

to my credentials I am able to argue with complete authority that my version of a golf green in Utopia was correct while his was entirely erroneous.

Unfortunately though, and in common with many golfers, he was not offering an opinion on the greens but making what he considered to be a statement of fact. Based on the dual principal that he could occasionally hit a golf ball in the rough vicinity of the target and that he was playing a golf course acknowledged to be of exceptional quality he concluded that he was fully qualified to make such a statement. To him the greens in question were of a quality that was highly desirable and he wanted to know when my greens would be of a comparable standard. I however took the stance of the art critic talking to the philistine and was able to point out the gross error of his ways. The greens I suggested, far from being admirable, were in fact artificial, horrifically

bumpy, diseased and unplayable for most of the winter, inordinately expensive to maintain, environmentally unsound and teetering on total demise whenever hotter than average weather was encountered. I also pointed out that their softness would negate all strategic elements painstakingly designed into the golf course. After all, there is no point in having a shrewdly placed greenside bunker if the green has all the characteristics of a green blancmange. Anyone can lob a mid iron over the offending object from heavy rough and still get it to stop within a couple of feet so what is the point in having the bunker there in the first place. It ceases to have any influence on how to play the preceding shot.

You might as well have that deranged individual from "Home Front in the Garden" design the course for all the subtlety you would need with greens like that. I ask you, would Tiger Woods with his supreme golfing brain have so dominated our Open Championship at St Andrews if Eddie Adams' greens had the receptive qualities of a plum duff? Well yes, he probably would have, but you get my point don't you?

However, to be fair, I do believe that most golfers do appreciate true quality when they finally encounter it. Just recently a popular golf magazine ran a piece on courses that they considered were in possession of the finest greens in the country. Listed were several leading courses and I am delighted to report that all of them were maintained in that traditional British way that produces a golf green

we, the greenkeeper, so admire. Yes, all of the courses mentioned had greens that were firm, true, fast and consistent whatever the time of year and surprise, surprise not a USGA spec among them. But we don't want to dig that old chestnut up again, do we?

So I say to all my fellow greenkeepers out there, if you are getting some serious abuse of the acoustic nerve then remember, you are the expert and they the layman. You are the respected art critic, they the student. You are the connoisseur while they are the apprentice. So argue your case from the position of complete authority that your knowledge bestows upon you ... in the nicest possible way of course.

Sandy McDivot,
Head Greenkeeper,
Sludgecombe Pay and Play



Feature listing from October '98

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

November '98: Royal Opening, Ramside 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, Lyshott 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

October '99: The Manor House, Castle Combe; Aeration; Saltex review; Mycorrhizas; Toro Award preview

November '99: Sir Michael Bonalack interview; The Pines GC; Oil; Bunkers; National Championship review

December '99: Agronomy; Security; Environment Competition Winner; Toro Award Winners

January 2000: Greens Construction; Awkward Jobs; Sandy McDivot; Agronomy; Toro Award review

February 2000: BTME2000 review; Committed to Green interview; Rookery Park GC; Engines; Chairman's profile; Environmental Management

March 2000: Cleobury Mortimer GC; Course Furniture; R&A Conference Report; Cutting heights; Avoncrop profile; Valderrama report; Westurf preview

April 2000: Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC; Utility Vehicles; Irrigation; Seed breeding; Gem Professional profile.

May 2000: Ross-on-Wye GC; Top Dressing; Course Mapping; Compact Tractors

June 2000: National Championship preview; Spraying; World Education Conference review; Environmental Management; Mowers

July 2000: Open Championship Preview; Dougal Duguid Court Case Report; Pest Control; Aventus profile; Course Conditioning

August 2000: Open Championship review; Water Features; Saltex preview; Charcoal; Malone GC; Royal County Down; Grand Tour Scholarship

September 2000: Blowers and Sweepers; Berkshire College Academy; National Championship roundup; Gordon McKillop interview; Winter health checks



Looking to the future



Well it was nice to have a bit of a respite in August, not so much going on in the 'BIGGA' world.

One event I did attend, along with John Crawford (Past Chairman) who was representing the Scottish Region, was a Forum held by the Scottish Golf Union under the title 'Scottish Golf Development Initiative'. The aim was to bring together all the bodies involved in golf in Scotland to look at and discuss ways of developing the game of golf in Scotland. There were so many ideas put forward that if even a percentage of them come to fruition it would help the development of the game. Golf in Schools, family memberships in clubs, better facilities for practise, especially for Juniors, more 9-hole courses, short game golf for children, assist clubs to run themselves as businesses, promote clubs in a better light and in conjunction with tourism sell ourselves. These were just some of the ideas that came from a wide spectrum of the golf fraternity in Scotland.

