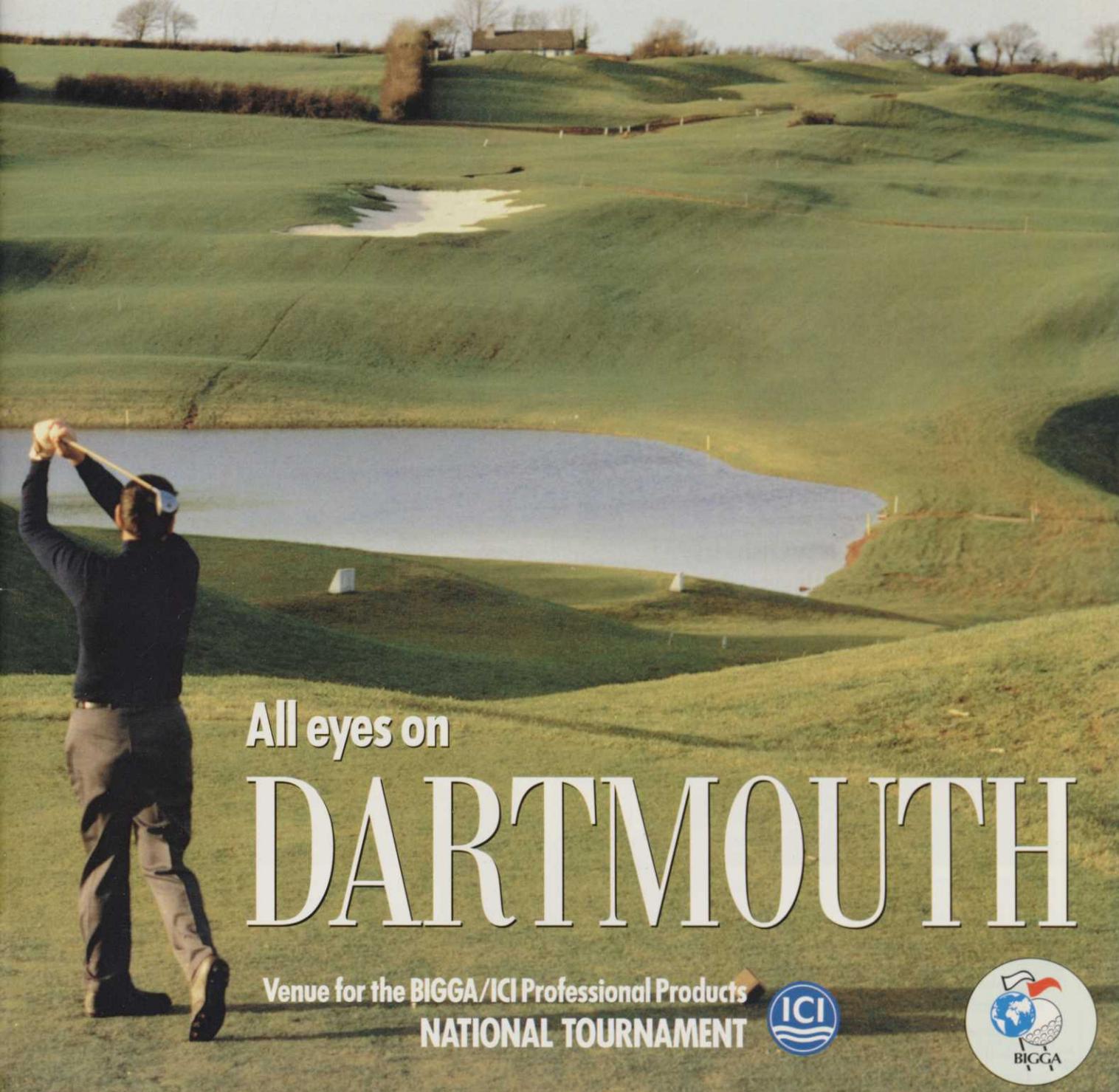


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GREENKEEPER International

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Golf Greenkeepers Association

MAY 1994

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The National Education Conference was the platform for greenkeeping luminaries to share their knowledge. We pass on a selection of hot tips **Pages 10-12**

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Avoiding a water hazard at Dartmouth, venue for this year's National Tournament

WIN £50 CASH IN OUR BUYER'S GUIDE COMPETITION: TURN TO PAGE 46



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

The Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, contact BIGGA on 0347 838581.

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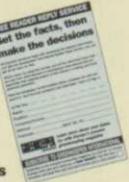


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Bill Lynch on 091 413 7218, or Carol Dutton or Louise Lunn at BIGGA HQ on 0347 838581.

Education officer is a high flier

BIGGA's new education officer is Kenneth Richardson.

Previously a senior training manager in the Royal Air Force, Kenneth achieved the rank of squadron leader in training and education specialisation.

With proven experience in training development, computer based training, distance learning and lecturing, he brings well developed leadership and communication skills to one of BIGGA's key posts.

Commenting on the appointment, executive director Neil Thomas said: "Kenneth brings specialist skills, knowledge and experience to the education officer post which will serve the Association well in the future and enable us to move forward progressively with education and training programmes for our members."



BIGGA Staff Profile

PAULINE THOMPSON

Accounts Clerk

Pauline used to swim for Yorkshire until she was 16 and this, coupled with nine years working for Barclays Bank, means she's never out of her depth at the sharp end of BIGGA's computerised accounting system. During the day, Pauline processes sales and purchase invoices and after work it's back to the swimming pool with her 12 year old daughter, teaching life saving techniques.

An information pack for the 1995 BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition is now

available. All you need to know about how to exhibit at the industry's premier event is explained. For a copy, contact Louise Lunn at BIGGA HQ on 0347 838581.



A privilege under threat?

One issue which the Association will need to address this year is the use of membership cards for seeking courtesy of the golf course. This is a privilege extended only to full greenkeeper members who are reminded on the reverse of their membership cards of the etiquette involved. These cards are most certainly not a passport to free golf and they need to be used both sensitively and conservatively. The vast majority of BIGGA's greenkeeper members respect the privilege of obtaining courtesy of the golf course and benefit greatly from the opportunity not only to play golf but to experience other golf courses in many varied conditions, thereby enhancing their own knowledge and expertise. Long may this continue but some notes of caution need to be struck. Whilst we are talking of a small minority, there is increasing evidence of misuse of cards not only by greenkeepers seeking to use cards over frequently and for purely golfing purposes, but by members in categories of membership other than full greenkeeper, who, quite simply, are not entitled to seek courtesy of the golf course.

It is essential that members becoming aware of card misuse report such instances to Headquarters in order that appropriate action be taken. Turning a blind eye will achieve nothing other than I suspect an increasing reluctance by golf clubs to grant courtesy. During the course of BIGGA's review this year we shall be looking to tighten our procedures still further to protect this privilege and ensure the continued cooperation of the many golf clubs across the country who welcome our members onto their golf courses.

Appeal for books

The news of an R & A grant of £10,000 to establish an Association library is to be warmly welcomed. In the years ahead we will have the chance to establish the history of greenkeeping within our own Headquarters and provide a service to members both when they are attending Aldwark Manor on courses or visiting and also in operating a lend and return service. So far so good but no-one should pretend that there is a great avalanche of books waiting to descend on Aldwark Manor. Far from it. Indeed since 1987 I have been singularly unimpressed by the numbers of books available to greenkeepers. The profession is not rich in its literature particularly on this side of the Atlantic.

Yet if BIGGA is not prepared to make a start in locating and initiating such literature the profession will continue to bemoan the lack of a vital resource in disseminating information and enhancing the learning process. So whilst an authentic library is not going to appear overnight, I would urge our readers to blow away the attic dust and see if they can discover some long lost literary masterpieces which might be better located at BIGGA Headquarters.

Book donations, loans or sales will all be welcomed and this library will only be a success if there are concerted moves within the membership to support it. Let's be hearing from you. In thanking the R & A for this grant, we thank them not only for the finance



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

involved but also throughout the last seven years for their steadfast and ongoing support of BIGGA. The R & A was instrumental in the formation of BIGGA and it continues to actively support our growth and development acknowledging the need for a strong greenkeepers' association. The R & A welcomes the improved education and training opportunities now available for greenkeepers and the enhancement of the status of those working in the profession as the evidence of better maintained and quality golf courses becomes clearer with each passing year.

Your views wanted

In the February issue of 'Greenkeeper International', I wrote of your Board of Management's decision to implement a review and prepare a five year plan. Regions and Sections were invited to contribute to this process and to canvass the views of members at section level. I recently spoke with a Section Secretary who considered it would be impossible for his section to comment on the structure and workings of the Association in its entirety. I could not

agree more. Indeed this was never the intention in implementing the review. Of necessity much of the work entailed has to be undertaken by your duly appointed professional staff who will report in the first instance to the Board of Management. There will then be circulation of an initial draft to Regions and Sections in the early summer for comments to be forwarded by the beginning of September. It is during the autumn that the final plan will be drawn up for approval by the Board of Management and ratification at the 1995 Annual General Meeting. However, as of now and throughout the process, any member either independently or through his section has the opportunity to put forward a view. Views can be submitted either individually, by sections or by regions. You may wish to see a change in procedure or policy at section, region or national level. If so, please let us know. If you have a concern communicate it to Headquarters. Members should not see this as an intimidating or onerous task - it was never meant to be and the administrative details will fall on your Headquarters office. This exercise should not be viewed as an attempt to restructure the Association. We would not be the growing and successful organisation we are today if our structure and policies were fundamentally unsound. Essentially we are seeing where the existing structure and policies can be improved and strengthened. Viewed in this context I hope that many members will feel able to make a contribution to the present exercise.

With regret...

In this issue you will read of the passing of John Shildrick. I first had the privilege of meeting John when the Association commenced its activities at the Sports Turf Research Institute in Bingley late in 1987. Shortly after in 1988, John retired from the STRI and became Chief Executive of the National Turfgrass Council. In that capacity he continued to work closely with BIGGA. Like many others I had a tremendous respect for John - his knowledge, his grasp of detail and his abiding wish to see the industry develop and prosper. At all times, often under acute pressure, he remained friendly, approachable, compellingly industrious and willing to offer advice and guidance. Within the Association as elsewhere in the industry, he will be sadly missed.

Association membership at new high

BIGGA membership is at an all-time high.

Already the number of members so far in 1994 has surpassed 1993's total – which itself was a record. There are now 5,183 members of the Association, compared to 5,162 at the end of last year.

"This is fantastic news and helps give BIGGA an even more powerful voice to act on behalf of greenkeepers everywhere," said the Association's sales and marketing manager Bill Lynch.

"And what's more, this figure doesn't include those members from last year who still haven't paid their subscriptions.

"If you know a greenkeeper who is not a member or has forgotten to renew, tell him what he's missing. Some 5,183 paid-up members can't be wrong!"

For information on how to join BIGGA, complete the post-paid reply card facing Page 2 in this issue.

NEWS



John Deere's manufacturing plants at Mannheim and Bruchsal in Germany have achieved certification to ISO 9001, which is the international standard equivalent to BS5750 (part 1).

John Shildrick dies of cancer



John Shildrick, one of the world's foremost authorities on sport and amenity turf cultivars and turf science generally, has died after a six-month battle against cancer. He was 65.

John was known to many greenkeepers through his 20 years as assistant director of the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, West Yorkshire, and latterly as both chief executive of the National Turfgrass Council and secretary of the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association.

Born in 1928, he graduated in agriculture at Cambridge University in 1952 and joined the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, also in Cambridge. As

head of the herbage seed section, he researched into new cultivars.

In 1968 he joined the STRI as assistant director, introducing and coordinating large-scale trials of sports turf cultivars. Many people believe the methods he developed dictated the path of subsequent research throughout the UK and in many overseas countries.

In 1980 he additionally became part-time secretary of the newly-formed NTC, consolidating information on amenity grass and non-grass surfaces, and was appointed secretary of the BTIA in 1986. John continued both jobs from his home after retiring from the STRI in 1988, becoming NTC chief executive that year.

Very much a private man, John devoted his life to the turfgrass industry, frequently working seven days a week, and he con-

tributed articles and research papers to virtually all major turfgrass publications and conferences in the UK and overseas.

Many tributes from friends and former colleagues have poured in. STRI director Dr Peter Hayes said: "At all times John was absolutely thorough, accurate and conscientious. His knowledge was tremendous."

Current NTC chairman Jon Bauer commented: "One of John's major gifts was the ability to explain difficult scientific concepts to the lay person, verbally and in print – he was the plain man's interpreter."

Mike Chance, the NTC's first chairman, said: "John was a great friend and a true professional. Working for the NTC gave him a tremendous grasp of the industry, complementing his research knowledge with a deep awareness of the commercial side of the profession. He was quite unique."

BTIA chairman Paul de Rham said: "John's dedication, knowledge and professionalism helped us all immensely."

John leaves a sister, Ann, and a close friend Barbara whom he met while working in Cambridge and who, with her husband, was particularly supportive during his illness.

Fancy a trip to America?

Are you good at what you do? Do you fancy a free trip to San Francisco? Well, why haven't you entered the ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year award? The closing date for entries has been extended to May 27 – just for you! Contact your section secretary for details and an application form. If you don't win the top prize – a trip to next year's GCSAA exhibition in San Francisco – you could win a weekend for two in London (including a West End show) or a weekend for two at Aldwark Manor.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Mill Hill's newly-appointed assistant head greenkeeper, Terry Colvill, has qualified for the TV gameshow Gladiators. The 21-year-old strongman has passed the show's tough fitness and personality tests and is waiting to hear if he'll be selected for a forthcoming battle on the box.

Terry, who has also worked at Highgate and North Middlesex courses, has been weight-training since he was a boy and still goes to the gym four nights a week. He is about 5ft 9in tall and weighs 15.5 stone. He also enjoys motorbikes, waterskiing and golf. He has a 19 handicap. "He hits the ball a long way, but he's all over the place," says his boss, Tony Dunstan.

■ Mike Seaton, formerly sales office manager for Rigby Taylor Ltd at their Guildford sales and distribution centre, has left the company to expand his pesticide application company – Weed Free (Bracknell). Tel: 0344 481011.



■ The new Sweetwoods Park Golf Club on the borders of Sussex and Kent at Cowden, near Edenbridge, officially opened for play on April 25. Head greenkeeper at the 18-hole, 6408-yard course is William Wilson. One of the key holes is the 544-yard 14th which tees off in Kent, plays onto a fairway in Sussex, crossing Kent water twice.

■ Ian Wilson, 31, is the new head greenkeeper at Hamilton Golf Club, Hamilton. He will head up a team of five, including a trainee. The former Blairbeth GC head greenkeeper replaces Peter Hall, who has gone to Whitecraigs Golf Club.

■ Stratford-on-Avon, which celebrates its centenary this year, has appointed Julian Doughty, 30, as head greenkeeper. He was previously head greenkeeper at Ealing, Middlesex.

■ Sixty acres of parkland next to Plumpton Hall, near Bury St Edmunds, is to be turned into an 18-hole golf course.

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NEWS

'Too easy' tournament course criticised

The US superintendents at the legendary Stadium Course at the Tournament Players Club at Sawgrass came in for some heavy criticism during The Players Championships (the so-called fifth 'major') - because the course was too easy.

Tom Kite, a former TPC winner, said it was in excellent condition "but it's not in the condition the architect intended." He explained it was way too soft, that the rough had been brought in by 6-8 yards on some holes, stopping wayward drives from running into the trees, and some hazards and mounds are now covered with grass.

The tournament was won by Greg Norman who shot a 24-under total and runner-up Fuzzy Zoeller was 20-under. The 36-hole cut was made on level par.

■ Kevin Garfitt has taken up the head greenkeeper's job at Ely Golf Club and is looking forward to hosting the county championship there next year. The 31-year-old was previously head greenkeeper at Pontefract. He takes over from 33-year-old Mark Jones who has gone to Preston Golf Club.

■ Myerscough College will soon be re-introducing a course which established it as one of the foremost centres of turf technology training. The new 'Sportsturf Construction and Drainage Course' will run from July 18-22. Tel: 0995 640611.

■ Aintree, the Liverpool racecourse that stages the Grand National, is off to a good start with its plans to build a £500,000 nine-hole golf course. It should be ready for an autumn opening, they say.

■ Sisis Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd has sent its Kent, Sussex and Surrey area rep, Keith Morris, to America to boost sales there. He has now set up home in Florida.



Ideal for verti-drain use

In last month's Greenkeeper International an ex-contributor got the details of the Kubota tractor wrong. We apologise for the error. The tractor tested was the L3250.

The 40 SAE hp (36.5 DIN hp) L3250 has a four-cylinder direct injection diesel engine, 540 rpm rear PTO and power steering as standard.

Particularly suited to meet turf maintenance needs in the golf, sports grounds and local authority markets, the L3250 has mechanical shuttle transmission providing the operator with 16 forward and 16 reverse gears including creep speed as standard, making it ideal for verti-drain operations. Partially synchronised transmission enables the operator to bring the tractor up to full speed quickly and easily for road travel.

Attachments compatible with this tractor include rear mounted flail units, quick attach front loaders and backhoes together with cultivators and post hole diggers.

Long service rewarded

Two employees at Ransomes have been given premium bonds in recognition of 40 years of service for the Ipswich-based company. Barry Saunders, left, joined as an apprentice and is now the quality audit engineer. Ron Pyke, who is blind, joined as a machinist in the thresher department and is now an assembler. They are pictured with Peter Wilson, Ransomes group chief executive.



Flower power

If you're under pressure to turn your course into Augusta National, Charles Hill Nursery tell us they have a collection of over 200 hybrid and species rhododendrons and azaleas - and at least one variety in flower every month of the year. Tel: 0252 703375.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Michael Buchanan, 41, is the first greenkeeper to be appointed at the Corby Golf Range and Leisure Club, where a nine-hole pitch and putt course, a nine-hole par 3 course and a large putting green are being added to a 26-bay floodlit driving range. Michael was previously with the borough council's grounds maintenance team and had worked on Mowsbury golf course, Bedford.

■ David Holloway, 30, has gone from deputy head greenkeeper at Royal Wimbledon to head greenkeeper at Coombe Wood Golf Club, Kingston Hill, Surrey.

■ Nottinghamshire's Hucknall Golf Club, which opens May 27, has appointed Jeff Dickinson as head greenkeeper. He is presently at Bulwell Hall (Nottingham City GC).

■ Phillip Newton, 23, has been promoted to the new position of deputy course manager at The Ridge Golf Course in Kent.

■ Chirk Golf and Country Club's new head greenkeeper, 41-year-old George Whitby, is preparing the 27-hole complex for the North Wales County Championships in June. After that he has two greens to rebuild with his seven-strong team. Previously this 16-handicapper was head greenkeeper at Mid Yorks. Before that he was at West Herts.

■ Five-handicapper Ross Wilson, 32, is moving from the Isle of Man, where he was head greenkeeper, to take up the new deputy course manager post at Newbury & Crookham Golf Club.

■ Stephen Street, 17, has joined the profession with his appointment as assistant greenkeeper at nine-hole Horsham Golf Park, West Sussex.

■ The 6th Madrid International Golf Show will be held on November 17-20 at the Casa De Campo Exhibition Centre, Madrid, Spain.

■ An article from the STRI in last month's issue was written by Dr AJ Newell, not Peter Hayes as stated.

