Looking ahead
Jim Arthur looks at the growth of golf in Europe and finds a big shortage of greenkeepers

Construction
A report from St Andrews on the reconstruction of the Jubilee links

On the Course
How Royal Troon has been prepared for the Open Championship

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LES PROBLEMES DE FINANCEMENT ET D'EDUCATION SONT EGALEMENT ABORDES. JOHN MELEAN COMMETTE LE PROGRAMME DE GESTION POUR LA PREPARATION DU TERRAIN DE GOLF DE ROYAL TROON A L'OCCASION DU CHAMPIONNAT INTERNATIONAL (PAGE 21). DANS CET ARTICLE, LE RESPONSABLE EN CHEF DE L'ENTRETIEN DU PARCOURS, NORMAN FERGUSON, EVOQUE LES CONSEQUENCES DE LA DOUCHE HIVERNALE, LES PROBLEMES LIES A L'IRRIGATION ET LE NOUVEL EQUIPEMENT ACHETE POUR AERER LE TERRAIN. VOUS APPRENEZ POURQUOI IL A ET E NECESSAIRE D'INSTALLER UN NOUVEAU SYSTEME D'EGOUT EN PREVISION DES 600 MEMBRES DE L'EQUIPE DE TELEVISION, ET VOUS LIREZ TOUT SUR LA RESTRUCTURATION DE LA BANQUETTE ET LES METHODES DE FUMURE EN SURFACE.

EN PAGE 26, IAN TOLMINSON, HAY PASSÉ SIX ANS A LAUSANNE, REVÉLE SES SECRETS EN MATIERE DE GESTION DU TERRAIN. CELOU DE LAUSANNE N'EST PAS SEULEMENT HANICAPÉ DU FAIT QU'IL DOIVE FERMER SES PORTES TROIS MOIS DE L'ANNEE PARCE QU'IL EST SITUÉ AU-DESSUS DU NIVEAU DES CHUTES DE NEIGE, MAIS SES ARBRES SONT EN OUTRE LES VICTIMES DE LA POLLUTION AERIENNE. QUELQUE 250 ARBRES Y ONT ÉTÉ PLANTÉS AU COURS DES DERNIERS ANNÉES.

AUTRE ARTICLE INTERESSANT DANS CE NUMERO: EN DIRECT DE SAINT ANDREWS, VOUS PORREZ DECORRIVER COMMENT LE PARCOURS JUBILEE A ÉTÉ RESTRUCTURE. DESSINE EN 1897, CE TERRAIN A DEPUIS ÉTÉ MODIFIE A PLUSIEURS REPRICES. SIGNEE CETTE FOIS PAR DONALD STEEL, LE JUBILEE COMPORTE UNE IMMENSE DUNE DE SABLE; CELLE-CI, AINSI QUE LES AUTRES CHANGEMENTS EFFECTUEZ, ONT NECESSITE DE CHARROYER D'ENORMES QUANTITES DE TERRE ET DE SABLE (VOIR P.16).

THE GOLF COURSE JULY 1989
"Foxy" stalks his pride and joy

Moortown golf course was in truly magnificent condition for the visit of over 60 northern greenkeepers to support Bill Mountain's sponsored tournament event. New holes have recently been opened, cut through the birch woods, after injunctions were threatened by local residents as a result of golfers peppering their houses from one of the par threes.

They have unwittingly done the club a favour as the two new holes at six and seven, a par 4 followed by a par 5 are both excellent. The first is a dog leg right uphill, the next requires a well drawn tee shot left, to line up for the raised green through two mature oaks.

Head Greenkeeper Bill Fox, suffering from back problems, decided to dispense with his clubs for the day, leaving the competing to staff greenkeeper, Mick Hannam, but he walked his course with justified pride, encouraging colleagues and receiving their unstinted praise.

Yorkshire Tournament moves to Cornwall

Whilst in Yorkshire it is worth mentioning that Benson & Hedges have done golf supporters no favours by giving way to BBC television pressure to take the event to St Mellion next year. The Fulford event in August has always attracted a huge attendance to a well presented course. The transfer of the tournament now leaves Yorkshire without any major European Tour fixture, though we hear something is in the pipeline for 1991 if a suitable sponsor emerges.

