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On January 17, the National Education Conference will kick start the week of events, followed by the BTME Exhibition. In keeping with tradition, The Learning Experience will run alongside the show with its usual selection of high quality workshops, providing invaluable training for its delegates. New additions for 2000 include 'Computing for Greenkeepers' and Golf Course Preparation, places of which are expected to be of high demand. Contact Sami Collins on 01347 833800 for further details.

SO, YOU WANT TO BE PART OF BTME2000?

Well here's your chance...

All you have to do to stand a chance of winning one of our three fantastic BTME package prizes is to answer six simple questions. There were two last month, two in this issue, shown below, and the final two will appear in next month's Greenkeeper International. When you have completed all the answers, fill in the entry form, printed in the November edition of Greenkeeper International and you could be on your way to Harrogate on an all expenses paid mini-break to BTME 2000.

OCTOBER QUESTIONS:

1. Name one of the new workshops introduced for BTME2000
2. Which Hall makes its debut at BTME2000?

Remember, Don't send in your answers yet, keep them safe until you receive the entry form, printed in next month's Greenkeeper International.

First Prize: Return rail travel from anywhere in the UK plus three nights accommodation at a top hotel in Harrogate with entry into the exhibition and all the education seminar sessions.

Second prize: Return rail travel from anywhere in the UK plus two nights accommodation at a top hotel in Harrogate with entry into the exhibition and all the education seminar sessions.

Third prize: Return rail travel from anywhere in the UK plus one nights accommodation at a top hotel in Harrogate with entry into the exhibition and all the education seminar sessions.

A woman's role



People have been asking me recently if I have taken up the very kind offer from Stephen Okula when he invited me in the March issue to his Tenerife home for a chat on the maintenance of USGA spec greens.

Well, despite his generosity, I have decided to decline on the grounds that it is impossible to walk down a beach at any of the Canary Islands without being visually assaulted on a regular basis by a series of out of condition Bavarians wearing nothing more than a back-pack. Quite a traumatic experience for us Brits, especially after that most traditional of Canarian meals, the Full English Breakfast.

But before our Editor receives a mass of complaints from the greenkeepers wing of the Naturists Association of Deutschland, may I point out that my comments are not to be taken too seriously, as has been the unfortunate case in the past.

However the following anecdote, I can assure you is entirely factual and was recounted to me by my Brother the celebrated portrait artist, Leonardo McDivot.

My brother has a long-standing female friend who confided to him a story that had been an acute embarrassment to her for a long time. With her resolve severely diluted by a cheap bottle of wine she recounted this horrific tale in the strictest confidence. This he then told to me in not quite such strict confidence and with a total and blatant lack of confidentiality I will now faithfully relate it to a few thousand greenkeepers in the hope that she is not a regular reader of this publication.

She was seeing a young man who was to become her future hubby and the time had arrived when she was

required to meet the family. As we are all aware this can be the most stressful of duties at the best of times but in this case the family was of English nobility background and the house a stately affair complete with gazebos, orangeries, servants quarters, lodges and such like.

So the day arrived and she pulled up outside the ancestral home in her Mini Metro. Having coped with the initial introductions and navigated her way through the tea and cucumber sandwiches without too many lapses of etiquette, she was then required to tackle the evening dinner. This in keeping with normal protocol in the land of the gentry was a ceremonial affair that entailed dressing up in full ball gown regalia.

Towards the end though, she found it necessary to excuse herself to the powder room. At this point events started to take on a somewhat surreal perspective. This is a very delicate subject but I will try to explain what happened as inoffensively as possible. To her absolute horror the product of the preceding meals steadfastly refused to disappear no matter how many times the chain was pulled.

Panic then started to set in and as time was elapsing her stressed brain was blowing up the problem to global proportions. Convincing herself that she had committed the most heinous crime imaginable against polite society, her behaviour became utterly irrational and using large quantities of toilet paper she picked up the offending object and lobbed it out of the window. Having reassured herself that the nightmare was finally over, she brushed herself down, regained some composure and went back down to rejoin the family in the dining room.

The problem was she did not find them in the dining room. They were in the conservatory gazing up at this strange object that had suddenly splattered itself all over the glass roof.

In telling of this girl's painful experience I wish to highlight the difference between the cerebral workings of men and women. Placed in a similar situation most men would not become overly worried and would either:

a) Forget about it, reasoning that the butler would probably sort the problem out, or,

b) Especially if he is a greenkeeper, take the top off the cistern and relish the prospect of carrying out some on the spot adjustments with the ball valve to effect a permanent cure to the problem.

That is not to say that we men are in some way superior to our female counterparts. Far from it. It is just that we have a different way of viewing things.

For instance, I am of the opinion that if most men were left to their own devices it would not be long before a deep rooted basal instinct would kick in and we would degenerate into a life of concentrated drunken slobbery. I myself have found this particular desire difficult to control on many occasions. But as we have our female brethren to guard over us, they manage by way of a superior strength of will and prolonged verbal persuasion to discourage these genetic urges and instead lead us down the path of domestic duties.