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IRISH GOLF GREENKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

SECOND TURF MAINTENANCE EXHIBITION

Last November, nearly 800 people – greenkeepers, golf club committee members, course managers, course designers, county council and corporation parks superintendents, developers, sports groundmen, students, etc. – attended the first ever **Irish Turf Maintenance Exhibition**.

Already half of last year's exhibitors have asked for space this year, but we want to increase the range of exhibitor – so if you are interested in participating, contact us now for further details.

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HOT TIP

Duncan McGilvray, course manager at Letchworth Golf Club:

The following points, which I have wanted to discuss with colleagues for some time, are, I believe, essential so that the perception of us and the work we do improves, as it certainly needs to.

POINT 1: If we manage a golf course we should be titled golf course managers. No employer will argue that point unless you do NOT manage a golf course.

POINT 2: We, as golf course managers, must hold seminars in the clubhouse so that all facets of our work can be presented and our golfing membership can question our actions and decisions. All golf course managers who do this (and there are a growing number) know that our work is made easier if we make the effort to communicate (a point expanded on elsewhere in this issue).

POINT 3: We present (as well as conduct) ourselves in a professional manner. This, in part, can be achieved by supplying our greenstaff with a uniform (not overalls) so that an image of professionalism can be projected.

HOT TIPS



BIGGA luminaries such as past chairman John Crawford, vice chairman Barry Heaney and new chairman John Millen (pictured) heard a rich variety of greenkeeping facts at the National Education Conference, at Warwick University. Greenkeeper International was there too and presents seven hot tips from the industry's hottest speakers.

HOT TIP

**David Oatis,
director, green
section
Northeastern
Region, USA**

The grass growing environment that a particular green or tee is located in has a big impact on water management and this is sometimes overlooked. Potted, shaded greens produce weaker, less stress-tolerant turf that is more prone to disease problems. This type of turf requires less water due to its reduced

vigour and because the lack of sunlight and air circulation reduce the amount of water lost through evaporation. The end result is that thinning and loss are common problems for turf located in a poor grass-growing environment.

We regularly recommend trying to improve poor grass-growing environments through tree removal and even through the installation of electric fans. This may sound like a peculiar suggestion, but properly used fans can improve the turf's

ability to cool itself. They can also help reduce disease pressure by reducing the level of free moisture. Obviously, they are not appropriate in every situation and removing trees and underbrush often improve a bad grass-growing environment to a sufficient degree. However, electric fans offer an effective alternative for especially difficult locations.



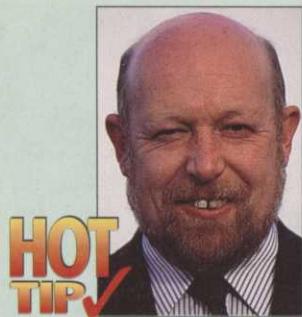
Joseph Baidy, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

While many of us have a self-image as a nature lover and a steward of the land, our public image doesn't quite measure up. A 1990 National Golf Foundation survey in the US found that golfers were evenly split on whether they thought that the fertilisers and chemicals used on golf courses pollute surface waters. But statistics from a National Golf Foundation survey one year later showed that golfers are almost twice as likely as non-golfers to describe the overall effect of golf on their community as "very positive" or "positive" – 67 per cent of golfers chose a positive description, compared to 35 per cent of non-golfers.

It's not that non-golfers feel that the game is a threat to the community – only 3 per cent said golf has a "negative" or "very negative" effect. Most non-golfers surveyed said that golf has no effect on their community (that's 32 per cent) or that they didn't know (that's 30 per cent). Altogether, that is 62 per cent of the non-golfing public that we might be able to reach with good news about golf and the environment.

As greenkeepers, we need to make sure, first and foremost, that we do a good job environmentally; and secondly, that we let everyone know about it. We must make sure we tell our good news, for there will always be someone else to share whatever bad news there may be. We must continue to sharpen our public relations and media relations skills.

QUOTE OF THE CONFERENCE
'When everyone else was into the Sex Pistols and punk rock, I was into Jim Arthur' – Kevin Munt, course manager at The Buckinghamshire Golf Club.



HOT TIP

Barrie Gregson, course supervisor at Mottram Hall Hotel

I have sand greens at Mottram Hall. God, have I had problems. Some of these problems are from a form of compaction and compaction is not something I would normally worry about on sand greens.

My greens are sat on a very correct stone carpet which, in turn, is blinded by a geotextile separation membrane. On top of this is a sand which, although it conforms to a recognised specification, everything is at its maximum regarding particle sizes.

Add to this the fact that the depth varies somewhere between 12 and 18 inches and you may start to recognise signs of problems.

Firstly, with natural rainfall and irrigation, plus normal maintenance, the 2 per cent clay and the 2 per cent silt and the 2 per cent fines have all started migrating downwards leaving all the larger stuff at the top. When the fines reached the geotextile membrane, they blocked it up. This caused three distinct problems:

1. Water cannot pass through at the rate it was intended;
2. Now the build-up of fines in the lower reaches act as a compacted layer and a filter for any nutrients that are trying to pass by;
3. Water and nutrients race through the top 4 or 5 inches where my grassroots need them to be. Because of this filtering effect I have got what can only be described as a hot layer, and when roots reach it, they burn off causing the death of the plant.

Our solution was to cut through the membrane. But without a separation layer, the sand would eventually pass through into the drainage stone below and block that up too. So we hired in a verti-drain, a big verti-drain, the one with the 18-inch tines on and passed

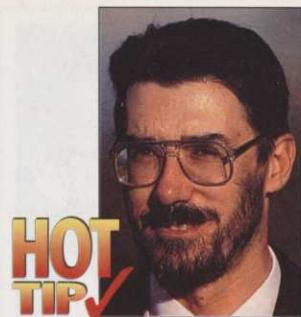
over each and every green.

We followed up the verti-drain by filling in the holes with Lyt-ag, the idea being that it would act as a blinding layer, therefore stopping the migration of sand but allowing the reasonably normal amounts of water and nutrients to pass through. Incidentally, we filled in the holes by hand using scoops and funnels. You should have seen my lads' faces! In general, it worked. It solved three of my problems, but not the other 17. When I've solved those, you'll read about it here first.



Happy is the greenkeeper who knows what his members want.

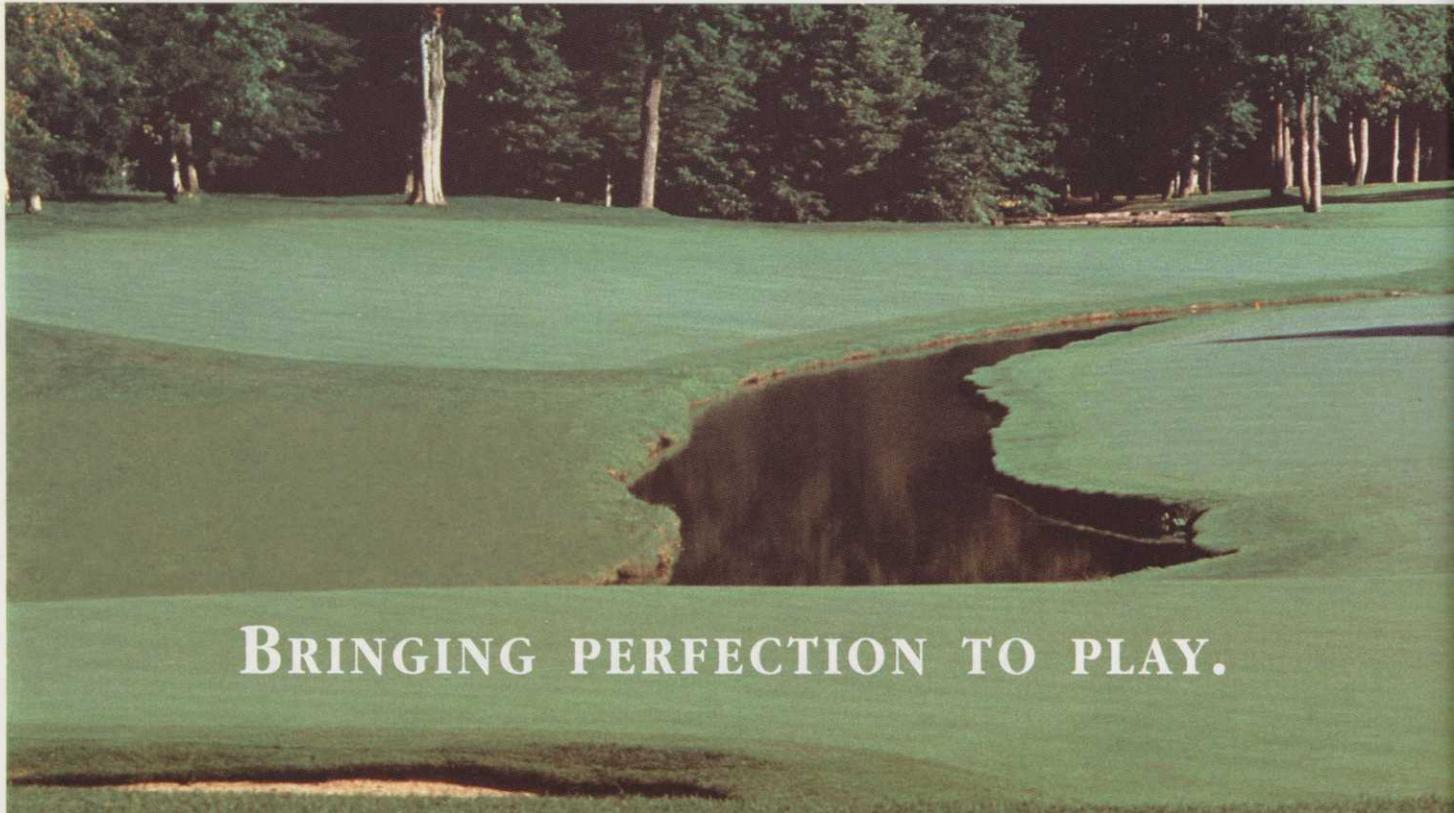
But, remember, lady members are the most important because most of them sleep with male members – I mean, they are usually married to male members. It is very important for the greenkeeper to understand this fact, especially when constructing a new ladies' tee or just working on the course on certain days. Treat them right or forever rue the day. Awesome pressure comes from this direction.



Alan Mitchell, course manager at The Hampshire Golf Club

A golf course can be built and open for play in less than a year. Work on The Hampshire Golf Club, a pay-and-play course with membership aimed between a municipal course and a members' club, began early last year and by September it was open for limited play. Built on downland near Andover, the site boasts an 18-hole course, a nine-hole par 3 course and a driving range.

Dry weather during February and March helped the project and the greens were prepared and sown by April. An 80/20 rootzone of Kingsley sand and fen soil was chosen. All fairways and tees were sown by the end of May. The installation of the irrigation system was not completed until September and erratic irrigation resulted in some



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who for three generations have made some of the lightest, quietest and most powerful machines which provide unrivalled accuracy and quality of finish. And today we're still working to keep you on course with a range

patchy germination on greens.

Although inevitably very young, the course opened for limited play at the end of September and was played throughout the winter, only closing on one day when covered with snow. The greens came through remarkably well and are now improving quickly with the spring growth.

Because of the need for cover, the greens were fed with high nitrogen fertiliser until the end of October and we were on guard for disease problems. In the event, we had little disease although it was often a damp winter.

In November, we constructed the nine-hole par 3 and had the greens ready for sowing at the beginning of December. Wanting to speed the growing in of the greens, I decided to sow at once with pre-germinated seed and cover the greens with gro-cover. We sowed the second week in December but were only able to get the covers on two greens because of heavy rain. The seed germinated anyway due to the mild wet weather and by the middle of January we had a light cover. At the end of February we commenced feeding and in March we were able to start weekly mowing. This has gained us several months on the greens.

If we can continually work on just these three points, I am certain we will be held in much higher regard by our employer and even the general public – that way the greenkeeper, who in my experience always puts pride in his work before all else, will be rewarded with higher esteem and a better salary. He will then give a far superior service and therefore better product, ie golf course.

CONTROVERSY OF THE CONFERENCE

You would imagine that one of the 17 talks would have provided the most controversy. But, no, it was the sixth to last question at the quiz night. The question was: How many broken clubs can a golfer replace during each round? Most contestants said none, but the answer Trivial Pursuits gives is one. We checked with the R&A who said: "As many as you like provided they were broken DURING THE COURSE OF NATURAL PLAY." Thus, if the player swings at a ball and wraps his club round a tree in the follow-through, he can replace it. But, if he swings and misses and wraps his club round the tree in temper, he can't. If a golf cart runs over his bag and breaks all his clubs, he can get a new set. If he chuck's the bag in a lake, he can't.



David Oatis, director, green section Northeastern Region, USA

What can be done to avert a disaster, such as massive loss of turf? The first step is to take an offensive approach rather than a defensive one. Act, don't react. Call in appropriate consultants and begin a fact-finding mission. Analyse the course's strong points as well as its weak ones. Look for potential problems in the water management systems, including irrigation and drainage, since failure here guarantees turf loss. Examine the growing environment around greens and tees. What is the air circulation situation like? Are trees becoming a problem? Is the majority of the turf the best-suited species or variety? Does your turf have a reasonable

chance for survival if the weather becomes unfavourable? All of these questions need to be answered before a plan of attack can be devised.

The golfers must be kept well informed. New programmes are more readily accepted by those who understand why failures occurred and what is being done to prevent them from recurring. They should be made to feel part of the decision-making process. Do not be surprised if the problems are complex and cannot be solved by a single solution. Usually, a variety of factors are involved. Don't fall into the trap of looking for a painless solution to your course's problems. It is very rare for a single piece of equipment, soil additive, growth enhancer, pesticide etc to turn a programme around. Severe problems rarely develop overnight and solutions require time, funding and patience to work effectively. In short, do not wait for disaster to strike, anticipate it. If disaster has already struck, use it to help sell the necessary corrective programmes. Don't be afraid to look at a bad year in a good light and use it to the golf course's advantage.

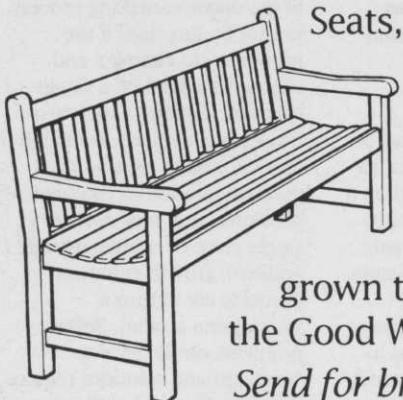


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AD REF
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AD REF
35

Why would Peter Oosterhuis, once one of the biggest names in European golf, leave the Hollywood set at the prestigious Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles for a pay-and-play course on a former rubbish tip near Heathrow Airport?

Because Stockley Park is special.

It is a Robert Trent Jones Senior design. It has USGA-spec greens and tees, and wall-to-wall irrigation. Set in the middle of a 250-acre country park, the 18-hole course is owned by the London Borough of Hillingdon but run by the PGA European Tour, Mark McCormack's International Management Group and Stockley Park Consortium, the developers of the course and nearby business park.

And although it opened less than a year ago (last June), it has staged a Challenge Tour event and it is set to host a Senior Tour competition.

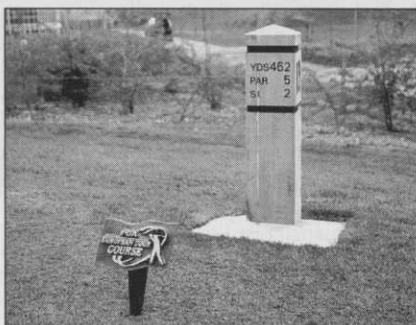
"The intention is to have a great golf course that anyone can play," says course manager Cameron McMillan, the youngest of Jack's sons.

Furniture and fittings

Because it is new and different, we thought we'd use it as our case study for our annual course furniture and fittings feature.

There is nothing too fancy here because the 6723-yard course is in the middle of a public park and things could easily get stolen or vandalised.

What they have got that's a bit different is EC regulation signage warning pedestrians of golf in play, horses, vehicles crossings, not to swim in the three lakes, keep to the footpaths etc. These signs have standard colours (like road signs) and pictures as well as words for the ethnic minorities who don't speak English. There are also signs telling horse riders to keep to the bridlepath and



Some of the 30 signs at Stockley Park

Sign of the times



telling dog owners where they can exercise their pets. One particularly interesting idea is information boards telling everyone about the wildlife and trees in the park.

Hole information is carried on 2ft high 'telegraph poles', but Cameron is thinking of replacing these because the elm wood is splitting and Peter thinks they're intrusive. They would prefer plates set in the ground.

Also on the tees are pineapple-shaped tee markers. There are eight ball washers on the course and half a dozen rubbish bins in addition to the bins in the park. There are no benches for golfers, just for the public in the park.

The park was built to gain planning permission for the business park. Having an upmarket business park, Stockley Park Consortium decided to build an upmarket golf course next to it as part of the country park. London Borough of Hillingdon sold the landfill site to the developers for £1, they developed it and sold it back for £1. Once handed over, it was then leased to Stockley Park Golf, which is made up of Stockley Park Consortium, the PGA European Tour and International Management Group, for 25 years.

The developers used gravel and London clay from the flat site for the business park, when construction began in 1985. The holes created were filled in with rubbish from the business park area. The capping was taken off and more landfill was put on top of landfill to create the contours Robert Trent Jones Snr wanted. The site was then recapped.

They knew the landfill would generate methane for 10-15 years so they installed a methane extraction system which sucks methane to the far end of the golf course and burns it off - enough to power a 1 megawatt generator for ten years but the cost of building and running a generating plant was too prohibitive.

Transition layer

The golf course construction continued with the creation of a "transition layer" (subsoil) upon which man-made topsoil (a mixture of the original capping material and sewage sludge) was put. This is proving to be a very good growing medium: "We'll have to cut the fairways daily in the summer," says Cameron. Because it was man-made, they had to "plant" 1.5 million non-casting earthworms.

During the construction, 4.5 million cubic metres of material was moved in nine months. To get a better idea of how much earth this is, imagine a one acre base with all this soil and rubbish piled on top - it would be higher than Mt Snowdon.

Once the land had been shaped, approximately £3.5 million was spent turning it into a golf course. The fairways and rough were seeded with perennial ryegrass and smooth stalk meadow grass, the tees with

perennial ryegrass, smooth stalk meadow grass and fescue, and the greens with Colonial bent/fescue. *Poa annua* found its own way there - "I inherited that," Cameron is quick to point out.

140,000 indigenous trees were planted - a mixture of fast and slow-growing species. The course also has 56 bunkers (large and unusual shapes, as you'd expect from an American architect).

The tees and greens were built to US standards, so they need a lot of water and feeding, but



Cameron McMillan, right, with Peter Oosterhuis. Top: an aerial shot of the course

STOCKLEY PARK'S MACHINERY

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- 2 Jacobsen Tri-Kings
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- 1 Jacobsen ST 5111
- 1 Jacobsen LF 3810
- 1 Charter House Topdresser
- 1 Hardi Eagle 600 Sprayer
- 2 Jacobsen 810 Express Buggies
- 1 Iseki 545 Tractor
- 1 Iseki 320 Tractor
- 1 David Brown 885 Tractor
- 1 JCB Excavator
- 1 Sisis 6ft Sweeper
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- 5 Allett Tournament Hand Mowers
- 1 Nissan 4x4
- 1 Ryan Sod Cutter
- 1 Ryan Core Harvester
- 1 Charter House Slitter
- 1 Jacobsen Crewchief
- 1 John Deere Bunker Rake
- 1 PZ Urgent Drainage Rodder



Information boards tell park-goers all about the trees and wildlife.

they've stood up well to more than 25,000 rounds in their first year. Water for the greens, tees, and fairways comes from a Rainbird system supplied by one borehole.