Open Championship

There could be two greenkeepers competing in the Open Championship at Troon this month. If Trevor Foster, Accrington's Head Greenkeeper can qualify again he is likely to be joined by Alan Tait, a member at Bogside.

Alan will be able to claim far more than course advantage if he makes the line-up at Royal Troon as he has been employed here as a part time member of Norman Ferguson's staff for the past eight months.

As one of the twelve greenkeepers involved in grooming, greens, tees and fairways for Troon's staging of their sixth Championship, Alan will know intimately, every blade of grass on the course.

A full Scottish international he spent two years at the Paris Junior College on a golf scholarship where he did a degree in journalism. He has one further advantage over the army of hopefuls competing for a coveted spot. His qualifying round will be played at his home club, Bogside.

"Wizz Kid"

Nottingham based Henton & Chattell, pride themselves on a "quick parts service" at least that is the sign painted on the side of their van.

One of their drivers was more than trying to keep up the firm's reputation when he was seen, weaving in and out of the busy traffic on the A38 heading towards Derby at over 80mph, just before 5.00 pm on Friday 9th June.

He nearly clipped the "Mower" as he overtook on the inside lane of the dual carriageway. Our advice to this keen young driver is to keep a wary eye open for the motorway patrol, otherwise he might find himself working in the warehouse for a few months.

Ganning plans to "one-up" rivals

The Belfry Course Manager, Derek Ganning has a singular objective this year, the presentation of the Brabazon course to perfection for the staging of the Ryder Cup in September. He has put in two lakes, rebuilt tournament tees and has "secret" plans to create certain visual effects, which he says will have Jimmy Kidd at Gleneagles, "green with envy".

We understand there is a degree of friendly rivalry between the managers of the leading championship courses, which all who know Derek, realise is combined with a degree of "leg-pulling".

From what we hear there is to be no free admission for greenkeepers to the Ryder Cup, they will have to pay the going rate of £15 a day or £45 for the whole event.
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A two cylinder, diesel-powered truck, selling at £3,499, has been launched with Marshall Tractors.

Similar to the popular continental concept of basic low-cost multi-role carriers, the Ranger could prove a strong British-made attraction as a golf course pick-up.

It is cheap to buy and run, and remarkably versatile, with a drop side, tipping flatbed capable of taking a 900kg payload.

It has a cab to provide protection in bad weather, and it is inherently safe on rough terrain.

The Ranger’s steel frame chassis is articulated in the middle, allowing the payload area approx 15cmsg of independent oscillation.

This improved safety on very rough surfaces, enabling all four wheels to maintain contact with the ground.

The 4-wheel drive has taken two years to develop with its flat automatic transmission, providing eight forward and two reverse gears.

The Ranger has a top speed of 20mph with disc brakes at the front, drum brakes at the rear. The live rear axle is unsprung, but the two seater cab has a coil spring and telescopic damper system.

The deluxe model of the Ranger has a 25hp engine, in-cab electronic monitor, hydraulic tipping, CB radio kit and electric winch, all for £3,999.
Elanco starts new business unit

The Plant Science Division of Elanco Products Limited has announced the appointment of Mr. Steven Frost to the new position of Business Manager, Professional and Environmental Speciality Products. Previously Steve was manager of New Product Planning and Licensing, Europe, before which he was manager of Agricultural Science and Product Registration for Europe based at the Lilly Research Centre in Windlesham, Surrey.

In his new position Steve will be responsible for developing a new business unit which will concentrate on the UK opportunities for Elanco’s extensive range of speciality products in non-agricultural markets. This follows the company’s success in these business sectors in the US where sales approaching $50 million per annum are being achieved from the wide range of products in turf, ornamentals, aquatic and horticultural markets. Commenting on his new position Steve Frost said: “Elanco already has several products which are currently being sold into non-agricultural markets in Europe. The new business unit will develop and expand these markets in the UK and enter new markets with the launch of unique new products.”

British dairy farmer turns to golf

A £15 million, 180-acre golf and leisure complex to rival the best in Europe is being constructed at Portal, Tarporley, in the heart of the Cheshire plain by entrepreneur farmer and developer John Lilley.