One of the interesting points about this forum was that BIGGA was invited to send a representative as one of the main bodies interested in golf. Until recently a forum like this would have been held with no representation from greenkeepers, even though greenkeepers are probably more affected by the growth of golf and the prosperity of clubs than anyone else. After all it is our livelihood and usually the largest number of employees at any club are the greenstaff.

One little aside at the forum was when, at a break, I was asked what BIGGA stood for. This was from a senior representative of a national golfing body. I knew what their Association was all about why didn't they know us. This brought home to me how insular some of these bodies are and also how much work we still have to do at BIGGA to be recognised on a par with them.

However, that aside, this was a positive and interesting two days, bringing together of views on how to expand and develop golf into the new century and I congratulate the Scottish Golf Union for this and I look forward to BIGGA being involved in future meetings.

It was annoying reading Tracey's report in the August issue about the abuse of membership cards for courtesy golf. I know it's a very small minority, but there are always some rotten eggs in the basket who are only looking to take advantage for purely selfish reasons. So don't hold back if you know of any abuse of our card, report them it could be you who can't get a game at a club because they have refused courtesy to greenkeepers.

I have just returned from Saltex where we were lucky with the weather. One heavy shower on Wednesday was the only glitch in the show. I was asked to be one of the stand judges on the Tuesday morning and what a hard job that is. I'm glad I had someone else with me to bounce our thoughts off each other. However we survived with no threats and no bribes... well I don't think cups of coffee count as bribes. One thing for sure our staff were kept busy. Tracey had numerous enquiries and questions about membership, with quite a lot of forms going out, and the sales and marketing team must have had sore feet after all their walking, as they made contact with customers, sponsors and advertisers old and new. I spent three hours solid going round with Steve Hardy talking to many companies. Tell you what, give me a job on the course any day! Anyway I would like to say well done to all the staff there for their hard work.

By the time this is published most of us will probably have finished our autumn renovation work or at least be well through it. Scarifying, hollow coring, micro coring, verti draining, top

dressing, overseeding - we will all be doing all or some of these tasks. Hopefully we will have had some reasonable weather to get them done and with decent temperatures we will go into the winter season in good health.

This is how I see it now, no longer can we talk about "The Playing Season", meaning April to September. The demands for play are so great now that to my mind we have two seasons - Summer and Winter - and we have to prepare for both. It has been interesting recently to talk to more and more who have been able to hollow core greens in August. Usually during a quiet two weeks when their members are on holiday, they have raved about their green's recovery rate, and are now going into the winter season in fine condition.

This is something we should all consider and start working towards. I know, your club will never wear it. Well I can assure you that is what these other clubs said, "If you don't ask, you'll never get". Find out if someone near you has done it, and use them as an example and make your request as professional as possible.

All you need to do is convince your green committee, not the whole club. If they won't go for it as a whole, ask to try nine greens or six or three or even one (always start high) next year. Once they have seen the recovery rate as compared with late September or October and the ensuing benefits they will be convinced for the next year.

Finally I would like to extend a warm welcome to Meredith Foster who has joined the Sales and Marketing team in place of Jenny, and also to Brad Anderson, who is taking Janine's place as Receptionist/Trainee Clerical Assistant.

I hope they will both enjoy their time with us.

In the July issue I did not finish with a quote. I'd like to thank those people who asked me why as it made me realise that someone does read this article. This month I have to thank one of my assistants, Mark Gardner, for the following

**Don't bask in
yesterday's glory**

S. A. R. Small

"I WISH WE HAD..."

"...a set of THATCH-AWAY verticutters.
I've never seen anything work like they did,
when we had them on demonstration!"



"Next, I'd get an EASY-LOAD trailer.
It would save hours of back ache when we're top dressing..."



"...and the GREENS GROOMER
is incredible for rubbing it in.
We had one of those on demo too"



"Then the TRUE-SURFACE
vibratory rollers are ideal for
finishing off after aerating and top
dressing. They keep the greens
true through the winter as well."



"plus, if we had a MAXI-BRUSH,
its' 18' width would quickly brush
the fairways, then we could fold it
down to 6' to do the greens.
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