So that is how the golf course was born. Or to be precise, a golf course, £1m clubhouse, nine football pitches, a district park with picnic areas, bridlepaths, and footpaths.

There is a lot of grass to cut but the only handwork is around bunkers. Ten greenkeepers, including 28-year-old Cameron and a mechanic, look after the site. They contract out the methane extraction and landscaping. Five men look after the trees and are following a "scorched earth" policy regularly spraying off weeds with Paraquat.

Recently, the greenkeepers have been busy REMOVING sand from the bunkers. Cameron estimates they've taken out 700 tons – taking the sand from 1ft deep to 4 or 5 ins. They did six holes in the autumn and the rest in March – "three weeks constantly digging out with an excavator." They will use the excess sand for topdressing the fairways. Another prob-

lem with the sand is it is too light and fluffy and for the Challenge Tour competition they had to water it down by hand.

Cameron, a five handicap golfer, has only played the course five or six times. "I've been too busy," he says.

Of the five McMillan sons, all of whom run courses, he has the lowest handicap "but I'm not the best," he says modestly.

Cameron has been a greenkeeper for 12 years, starting as an apprentice under father Jack at Sunningdale. He left there when he was 21 to take charge at Liphook in Hampshire. After two years, he went to Germany and got involved in golf course construction. He also helped build some courses in the UK, including the back nine at Aldwark Manor. After more than three years building courses he returned to management at Laleham GC in Chertsey, Surrey. Then, last June, when Stockley Park opened, the father-to-be moved round the M25 – and was impressed with what he found: the flat landfill site had been turned into a pretty country park with some of the newly-made

GOLF COURSE SIGNS

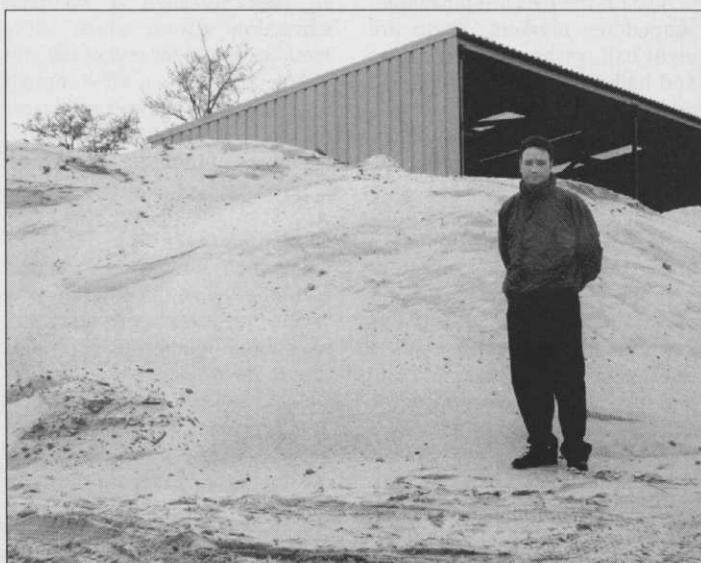


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Just some of the 700 tons of sand taken from the bunkers

When looking good is par for the course

A polished granite effect yardage marker plinth case, made from tough maintenance free polyethylene which, when filled with sand, gives the same stability as concrete, is available from manufacturers Tacit of Rugby. Tacit also have a new-style ball washer with maintenance free case and an unbreakable tee marker which is domed shaped and made from cast aluminium. Tel: 0788 568818.

Geebro claims its Lister range of teak outdoor furniture is the largest in the world. The range covers benches like the popular Mendip, bins, tables, troughs, chairs and picnic suites. Tel: 0323 840771.

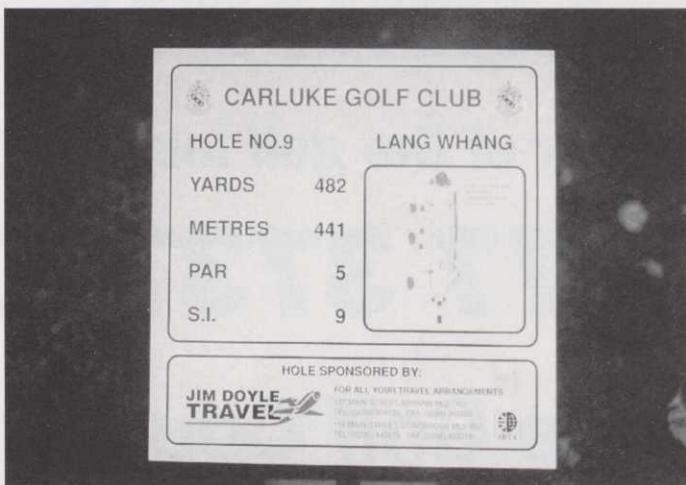


Nicoll Graphics' engraved tee plates use a photo-chemical etching process that allows you to incorporate as much or as little detail you require, eg just distance details or the complete 'stroke saver' type hole plan.

The Liverpool-based firm's markers are chemically etched onto 2-6mm thick metal plates, finished with a coarse stoved paint, graphic detail coloured to your specification and coated with an all-weather fluoropolymer spray. The markers have blind fixings or can be fitted to a West African mahogany board with colour-coded 1in box section steel legs (as shown). Tel: 051 2647331.



BEV Golf Equipment of Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd, are offering golf clubs FREE tee markers and other on-course equipment. They make their money through selling advertising on the equipment. Tel: 0492 622309.



Shelley Signs manufacture their signs in glass reinforced plastic with the designs and text inset



As well as signs manufactured from stove enamelled aluminium, the Golf Sign Company also supply tee markers, main entrance signs complete with full-colour crests, tournament and information boards.
Tel: 051 6478081.

to form an integral part of the surface. Their range covers on-course signs including tee markers,

directional, instructional and caution signs. Signs are also supplied for car park and club house, as well as one-off panels for leadership boards and other 'specials'.
Tel: 0952 541483.

Insurance protection forms part of BIGGA membership package

Accidents happen. We all know that. They happen at home, or playing sport, or travelling – and at work.

And when they happen, it can be painful in more ways than one. Accidents can result in severe financial hardship. That's why BIGGA, in conjunction with Fenchurch Northern, provide to all members some protection within the membership package.

Benefits include £5,000 upon death, permanent total disablement, loss of limbs or blindness. Loss of hearing in both ears means £2,500. Toes, fingers and thumbs are worth £50 – £1,000. For temporary total disablement (payable for 104 weeks but excluding the first week of any period of incapacity) you would receive £35 per week.

In common with all insurance policies there are exclusions. For example, benefits will not be paid out if the injury is self-inflicted (eg. suicide), or if you were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Nor will it pay out if you are "pregnant or suffering from sickness or disease not resulting from any bodily injury (ie. where the injury cannot be identified with a specific accident) or suffer from bodily injury due to a gradually operating cause (ie. any injury/illness which is pre-existing or cannot be identified with a specific accident occurring during the period of the policy)."

If an accident occurs the circumstances should be reported to Fenchurch Northern immediately. Fenchurch Northern are at Bramley Business Centre, 533 Stanningley Road, Leeds LS13 4DA. Telephone 0532 558400 fax 0532 570310.

Members can increase the benefits on application. These additional benefits are available on completion of a health questionnaire at relatively low premiums ranging from £15 – £60 dependent upon the benefits required.



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Duncan Beall, left and Will Laughton discuss the progress of the 17th tee at Rufford Park Golf Centre

Farmers build course on tight budget

The developers of a new golf course in Robin Hood country have shown that it can be done without robbing anyone.

Will Laughton, one of the farmers behind the Rufford Park Golf Centre in Sherwood Forest, says they spent £350,000 building an 18-hole par 70 course, nine-hole short course and driving range. There is also a 2,300 sq ft clubhouse, which they have deliberately not gone over the top on. "I don't think much money is made in a clubhouse," he told Greenkeeper International, pointing out that many recent development failures have been due to lavish clubhouses.

Mr Laughton says that golf course development is the last thing to enter without sufficient capital, but argues that a tight budget is more effective than having unlimited resources: "It means you have to work with the land, rather than against it."

Duncan Beall of Johnsons Seeds, who have been involved with the project from day one, confirms this approach: "I was given two targets: get the seed mixture right and get the price right."

The course, which opens to members in July and other users in August, is built on sandland so Mr Beall looked for grasses that were compatible with the indigenous grasses of the area and which would be resistant to drought.

To meet Mr Laughton's demands, Johnsons Seeds found it necessary to make some compromises but Mr Beall says this did not cause him concern. "We worked together and came up with the right mixture at a realistic price."

With input from the Sports Turf Research Institute, Mr Beall opted for fescue/bent fairways, using a good proportion of Jupiter slender

creeping red fescue for drought tolerance and fine leaves.

The course is now complete and Will Laughton and his brother Bruce (who is in charge of course maintenance following some private tuition in greenkeeping) are entirely satisfied with the result. "We researched all over the world before embarking on this project and quickly came to the view that if there was anything we didn't understand, we would pay for professional advice," said Will Laughton.

He says construction consultant David Coussells of Milton Keynes (who worked on the two courses at Woburn) did an excellent job, as did Beall.

"I could have purchased my seed anywhere but I required technical advice throughout the project. Duncan Beall didn't cost anything but in retrospect I would have been willing to pay for his services or to pay more for the seed."

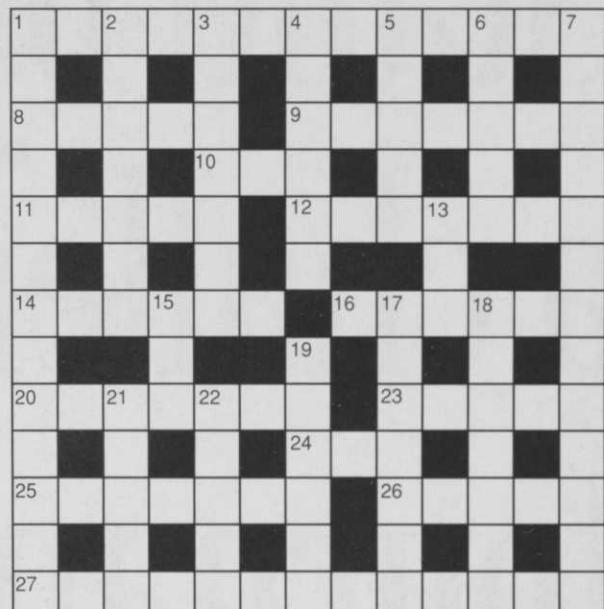
Will Laughton says that in contrast there are some professionals around who work to a formula that doesn't allow for the natural characteristics of a site. "Farmers may not necessarily know much about golf courses but they do know about land."

Rufford Park has achieved its budgeted membership of 500 and will be looking at playing patterns before deciding whether to accept more members.

There is a trend for public courses to act as feeders to more expensive private clubs. However, the Laughtons hope to break the mould by providing facilities that match the best that private clubs can offer. The head greenkeeper is Peter Hunter, who is working on his first golf course but was chosen because of his man management and motivation skills.

GREENKEEPER'S CROSSWORD

Compiled by Mark G Smith, assistant at Frilford Heath GC



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Golf competitions beyond the level of tournaments (13)
- 8 Calibrated straight edge in the workshop (5)
- 9 Obtained precisely the best terms for supplies (7)
- 10 Previous name of the Saltex trade exhibition (abbrev.). (1,1,1)
- 11 Hale winner of the 1990 US Open (5)
- 12 GC, Edmond, Oklahoma, venue of the 1988 USPGA Championship (3-4)
- 14 Initial effect of close mowing and drought on fine turf grass (6)
- 16 The Lapwing or Plover (*L. Vanellus Vanellus*) (6)
- 20 Fertilisers may do it slowly or quickly (7)
- 23 White (*L. Cupressus Thyoides*) (5)
- 24 Governing body of golf based at The Scores, St Andrews, Fife (abbrev.) (1,1,1)
- 25 Corporate sponsors of the USLPGA Dinah Shore Classic (7)
- 26 Olin US Open Champion in 1934
- 27 How striping patterns render greens and fairways! (4,2,7)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Last player to achieve back to back wins in the US Open (6,7)
- 2 Blooming (7)
- 3 Grass clippings. Two-balls we hear! (7)
- 4 Portland CC, Portland venue of the 1946 USPGA Championship (6)
- 5 A plant stem (5)
- 6 Bury or cover with earth (5)
- 7 Outcome of excessive rainfall (6,7)
- 13 Overall result of the 1969 Ryder Cup Match (3)
- 15 A spring of water to watch (3)
- 17 Local currency in which the winner of the Portuguese Open may be paid (7)
- 18 Ideal driving area to spread wear (4,3)
- 19 To play a provisional ball (slang) (2-4)
- 21 Broad and usually rounded segmental divisions of a leaf (5)
- 22 A Golf Club's staff are its greatest despite never appearing on a Balance Sheet (5)

★ Solve the crossword puzzle and you could win either a BIGGA blazer (worth £87.95) or £50 in cash! Send completed entries to: Crossword Competition, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aline, York YO6 2NF.

Closing date May 24, 1994. First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win the prize. Photocopy your entry if you don't want to cut up your magazine.

Winner of the March crossword was David Goodchild, first assistant at Ellesborough GC, Aylesbury, who selected a blazer as his prize.

Winner of the April competition was Elliott Small, course manager at Tulliallan GC, Kinardine on Forth, who also chose a blazer.



Name:

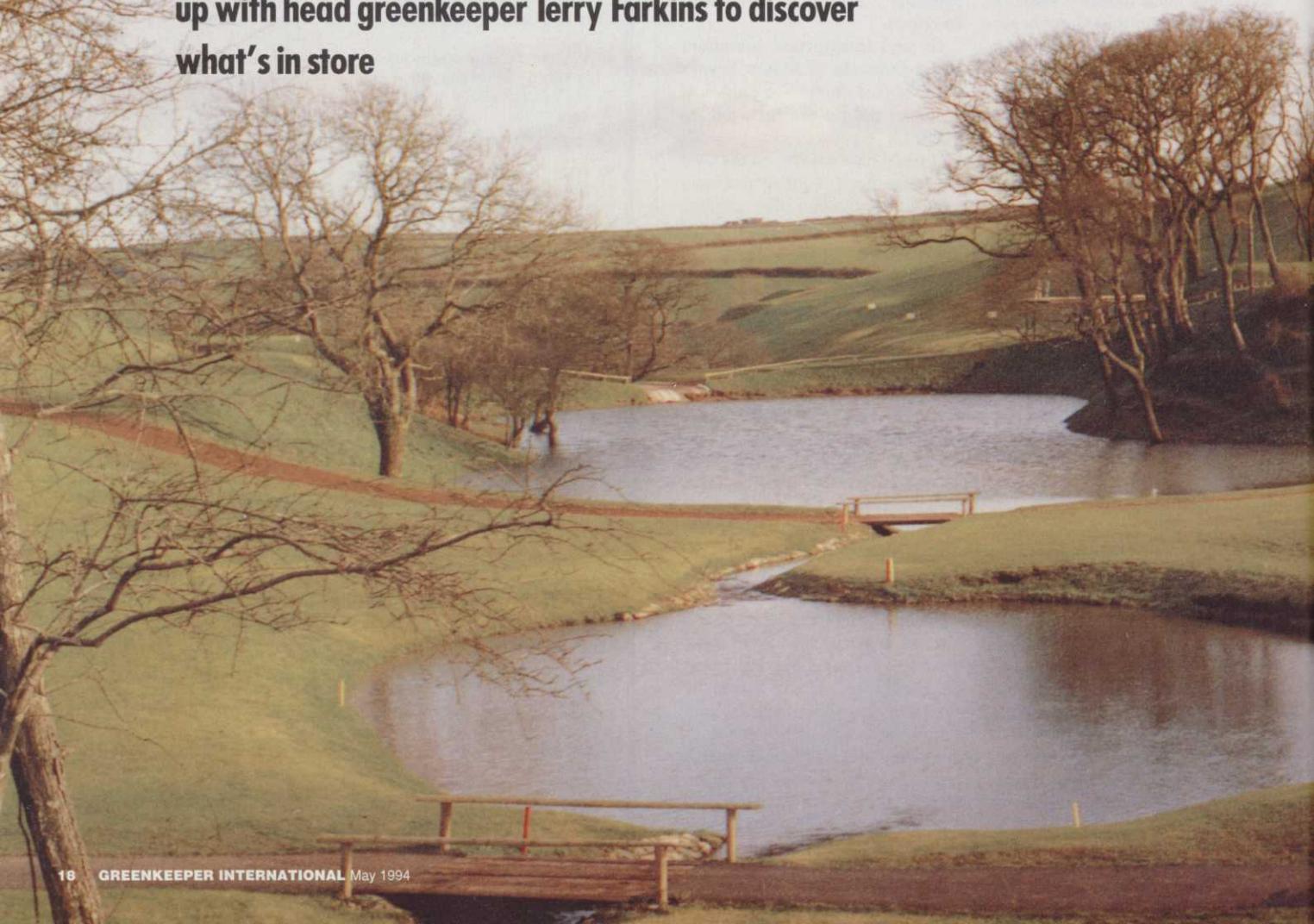
Address:

If I'm the winner, please send me £50 cash or BIGGA blazer, size

Stand by for a challenging tournament



**BIGGA's 1994 National Golf Tournament,
again sponsored by ICI Professional Products,
moves to Dartmouth on August 1-3. Chris Boiling met
up with head greenkeeper Terry Farkins to discover
what's in store**



Bring plenty of balls with you if you're coming to Dartmouth Golf and Country Club for this year's ICI-sponsored National Tournament. And a scuba diving outfit might not go amiss as this picturesque course boasts seven water hazards, including an irrigation lake that holds 1.5 million gallons.

The tip from head greenkeeper Terry Farkins is: "Don't take your driver out until the 6th." After that the 6663-yard (off the white tees) par 72 course becomes more open.

"Once you've played it a few times you know where to stick your driver in your bag and you know where to get your iron out," says 12-handicapper Terry, who joined the course two and a half years ago halfway through its construction.

When I went down to Devon to see him and view the course, the main thing on his mind was when were his six men going to be paid?

Receivers were called in on March 28 and are running the club for the banks which financed this £6m project. Although there is much uncertainty about the future of the club, Terry has assured BIGGA and ICI that it is "business as usual" and they are looking forward "to welcoming all BIGGA members and feel confident you will all enjoy our superb golf course and leisure facilities."

These facilities include a £4million, 40,000sq ft clubhouse on an elevated position overlooking the 18th green and surrounding South Hams countryside. On the ground floor of the clubhouse is a leisure club with swimming pool, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi, solarium and gymnasium. On the top floor is a conference/function suite that can seat 300 delegates or guests.

The complex was

a local property developer's dream. Ralph Hitchens, a keen golfer, wanted to build something special. He's done that, although he's no longer involved to take advantage of it.

Ralph bought the land, which is five miles west of Dartmouth, from three farmers. Englishman Jeremy Pern was brought in to design his first UK course. A massive earth-moving programme went into action and, a year later, race ace Nigel Mansell, the club's first president, opened it in August 1992.