Iseki UK expands to Cambridgeshire

Iseki UK has opened the doors of Britain’s first specialist compact tractor centre based in Cambridgeshire.

The move to the new three and half acre site at Bourn, adjacent to the A45 Cambridge – Bedford road, comes just two and a half years after the companies formation in Great Britain and mirrors Iseki’s growth in the market place to offer some of the best facilities in the business. Speaking at the opening of these spacious new premises, Iseki’s managing director John Hawkins said, “since our formation we have consistently wanted to increase the facilities offered to our dealers and professional turf users. The move to Bourn provides us with more room for our increasing parts and service area and for training, whilst outside we hope to establish the best in demonstration areas too.”

The new Iseki premises comprise some 20,000 sq.ft under cover, a new modern office and administration block, an assembly hall and containerised storage for products recently arrived from Iseki’s parent company in Japan. Iseki’s approach to the compact tractor and professional market is to supply a total package for the end user. The range of products distributed now includes not only the Iseki range of tractors, but also the Greenscare range of Coremasters, Turfblazer out front mowers and the Muratori, Sitrex and associated brands of loaders/backhoes and attachments.

The opening of Britain’s first compact tractor centre is an important milestone for Iseki UK. “We now have the facilities to match our growing share in the market.”
said Mr Hawkins, "We can offer the dealer and users we serve the opportunity to view, test drive and evaluate the products we sell as well as training and support, engaging them with a wide range of educational courses for the user, salesmen and fitters."

Jupiters launch Jupiter to replace imports of creeping red fescue

"The best new cultivar to have reached the sports and amenity grass sector for many years" — that is the description applied by Johnsons Seeds to Jupiter, an outstanding fine-leaved cultivar of the slender creeping red fescue group, which was introduced by the company towards the end of June. The first product of Johnsons' amenity grass breeding programme and launched after 15 years of assessment, commercial development and trials, Jupiter offers all the attributes which sports people and amenity turf managers look for in a cultivar, notably: Bright emerald green and distinctive strong winter colours; uniform and compact low growth for low maintenance and fewer heads; compactness — Jupiter has higher shoot numbers per unit than many other Chewings fescues, thus offering all the attributes which sports people and amenity turf managers look for in a cultivar, notably: Bright emerald green and distinctive strong winter colours; uniform and compact low growth for low maintenance and fewer heads; compactness — Jupiter has higher shoot numbers per unit than many other Chewings fescues, thus giving extra density and resistance to wear and weeds; tolerance to drought in summer and cold in winter; disease resistance, particularly to red thread and dollar spot, where it has proved to be more resistant than other leading cultivars, bred and produced in Britain.

Entered into trials by the Sports Turf Research Institute in 1984, Jupiter is currently the only cultivar to have been awarded live 'A' ratings for compactness, freedom from red thread, freedom from dollar spot, greeness in summer and greeness in winter. The new cultivar received 'B' ratings for 5mm mowing and short growth.

Trials carried out by Johnsons between 1983 and 1987, in which Jupiter was compared with leading cultivars of slender creeping red fescue, plus the widely-used commercial stong creeping fescue Boreal, showed the new cultivar to be well in advance of other varieties.

Assessments were made covering colour, texture, density and disease-resistance on a 0-9 basis. Jupiter merged as the top cultivar with an overall score of 7.17.

Disease-resistance was rated on an A-D scale with only two varieties achieving a pair of 'A's for red thread and dollar spot, Jupiter being one of them.

Plant breeders rights were granted to Johnsons for the UK/EEC and North America in 1985 and it is now Johnsons' declared aim to build up seed production in the UK, avoiding the scarcities which are experienced with some contemporaries of Jupiter.

The company have pledged that, by increasing the number of growers and the acreage of Jupiter, supply will keep pace with demand and there will be enough seed available to satisfy current and future needs.

In fact, the acreage of Jupiter this year will exceed the total UK acreage of creeping red fescues in 1986, while in 1990 production will be triple that amount.

Johnson's are recommending that Jupiter should be a component of the major mixtures for fine turf and they are including it as a key cultivar in their mixtures for areas such as cricket squares, golf greens, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Such is the versatility of the cultivar, however, that mixtures are also being marketed for golf fairways, cricket outfields, shaded areas, embankments and general purpose applications.