Some may argue that their brains are incorrectly wired leading to a series of illogical conclusions based on nothing more than women's intuition. This is clearly untrue. For example, when my dearly beloved moved into a previous abode of mine that had resisted all my attempts to sell, she drew my myopic attention to the fact that the sparse black and white furnishings and stark empty spaces devoid of all feelings of homeliness were not helping me in my quest to attract the punters.

I was also made aware, in a brutally frank manner of the fact that vacuuming the carpets on a quarterly

basis was generally considered insufficient. It was also pointed out to me that my theory of living in conditions of total squalor would help me build up long term resistance to disease was not necessarily conducive to a quick sale.

Having made a few simple refinements such as the addition of cushions, flowers and what I considered the most tasteless of all, little cheruby type ornaments, a path was beaten to my door by eager buyers with full-asking-price bundles of cash in hand. So in this instance it was I, a fairly typical male who was unable to reach a conclusion based on simple logic.

Intelligence can and should not be rated on the ability one has in tackling an IQ test.

For example, ask me who came second in the 1973 British Open and I could relay such information of unmitigated boredom to my heart's content.

Ask me what colour would look good with magenta and I would fumble about hopelessly for an inept answer. Given my position of Head Greenkeeper in charge of not only a golf course but also several areas of flowers and assorted shrubbery, what ability do you think would be most appropriate?

My amazing talent to recall in detail the picture of Neil Coles striding down the last fairway at Troon, complete with ill fitting trousers and hideous jumper, several shots behind Tom Weiskopf or my equally amazing lack of talent at deciding what shrubs would look most impressive adjacent to the Captain's parking spot. With all due respect to Neil Coles, the ability to visualise horticultural artistry would win every time. Put the wife in a similar situation and she would notice those little details that are completely invisible to us males. The Captain's Rover, she would observe, always seems to come in a colour that matches his hearing aids and planting

would be appropriately harmonious.

Which finally brings me to my long-winded conclusion. The current trend of encouraging women into the world of greenkeeping is long overdue and should be encouraged at every opportunity.

Of course it is not only for a women's ability to design planting schemes that we should employ and promote. It is also for all the subtle touches that can be so lacking in the male of the species and simply because a different perspective on problems can often be the key in which to solve them. But it doesn't stop there. Have we not all noticed how supply companies are deploying that most fiendish of sales tactics, the female rep. Well maybe it is time the tables were turned. My wife can haggle with a man to the point where agreeing her terms is the only viable alternative to a nervous breakdown. Her powers of persuasion are incredible. I still spend many hours awake at night trying to comprehend how she managed to get the mortgage in my name yet the house in hers. She, like many of her associates, can go on a shopping spree of frightening proportions and yet still convince me by some obscure logic that she has saved me a fortune.

Employ women to do your purchasing and that 10% discount you were so chuffed at getting will be a thing of the past. 20% or 30% will be the norm.

So I say to all my macho colleagues out there Go Forth! Remove those tacky calendars given to you each year by the tractor spare's company and employ the fairer sex. You have the word of Sandy McDivot (and proud of it), I promise, you will not regret it.

Sandy McDivot.
Head Greenkeeper: Sludgecombe Pay and Play.

Feature listing from October '97

October '97: Environment; Recruitment; Abbeydale GC; Rough Mowers; Soil Analysis

November '97: Environment; Competition; Bank Cutting; Risk Assessment; Pumps

December '97: Seed Development; Longhirst Hall GC; Toro Awards; Fertiliser Spreaders; Communication

January '98: FEGGA Conference; Buying Power Equipment; Elmwood GC; Mobile Phones; Traffic Management; Spraying; Environment

February '98: BTME Review; Overseeding; Royal Mid Surrey GC; Drainage; Thatch

March '98: Trees, Golf Course Accessories, News from GCSAA, Leamington & County GC, Trevor Smith's BTME Talk

April '98: Gleneagles Hotel, Compact Tractors, Environment, Protective clothing, Rain bird, Internet

May '98: Greens Mowers, Suspended Water Table Greens, Seeds, Letham Grange Resort, Charterhouse profile, Security and BIGGA's Fund Raising Campaign

June '98: Interview with Nick Park, Earthworm special, ATVs, Royal Porthcawl, Grinding

July '98: Aeration, Royal Birkdale preview, The importance of research, Architecture

August '98: Mill Ride, Fescue, Blowers, Textron, Open Review, Nematodes, Training

September '98: Nine holers - Tolladine and Fingle Glen, Turf, Steve Clement profile, Drainage, World Scientific Congress report

October '98: Saltex Review, BIGGA Retrospective, Stirling GC, Toro Awards Preview, Tree grants

November '98: Royal Opening, Ramsdale Hall GC, Gang Mowers, Hayter International report, Irrigation Systems