There are 27 holes, 18 of which make up the Championship course with the other nine being an easier Club course. All the greens were constructed to a USGA spec. The front and back nines of the Championship course are very different. The first holes are very picturesque with several man-made valleys to drive through and lakes to hit over. The back nine are more "linksy", set 500ft above sea level with man-made mounds framing the fairways.

There are just over 50 bunkers on the course but some are very big. One bunker on the 9th required 100 tons of sand.

Terry's favourite holes are the 4th, 5th and 18th.

The 4th is 491 yards off the white tees, through a valley with a lake near the green. "If you get a par 5 you can be really pleased," he says. "With the water, it's easy to walk off the green with a 10 on your card."

His tip is to take two 4 irons and then an 8 or 9 iron.

The 145-yard 5th is a very pretty hole. Sitting in a valley, the green butts onto a

lake. When we were there, the pin was very close to the edge of the lake – and Terry says it's one of only a few pin positions possible on this hole because of the size and contours of the green.

The 18th is a spectacular finishing hole requiring a 214-yard tee shot over a lake to a green guarded by three bunkers. The tees are terraced into the hillside opposite the clubhouse.

At Dartmouth there are four sets of tees on each hole – red, blue, white and gold. From the gold tee, the 18th measures 244 yards. When the gold championship tee is used on the 10th, it completely changes the hole. From this tee the drive must carry 190 yards over a wood-filled valley (home to several badger sets) to reach the landing area. A sheer rock face borders the fairway to the left, whilst to the right the valley plunges away to a stream. A good drive on this 407-yard par 4 is rewarded with a comfortable second shot to the green. From the white tees the hole is a relatively straightforward 384 yards.

Getting to the greens is only half the fun. When you get there we think you'll like what you find. Predominantly creeping bent (Cobra) grass on sand (see panel), these greens have a reputation for being slick. Terry expects them to have a stimpmeter reading of 8.5. "I'm not a great lover of that, but that's what I'm asked to produce," he explained.

Another thing that you will like is



Terry Farkins, 29, is a former Cannington College student and was the '91 regional winner in the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year awards. Terry spent eight years at Torquay, where he was born and still lives before hearing about the Dartmouth job. He joined after 12 holes had been constructed. The developer, Ralph Hitchens, said to him: "There it is, show me what you can do. He let me run my own show." Terry had the back nine ready to play from seed in six months. "We were talking about closing it for the winter but because it had established itself so well, and they needed the money, we stayed open."



THE GREENS

The greens at Dartmouth Golf and Country Club use a USGA method of construction. There is a herring-bone drainage system set into the subsoil, followed by a 100mm-deep layer of 6mm gravel. The rootzone was laid on top, no blinding layer was needed. The 250mm-deep rootzone mix is 90-10 sand and fen soil. The sand came from a local quarry (Watts Blake and Bearne) and

is described as irregular to sub rounded with particle sizes of 93 per cent between 0.25 and 2mm. PH is around 6 to 6.5. "We have had no problems with the sand, it is of excellent requirement as it does not compact."

The seed mixture after construction was as follows, but they have now introduced creeping bent (Cobra) to the sward and this has dominated

the surface:

- Chewings fescue (*Festuca rubra commutator*) - Frida - 60 per cent
 - Slender creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra litavallis*) - Rufilla - 20 per cent
 - Oregon bent (*Agrostis Castillana*) - Highland - 10 per cent
 - Browntop bent (*Agrostis tenuis*) - Bardot - 10 per cent
- Tees are subsoil graded with

falls from front to back and are finished off with a 4in layer of site soil and sand, mixed 50/50. The seed used was the same as the greens but with smooth stalked meadow (Julia) and creeping bent (Cobra). The fairway is similar, except the Cobra has been replaced by perennial rye (Hermes), a dwarfed variety. All seeds were supplied by British Seed Houses.



The driving range, with a dangerous slope for maintenance

the atmosphere at the club. It's a modern club, set up by a businessman who wanted a place where people could come and unwind. You can dress casually in the bar and restaurant. And with all the other facilities, you can still enjoy your visit even if you don't play well.

Nervous

We thought Terry might be nervous at the prospect of dozens of greenkeepers descending on his course. But he's not. "Greenkeepers are more sympathetic than anyone, because they understand each other's problems. Every green's different, every green has its own problems. Some days people play a course and moan about it, and the only difference in it is the cut. They moan about a green not being very good, and the only difference is that it was left that day. Golfers don't see it that way, greenkeepers do. They can see the type of surface and grasses someone is working with, and understand the problems that they've got."

Dartmouth was designed for a major competition but, because of the financial situation, the course has had to stay open all year, apart from when it's

snowed. Golfers always get to play the main greens and are on grass tees all year. "We've got good tee and greens construction," says Terry proudly.

To keep on top of thatch build-up on the creeping bent greens, Terry uses an aggressive programme of hollow-coring, slitting, and verti-cutting. They verti-cut every three or four weeks during the growing season. This programme also stresses the annual meadow grass.

It's a high maintenance course with many banks that need mowing and large, unusual shaped bunkers.

The front nine, in particular, needs more manicuring because it's meant to be pretty. Because the second nine is more linksy with vast mounding "we can get away with more and we can leave it more rough and ragged".

The large mounds and steep banks also make it a dangerous site to maintain. The driving range is particularly hazardous and they dare not venture on it if there has been the slightest dew.

Terry's biggest problem, however, is the bunkers. It's not just their size, but the sand is so light and fluffy and the course so windy that they are constantly having to refill them.

Top soil shortages

The first season Terry was here he concentrated on getting the greens right, then the tees, and now he is looking to improve the fairways by weed spraying, verti-cutting and scarifying.

One thing he has noticed with the recent wet winter is that the fairways drain well. This is partly because of the shortage of top soil following the construction of the mounds. There is supposed to be two inches of top soil all over, but it's a bit sparse in places. However, the grass seems to be growing well: "We've used a lot of nutrients (high nitrogen and agricultural fertiliser) to get it established, but the result now is that you only get boggy areas in the few spots where there is too much top soil," explains Terry.

They have been verti-drained twice since opening.

When I visited the course in early April, Terry and his team were looking to topdress with fine sand "but because of the bad weather we weren't able. We're two weeks away from a county match, so we're limited as to what we can do. So maybe next week I'll verti-cut them, and give them just a light dressing if I can get away with it, and give them another feed and get them going again. As soon as the match is finished, we'll be in hollow-coring, overseeding with creeping bent and top-dressing."

Being a modern club, there is no greens committee and Terry has good communication with the pro (director of golf) and the members and is able to oversee etc at the best times for germination.

Terry, who originally wanted to be a cricket groundsman, tries to play once a week himself and he tries to play as many other courses as possible "because you always think you've got the biggest problems, but you go somewhere else and you see they've got bigger problems than you."

One of the key people in his

seven-man team is Steve Hunt, who worked the land when it was a farm. He knows the land inside out and, according to Terry, is an excellent weather forecaster.

He says it will great in August, so the only other thing to worry about is the pin positioning: "I'm always fair," says Terry, "at least they're on the greens." But sometimes only just.

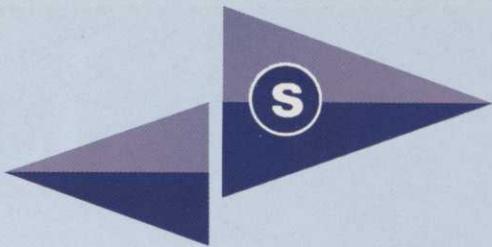
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The £139,000 worth of equipment in use at the club includes:

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- 2 Lloyds Pallidins pedestrian mowers
- 1 Outfield Spiker
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- 2 Pro 24 strimmers
- 1 Toro fairway mower (223 D)
- 1 Toro Sand Pro bunker rake
- 1 Cushman power unit
- 1 Top Dresser
- 1 Vari Tyne Aerator
- 1 66-gallon sprayer
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- 1 Allen Reciprocator
- 1 Cyclone fertiliser distributor
- 1 Small trailer
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- 2 Knapsack sprayers
- 1 21in rotary
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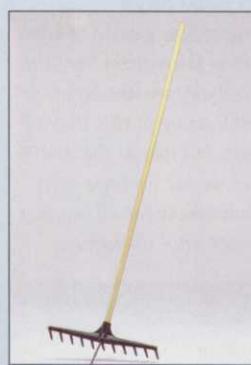
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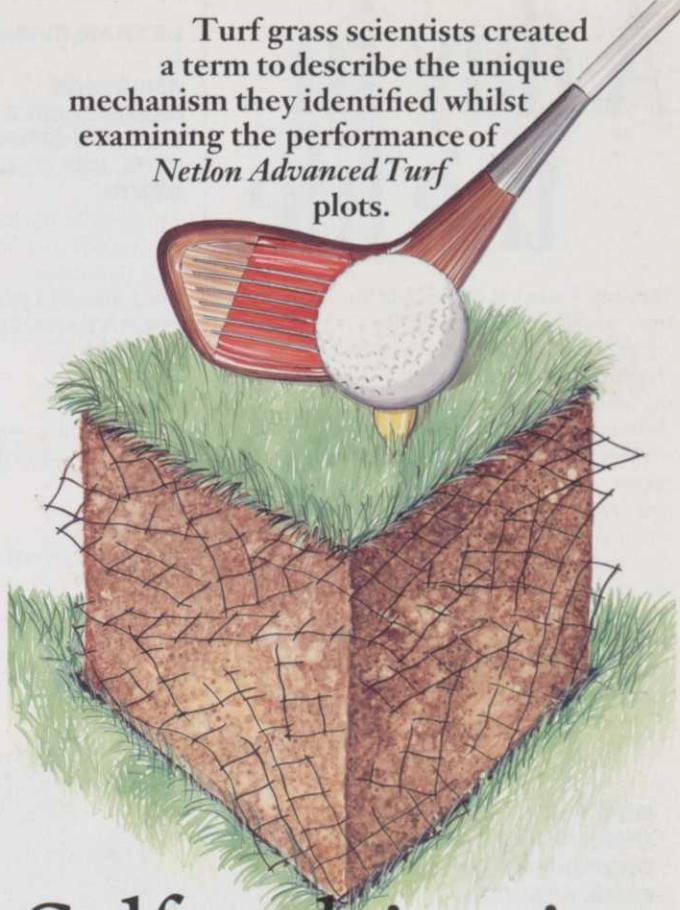
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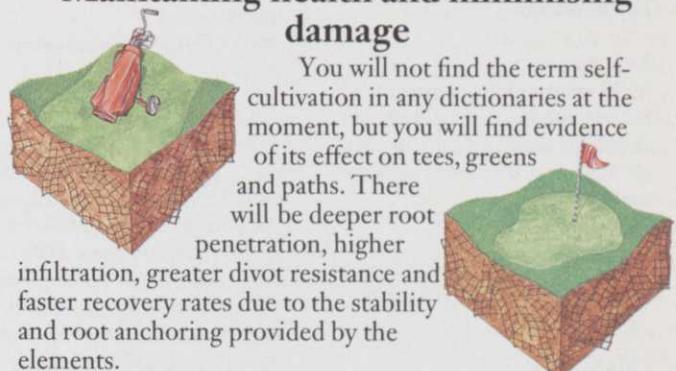
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A day in the life

They say "variety is the spice of life". If that's true, greenkeepers certainly live spicy lives. Judging by a little survey we carried out recently, no-one was doing the same thing on the same day and no-one restricted themselves to just one task.

We contacted two greenkeepers from each region – a course manager/head greenkeeper and deputy course manager or first assistant – to find out what they were doing on one day, also chosen at random – March 17. Here are the replies from the magnificent seven who responded to our request.

• We're going to do this again on June 14. If you would like to take part, drop the editor a note.

GAVIN KYLE, 28 DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER ASHFORD MANOR GOLF CLUB, ASHFORD, MIDDLESEX

An 18-hole parkland course built in 1898 on a gravel subsoil. It covers 102 acres of which approximately 85 acres are manicured and the rest is woodland. 700 members.

Time spent in job: FIVE YEARS

6.45-7am

Check oil and water in machinery. Set up machinery that will be used first thing. Start and leave to warm up. Make sure they are in working order.

7.7.10am

Delegate morning jobs and then plan the rest of the day's work with the course manager.

7.10-7.20am

Attach slitter to Jacobsen workhorse.

7.20-10.30am

Slit-tine greens and surrounds. This operation is usually carried out 1-2 times a week and is carried out regularly in the lead-up to spring when we will start our spring/summer maintenance programme. The greens total approximately 8,200 m sq in size.

10.30-10.55am

Break time.

10.55am-12.45pm

Mow greens with Jacobsen. Greensking to tidy up greens after the recent warm weather has produced some patchy growth. This is also done



in preparation for the weekend competitions. Mowing height is 6mm (1/4in).

12.45-1pm

Wash off machine and make ready for next period of work.

1-3.10pm

Mow fairways with Jacobsen Tri-King. After recent warm weather and with the moisture in the soil, the fairways are starting to grow and are patchy in certain areas. This is also done to tidy up the course for the coming weekend's competitions. It won't be long before we are into our summer programme if weather conditions remain the same.

3.10pm

Head for the bank – it's pay day.

Finishing time: 3.15pm

Typical day?

From a slitting point of view, this will continue while the weather and ground conditions permit before we are fully into our summer work programme. As the month goes on, so the cutting programme will continue while ground conditions permit. The mowing frequency should increase. In some ways it was a typical day and in others it wasn't. We are trying to make the most of the conditions and use them to our own benefits.

GRAHAM EDWARDS, 21 ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER HARPENDEN GOLF CLUB, HARPENDEN, HERTS

An 18-hole parkland course set in 136 acres. 850 members.

Time spent in job: FOUR YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS

7-8am

Tidy up bunkers, getting rid of rabbit scrapes and foot marks.

8-9.30am:

Build new path and steps to the 18th tee.



9.30-10am

Lunch.

10-11.15

Continue with path and steps.

11.15am-12.30pm

Fit new nets in practice nets.

12.30-1pm

Dinner.

1-3.30pm

Continue with practice nets.

Finishing time: 3.30pm

Typical day?

It was a normal day for this time of year.

DOUGLAS DUGUID, 40 HEAD GREENKEEPER WESTHILL GOLF CLUB, ABERDEEN

An 18-hole parkland course set in 109 acres. 700 members.

Time spent in this job: 18 YEARS, SIX MONTHS

7.45-8am:

Closed course under 1 inch of snow.

8-9.30am

Mixing topdressing.

9.30-11.30am

Rebuilding work on the 10th fairway (whole new fairway and tee). The 10th hole at the moment has a severe climb up the side of a hill and we are shaving away the slope to site a tee near the bottom rather than the top. We should have started this job two months ago, but couldn't because of the weather.

11.30-11.45am

Check course and re-open it.

11.45am-12noon

meeting with greens convener about 10th fairway.

12-12.30pm

Lunch.

12.30-1.30pm

Preparing new pins and flags for start of the golf season on March 19.

1.30-2.15pm

Load trailer up with tee markers, litter baskets for putting out before the 19th.

2.15-3.45pm

Working on the 10th fairway.

3.45-4.15pm

Tidying up stones on 16th fairway – they've rolled down from the 10th fairway above.

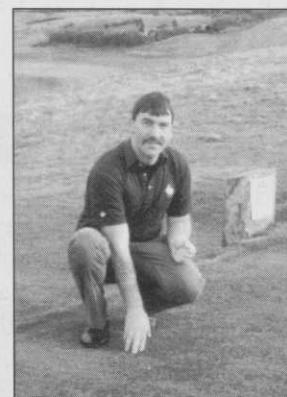
Finishing time: 4.20pm

Typical day?

Unusual as we are rebuilding a new fairway on the 10th. Normally we would be topdressing at this time of year, but due to the weather this winter we have been under snow for all but two weeks since Christmas.



Douglas Duguid



Steve Evans

**HUW MORGAN, 27
COURSE MANAGER
THE WILDERNESSE CLUB,
SEVENOAKS, KENT**

An 18-hole parkland, heath and woodland course set in 300 acres. 750 members

**Time spent in this job:
12 MONTHS**

7.30-8am

Discuss with staff what's on today and give course supervisor a list of work for today.

8-8.30am

Follow sprayer operator for two greens to check that the new sprayer is working OK.

8.30-9am

Collect petrol and diesel from local petrol station.

9-10am

Finish off writing reports for meetings later this month.

10-11am

Break.

11am-1pm

Help out with hollow-tining of greens. Check that machine is still going the correct depth.

1.30-2.30pm

Update computer with the latest budget purchases. Calculate how much has been spent this year ready for a meeting with the treasurer.

2.30-4.10pm

Meet with technical advisor from Hardi Sprayers to discuss our new sprayer.

Finishing time: 4-4.10pm

Typical day?

Fairly typical because we had numerous little problems which I had to solve whilst trying to do my own work.



**DAVID NORTON, 29
HEAD GREENKEEPER
THE BELFRY, WISHAW, WEST
MIDLANDS**

One 18-hole pay-and-play course, The Brabazon, plus the 20-hole Derby with 460 season ticket holders and a driving range. All in 500 acres.

Time spent in job: 20 MONTHS

6.30-6.40am

Check conditions, weather and golf booked on the courses for the day. Decide jobs for the day. Roll call and allocations of day's work.

6.40-8.25am

Inspection and course set up of front 9 holes on Brabazon Course. Markers switched, check bunkers, trim holes with one other member of staff.

8.25-8.40am

Fill in time sheets and coming week's planner.

8.40-8.55am

At hotel, go through computer for following week's bookings and sheets for any important golf details of groups, ie start times (two-tee start, shotgun etc).

8.55-9am

Get mail etc from office.

9.905am

Collect week's wage slips for the greenkeeping staff.

9.05-9.30am

Assist greenkeeper (front of hotel, back of 9th and 18th greens) topdressing new artificial turf path and directing golf with signs, hoops etc to 10th tees and hotel around new turf and bedding borders.

9.30-9.35am

Break, give lads wage slips, check no problems with anything and have a coffee.

9.35-9.45am

Have a short meeting with the course manager.

9.45-11.45am

Assist on the Derby Course with the hollow-tining, core collection and clearing of greens. We're in the middle of this at the moment.

11.45am-12.20pm

Swap with member of staff and go to see how work on the new 8th Brabazon tees is coming along, liaise, assist and direct continuation of work and turfing.

12.20-12.30pm

Go to office and ring two suppliers.

12.30-1pm

Dinner.

1-2pm

Carry on work on 8th tees.

2-2.40pm:

Attend heads of departments meeting in hotel, when we go through next week's business and I also roughly plan my following week's operations.

2.40-3.40pm

See personnel manager and go through recruitment file for anyone suitable for vacancies arising shortly.

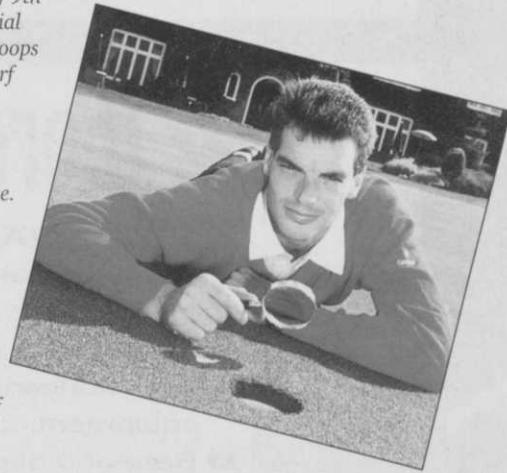
3.40-3.55pm

Agree shortlist with personnel manager and instruct her secretary to make necessary arrangements.