The source material for Jupiter was selected from a natural turf area in the south of England. Parental clones have been retained to ensure that Jupiter will remain uniform and stable for commercial production.

Derek Whelbourn, director of Johnsons' wholesale division, commented: "There can be no doubt that Jupiter adds a new dimension to the options which are available to anybody with an interest in sports and amenity turf. It is a truly outstanding new cultivar — we have called it Jupiter because we believe it is out of this world — and we are very proud to have produced such a fine cultivar from our amenity grass breeding programme."

The current value of the UK amenity seed market is placed at between £15 million - £20 million with a demand for some 5000 tons a year. The domestic market is about 1/2 of this again, giving a total UK seed market of 7500 tons. Johnsons share of this is claimed to be 25 per cent and with the launch of Jupiter the company forecasts this share will rise rapidly as domestic production begins to replace import of creeping red fescue. Material grown on British farms is estimated to be 200 tons, about 10% of the total imports of this variety.
Fisons lecturer in pesticide chemistry

Fisons Horticulture Division has signed an agreement, valued at £90,000 over three years, with the University of Essex to establish the post of Lecturer in Pesticide Chemistry, together with supporting laboratory facilities.

The Horticulture Division of Fisons plc sells the extensive Murphy range of pesticides on the UK home and garden market. In addition, Fisons Horticulture has a specialist pesticide range for the professional horticulture industry, including products such as the Fungicides Filex, Basilex and Turfclear.

Under the new agreement, the appointee will lecture within the University of Essex to established courses and carry out pesticide research to the benefit of both Fisons and the University.

Dr Roger Turner, research and development director of Fisons Horticulture, said, "We are delighted to be able to establish this lectureship and the extra laboratory facilities here at the University of Essex."
The total annual cost of maintaining Britain's golf courses is currently running at £38 million. This is a massive increase of nearly 25 per cent compared with the £30 million spent in 1986. The total excludes labour costs at £66 million which also compared to 1986 shows an increase of nearly 25 per cent.

The expenditure by clubs now on maintaining the golf course indicates a big swing towards the improvement of playing conditions to the attitude just three years ago.

The total acreage of land utilised in 1989 as golf courses in Britain is estimated at 287,130 acres (114,852 hectares) and of this area nearly 66 per cent is maintained and mown regularly. The South East accounts for the most land used for golf with 28 per cent of the total followed predictably by Scotland with 23 per cent, and Northern England with 19.5 per cent.

The figures have just been released from the UK Golf Course survey 1989 which shows the average wage of a head greenkeeper has risen by £1,500 since 1986. The national average annual pay for a head greenkeeper is now £8,630 - a figure however that falls well below the recommended scales of pay just issued by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association of £13,409.

The survey was conducted by Turf Management and is published this month. It shows that each club budgets for an annual capital expenditure and while this varies from year to year the information provides an accurate figure to the amount being spent in buying new equipment or replacing worn out machinery. In the South East golf clubs spend an average of £16,000 a year compared with clubs in Wales which record a meagre £2,400 a year. A national average however indicates that £16.4 million, a rise of 15 per cent, is spent on new machinery by clubs annually.

The most popular manufacturer supplying equipment to the golf course industry is Ransomes although a majority of clubs indicated they used equipment from more than three suppliers.

John Deere and Iski were two companies that featured in this analysis while Toro holds an estimated national share of 18.4 per cent, other firms showing a significant market share were Sisis 14.8 per cent, Cushman 11.4 per cent and Jacobsen with 10.2 per cent. The Jacobsen share of the market shows a significant increase and is nearly double the figure reported in the 1986 survey.

Another company who has seemingly made impact on the British golf course market is Kubota. This company now holds an estimated 6 per cent share of the machinery and equipment sector compared with 1986 when it featured only in the 'others' category. While Kubota claim to be the largest supplier of compact tractors in Britain the dominant market position for golf is held by Massey Ferguson and Ford.

The total average expenditure on pesticides is calculated at £5.9 million which indicates that golf clubs have a major requirement for these materials. The amount consumed for the golf course market is a significant proportion of the total amount of pesticides used in amenity horticulture.

