will have to say about that? Not good enough say I, such little knowledge is most certainly a dangerous thing!

DAVID WHITE



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A GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL REPORT

The EEC, new directives on pesticides, the handling of loads – and how all this affects YOU

In addition to the changes within the UK on pesticides reviews, registrations and withdrawals – expected in 1992 – there are also some changes expected as a result of EEC Directives. The Pesticides Directive is expected to be available in the spring and will contain the expected list of substances permitted – and not permitted – to be sold and used within EEC Member States. The EEC will also be conducting reviews of pesticides in addition to the individual reviews of Member States. It seems very likely that the decisions of the EEC Parliament regarding pesticides reviews will be imposed upon Member States.

Nobody is sure just how this will work in practice, but it is possible that the EEC might overturn a UK decision following our own review of a substance. The new Directive on personal protective equipment will have far reaching consequences for those not supplying the correct equipment for the job, and it must be understood that PERSONAL means just what it says. The new standards of quality – the CE mark – will also apply from 1992 and purchasers of protective equipment should specify that the garment will comply with EEC standards.

EEC and the manual handling of loads

The Health and Safety Commission has issued a Consultative Document entitled 'Manual Handling of Loads, Proposals for Regulation and Guidance'. This has appeared in response to EEC Directive 90/269/EEE 'on the minimum health and safety requirements for the manual handling of loads where there is a risk, particularly of back injury, to workers'.

The document states that more than a quarter of the accidents reported each year are due to the manual handling of loads. In addition



there is an unquantifiable number of cumulative, unreported injuries that result in some form of disability and sometimes permanent disablement.

As with all the modern workplace legislation recently introduced, these draft proposals will require employers to assess the risks to staff when manually handling loads. The hierarchy of decision making steps proposed is similar to that used in COSHH Regulations:

• Avoid hazardous manual handling operations where possible. Assess any hazardous operations that cannot be avoided.

• Remove or reduce the risk of injury, using the assessment as a basis for action.

The requirement under the existing Health and Safety at Work Act to establish 'safe systems of working' forms an important part of this process.

The emphasis is on the controlling of manual handling (which may cause) injury and not on the weight of the load. In fact the proposed Regulations state:

• Each employer shall so far as is reasonably practicable, avoid the need for his employees to undertake manual handling operations which involve a risk of their being injured; or where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the need for his employees to undertake manual handling operations which involve a risk of their being injured; make a suitable and sufficient assessment of all such manual handling operations to be undertaken by them. (b) To take appropriate steps to reduce the risk... (c) To provide information and training on the manual handling of specific loads at work...'

It is quite clear that many of the old ways of man-handling work and the acceptance of the fact that we all have a bad back must change – and about time too!

One of the more obvious ways of reducing the strain and 'exposure' to back injury is to have mechanical equipment such as fork-lift trucks or similar, for tractors. If fork-lift trucks are purchased, separate regulations apply and a Certificate of Competence is required.

Comments on this important document are required by March 9th 1992. Copies can be obtained free from: Sir Robert Jones Memorial Workshops, Units 3 and 5-9, Grain Industrial Estate, Harlow Street, Liverpool L8 4UH.

Intensive week of training will bring greenkeepers up to date with pesticide regulations

Association moves quickly to boost pesticide certification

Recent seminars and conferences, together with the Management Training Programmes held recently at Aldwark Manor, have revealed some interesting training needs. The very low number of head greenkeepers and course managers who have pesticides certificates of competence (PA2A) is worrying. Equally, it is worth noting that a full certificate (PA1 & PA2A) is ten credits toward Master Greenkeeper status. Some have openly confessed to hiding behind the so-called 'grandfather' clause and this mistaken belief – that experience is an excuse for competence – needs clarification.

Regulations state quite clearly that 'all who use pesticides' will be competent to perform their duties. To be competent the operator of a pesticides applicator must be fully familiar with the Regulations and the Code of Practice.

It is not possible to be up to the new standards of competence without attending the Foundation Module and the Ground Crop Sprayer Course. Since a certificate is required to supervise a non-certified operator (and it must be understood that to supervise means to keep the operator *within sight* at all times during the operation), how can a greenkeeper be expected to do his job to a good professional standard? If we are to raise and maintain high standards, the full certificate of competence to apply pesticides must be one of the basic qualifications to be a course manager.

One thing is certain, we cannot rely on the 'grandfather' clause as it seems likely that it will be removed as an option in the near future.

To meet this obvious need, David Golding is arranging a special one week course at Aldwark Manor, March 16th-20th inclusive. The total cost of the course will be £495 (inclusive of VAT). This includes accommodation, meals, training and examination fees. This will be an intensive week of training and testing for experienced greenkeepers. Jon Allbutt will be taking the pesticides section and arrangements will be made through the County Proficiency Test Committee to have testing carried out at the end of the course. It is also possible to take the test back at your own course by arrangement with the local Test Committee. Further details: Telephone David Golding on 03473-581.

From Head Greenkeeper to Course Manager turn to Page 9.

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL January 1992 7

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To be a Golf Course Manager...