December '98: Toro Awards, Environment Awards, The Appliance of Science, Engines, Architects, BTME Preview

January '99: Pesticide Usage, Life in Colorado, Lyschott Heath GC, Worm Research, Stylo Matchmaker profile, Temporary Greens

February '99: Westerham GC; R&A questionnaire results; Finland; grass cutting; BTME99 Review; Bernhard and Co

March '99: Loch Lomond, Worm update, GrassRoots, Softspikes, Maintenance facilities, Environment review, Architecture

April '99: Carden Park, Telecommunications, Water Management, Rolawn, Seeds

May '99: Security, Bude and North Cornwall GC, Spraying Regulations, Jim Arthur, The Acid Theory, Amenity Technology profile

June '99: Thorpeness GC, Millennium Bug Busting, Irrigation, Scotts profile, Company adaptability

July '99: Carnoustie, Golf Course Furniture, Spike Research, Toro profile, BIGGA Silent Auction

August '99: Viscount Whitelaw tribute; Open review; Merrist Wood; Saltex preview; Turf; Trees; Grass Cutting; BIGGA Golf Day review; Redexim profile

September '99: Slaley Hall; Tyres; Spotlight on Thatch; Elmwood College Awards; National Championship preview



GTC update



tion and renovation with Souter of Stirling Sportsturf Ltd.

John Davies represents education. John has too many qualifications to mention here but to give you a sample he holds certificates in agriculture, engineering, health and safety, pesticides and education. He is an Internal Verifier with D32-33 and 34. John has been in education for over 30 years.

As well as its five members, The Technical Committee can call upon other experts in specialist fields as they see fit. Our job on the management must be to support and try to implement their ideas as far as possible. I personally feel this is a good and positive move in the right direction.

On September 7th I joined our team at Saltex. The weather was good for all three days, and although I feel the numbers were down on some years past, the BIGGA stand was very busy. The staff made many new contacts and took in lots of new members.

For myself, I was kept busy stand judging and attending meetings, so I'm sorry if I missed some of you when you visited the BIGGA stand. However, it was nice to meet so many of you, both greenkeepers and trade members. I would like to express my thanks and those of our staff to Chris Kennedy who kindly arranged for us to have dinner at Wentworth Golf Club on Wednesday evening. We were looked after like royalty and the food was superb. Thanks Chris. Also thanks to Richard Fry, who invited us to join him at the Ascot Oriental for a wonderful night, it was much appreciated. Finally I would like to thank the girls who worked so hard for three long days on our behalf.

Here we are at the end of another season, the last of this century. In many ways it's been good for some and not so good for others, depending where you live and work. Down

south, it started off wet with a dry June, very wet July and a dry August, but in the north and more so in Scotland, they have had more than their fair share of rain, but one thing has remained constant and that is the pressure put on greenkeepers, sometimes unfairly, but sometimes by our own stubbornness to accept change. I get many calls and letters from members who have got problems, some you can help and others which are far and away outside my or any other greenkeepers ability to help.

This is where legal advice comes in though your membership. Countless members have been grateful for this part of their package deal, but for many there seems to be a reluctance to use what is their right as a BIGGA member. The advice you can get is invaluable, not just for work related problems, but for home and personal difficulties as well. I don't care how many of you make contact with me, I will always try to point you in the right direction, and I'm happy to do so, but take a piece of advice, when your membership renewal drops through your door, don't just put it on one side, take a good careful read and make sure you know what's in it for you. It is an excellent package and one we should be proud of.

Finally, the seminar season is coming round again and I look forward to the chance of meeting lots of you again, if not at the regional ones, then at BTME in January. There is still lots to learn by us all. We will never know it all, so let's take every opportunity that's on offer.

Gordon Child

I am pleased to report that at the last GTC meeting things seem to have settled down with a more positive move to go forward. It may be early to be sure, but the signs are that everyone at the meeting were there to make a fresh start on the back of the Lantra Report. A new Technical Committee was appointed, and its responsibility is to assist the Education Director and propose to the Management Committee the way forward in its educational objectives, to prepare and maintain a three year on - going plan of GTC activities as well as identifying training priorities. The Technical Committee consists of the following personnel and the bodies they represent.

Dr Mike Canaway STRI, of whose credentials I am sure you are all aware.

Kerran Daly BIGGA, Course Manager at Gog Magog Golf Club, a Master Greenkeeper and also a GTC Assessor. Kerran holds a Certificate of Education along with Phases 3 & 4 and Diplomas in Golf Management and Turf Culture.

Tony Mears GTC, Course Manager Dinsdale Spa Golf Club. Tony is an Internal Verifier for the GTC with a D34 Certificate to add to his D32 - D33 and D36 Assessor and Advisors Certificates.

Iain Ritchie, Golf Superintendent, Portmarnock Golf Club, is currently President of the GCSAI and holds a Certificate in Turf Grass Management, along with qualifications in construc-



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