Golf clubs also spend a considerable amount on fertilizer with the survey showing a total of £1.1 million spent annually. This is a considerable increase of some 38 per cent. The region spending the most on fertilizers is the South East followed by the North. Clubs in East Anglia use the lowest amount of the whole country with only £936 spent annually.

Copies of the market survey are available at a price of £155. All enquiries should be sent to TURF MANAGEMENT, 201-205 Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7PB.

Golf Course Europe

Interest has been considerable, especially from continental clubs after the announcement that Expoconsult are organising a conference and trade show in Welsbaden 4-6 October. The event is for golf course managers and greenkeepers together with others from the golf course construction and maintenance industry.

The conference programme will cover such diverse topics as Irrigation, Golf Course Maintenance principles, Public Courses, Financing of new course, Club House Architecture and infrastructure. All lectures will be delivered in the English language with a simultaneous translation into French and German. The exhibition is expected to attract thousands of trade visitors from all over Europe who will visit the stand of over seventy exhibitors. All available know-how products and technology will be on display.

For further details contact: Expoconsult, P.O.Box 200, 3600 AE Maarssen, The Netherlands. Tel: + + 31 3465 73777.
LOOKING AHEAD

Big shortage of good course managers

As more and more golf courses are being built in Britain and Europe Jim Arthur expresses his concern that many will suffer because of the shortage of good, well qualified managers

It is not only in golf greenkeeping that concern is being expressed about the effects of "traffic" on sports turf. One sees comments in the tennis world from such a respected head groundsman as Jim Thorn at the All England Club that management techniques have not kept abreast of the effects of stress and pressures from play and that unqualified, unskilled people are put in charge of court maintenance at many Clubs, merely because they had been club professionals. The same applies to cricket - where criticisms are made of wickets which not only have withstood all the world from such a respected head from a golf greenkeeping Magazine!

But, however, it would be neither appropriate nor wise to venture into such areas in golf greenkeeping Magazine! We have enough problems of our own. In generalising about trends, it must always be taken into account that the excellent condition of the relatively few courses in improving condition, is not only in golf greenkeeping - instead of, as in earlier decades, regarding it as a last option for those "wanting an outdoor life" - often synonymous sadly with the description "strong in the arm and thick in the head".

I am concerned that concern is being expressed - instead of, as in earlier decades, regarding it as a last option for those "wanting an outdoor life" - often synonymous sadly with the description "strong in the arm and thick in the head".

The main threat comes, of course, from the new courses being built as part of hotel and leisure complexes, or by developers both in Britain and Europe. Such bodies know they have to pay and are more than willing to do so, having long experience in paying the going rate and more, and in treating their managers as managers!

The relief of those excellent men who have moved from members' clubs, where every upstart or novice member feels qualified to criticize them and where Captains playing off 20 and worse, regard themselves as having a God given right to fire good men, just because a long serving experienced head man reckons he knows rather more than the Captain about greenkeeping, is illuminating!

At a conservative guess we are going to need some 500 head men in the next decade (or less), if current estimates of new course projects are even half accurate. On top of this we need back-up trained staff replacement of retirees.

When 'labour' is in short supply wages escalate - and this has been true ever since the Black Death. If 'member clubs' whose parrot cry to any attempt to lead them into the twentieth century is to vote down any increase in subscriptions and who claim to own as well as have the right to run their club - whereas in truth they are merely temporary custodians for future generations - fail to respond to this financial pressure, they will soon find they have only second class greenkeepers, trainees, or those stalwarts motivated by loyalty, love of their course or reluctance to move, to look after their courses.

The problem of finance has induced Treasurers to increasingly encourage and rely on societies - not all of whom are proficient players. Whilst this revenue, which sometimes exceeds the total of members' subscriptions, may balance the books it is not free! In fact, wear is disproportionately higher and an appreciable proportion of this revenue ought, but rarely is, diverted back to course maintenance. A recent survey of a number of south county clubs showed that eliminating all societies (NOT green fees) would have to be balanced by increasing the subscriptions by varying amounts, generally £50-£100 p.a. Yet in EVERY club, members voted the proposal down, often overwhelmingly. Too mean
to pay an extra £1 a week to enjoy more fully their own club’s facilities! It defies belief!