Finishing time: 3.55pm

Typical day?

Fairly typical for a Thursday. However I had one member of staff on holiday, one at college and four away doing their PA2 spraying courses, so I was pushed for staff. But it's always busy. Both courses were fully booked from first tee times at 7am until 'nine holes only' late afternoon.



**CRAIG WYLLIE, 27
FIRST ASSISTANT
GLASGOW GOLF
CLUB, GLASGOW**

An 18-hole parkland course set in 90 acres. 1,000 members

Time spent in job: 10 YEARS

8-8.40am

Put pins on winter greens due to 1in of snow.

8.40-10.10am

Drainage work.

10.10-10.30am

Break.

10.30am-1pm

Continued work on drainage.

1-4.20pm

Continued work on drainage. We were putting in a 100mm pipe in a blaze path to remove water that was lying on it. The pipe was to be put into a conduit that we thought was not used.

After opening the conduit we found that there was water running in it. We then decided to put dye into a conduit we already had open further out on the course. We discovered that the two conduits were linked as the dye went past the hole we had opened. We then discovered that the two conduits are joined in the area we were working. One of them was blocked past the join due to a sewage pipe that was put in 20 years ago. We have now decided that this will have to be left to next year to be fixed as we have too much work to do.

Finishing time: 4.30pm

Typical day?

Weatherwise, very typical. Workwise, this was due to the weather as we could not do course work.

STEVEN EVANS, 33

**DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER
ST ENODOC GOLF CLUB, NR
WADEBRIDGE, CORNWALL**

Two 18-hole links courses set in 200 acres. 1500 members.

Time spent in job: TWO YEARS, SIX MONTHS

7.30-7.40am

Liaise with course manager, organise work programme and direct greens staff.

7.40-10.10am

Fertilise greens on Church Course with NPK, granular fertiliser; 1oz per square yard.

10.10-10.30am

Morning break.

10.30am-12.35pm

Fertilise surrounds and aprons on Church Course with NPK, granular fertiliser; 1oz per square yard.

12.35-1.05pm

Lunch break.

1.05-4.10pm

Check automatic irrigation system for faults and breakages including all sprinkler heads around greens on Church Course.

4.10-4.20pm

Put all machinery into shed and lock up.

Finishing time: 4.20pm

Typical day?

A typical day would usually consist of organising daily work programmes in advance, motivating greens staff and creating a good atmosphere to work in, which is essential. Today was typical in those respects. All greens staff are encouraged to play a full part in the running of the golf course. All greens staff have been practically trained in most areas of greenkeeping and this is an ongoing process.

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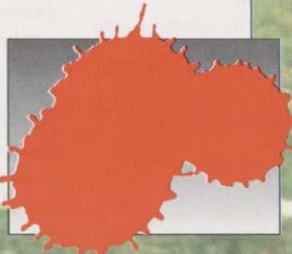


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Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

NORTH-WEST

The Northern Region seminar at Mere GCC was a well attended event, with 147 delegates being treated to an educational day not to be missed. The day started with Martin Hawtree (golf course architect) and John Greasley (golf course construction) talking and showing slides of the reconstruction of the greens at Royal Birkdale. It was most interesting to note that both speakers agreed it had been essential for the reconstruction to be carried out due to the poor quality of the rootzone mixture in the greens. Mike Sheehan, the course manager at Mere, talked about the water features he had constructed there. Mike showed a series of slides from the commencement of the construction to the finished features which harmonise neatly with the course.

The afternoon began with Derek Ganning talking about his five-year plan at The Belfry, and gave an insight into how the staff at The Belfry work as a well drilled team. Bob Taylor, who was responsible for setting up the "Conservation management for golf courses" at the STRI, spoke about the need to properly maintain the copse, ponds and ecological areas as well as the greens, tees and fairways on golf courses in order to look after the flora and fauna. Finally, David Golding spoke about greenkeeper training and how the Greenkeepers Training Committee, with the backing of the R&A and the golf unions, are working closely with the colleges for greenkeepers to gain NVQs. It was encouraging to know that the GTC and BIGGA work closely together.

This seminar, the first at Mere since 1989, appears to have been a success and thanks for this go to Mere for the use of the facilities, the speakers, the delegates who attended, and the companies who supported us financially - RJ & J Campey, Burrows (GM), Amenity Land Services, Jacobsen/Textron, Rufford Topdress, Acorn Equipment, Turner Groundcare, Sisis, Ritefeed, SF Hodgkinson (turf growers), Maxicrop, and Cheshire Light Tractors.

A trip to Ransomes was organised by Burrows (GM) and if you missed it you missed a treat. On the coach trip down we were entertained by Billy Connolly - on video. A mid-way stop for lunch, and press on to Ransomes. A cup of coffee and a few words of welcome from Richard the sales manager and then a trip round a brewery, with free booze. A quick trip to the hotel, shower, change and back to the bar before dinner. Day two was a trip round Ransomes' factory, which needs a couple of days to take everything in, and then the journey home. Many thanks to Burrows for organising the trip.

The next golf is the spring tournament on Tuesday May 24. This is the Hayter qualifier and all applications with £10 deposit to Paul Pearse, 1 Swan Close, Poynton, Stockport SK12 1HX. Tel: 0625 859258 not

EVENTS DIARY

- June 8-9: BALI Trade Show, Stoneleigh**
June 29: Southturf, Turf Care Trade Exhibition, Motspur Park, south west London
July 14-17: Open Championship, Turnberry
August 1-3: National Tournament, Dartmouth Golf Club, Devon
September 6-8: Saltex (previously IoG) Trade Exhibition, Royal Windsor Racecourse, Berkshire.
September 22: Hayter Challenge Final, Pannal Golf Club, Harrogate
November 9-10: Scotsturf, Ingleston, Edinburgh
December 1: Scottish Region North Section one-day conference at Craibstone Estate, Bucksburn, Aberdeen
January 25-27, 1995: BTME '95, Harrogate International Centre

later than May 17. Soup and sandwiches 12 noon to 1pm. Tee off 1.30pm.

BERT CROSS

SHEFFIELD

Our March winter lecture was given in the form of a demonstration and short film show by Jacobsen, luckily the weather was kind enabling members to try out the different machines on show. Thanks go to Michael Vjestica and Ivan Seaman of Jacobsen and to Les Purdy and Chris Bryden of Purdy's for an excellent afternoon with a super buffet thrown in too!

The trip to the Ransomes factory in April was postponed until later in the year due to only nine people wanting to go. When this trip is re-scheduled, hopefully we can raise the 20 people needed to go as this is a very interesting visit giving a good insight into Ransomes', so get your names down.

This year our annual tournament at Tankersley Park Golf Club on July 14 will be sponsored by Yorkshire Mowers and our autumn tournament, at Retford Golf Club on September 21 (tee off 1.30pm), will be sponsored by Purdy's.

On March 16 a committee meeting was held and it was agreed that from October 1994 members will have to attend at least two winter lectures to be eligible for the following year's golf tournaments. Also mentioned at the meeting was some members' dress - this has fallen below acceptable standards, please dress suitably. Remember we are guests of Rotherham Golf Club and should abide by their rules - please wear smart jacket, collar and tie at all lectures.

IAN COLLETT

EAST SCOTLAND

Tom Murray of Ratho Park GC is the section's nomination for the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year. Tom will be visited by representatives from ICI and BIGGA in the next few months and we all wish him well. Hopefully his course, like all of

ours, will have dried out by this time.

This has probably been the worst winter for many years. The very wet summer coupled with an equally wet winter has given all of us problems with courses flooding. Even the seaside courses are under water.

Hopefully better and drier weather is on the way and things can get back to as near normal as possible.

Almost all section events have been organised for the year; and the fixture list should be in members' hands by the spring outing.

At section committee level things have been happening under the careful eye of our new chairman, Peter Ormiston. Peter, as we all know, is a go-ahead type of chap and has studied carefully the way forward for the section.

The committee has been split into various small committees: social, handicap and education being his main objectives.

On the social side, things have been happening already with the quiz and skittles nights all arranged for the full year. Peter, along with his committee, have done their part - all we require now is for the members to do theirs and come along and support us.

In the past the cry has always been 'Everything is on at the west side of the city.' Well, this has now changed: the skittles have been taken to the east of the city along with the quiz night. The "Right Wing" Willowbrae Rd is the skittles venue and the "Black Bull", Dalkeith, will stage the quiz. All we have to do now is sit back and wait for the east of the city members getting in touch. No excuses now.

The big change is the annual dance. It will now take place on a Saturday evening. A sit-down dinner instead of a buffet, a live band instead of a disco and a hotel instead of a golf club. The venue will be The Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady on Saturday December 3. Tickets are already printed and a super deal has been struck with the hotel, even for those wishing to stay the night. The cost of this fabulous night will be £15 per head including transport from the Edinburgh area; and again, this is in the east. So start saving as demand will be as usual.

Peter and his committee have started to show the way forward. I am sure you will do your utmost to support us.

Have you paid your subscription yet? If not, do it now or you will lose out. Membership in the east is at its highest ever; let's keep it that way. Remember the saying, "You'd Better Watch Out, BIGGA's About."

WILLIE BLAIR

SOUTH COAST

It is time to start thinking about the annual match between the South Coast and South West sections which will take place in the autumn. Paul Drodge will be organising the event for the South Coast. Let's make a good show this year! Those wishing to be considered for the team



should contact Paul on 0425 271954.

If anyone wishes to contact me, my home number is 0703 438808 and my office number at the Hampshire Golf Club is 0264 334269. An answer phone is always available on both numbers. Please feel free to ring, we are especially looking for feedback from the section on the constitution review which is taking place at headquarters. Where do you think BIGGA should be going in the future?

I hear David Hinks has found a new position at Southwick Park and I am sure that we all wish him well for the future.

We had good turnouts for our last two winter lectures at Alresford Golf Club. There were first-hand accounts of the East Sussex National and Wisley clubs and if you missed them then come along to our future events, the company and beer are always good.

ALAN MITCHELL

SURREY

Huxley Bowl entries reached a record 17 pairs this year. Draw sheets have been dispatched, with the first round to be completed by May 14. Please phone results in as soon as possible.

Venues for the 1995 season are being looked into. Members wishing to stage a BIGGA event should contact the committee.

Congratulations to Gavin Kyle, formerly of Ashford Manor under Terry Huntley, upon his appointment as head greenkeeper of Sutton Green GC near Guildford. Good luck.

Forthcoming events include the Hayter regionals at Banstead Downs GC on June 16. Members wishing to play in the England v Scotland match on July 13 should contact Derek Walder on 0737 246088.

The Southturf exhibition is around six weeks

Around the Green



away now and Surrey can boast 382 members to date so please try to attend this event and make it really worthwhile - June 29 Motspur Park.

DAVID GIBBS

CENTRAL SCOTLAND

We start this month's news by reporting the finish of two members' working lives. Pat Differ of Dullatur GC and Ian Connell of Ladybank GC have recently retired from their respective clubs. Best wishes from everyone in the section go to Pat and Ian for a long and happy retirement, hopefully we will still see them at some of the section events during the year.

The visit to Scottish Grass Machinery was well supported and our thanks go to David McInroy and his staff for the hospitality which was extended to everyone. Likewise, the return visit to the Monarch's course at Gleneagles attracted a large turnout and with Jimmy Kidd and Ross Monachan giving a superb presentation of the Gleneagles set-up, everyone had an excellent day.

At the time of writing, we have over 50 forms returned for the visit to Ibrox Stadium. Three interesting names which are included are Fergus McCann, Brian Dempsey and Dominic Keene. I wonder if they will turn up?

Out of the 250 questionnaires which were

sent out a couple of months ago, only 15 have been returned. Did the postman get lost when he was delivering them, or is everybody satisfied with the variety of events organised at the present time? (Fifty forms for Ibrox!)

Past chairman of the section, Duncan Peddie, has been a bit under the weather recently. Hopefully it's not a reaction to the beer consumed during his week in Harrogate. Whatever it is Dunc, I hope you have recovered by now, we missed you at the last committee meeting.

Ending on a high note this month, with another six new members joining the Association. Welcome to the Central Section, lads! Hopefully you will manage to get along to some of our events in the coming months. We look forward to meeting you.

JOHN CRAWFORD

AYRSHIRE

The typical Ayrshire greenkeeper's habit of walking with a pronounced lean forward into the wind has been tested to the limit this past few months, and with the addition of more than 50 per cent of our annual rainfall in three months this spring is proving more difficult than usual. Days when fertilising, spraying or top-dressing can be carried out are few and far between, then when a good day pops up, out come the golfers in their hordes, wondering why the course isn't in top playing condition. Hopefully by the time you read this, the waterproofs will be shed, the gait a little straighter, and the greens a little smoother.

George Brown tells me Turnberry is shaping up well for the Open, with hundreds of yards of snow fencing erected (to prevent sand blow) working very well.

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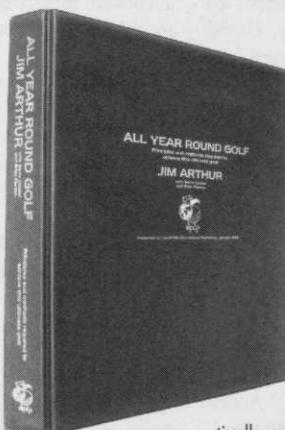
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Over the past few weeks I have had the pleasure of walking the new courses at Loch Lomond and Fota Island in Cork, both with creeping bent grass greens in excellent condition in mid-March. Fota Island in fact only opened in September and after a fair amount of play still looks good. Whatever has been said about creeping bent, it may well have a future in these isles.

Finally, if you see a huge yellow Ford Thunderbird with a red-haired driver waving at you, it's not Fergie, it's only our chairman indulging his fantasies.

DUNCAN GRAY

SUSSEX

The Sussex branch fared pretty well at the Annual Gentlemen's Dinner event at Walton Heath. Mr D Taylor, chairman of the green at Cooden Beach, came first in the guest section with 41 points, Stefan Antolik, from the same club, took second overall (9-16 handicap) with 40 points and George Barr of Ham Manor slogged a mere 287 yards to win the longest drive of the day. By the way, George told me it was a three wood and into the wind!

Twenty-four greenkeepers took part and passed a one-day first-aid course held at Ham Manor, organised in conjunction with BIGGA and Medical Training Services. Another course is planned for later in the year.

Lastly, two events for your diaries: April 28 – our spring meeting at Willingdon GC (why weren't you there?); June 29 – Southturf, Motspur Park.

MARK WITTON

LONDON

This month I would like to congratulate the following on their new appointments:

Paul McDowell, new head greenkeeper at Slinfold Park Golf and Country Club. Paul leaves our section and I would like to thank him for all his work on the committee.

Paul Cooper has been appointed head greenkeeper at Bushey Golf and Country Club.

Jeff Donovan has been appointed head greenkeeper at the new course at Barnet, Bridgedown GC.

Terry Colvill has been appointed assistant head greenkeeper at Mill Hill GC. Terry has also recently qualified for the TV gameshow 'Gladiators'. I would like to wish all the lads the best of luck.

TONY DUNSTAN

WEST SCOTLAND

Not a lot to report this month unless you count wind, rain, snow, sleet and hail, which brings me onto the subject of the annual North v South of the river football match. Picture the scene, it's Sunday at Ibrox community football pitch. It's cold, very cold, snow intermingled with icy rain and yet they still turned up. Earlier the snow had been cleared from the lines so that play could go ahead. Nevertheless, 9.50am and the whistle blows to start a game that gave new meaning to slide tackles. Joe McKean (referee) kept tight control on the proceedings and has to be congratulated on suffering the elements and the volley of abuse and calls for offside he received from both teams.

The game was finally brought to an end at 11am with the score standing at 3-1 in favour of the South. Although Pollock man Stephen McGahey should have been playing for the South, he was given to the North after turning up late and scored their only goal.

Around the Green



In March an excellent outing to Turnberry was supported by 40 greenkeepers. Well done to George Brown for an interesting and informative talk covering the shed area, machinery, clubhouse, hotel and course. Each aspect of the complex was fully explained and all our questions answered.

Finally, Ian Wilson, formerly of Blairbeth, has taken up the post of course manager at Hamilton GC where I'm sure he'll do well. Good luck, Ian!

SCOTT BALLANTYNE

NORTH EAST

The section would like to congratulate Terry Chareton of TurfCare for providing a superb field day at Beamish Park GC. The attendance spoke for itself with over 80 persons present. As for the speakers, they did their respective companies proud.

George Atkinson, head greenkeeper for 17 years at Consett GC, is due to retire in September. In recognition of his services to greenkeeping and to his hard work as a section committee member we will be holding a presentation dinner at Stocksfield GC in October. Any member

interested in attending should speak to Barry Wilson at South Moor.

Congratulations to section chairman Richard Greane on becoming a grandad!

JIMMY RICHARDSON

SOUTH WEST

As highlighted in April's issue, a grant has recently been given by the R&A for use in putting together a central library for the benefit of members. Any suggestions for book purchases and/or donations or loans of relevant books would be productive. The intention to make them available to members attending courses at Aldwark or on a normal loan and return basis means that everybody can benefit. Anyone interested can contact me or headquarters direct.

Some interest is being shown in training courses, with, hopefully, a few more members now being aware of emergency first-aid procedures should the need arise.

The section golf matches between the secretaries on June 28, South Wales on October 5 and the South Coast on October 25 need teams. Interested in playing? Applications can be made by returning the slip in the recent section letter along with any suggestions for events for the 1995 fixture list.

Congratulations to Guy Woods on his appointment as head greenkeeper at Lansdown GC.

Finally, many new members have joined the section over recent months. We welcome you and look forward to meeting you at section events in the future, like the next one at Filton GC on July 27.

KEVIN GREEN

DEVON AND CORNWALL

Padbrook Park GC was the venue for our March meeting, which saw more than 60 members competing over the excellently presented nine-hole course for the Supaturf Trophy for head

greenkeepers and trade, and the Rhone-Poulenc Trophy for assistants. It was also the section's qualifier for the Hayter Beaver Challenge Trophy (results for this elsewhere in Around the Green).

Our congratulations to head greenkeeper Cary Rawlings for the condition of his new course. Executive director Neil Thomas and our non-golfing members were treated to the usual course walk by departing assistant greenkeeper Richard Hall before returning to the clubhouse for lunch. After an excellent lunch, John Palfrey on behalf of Supaturf, Paul Clifton of Rhone-Poulenc and Robin Boyes of Hayter Beaver presented the prizes.

Supaturf Trophy: 1, A Ramsden (Budock Vean) 34pts; 2, T Gooch (Torrington) 31; 3, C Rawlings (Padbrook) 31.

Rhone-Poulenc Trophy: 1, A James (Tehidy) 35pts; 2, S Evans (St Enodoc) 33; 3, C Bland (Dainton Park) 33.

Our afternoon programme was altered slightly as our executive director Neil Thomas was invited to the section to discuss in an open forum recent occurrences within the Association. Many of the questions were about the AGM. The section would like to thank Neil for making the long journey to our section and for giving us the chance to hold this open forum.

Before the open forum, our educational talk was presented by Gordon Jaaback on water conservation. It was most informative and interesting. The section thank Gordon, who was presented with a small gift as a show of its gratitude. I will be sending out a brief paper of Gordon's talk and a more detailed question and answer paper on the open forum in due course.