Few will deny that the title 'Course Manager' is one that is open to misinterpretation. The Association believes that to justify such a title it is vital that a course manager should be fully conversant - and be properly tested and certificated as competent - in such matters as the pesticides and legislation. In addition to demonstrating sound agronomic knowledge, the modern course manager should also give careful consideration to those management skills which fall under the broad umbrella of communication, motivation and stimulation. To the head greenkeeper, young or old, we put the following questions:

Have you the craft skills of greenkeeping but wish you could communicate more skilfully with your staff and green committee? Would you like to be a better manager, with the ability to prepare monthly reports and make verbal presentations at green committee meetings?

To the Chairman of Green or Course Convenor we ask: Does your greenkeeper require better management skills – especially those of communication – and the ability to make presentations in both written and verbal form? Would not such skills make your Club life more pleasant and productive – and your golf more enjoyable?

The Association has the answer. Following critical acclaim at both BIGGA headquarters and the BTME seminars in Harrogate, we have negotiated with two acknowledged experts, Paul Whiteley and Frank Newbury, who have the supreme skill of training others in the art of communication, stimulation and motivation, to present a week long course for Head Greenkeepers who genuinely want to become Golf Course Managers.

Because the programme is a personalised and intensive one, places will be limited to the first twenty applicants and would-be attendees are urged to confirm a place without delay. The inclusive cost: accommodation, meals and wonderful training sessions, is \pounds 495 including VAT. Cheques should be made payable to BIGGA.



■ The Royal Birkdale Golf Club tell us that 63 year old Tom O'Brien, their head greenkeeper for the past 14 years, has expressed a desire to take early retirement in 1992, the Club having been unable to per-

suade him to change his decision. Tom joined Royal Birkdale from Gullane in 1978 and has prepared the course for two Open Championships.

Amenity management PR man, Mike Saull, has established a new public relations business – Landline PR – based in Shrewsbury. Previously a director of a specialist division of Agrafax PR, he has handled

work for companies including ICI, Nomix-Chipman and Maxicrop International. A soil scientist and drainage specialist by training, he also held the post of Technical Secretary to the Soil and Water Management Association.



■ Let's not forget to congratulate Howard Swan on being admitted to the regulatory body for golf architecture, the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, as a full member. Howard, the son of a greenkeeper,

worked for 16 years in design and construction before setting up his own practice in 1987. He founded the British Association of Golf Course Constructors in 1980 and for five years, until 1990, was Chairman of the National Turfgrass Council.



■ Phil Baldock, Chairman of the Surrey section of BIGGA and a member of the SE Regional Board, is moving from Hankley Common to take up the prestigious position of head greenkeeper at the delight-

ful Harry Colt masterpiece, Royal Portrush. We are sure he'll find no difficulty in negotiating 'Calamity Corner' or enduring 'Purgatory' and will thoroughly enjoy managing the only Irish course ever to stage an Open Championship. If things get too tiring, he can always turn to the famous eleventh, the notorious 'Feather Bed'. Phil had long ago set his sights on Royal Portrush (he is married to Anne, a fair colleen from Northern Ireland), and having achieved this first ambition, his next is to see The Open return to Royal Portrush.

Members of the Northern Ireland Golf Greenkeepers Association (NIGGA), and indeed all greenkeepers in Northern Ireland, will quickly learn of Phil's enthusiasm for our Association, with Phil no doubt embarking on a personal crusade to



FACES & Places

bring NI under our international banner.

■ Winner of the Kubota (UK) Cup for Best Machinery Student at Lancashire College of Agriculture is Richard Ellis Haynes. Richard, who gained a distinction on the

National Diploma Turf Science and Sportsground Management course, is pictured being presented with his cup at the college's annual award ceremony by Kubota's Russell Mellor. Richard is now employed as a mechanic at Bourne Country Club, Hertfordshire.

■ David Woods, head greenkeeper at Holtye and currently a Phase 3 (Enterprise Management and Greenkeeping Supervision) student at Plumpton College, has gained the rare distinction of being the first greenkeeper to gain the prestigeous Top Student of The Year Award – The City and Guilds Silver Medal – awarded by none other than the examining body itself, The City and Guilds of London Institute Examination Board. Greenkeeper International share in David's delight and send him heartiest congratulations.

■ A new post – Scottish Office Co-ordinator – is announced by SISIS with the appointment of Duncan Crawford. It will be Duncan's responsibility to co-ordinate the activities of the Scottish demonstration and services teams and liaison with area sales representatives. The supply of spare parts will also form part of his duties.

■ Michael Peters, Aldeburgh's head greenkeeper, scored the second hole in one of his golfing career last month, using a wedge at the 116 yard second on the River course.

■ Members will be saddened to learn of the death at the age of 80 of one of Britain's greenkeeping stalwarts, the legendary Doug Pate, who was for 23 years (1953-1976) head greenkeeper at Royal Birkdale. His was a record that may be hard to surpass, having been responsible for the preparation of no less than five Open Championships and two Ryder Cup Matches, together with countless other major tournaments, and his legacy to the greenkeeping craft is one that will always be remembered. Greenkeeper International offers sincere sympathy to Mrs Pate on her sad loss.



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