So much for the problem - what of solutions? Obviously the first priority must be to see that GOOD men are proportionately rewarded - and provided with pensions and other perquisites but also to see that they are treated as skilled professional managers - if they are! Failure by their employers to regard school teachers as being a respected and worthwhile profession is far more behind their present discontent than mere salary levels.

Secondly we need better and more intensive education. Whilst there are VERY few colleges teaching good greenkeeping, we are in general training no more GOLF greenkeepers in a year than we were a decade earlier. What is worse is that in many cases the very best being trained in any way differently than 20 years ago - it is only the skill and devotion of a mere handful of dedicated college lecturers interpreting and re-thinking an outmoded and often totally wrong syllabus in order to meet today’s problems, which prevents the whole education scheme being a fiasco. This is why it is so depressing for a meeting of VERY few colleges teaching good greenkeeping education has by and large stagnated, since those optimistic days when we thought we could standardise current and concentrate education at a few controllable centres.

The situation is I am assured no better in the States, where a far smaller proportion of clubs take advantage of the USGA Green Section’s advisory service than do clubs here with S.T.R.I. Furthermore I am told that an even smaller proportion of U.S. superintendents are member of the GCSSA than the proportion in the U.K., who joined B.I.C.G.A. though their vast numbers at their annual jamborees makes this difficult to believe.

Respected golf writers such as Michael Williams and Donald Steel plead for better courses, better able to stand up to the vagaries of our weather (we do not have a climate!) and to produce not only first class conditions for major events but the same standards all the year round. Who is more important? A handful of talented and overpaid young men who care only that it is right on the day, or the all year round golfer, who should surely expect his course to be at the very least playable, whenever he wants to play it.

There are pleas for an end to the divisions that seem to beset the greenkeeping world, which are often less basic than it would appear. There are suggestions for a ruling authority to lay down standards for course management and presentation. Surely this is there already in the Royal and Ancient, working through its appointed body, the Golf Section of the Sports Turf Research Institute.

What we must eliminate are bad greenkeepers, and there are still many relying on fertilisers and water to tart up their courses, be this for a major Tournament or their own Captain’s day - not understanding, or worse not caring, that this way lies thatch, annual meadow grass, temporary greens and course deterioration. I have no patience with those who say we have to learn to live with annual meadow grass - even though I accept that past bad greenkeeping has often left impossible legacy and control will necessarily be slow. So many of those who regard their awful meadow grass greens as inevitable have excellent bent approaches and fairways!

Finally, everyone from those in charge of clubs to those in charge of courses should note the avowed intention of the PGA to gain more control of the game. Whilst I rate many club professionals as my personal friends, there is no doubt that the interests of too many professionals in either group are opposed to those of members and players. This in no way implies that the interest of any club’s professional in his Club’s course should be discouraged, but he must not interfere with course management, any more than Greenkeepers should interfere with the way he runs HIS business. In far too many cases, malcontent members find their professional a willing focus for their grumbles - and once this happens, disaster and deterioration follow. Whilst undoubtedly the best way to run anything is through an amiable dictator there are two main problems - how to keep him amiable and how to stop him giving up - because it really is one of the most thankless tasks in the world to try to meet the opposed desires of the average membership - half of which are totally incompatible with the other.

The message is - especially to member ‘controlled’ clubs - to look after your good men, remembering that skilled staff are impossible to find and even bad ones are scarce.

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LOOKING AHEAD
New Jubilee course opens at St Andrews

Originally regarded as a ladies course when it opened in 1887, the new Jubilee reconstructed course marks a further stage in the development of these famous links.

The Jubilee course has been redesigned by Donald Steel with the main feature being the use of the huge main sand dune that used to be an unused spine down the centre of the course. This now comes into play on four of the new holes. As our illustrations show work by contractors Brian D. Pierson (Contractors) has required considerable earth moving and contouring to maximise the links qualities of the terrain. Walter Woods admires the bunkering.

Walter Woods the St. Andrews Links Supervisor has worked closely with the contractors and is particularly pleased with the quality of the greens which will be every bit as demanding as those of the Old Course. The Links Manage-
ment Trust are committed to providing even better facilities for visitors to the 'Home of Golf' and they together with Messrs Steel, Persson and Woods are to be congratulated on producing an exciting course that will appeal to the visitor and take some of the strain from the old course. Steel has also been given the task by the Links Management Trust of redesigning the Eden course. Not only to make it a more valued test of golf, but by using some of the land recently acquired at the far end of the course.