The section would like to thank Mr Chard and all the staff at Padbrook for making our day so enjoyable.

Our next meeting will be the new summer tournament and workshop which has been sponsored by Jacobsen & MST and will be held at Yelverton GC on Wednesday June 22 with start times from 12.30-2pm. The workshop starts at 2.30pm and evening meal at 6.45pm, followed by the prize presentation and raffle.

RICHARD WHYMAN

NORTH SCOTLAND

The section would like to welcome four new members: John Littlejohn, the deputy course manager at Newmacher, Aberdeen; also from Newmacher is assistant Patrick Wood; from nearby Alford we welcome Jonathon Lester; and from King James VI GC in Perth comes apprentice Kenneth O'Donnell. Transferring into the area is Graeme Flett from Fife who is the new head greenkeeper at Newtonmore GC. It is good to see a regular monthly influx of new members but unfortunately we seem to have lost about 30 of last year's members. Hopefully they will be rejoining but if anyone knows of a colleague who has not taken up membership again then please ask them if they have a reason for it. Maybe we can solve any problems they have in joining. Obviously there are a few people lost each year due to retirement, change of career, relocation etc, but this year's figure seems a bit high!

Some news comes in from the North East. Firstly, Hughie McIatchie at Peterhead is proud to announce that his female apprentice Aileen Snowden has finished her time and is now a qualified greenkeeper. Well done, Aileen. Hughie also tells me of someone's misfortune that became another person's good luck. A ship lost its load of newly cut timber and various links courses around the North East were able to pick up trailer loads of good planks! New build-

ings are going up as a result. It's a pity it didn't quite make it over to Tain.

The Scottish Conference at Elmwood College, Fife was a great success with a full house and quality speakers. I, along with my deputy Gordon Mckie, attended the workshops on the previous day and found them excellent as well, with much learnt.

Finally, are there any members interested in first-aid courses? If there is sufficient demand, I can set up some training days in the area.

Remember, by law all courses must have at least one first-aider who has been trained in the last three years! Contact me on 0862 894402

IAIN MACLEOD

NORTH ENGLAND

Our annual dinner, at Northcliffe GC, was a very pleasant, enjoyable evening. All were mesmerised with the outrageous illusionist comedian Madman Burnette (aptly named) for an hour. After a short break he continued to entertain us with some pleasant singing and dance music. Some 60-plus members attended. The food and wine enhanced the evening even more. My thanks to all members who helped on the evening especially Sara and Bob Lupton, Ken Christie, Roy Fenton, Phillip Taylor and all the staff at Northcliffe GC where we were made most welcome.

I am pleased to welcome to our section the following new members: Derrick Redhead, Marshall Gordon Monkhouse, Richard Longstaff, Stephen Awde, all from Penrith GC, David Crampton of Hatfield Hall GC, Benjamin Turner of Outlane GC, Philip Simpson of Oakdale GC, Gary Potter of Skipton GC, Simon McIlwaine of Wetherby GC, Christopher Williamson of Keighley GC, and Andrew Ivel of Moor Allerton GC.

If any new member requires any information please contact me on 0274 568128.

There are still a few places left on our golfing events, if you have not booked yet please do so immediately by sending your name and £10 deposit to me, to avoid disappointment.

PAT MURPHY

SOUTH WALES

With the weather remaining as wet as ever into March, a few days away from the course were possible without suffering too much of an attack of conscience.

On March 10, Ted and Chriss Hopkins of Ted Hopkins & Son, Newport, took us to Massey Ferguson's headquarters at Stoneleigh. The attendance should have been better but, as usual, a few failed to turn up (mind you, it was the finest day of the year upto then). So, with this playing on our minds, we headed up the M5 Coventry-bound.

After first visiting the tractor museum and then watching the 'History of Massey Ferguson' video, we entered the factory. Boy, what a factory! I've had the pleasure of visiting a number of major machinery manufacturers' premises over the past few years, but this was the largest so far and can only be described as enormous!

Hang on a minute, could this be right? Blue tractors rolling off the assembly line? Does that say Iseki on the side of it? For those of you who haven't heard, Massey Ferguson UK have entered into an agreement with Iseki Japan whereby Massey Ferguson UK now produce Iseki tractors over 40hp for the export market, ie Japan, and Iseki Japan produce Massey Ferguson compact tractors for export, ie Great Britain. Clear? Good.

Around the Green



With this having been explained, it was off to the Stoneleigh test centre for a spot of lunch and a machinery demonstration. A number of machines were demonstrated as well as the complete range of Massey Ferguson compact tractors varying from 17-35hp turbo. An excellent range of tractors with just too many good, new features to mention.

Thanks to all at Stoneleigh, Massey Ferguson UK and Ted and Chriss Hopkins for a splendid day out, even if the bus did break down on the way home.

On March 15, at Sandfields, Bristol, Avoncrop invited many greenkeepers to their premises for a factory visit and seminar. The seminar was based on an update of new chemicals from the Rhone-Poulenc stable, presented by Paul Clifton. These included Twister Flow, Castaway Plus and Vitesse. There was also a talk on top-dressings with the STRI's south-west adviser, Peter Winter, covering the whys, whens and if you should. The day was extremely well attended and exceptionally well organised and we thank Avoncrop and especially Rod Feltham for his hospitality and look forward to future visits for, despite a recession, Avoncrop have expansion in mind.

March also saw the winter lecture programme coming to an end with Lyn Davies of Pencoed College presenting a paper on 'Conservation on the Golf Course'. An interesting and informative evening was again had by all in attendance, even though the title was a little misleading, or was it that the subject deviated slightly?

Our sincere thanks to Lyn and to all those who presented papers throughout the winter and made the programme such a success. I hope that this year's programme will be as varied and enjoyable.

Many new members have joined the section this year and we look sure to break the 150 barrier. I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can throughout the year, whether it's at our golf days or the educational evenings. Meanwhile, if you have any queries, please contact me on 0850 716403 or 0792 233923.

PETER LACEY

NORTH WALES

Firstly, congratulations and best wishes to the following members on their appointments: Ain Buckley who has joined the new development at Northop Country Park as first assistant; George Whitby who is moving into the area from Pontefract GC to take over as head greenkeeper at Chirk GC; Craig Wheeler who has moved from Delamere to Frodsham GC to become assistant head; Tony Wellings on his move from Carden Park to the new Eaton course at Waverton, Chester; and our old friend Mark Proctor on his appointment as course manager at St Pierre Chepstow after a spell working in Germany.

The committee would like to welcome all new members and look forward to seeing you at our functions.

On a slightly different note, what about you retired members out there? With so many new courses being built and with it the influx of young people into the profession would you feel

able to share your experience at practical workshops? If so, please call me on 0829 250556.

To finish this month, a public thank-you from our chairman, Brian Anderson, to the Welsh Golf Union for very kindly making a presentation to him in recognition of the quality of the Abergel course on the occasion of the Over-35s Championship.

ANDY CAMPBELL

SCOTTISH REGION

Even though most of the rest of Scotland was suffering under torrential showers, Dunbar lay sunny and bright for the Scottish Region annual match against the secretaries. However there was a 'slight breeze', actually it was a full scale gale and the beach proved to be a popular place for golf ball hunting. One look at the gale and a quick word with Graham Wood, "let us play off the front markers, Graham". So ably led by chairman Gordon Moir, off we set to retrieve the Trophy. Was it a wise move by the selection committee to put one links greenkeeper in each pairing? Well, all but two. Surely in this gale their experience would be invaluable. And so it proved as the first two pairings returned a win. However the next five matches were won alternately by the secretaries then the greenkeepers. So with one match to go it was 4-3 in favour of us, but we need an outright win. Everyone anxiously watched for Jimmy Neilson and Norman Wood coming in. Ah, big beaming smiles and the Trophy is ours.

Well done lads and you all get a game next year. Well maybe some names will have to be looked at. To let you know how windy it was, Graham's men were out divotting fairways and they were walking down the 6th fairway and filling the divot marks on the 17th which runs parallel. The course was, as usual, in great condition and the inner man was extremely well catered for, so thanks to all at Dunbar Golf Club for a most enjoyable day. One of my opponents on spotting the Bass Rock Offshore reckoned 'it must be windy, Ailsa Craig's been blown round to this side'.

Our annual conference was held at Elmwood College. Eight speakers gave a varied and comprehensive programme in many aspects of golf. Norval Black, principal of Elmwood College, gave us a warm welcome to the college and set the pace for an interesting day. Our morning chairman was Jim Paton, West Kilbride Golf Club. Elmwood's own head of greenkeeping section, Carol Borthwick, started the day off with an up to the minute report on greenkeeping education, with special reference to SVQs. By the title of Steve Isaac's from STRI talk, Grooming the Green, we could have been forgiven for wondering if our greens would look better with a short back and sides. He certainly made us think about the use and overuse of groomers. Very diplomatic Steve spoke of the red, orange or green machines.

In the capable hands of ex-rugby referee Eddie Sheret, Lothian Golf Association, the title 'Course Rating Review' was brought into reality and not just another piece of legislation that the authorities want and no-one else cares about. Kevin Stables, well respected Scottish club professional at Montrose Links, told us what he thought of Scottish golf courses and what he looks for in a course whilst playing on the Tartan Tour. It was nice to hear good commonsense views from Kevin and I'm sure he will be welcome on all our courses this year.

Douglas Dalgleish finished off the morning

session in his own inimitable fashion. Douglas, the president of the Scottish Golf Union, has his own ideas on how golf clubs should be managed and operated. His description of different types of amateur golfers brought many laughs and thoughts of 'I've got some of them in my club'. Communication and co-operation between all parties involved in running golf clubs were points which came through in his talk. We went off happily to lunch and it must have been a good morning as, come 1pm, the hall was filled again. Our afternoon chairman was Willie Blair from Kingsknowe GC. Ian McMillan, course manager at Balbirnie Park, took us through his life and times at Balbirnie. 'Thru Flood and Fire' was the title of his talk and these were only some of the problems he has encountered over the years. Well done Ian, now which Scottish greenkeepers can we tempt up on to the platform next year? You get a free lunch you know! Some subjects can be very difficult to make interesting and our last two speakers had this dubious task.

Douglas Shearer, consultant agronomist, brought us up-to-date with pesticides, that is if it is possible to be completely up-to-date. I'm sure the powers that be wait until we have nearly caught up and then make new rules. However back to Douglas who is one of the few that can make pesticides regulations sound interesting and also put the fear of death into you. Now what do I do with these contaminated gloves again? No, not your teeth you fool!

And finally, what did we know about fertilisers? Well, after Keith McKee, amenity manager for Fisons, had finished we knew a lot more. Again a difficult subject ably covered by an obvious expert. Gordon Moir, Scottish Region chairman, proposed thanks to all the speakers and chairmen and everyone else involved in making

Around the Green



the day so successful. His special thanks went to the Scottish Region patrons who sponsor the conference every year.

ELLIOTT SMALL

EAST MIDLANDS

Congratulations go to Richard Parker who, along with his Longcliffe pro and two members, has returned from a pro-am tournament in Spain with first prize.

Gavin Robson of Lingdale GC has been nominated to represent the section for this year's ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. I'm sure all our members would like to wish him all the best.

This month we welcome three new members to our section: Paul Knowles of Overstone Park GC, Northampton; Nicholas Dowman of Belton Park GC; and Paul Holmes of The Notts GC, Hollinwell. It is hoped that all these members will attend section events as they will be made most welcome.

With this year's singles and pairs K/O about to begin, may I remind all entrants to make sure matches are played before the closing dates.

Finally, if any member has any news they would like to see in this column, they can contact me on 0533 890301.

ANTHONY BINDLEY

MIDLAND

For our final lecture of the winter, at Telford Golf and Country Club, the speakers were Bob Pillsbury from Alexanders and Bill Oliver from Hardi Sprayers. The numbers were a little disappointing with only 20 people turning out for what was a most enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks to our two speakers and their respective companies for supporting our section event.

We would like to welcome the following new members to our section and look forward to meeting you at our future events - Wayne Broadway, Vincent Gilroy, Craig Roberts, Graham Rushton, Neil Turner, Paul Adams, Trevor Stone and Paul Underhill.

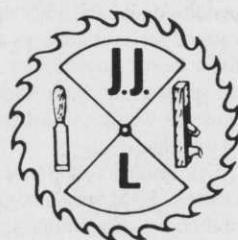
On April 13 we finally played our spring tournament after being cancelled the previous week due to adverse weather conditions. We apologise for any inconvenience caused. The tournament played at Trentham GC was eventually won by Peter Holtham with Paul Loffman winning the gross prize. Mike Hughes, in the absence of our chairman, presented the prizes and thanked everyone for making our day so enjoyable.

Date to remember: June 6 - summer tournament, Fulford Heath GC (closing date for entry is May 11). If you haven't got a form and would like to play, call me on 0789 762912.

DEAN CLEAVER

HAYTER CHALLENGE TOURNAMENT

The following golfers from the Devon and Cornwall section have qualified for the regional final at Bude and North Cornwall GC on Wednesday June 15: 0-9 handicap - T Ramsden, C Bland, C Rawlings, M Gilbert, J Mitchell; 10-18 - B Ridgeway, T Pipe, T Gooch, M Bosley, W Potter; 19-28 - A James, S Evans, S Milne, J Barr, J Bullen.



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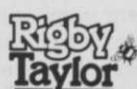
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Annual meadow grass

The debate continues

Independent turfgrass agronomist Neil Baldwin adds to the debate by giving the reasons why he believes annual meadow grass has no place on a putting green.

Ever since the first principles of greenkeeping were established, the colonisation of golf greens by annual meadow grass has been at the forefront of discussion. In fact there has probably been more debate revolving around this grass species than on all other topics relating to fine turf maintenance combined. Whilst certain agronomists are totally opposed to annual meadow grass and see no place for it within golf greens whatsoever, others are non-committed and take the 'easy' middle ground and yet more say it has a place and a role to fulfil.

The recent expansion of golf and increasing numbers of courses being constructed has led to many people offering their services as 'agronomists' and these people, usually those without any real technical training or experience have in fact spread much misinformation, resulting in a confused and misinformed greenkeeping industry. Thus, it is the aim of this article to present some of the basic facts relating to annual meadow grass, its biology and its characteristics relating to its suitability as a turfgrass species. In this way it is hoped that the basic record on annual meadow grass may be restored and this article may be presented as a true no-nonsense record of annual meadow grass in fine turf.

Annual meadow grass has been studied intensively and its biology has been reviewed several times from 1937 onwards. But only last year was an overview of chemical control of annual meadow grass published. Thus, it is inappropriate for this concise

Growth characteristics of annual and perennial biotypes of *Poa annua*

	Annual biotype <i>Poa annua var. annua</i> L. Timm	Perennial biotype <i>Poa annua var. reptans</i> (Hausknecht) Timm
Life cycle	Mostly annual but sometimes biennial	
Growth habit	Erect, compact bunch type growth	Low growing. Spreads by prostrate stolons and tillers
Flowers	Panicles are open with dense seed formation	Panicles are open with sparse to moderate seed formation
Tiller number	Variable. Low in spring and high in autumn	High. Produces secondary tillers. More stable growth.
Rooting	Few adventitious roots	Numerous adventitious roots
Seed dormancy	Will germinate after dormancy of two or more months	Can germinate within three days of maturity on the plant

article to even attempt to rewrite everything that is known, but certain relative facts are given as its biology relates to fine turf management.

Annual meadow grass may occur in golf greens in many different forms (biotypes) ranging from true annuals to a handy perennial form. The annual form (*Poa annua* ssp. *annua* or *erecta*) seeds rapidly, usually within two months after germination and then dies. The perennial form (*P. annua* ssp. *reptans*) is slower growing, has a creeping growth habit, seeds more slowly and may overwater. In UK golf greens both forms may be found together, as

well as intermediary types but in the majority of cases it is the perennial form that dominates. Thus, we are really dealing with a perennial form of a grass with 'annual' in its name!

Now we have defined the plant we are dealing with, we can discuss its suitability as a component of fine turf.

There are several reasons why annual meadow grass is not favoured as the ideal grass for fine turf. Turf is often judged simply by its colour. A bent/fescue sward is able to maintain its dark green colour year round which is in contrast to annual meadow grass which may naturally pale to

a yellow green colour especially when under stress due, for example, to drought or cold temperatures. Its prolific seeding in late spring can give a white appearance to the surface.

However, during a limited period, annual meadow grass may have an adequate appearance, but as golf is an all-year-round sport it must be said that annual meadow grass provides a poor surface from the visual stance. From the playing viewpoint annual meadow grass is present in virtually every golf green countrywide and so it is difficult to be exact as to how it compares to 100 per cent bent/fescue swards. However from our knowledge of annual meadow grass and how it affects the surface we can come to the conclusion that it is detrimental to the playing quality of the green for the following reasons:

1. Due to its growth habit, annual meadow grass often occurs in clumps or discreet patches. Thus, in combination with the different growth habits of bent and fescue, it may produce a bumpy uneven sward.
2. Annual meadow grass produces thatch much more rapidly than bent/fescue, which can become waterlogged to produce a soft surface more prone to pitch marks and also a surface that has a slow speed.
3. Annual meadow grass is by far the grass most susceptible to attack by fusarium patch and anthracnose diseases.

These are the principal disadvantages with annual meadow grass. I make no apology by starting from the negative viewpoint as, in my opinion, these far outweigh the advantages of annual meadow grass being a species that can provide at least some form of cover on the poor compacted soils present on many greens and also is capable of taking and recovering from wear.



Colonisation of a thin turf surface by annual meadow grass

Top picture: A 100 per cent annual meadow grass sward in winter. Note the pale colour in contrast to the green fairy rings in the foreground

Bottom: Fusarium patch scars in late winter on an annual meadow grass sward

From what is known about the conditions that favour annual meadow grass, certain cultural practices have been developed to favour bent/fescue and reduce annual meadow grass at the same time. Lowering the turf pH for example by making applications of acidifying fertilisers can create conditions more favourable to maintaining bent/fescue as these grasses can grow at lower pH's than annual meadow grass.

Also there is strong evidence that excessive amounts of phosphate are present in many golf greens and that annual meadow grass is favoured by a readily available source of phosphate. In the long term, eliminating phosphate applications will help to reduce the annual meadow grass content. However, it must be remembered that phosphate persists in the turf profile and it is used very slowly, so creating low levels of phosphate may be a long process. There is also a strong

link between annual meadow grass colonisation and excessive watering. Automatic watering systems should be used carefully and judiciously, not simply because they are there and it's not raining! The importance of thatch reduction and relief of compaction by mechanical aeration cannot be over-emphasised as it is important in favouring bent/fescue and discouraging annual meadow grass.

In conclusion, we have seen that annual meadow grass has many disadvantages, and it is the author's view that it cannot make a reasonable putting surface all year round as the demands of the game of golf dictate. The way forward must be to formulate a management plan that favours bent/fescue and discourages annual meadow grass. If this is implemented then a look to the future should see annual meadow grass decline gradually and finer grass take their rightful place.



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Where quality matters.

To hire or to buy? Michael Bird weighs up the options and talks to greenkeepers with their own ideas about capital investments.

Machinery hire has become a profitable venture for Whitchurch Golf Club on one specific item of machinery.

In the early 1980s, the Cardiff club hired in a turf cutter up to four times a year to help with tee extensions, course repairs and other turf renovation work. Today, Whitchurch owns its own machine, hiring it out to other golf courses when available. The venture's success has now covered both the turf cutter's initial purchase price and its running costs.

"A two day hire used to cost us £36," explained course manager, Dennis Archer. "The machine might be on the course for up to a week at a time, but was standing idle more often than not while the ground was prepared ready for turf laying. When delivery charges were added to the total hire bill, we found that the annual cost was substantial."

Reasoning that a turf cutter should last for many years if properly used and looked after, Dennis produced figures to demonstrate the economies of

Greenkeepers count the costs of hiring or buying

buying. In 1985, Whitchurch purchased its own Brouwer machine for £1,700.

"As soon as it arrived, we had requests from other organisations wanting to borrow it," said Dennis. "We were happy to do this providing it was available, but with three conditions. It could go only to other golf clubs. They had to collect and return it. And a charge was made to cover blade and machine wear and tear."

Demand was such that by 1990 the turf cutter had paid for itself. The current hire charge made by

Whitchurch Golf Club is £19 a day and Dennis points out that, nine years on, the machine is still in excellent condition. "The major benefit is that we have our own equipment and have first call on it. The fact that it produces an income is a bonus."

Dennis believes that a turf cutter makes an ideal hire item due to its ease of use and limited number of wearing parts. He commented that the club had looked long and hard at joint ownership of larger, more complex machines but had been dissuaded by concerns over availability during difficult seasons and the ultimate responsibility for breakages, damage and major repairs.

"Buying and hiring both have an important role to play," he said. "For example, we use a contract service for the annual patch spraying of fairways, bunker edges and other problem weed areas, and yet have our own sprayer for pesticide and liquid fertiliser applications on the greens, tees and surrounds."

"The benefit of the contractor is that he does the complete job for what it would cost us in chemicals alone. I estimate it saves the club up to £600 a year."

Pat Murphy, course manager at Shipley Golf Club, West Yorkshire, stressed that the decision whether to hire or buy was dictated first and foremost by budget. He prefers to own the machines he uses and the club has a five year forward replacement policy, placing machines on the purchase list according to need.

"Obviously, important equipment such as mowers are changed on a regular basis," he commented. "Other items that we would like but cannot afford immediately are noted and hired until we have the money available to buy them."

An exception to that rule is the Robin Dagger, a portable machine which injects compressed air through a steel probe to loosen soil and relieve compaction at depths up to 45cm (18in).

"We hire it in to do all the greens twice a year and the tees when needed," noted Pat. "Although it does a superb job with minimal surface disturbance, the club will not consider spending almost £4,000 on a machine which can be hired for £300 a week. It's almost made the list, but concerns over long-term reliability and running costs will probably keep it as a hire item."

One machine which went onto the club's "shopping list" the first year it was hired was a combined flail cutter, scarifier and sweeper with integral collection hopper. "We used to hire one in twice a year for leaf collection in the autumn and general turf tidyng in early spring," explained Pat. "When we saw its potential for scarifying and mowing, we realised it could earn its keep throughout the year."

Despite the obvious benefits, it took eight years for the machine to reach the top of the purchase list. The problem, as Pat explained, was that long-term forward planning and budgeting was not formalised at the club until four or five years ago.

As a result, Shipley Golf Club did not take delivery of its own machine – an RL 1502 Versatile unit from Richard Long Engineering – until last autumn.

The contract hire of a JCB digger/loader with driver is one item that will, however, remain an annual event. Used for greens' reconstruction, tee building and drainage works, the man and machine arrive in September and remain for about a week. "We've had the same operator for the

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A popular hire item with most golf clubs for seasonal course works, the digger-loader can make a good buy at plant hire auction sales

past 24 years, so he knows what he's doing," commented Pat. "The combination makes a valuable short-term addition to my team."

Brian Turner, head greenkeeper at Worplesdon Golf Club, near Guildford, Surrey, used to hire in a JCB and driver for tree planting and course construction works two or three times during the year. That was until he noticed that a nearby plant hire company was holding a liquidation sale.

"We picked up a JCB and a vibrating roller at knock-down prices," he said. "I can now choose the optimum times to carry out course work to suit the weather and turf conditions. If it rains one day, we can get on with another job without paying for a day's wasted hire. The vibrating roller has also proved invaluable for path construction. I recommend all greenkeepers to keep an eye open in the local and trade press for plant hire sell-offs."

Gerry Haynes is responsible for 18 and nine hole parkland courses at Hartsbourne Golf and Country Club, Bushey Heath, Herts, where hiring is preferred to buying in two particular situations: For short, intensive jobs carried out once or twice a year and for those tasks which tend to be highly repetitive or slow and, as a result, boring for his staff.

"Verti-draining is one example which combines both situations," he said. "I cannot see that it is worthwhile buying and maintaining a £12,000-plus machine which will be used for a maxi-

mum of three weeks out of 52."

To ensure that the machine and operator are available when he needs them, Gerry books the Verti-drain up to nine months ahead with Surrey-based contract firm, Turf Machinery Ltd. However, this arrangement does not commit him to taking the service if the weather or turf conditions are not suitable.

"The company is both flexible and helpful, always checking a few days ahead that we are ready for the Verti-drain," he pointed out. "I use them also for hollow coring every other year. They are the only local contract hire firm I know which offers a mechanised core collection service. As a result, we can do all 27 holes in a day. The core collector can clear 18 greens in the time it took us to do one by hand."

A different specialist contract hire service is offered by



Dennis Archer, course manager at Whitchurch Golf Club. Hiring out the club's turf cutter has paid for its purchase and running costs

Turfmech Machinery Ltd in the form of fairway scarifying and grass collection. Based at Hixon in Staffordshire, the firm uses its own scarifier, tractor-mounted blower and vacuum collector to treat up to nine fairways in a day.

Head greenkeeper at Stone Golf Club, Mark O'Malley, has used the service for the past three years to encourage stronger and finer grass regrowth on fairways suffering from compaction due to increasing levels of play. "We had not carried out any regular fairway maintenance during the previous 10 years," he explained. "Drainage was suffering, so we bought a fairway slitter."

Being a nine hole private course, funds for machinery investment are limited to essential items. The ability to hire in a contract fairway scarifying service therefore proved a great attraction, especially when told that for around £1,000, one is hiring machinery valued at £30,000 together with the labour to carry out the work.

"The fairways have benefited tremendously from the treatment and golfers have commented on the improved grass growth," commented Mark. "We plan to scarify again this year and then will probably alternate it with a hired Verti-drain, according to need."

Hiring of a rotary mower is not a typical golf course requirement, as most clubs are normally well equipped with grass cutting equipment. Blairgowrie Golf Club in Perthshire, however, needed a rotary mower for a rather special

task — the management of heather covering large areas of the 54 hole course.

Course manager, Alan Holmes, explained that the freedraining glacial soils did not encourage heavy grass growth. As a result, gangs were used for the semi-rough while the club's flail mower kept the rougher area under control.

Although the flail machine had been used successfully on the heather in the past, its action is quite aggressive and the plants took maybe two seasons to recover. Burning was out of the question.

"I reasoned that the best course would be regular topping to maintain even, yet controlled growth," he said. "However, I did not want to spend £12,000 on a machine that would be used for only 20 days a year. Hiring was the obvious solution."

Turning to Huxleys Grass Machinery at Broxburn, near Edinburgh, Alan hired a Turf Blazer 727 outfront ride-on rotary mower. "We experimented at various cutting heights and found that 5 inches was ideal," he said. "Apart from doing a good job on the heather, it appears that rotary topping will also help keep the broom at bay."

"Hiring provides sufficient flexibility without an accompanying high level of expenditure. For our particular needs, I see no advantage in owning a machine whose depreciation in the first year is equivalent to three times the hire charge."

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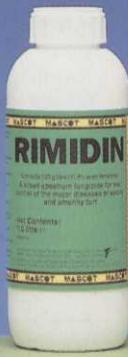
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Looking back at The Way Forward

The Way Forward, a discussion document of British golf course management produced by the R&A's greenkeeping panel, is now five years old. It pointed the way for greenkeepers and course management to go, but did it change anything? During a recent trip to Scotland, Chris Boiling went to see Michael Bonallack, secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, to find out. After the initial pleasantries, the conversation with the former amateur champion went like this...

Greenkeeper International: The Way Forward is widely read in greenkeeping circles. Can you give me some insight into how it came about, the R&A's role in it, and whether it's changed anything?

Michael Bonallack: The R&A have a very strange role in golf. We are the governing authority for the rules of golf and amateur status, and we have no other responsibility really apart from the championship side where we run the Open Championship, amateur championships, and pick players for Great Britain and Ireland's amateur teams.

We got involved in the Way Forward as a result of forming a committee to decide where the money generated from the Open was spent. We decided that there were three particular areas where money could usefully be spent – greenkeeping, new golf course development, and coaching for youngsters.

This was at a time when greenkeeping associations were not totally unified, as they are now, and we formed a technical committee to examine the various problems that they could see in greenkeeping. On that committee, with others, were Jim Arthur, who is an agronomist, a golf club secretary in Keith Almond, and Walter Woods, who's the course superintendent here at St Andrews. In this document the committee set out what they thought was the way forward for committees to go about greenkeeping matters in the future. It was putting more emphasis on the greenkeeper controlling how the course was maintained rather than six or seven committee people who were there for one or two years dictating the policy. In that document they set out their ideal committee structure,

which is a committee of one plus the head greenkeeper.

Once it was published, we said to the national unions, 'OK, this is what we believe should happen and now we hope that the national unions will take this up and will educate the golf clubs, and committees in golf clubs, on how they should go about reacting to the proposals with their greenkeeping staff.' The English Golf Union in particular have been very active in this respect, and run seminars and educational programmes and I think it's gone well in England. It has in Scotland but probably not to the same extent.

We also formed a joint golf course committee which is composed of a chairman from the R&A and representatives from the four Home Unions. The idea of that committee is to recommend to our external funds committee areas where we might usefully provide money whether it's for research into greenkeeping matters, whether it's in support for the Greenkeepers Association, or greenkeeper training through the Greenkeeper Training Committee. The joint golf course committee has been fairly active, they've now become involved in things like the environment and in particular in setting a standard which we hope will be accepted by Brussels, so that golf will be setting its own environment.

mental standards rather than having them imposed on the game by bureaucrats in Brussels. That is really where we've got to now. These things are all ongoing, it's a comparatively slow process – you don't expect to change things overnight, but I think certainly people are more aware now, and we still get requests for copies of The Way Forward from golf clubs.

I think the standards that were set out in that booklet are becoming much more acceptable, people recognise now the needs for



firmer, faster greens, for regular aeration, for less water, less fertilisers, and this is common practice now. Nearly every club seems to use deep aeration every winter on their greens. And so I think the Way Forward has done a lot of good.

GI: Are the problems highlighted in it, like overplay, year-round golf, faulty construction, unsound agronomic management, ever-changing committees, insufficient budgets, any better now?

MB: In a way I think things are better because there have been a number of new golf courses built, so some of the demand that was causing the problems has been taken off existing courses. I think the human aspect, through greenkeeper education, is improving all the time. Standards of greenkeeping are improving, the advisory services are very good, and, generally, golf clubs are accepting now the need for proper maintenance.

GI: Is the golfing public becoming better educated about greenkeeping matters?

MB: Yes, I think they are. They'll soon tell you if the course is not in good condition....

GI: But from a knowledgeable point of view?

MB: I think they recognise now that it is a false idea to have soft greens where you can stop the ball with almost any club. I think that was one of the biggest problems we had in golf – the wish that anybody could stop a ball on the green whereas the pros have considerable skill to stop it and they do it on very

Looking back at The Way Forward

hard greens. I think greenkeepers tended to pander to the players who wanted to stop it just by making the greens softer – anybody can stop it on a soft green, that doesn't require any skill at all. Even the average golfer recognises now that that's not a good way to go about it because with soft greens you get thatch and you then get all the problems of poor greens in the winter, the course closed, or playing on temporary greens. That's one thing I think which has improved over the past few years, the number of courses now that don't require temporary greens in the winter. They can keep going on their proper greens because they've been properly maintained.

I think there have been a lot of improvements but a lot of them are fairly gradual and you don't notice that they're taking place. When the Way Forward was written very few courses would use aeration to any great extent. A lot of clubs have bought their own verti-drain machine now. That's become a regular occurrence now whereas it was the exception rather than the rule. That can only be good.

GI: Is the technical panel still in existence?

MB: Yes, they have been very busy in trying

to draw up a British specification for construction of golf greens. If courses are constructed in the right way in the first instance then there is going to be less chance of them going wrong during the maintenance.

GI: What else are they working on?

MB: The other thing they've been working on is environmental concerns. The environmental lobby has certainly become fairly vocal recently. There's a group, I think, formed in the Far East which is the Anti-Golf Group trying to stop all golf development, but I don't think they'll have very much success. But golf has got to be seen to be responsible and not to desecrate the countryside and in actual fact golf has a very strong case as it protects wildlife rather than destroys it. The game's got nothing to apologise for, it's just got to publicise its work better and show people that golf courses are havens for wildlife, you get rare flowers, animals and insects that don't exist anywhere else but they do on golf courses. So this is an area where we have been actively concerned.

Also, greenkeeper training, the committee has become involved in that, and in research at the Sports Turf Research Institute. They recommend to our general committee which areas of research should be encouraged and which ones we should give money to. It is ongoing, you can't expect the manufacturers to do it all. Manufacturers are trying to sell a product whereas the STRI should be trying to find out what is the best way of tackling a particular problem without any commercial bias.

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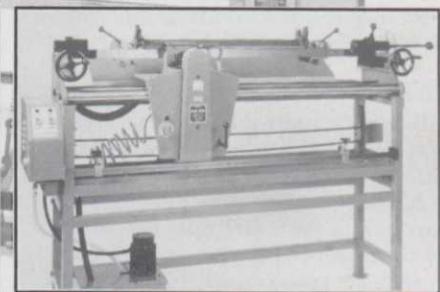
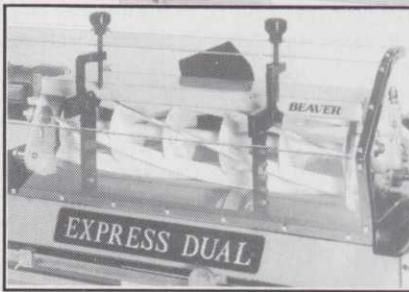
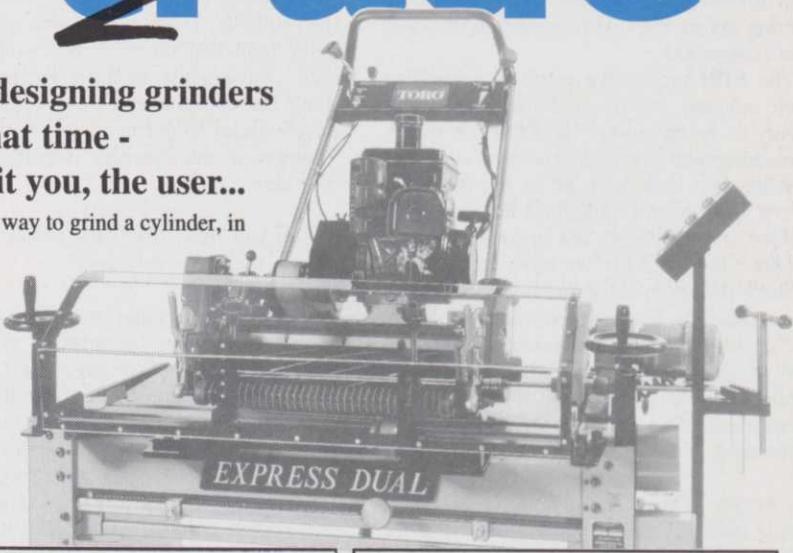
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GI: In The Way Forward, those areas where the panel would like to see action taken were asterisked. How many of those areas have seen change?

MB: I think we have seen some movement away from the demands for Augusta type courses which call for a lot of water and fertiliser and the idea that green is beautiful.

Nature conservancy, as I have said, is something that is a concern and is being dealt with. A proper working relationship with the Nature Conservancy Council is being established. We've published a joint booklet with them on nature conservancy.

Tests are certainly going on on the effect which golf balls have on playing surfaces. That's certainly being looked at, especially the possible damage they can do to greens.

The Unions have certainly become more aware, as I've said, conducting their own seminars at club and county level.

The role of the greenkeeper has undoubtedly grown over the years, through the growth of BIGGA, the exhibition at Harrogate and their profile as shown in the magazine. That's one of the things that they suggested, that BIGGA needs a much higher profile in putting across the role of greenkeepers, well that's happened.

The STRI must have ways of publicising their advisory service. I think there is still plenty to be done with the STRI but that is something that is being looked at.

When you look at it, all in all, the areas which have been highlighted have all been tackled to some extent, not as greatly as some people would like but we have no authority to force people to carry out any of these recommendations. It was an educational process in that the panel put up certain ideas which they thought would be good for the long-term future of golf in the hope that people would adopt them. And I'm glad to say that many clubs have.

GI: At the BTME I heard some greenkeepers saying that they thought it might be time for another Way Forward. Are there any plans? Has it been discussed at all?

MB: Well, if there really was a need for a new Way Forward we would be happy to back it. I'm not sure that we should take a lead in that. I'm not sure what is meant by a new Way Forward, it suggests that the ideas put forward in this document have been superseded by something else. That's a very different matter, but I don't think they have. I think the basics are still the same, it's just a question of re-raising them and reminding people of them. If that's the idea, fine, but it's not really our role. Having done it once I think it's up to the Unions and probably BIGGA to get together on that. I think the greenkeepers, as this document suggested, should be taking a very much higher profile in all greenkeeping matters. Maybe they should be relaunching The Way Forward.

GI: In general, what's the R&A's view of greenkeepers?

MB: We are totally supportive of the role of greenkeepers, that's why we've been supporting them financially and also trying to help them with the education of greenkeepers, we help the greenkeeping colleges. We think that

Looking back at The Way Forward

greenkeepers are one of the keys to the whole future of the game. If you've got good head greenkeepers you're going to have good golf courses. Without good golf courses you won't have many golfers.

GI: What more can greenkeepers do to improve their lot?

MB: They are already making it a much more attractive industry for people to come into and I think that the new video produced by the GTC and BIGGA is going to attract a lot of youngsters into the profession because they can now see that it is a very worthwhile and rewarding career. I think that one of the things that they have got to do is to sell the opportunities that are there in greenkeeping because golf is still expanding, especially on the continent. There are still new golf courses being built and for every new course that's built you're going to need greenkeepers. I think the opportunities for greenkeepers to progress and to get involved, as they do in America, in management is going to come over here.

GI: Do you think the Home Unions could do more to support greenkeepers?

MB: Some of the Home Unions are a bit wary about greenkeepers getting too powerful. I don't see that as a problem at all. I think the greenkeepers should be encouraged to improve their education. The Home Unions are certainly supporting greenkeeper training and education, but I think some people were a bit scared that the Association was becoming a trade union rather than an association. They thought there might be problems with clubs being faced with demands for wage increases and that it would be far more costly to maintain golf courses. I don't think that's a danger at all. I think as greenkeepers become better educated and better trained you're going to pay them more because you get the results on the golf course – the golf course will be better maintained and you'll get more people playing and you'll get a bigger income.

GI: When the Way Forward was produced, BIGGA was in its infancy. What are the R&A's views now about the Association, its role, where it's going?

MB: I think it has developed very well. It has a definite image now. It has its own trade magazine. It has its own exhibition which has been very successful. And I think the whole profile of the greenkeeping profession has been enhanced.

GI: What exactly is your job as secretary of the R&A?

MB: If you look at it in terms of a company, the R&A is a parent company of a number of subsidiary companies. We have a general committee which is the overall committee of the

club. Under that we have a championship committee with its own championship secretary which is responsible for running all the British amateur championships (boys, youths, seniors) and international matches, and they also run the Open Championship which is the oldest championship in the world and now a very big business. We then have the rules of golf committee which is responsible worldwide for the rules of golf, except in the United States and Mexico, and that committee again has its own secretary and that's responsible for making new rules, for making decisions on existing rules, and educating people on rules. They run seminars and exams for referees.

The amateur status committee, also has its own secretary and is responsible for laying down the rules of amateur status worldwide. Then we have the finance committee which is responsible for all the financial affairs of the club and the club committee which is responsible for the R&A as a golf club in St Andrews, and run like any other golf club except we're in the peculiar position that we don't own or run a golf course.

These are the committees and I am secretary of the R&A as an entity covering those different functions. It's my job to make sure the committees operate in accordance with the policy of the general committee. They lay down the policy and, through the committee secretaries, it's my job to make sure the policies are followed. We are also involved in the World Amateur Golf Council which is responsible for running the world amateur team championships, for men and women, on a biannual basis. Then we also have sub-committees, such as the external funds supervisory committee, and their job is to distribute the profits that are made from the Open back into the game of golf for the development of the game on as wide a scale as possible because one of the policies the general committee laid down many years ago was that the profits from the Open cannot go back into the R&A as a club. The profits from the Open have to be distributed for the benefit of golf, and it's for this reason that we have been supporting greenkeepers and greenkeeping matters, because that is one positive way of putting money back into the game for the benefit of everyone.

GI: How long have you been doing this job?

MB: Nearly 11 years now. I came to the R&A in June 1983 and took over as secretary in September '83. It seems like yesterday...

GI: Do you still play golf?

MB: I play occasionally, when I can. Everyone imagines a golf club secretary has a lot of time to play golf, but that isn't the case.

GI: What's your handicap these days?

MB: Three.

GI: Do you play here at St Andrews?

MB: Yes, but I play mainly at Elie which is just down the road and is a wonderful example of how a golf course should be. The greens there are superb all year round, never on temporary greens. The greens are fast and true, even in the middle of winter. And the course is never closed unless it's got snow on it...

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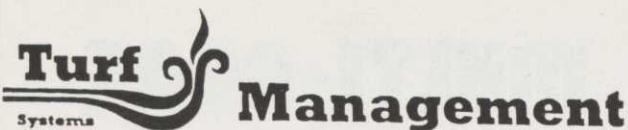
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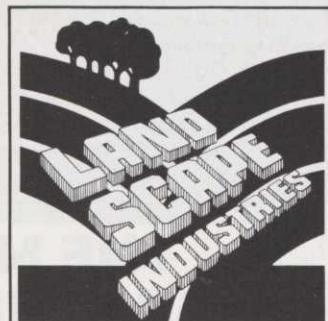
Landscape Industries in the spotlight

Most of the leading companies involved in turf management will be at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, on June 8 and 9 to show their products, technology and services.

Landscape Industries brings together a combination of trade displays, working equipment, discussion sessions and specialist technical features – and admission, parking and the exhibition catalogue are all free.

There will be more than 200 companies displaying everything from chemicals and mowers to nursery products, irrigation and garden accessories. Many manufacturers will be able to demonstrate their equipment in realistic conditions.

Education is also of importance at Landscape Industries, so many of the country's leading industry organisations will be on hand to offer advice. These include ADAS, British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association, Arbicultural Association, City and Guilds, BALI, BLITO, ILAM,



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Advice left wanting

May I take this opportunity to pass a comment on a couple of articles in the last two editions of the magazine that perhaps help to demonstrate the inconsistency of agronomic advice being given to greenkeepers, but perhaps also the short-sighted and false economy of some of our golf clubs.

Firstly, the very fine detailed account of the building of the new greens at Birkdale. It seems a lot of trouble and hard work went into the removal of the offending "organic" soil and its subsequent replacement with a sandier rootzone. Why then replace the old *Poa* turf over this new material, surely an opportunity to instantly replace this with new fescue/bent turf grown on a sandy rootzone or of the washed variety was missed. Even STRI's Jeff Perris comments that "It will however take a long time to amend the turf from annual meadow grass to one containing more of the desirable bents and even fescues". Was this decision one of purely economic grounds, perhaps the "toughening" and remodelling aspect of the project took greater priority than the true links turf on which we assume we want to play.

Secondly, the merits of replacement of the old *Poa* turf on the new rootzone material is clearly called into question by an article in the following month's magazine, again by an STRI advisor, this time Mike Canaway. Especially interesting is the data on performance after wear and filtration rates on the new turf types laid on a sandy rootzone. Even though a *Poa* turf was not tested, comparison can surely be made. I am sure that we can all assume that the *Poa* turf in question has a very high probability of containing a large amount of organic matter, prone to disease and even if thinly cut, must still contain, in part, the "undesirable organic soil". Mike Canaway states: "Clearly the purpose of a sand-based green is to provide free draining conditions. If the turf supplied caps the rootzone, then clearly much of the effort put into golf green construction has been lost." Mike finally appears to recommend the use of the "Coronet" washed turf as having "no detrimental effects on playing quality" and being *Poa* free.

May I therefore suggest that we have a well respected advisory body contradicting itself in its recommendations and can I also ask if the option to put washed fescue/bent turf on the new greens at Birkdale was suggested and subsequently turned down on purely economic grounds. I have no doubt that in time with the correct remedial programme bents and fescues will return to the greens at Birkdale and having a free draining rootzone will be a big help. We are all familiar with the recommended process, but we are also familiar with the facts that it can be a long hard road, one that sometimes falls foul from the pressures of irate golfing

In admiration of Tom O'Brien

After reading, with great interest, your article on the remodelling of Royal Birkdale, I felt I must write and express my admiration for the honesty and sheer guts of Tom O'Brien. It takes a special kind of man to admit his mistakes in such a frank manner.

We have all made mistakes, some large and some small. If we are lucky we get away with them, if we are very lucky, nobody notices them. For your mistakes or oversights to be seen and discussed by, who knows?, many millions, is a burden not many men could carry.

Two years ago a very dear friend and colleague of mine took his own life after dam-

age was caused to some of his greens, he felt, wrongly, that he was at fault.

Tom O'Brien can retire assured that our industry is the poorer for the loss of a man of his calibre.

He is right when he says that the club would not spend £300,000 on the greens just because they were cut too short.

His comments on the agronomic advice he received should also make a few people take a long hard look in the mirror.

Enjoy your retirement Tom, you've earned it!

Peter Wisbey, Pinheiros Altos, Algarve, Portugal

members who often wish to forsake the far-off resulting quality of putting green turf for short-term colour and softness (remember the 5 wood syndrome) and regularly comment on the seemingly continuous aeration treatments

I have perhaps been lucky that I find even with a very limited budget and high levels of play, that my greens sustain an ever increasing population of bents and fescues. Am I lucky in applying the right programme of treatments, or being in total control of policy and having no greens committee? I can clearly state that in all areas of performance fescues and bents outperform *Poa* any day. Even this winter my greens have been in play, they have stayed firm and been disease free, so perhaps I am biased against *Poa*. I have also previously seen thatchy, fusarium ridden *Poa* turf removed from a green, closely boxed (thinly cut), the rootzone replaced with the intention of being more free draining and re-contoured and the old *Poa* turf replaced. To this day, probably over 12 years later the green is still *Poa*, prone to disease and remains soft during wet periods, no improvement in performance whatsoever. I sincerely hope Birkdale's results are markedly better.

Paul Copsey, course manager (among other things) at Barnehurst Golf Course, Bexleyheath, Kent

Ultimate challenge?

Your news column last month had a story relating to long holes. We have a 620-yard par 5 (medal tee), 602-yard (yellow tee) par 5 9th hole. Whilst Knaresborough would appear to be longer, bear in mind that the original medal tee, now used as the 18th medal tee position, would have added a further 40 yards to the hole, and the green is surrounded on three sides by a spinney which drops down 10-15 feet almost immediately.

The hole was reduced in length as we felt

that it was too long, bearing in mind the undulations that exist as well. We have had a certificate designed which will be awarded to any player achieving a birdie off the medal tees in competition, and have had about a year's supply (6) printed!

Steve Rumball, Chalgrave Manor Golf Club, Luton (due to open in May)

Rakes' progress

I am writing to inquire if any other golf courses have had the same experience with plastic headed rakes as we are experiencing at Delamere Forest Golf Club.

In 1993 we purchased 75 rakes and had no problems until the frosts, which started in October of last year. We now have 43 useable rakes, as the rest seem to have shattered in use since the onset of hard frosts.

We have contacted the manufacturer who says he is unaware of any problems, and that the plastic manufacturer assured him that the plastic is not at fault. He suggested we must have heavy-handed golfers.

For this reason, would other courses like to inform me if they have such clumsy members and if their plastic-headed rakes have withstood the winter intact.

PN Bertenshaw, course manager, Delamere Forest Golf Course, Cheshire

Just great, Sam

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Samantha Flint at head office for putting on a great ladies programme at the National Conference. Everything from accommodation, meals and especially the trips were great. Thank you very much, Sam, for making it an interesting and very enjoyable few days.

Edna Small

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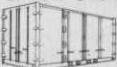
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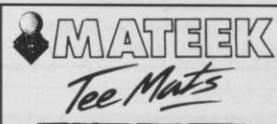
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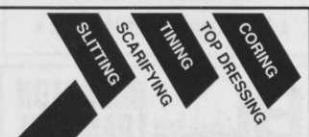
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Applicants must be fully experienced in all modern techniques of course maintenance and construction including machinery maintenance and care of irrigation systems.

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Salary negotiable. No accommodation.

Apply in confidence with full CV to:

**Secretary/Manager, Wyke Green Golf Club,
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**Golf Club Ortenau
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requires a

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Minimum age 25. Technical and practical qualifications. Pesticide certificates. Sound knowledge of modern irrigation and machinery. Capable of controlling and motivating staff.

Salary negotiable. No accommodation.

Apply in writing with CV to:

**Mr C Plant, Westwood Golf Club,
Newcastle Road, Leek, Staffs ST13 7AA**

Closing date: Two weeks from publication

RECRUITMENT



Royal Blackheath Golf Club

require a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applicants are required to be fully experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping, budgetary control and machinery maintenance. A minimum of five years experience as Head Greenkeeper or equivalent at an established golf course is essential.

An ability to manage, lead and motivate staff is a priority. The Club is presently in the early stages of implementing a development plan.

The salary and benefits will be commensurate with this responsible position and family accommodation is provided.

Please reply in writing with full CV to:

**The Secretary, Royal Blackheath Golf Club,
Court Road, Eltham, London SE9 5AF**



**Horton Park
Country Club**

requires a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applicants must be experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping and course management and must have a proven track record in motivation and leadership of greenstaff. Sound knowledge of modern irrigation and machinery is essential.

Horton Park is an 18 hole golf course with a 26 bay driving range, managed by a team of five greenstaff.

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Apply in writing with CV and salary expectation to:

**Mr P Hart, Director & General Manager, Horton Park Country Club,
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Salary negotiable. No accommodation.

Apply in writing, with full CV to:

**The Secretary, Bloxwich Golf Club (1988) Ltd, 136 Stafford Road,
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Please write, enclosing your CV to:

**Duke's Dene Golf Club Ltd
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North Worcestershire Golf Club

invites applications for the position of

COURSE MANAGER/ HEAD GREENKEEPER

for an 18 hole golf course situated in attractive rural surroundings south Birmingham. Applicants must be fully experienced in all aspects of modern course management and maintenance techniques. The successful applicant must have the skills to lead and motivate staff and will be expected to demonstrate abilities to maintain a quality course to a high standard exercising firm budgeting controls.

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Applications in writing with full CV to:

**The Secretary, North Worcestershire Golf Club,
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In addition, you must have at least 3 years' experience in horticultural and sportsground operations, with a specific knowledge of greenkeeping, and will be required to use and maintain appropriate equipment.

You must be capable of motivating employees to reach the required standards and have the ability to communicate effectively with both employees and members of the public.

Possession of a driving licence is essential. This post is not suitable for job sharing.

Application forms are available from and should be returned, quoting Ref. SL/P75, by Friday 20 May 1994, to:

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Berkhamsted Golf Club

invite applications for a

FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants must be suitably qualified and experienced in all aspects of course management.

No accommodation.

Please apply in writing with full CV to:

**The General Manager
Berkhamsted Golf Club
The Common, Berkhamsted
Herts HP4 2QB**

The great pesticide debate rages on. Articles by Tony Howorth, David Stansfield and Neil Baldwin in the December issue of Greenkeeper International all raised questions about the future of our industry.

It seems to me that a great deal of the argument hinges around the statement that "it is better to use an effective product once, under controlled conditions, than one with reduced longevity many times." This sounds eminently sensible but what is really being said? Firstly, is it not naive to talk about "controlled conditions". This implies:

1. We are all perfect and accidents never happen;
2. The proper application of the product is all there is to it. What about manufacture, waste products, transport, storage and handling?
3. That once down we can forget about it. What about long-term effects on the soil micro-organism population, the ground water and ultimately the wider environment?

Secondly, as David Stansfield pointed out, if a chemical is to be effective over a long period it must be persistent in the soil. This persistence increases the hazard greatly. As a result of applying lead arsenate today, its effects on the ground water would not be seen for many years. Less persistent chemicals reach the ground water much quicker and are therefore more easily traced, monitored ad assessed.

The effects of less persistent chemicals are also more selective as they lose their efficacy as they travel down through the soil profile. This can be beneficial in retaining some of the more helpful soil organisms.

When assessing the use of any chemical under COSHH we must consider the RISK and the HAZARD. There is certainly a greater risk of accident and contamination with spraying ten times as opposed to once but what about the hazard? Would you rather fall off your mower ten times or out of an aeroplane once? You would not have long to contemplate which is the most hazardous.

As part of the legislation under Health and Safety scientists are employed to do specific objective tests and decide whether a chemical is safe to use in a given situation. It is of no consequence to them if removing that chemical poses serious problems for the manufacturer or end user, and rightly so. Imagine if this decision was left to the horticulturalists or the trade, a recipe for self-interested disaster. We are always complaining that golfers keep trying to tell us our job but it seems that we think we know better than trained scientists who carry out the tests.

It is very weak and short-sighted of us as greenkeepers to support Health and Safety legislation which improves our work environment and enriches our lives and then to criticise the removal of products which are deemed to be dangerous because it is inconvenient.

To be perfectly frank, I am not at all sure what all the fuss is about. I am told by the people who know best that the current products are safer than the old ones. It costs our club 0.5 per cent of its annual expenditure to control our worm problem, a problem that as anyone who works on the chalk downs will tell you is our num-

TALKING HEADS

Master Greenkeeper Kerran Daly adds to the debate over pesticides

ber one problem. With thio-phenate methyl we get effective control at a reasonable price. If clubs find the price too high then two things can happen. The cost will come down in response to market forces or the products will disappear. Clubs will then have to reassess whether the price was too high. This will leave a gap for new products to fill.

Fenarimol is a prime example of a new safer chemical (no hazard warning under COSHH) which would not have been marketed if legislation had not banned more toxic chemicals. Some would have us go back to the old mercury salts and would no doubt say that they were perfectly safe but I think I would rather risk an accidental dose of fenarimol than a swig of mercurous chloride.

Neil Baldwin stated his belief that new safer products are just around the corner and this is all because we have had the wisdom to withdraw dangerous chemicals and force research and development into new ones.

Interestingly, the well-known mole destroyer aluminium phosphide came up in Tony Howorth's article. I am glad to say I have never had the displeasure to use it but it reminded me of a recent conversation with a highly respected greenkeeper at the Cannington seminar who warned me off the noxious substance. He reported it to be highly unstable and very difficult to use with no good result. A trade salesman then joined in the conversation stating that "the legislation surrounding the product was so severe that his company could not and would not market it." I was cheered to see such a fine example of the legislation in action.

It has been suggested that the chemical companies are making large profits out of increased chemical sales. It is politically embarrassing for me to be seen to defend multi-national chemical companies but in this case I am intent on doing so. We are a small market and research and development costs and the costs for registration are enormous. Even so, it is the market which dictates the price and if no-one buys it, it will fail.

The charge that costs are too high are refuted by my budget figures. All too often I hear greenkeepers complain about the cost of pesticides while they are quite happy to fork out huge amounts on fancy fertilisers, particularly liquids, at highly unrealistic prices. I must admit that in the fertiliser business most products price themselves off my shopping list and I would be happy to see most disappear.

Chemical companies have a right to make a living and I am very pleased that they are now doing so by producing less hazardous chemicals under tighter regulation of the manufacturing process. The alternative is for them to go on producing the old long-term cures which are not sustainable in a modern day free market which requires growth. To compete against cheap labour regimes abroad, British companies need new markets in high-tech areas. The control of pollution has provided such markets. We must generate wealth and growth to improve our standard of living and be leaders in the field of a cleaner and better future. If we stand still we will be swallowed up by the "Made in Taiwan" phenomenon.

What if legislation got so tight all pesticides were withdrawn? David Stansfield reported that this already is the case in other European countries, without any insurmountable result. I think the thought of no pesticides should not frighten greenkeepers and indeed they should welcome it. With no chemicals, only those following sound cultural practices in pursuit of true British fescue/bent courses would survive. At present, high fertiliser, heavy watering regimes producing lush meadow-grass greens are being maintained by heavy use of blanket fungicides.

No greenkeeper, including myself, could afford to adopt a unilateral policy of never using pesticides. The initial deterioration in his course, and his course alone, would lose him his job. However, if all courses were in the same boat then the long-term result of *Poa annua* free courses should be welcomed by all managers who believe in a return to golf played as it should be on fine-leaved species only.

The withdrawal of all pesticides would have other benefits in that the growing mound of paperwork and the constant headache of keeping abreast of current legislation would be greatly reduced. The environment for golfers, employees and the public would be much improved. The return to cultural controls would mean more jobs for greenkeepers. It is true that chemical companies would lose market and would probably need to shed some staff but I am convinced there would be a net gain in employment which is good news for our thousands of young unemployed.

The removal of chemicals would leave a large gap in the market for entrepreneurs with innovative cultural control ideas. This too would create new areas for employment. All of these side benefits on top of the forced return to sound greenkeeping principles make the withdrawal of all pesticides an attractive proposal.

In the meantime, use of less toxic materials demands higher standards of management and so educated managers are what we need most. Thankfully BIGGA has made this its top priority over the past five years and I am sure we will reap the benefit by the sensible use of less persistent chemicals in an integrated management system.

In the mid to late '60s, greenkeeping lost its way with the introduction of heavy fertilising, misused automatic irrigation and cure-all pesticides. Those of us who have fought long and hard against the first two heresies should add their weight against the third because it is now the only thing propping these up.

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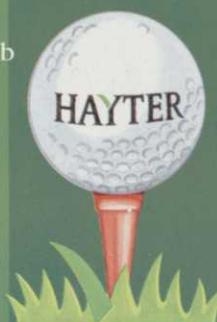
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