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Steel's design allows the vast flat area that formed the 1st, 17th and 18th holes to be drained and provide a permanent site for the Open Championship tented village. With poor weather at three consecutive Open Championships the tented village area turned into a mudbath how with easy access next to the Old course, 16th green and the Old Course Hotel, this well drained area will provide an ideal site.

Staff constructed a lake that guards the entrance to the 8th green that has to be played over to the short 9th. A lake may seem a strange addition to the St. Andrews scene but it is an effective feature. A reproduction of the 'Principal's nose' is also incorporated in the design of the 16th hole. Next year on the land bought from the Strathstreyum Estate between the Eden and the road into the town, a further 18 hole layout is to be built, again designed by Donald Steel and built for the Links Management Trust by Brian Persson.

Material is being collected from the other courses to form the sand dunes to the flat pastureland site for the Strathstreyum course, into a links in keeping with the St. Andrews tradition.
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Royal Troon prepares for the 118th Open Championship

John Lelean, looks at the course preparation for Royal Troon’s sixth staging of the most prestigious event in the golfing calendar.

It has been quite a year for Norman Ferguson, Royal Troon’s Head Greenkeeper. He was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honour's list and now seven months later, will be taking the stage once more as the presenter of the golf course destined to be seen through the medium of television, by the largest audience since the Olympic Games.

Providing the facilities for world wide television is just a part of Norman’s vast programme of work at Royal Troon. Their commentary positions extend almost half the length of the 16th fairway, all to be linked into British Telecom international cables.

The latest request is for separate toilet facilities for the estimated 600 crew which have to be connected to the main sewerage system. This will mean yet another section of the fairway to be dug up for pipes to be laid, though he might well incorporate this excavation with a public crossing point to overcome the problem of relaying the turf.

Answering the call of nature for the army of broadcasters appeared to be quite a problem at Royal Lytham last year as they were missing for up to three quarters of an hour queuing at the public conveniences!

Greenkeeping at Troon is a family profession. Norman has been in charge for 30 years, succeeding his father, who held the top job for 40 years. Brother William is first assistant. He was born in the greenkeepers bungalow on the edge of the course, where his well tended garden is a constant conversation opener with guests at the adjacent hotel.

Royal Troon in the middle of June, with barely six weeks to bring the course to perfection, resembled a cross between a building site and a full scale army manoeuvre. Whilst the twelve greenkeepers were battling to nurture the grass on greens, tees and fairways, yellow British Telecom vans were everywhere, tent framework was under construction and a virtual battalion of scaffolders were erecting stands at every vantage point around the course.

Add to that the TV towers, positioned to home in on every shot over 7,094 yards and greenkeepers at least will realise Norman and his crew were working under more than a degree of difficulty.

The mild winter enjoyed by all golf courses in the UK did enable the staff to progress a great deal of work on the course, including revetting 60 of the 80 plus bunkers. They have also put in a new sand trap on the left of the fairway up the eighteenth and built a championship tee some 27 yards further back to give the finish a bit of bite.

The final hole now measures 452 yards, which will require at least a 5 iron for the second shot for even the big hitters.

If there is a north westerly gale blowing down the fairway from the clubhouse, then many will find it difficult to get up with a much longer iron.

Wind, the feature of all links courses can be particularly punishing at Royal Troon. Those who can remember the
last time the Open was played here in 1982 will recall that Nick Price, runner up last year at Royal Lytham was in a commanding position, three shots clear of the field as he stood on the 13th tee. By the time he sunk his final putt on the 18th he had dropped four shots and handed the Open Championship to Tom Watson. Who will eventually be proclaimed “Champion” was far from Norman’s mind in June, his thoughts were how to ensure the course met with the requirements of the members and the R & A Championship Committee. Although his ultimate goal is a superb course without blemish for the members, he finds they are so sensitive, the slightest malfunction will switch off the whole system.

Despite all the digging and cable laying around the course, to date there has only been one hiccup and that was up in front of the club house when a scaffold, anchoring down a seating structure severed the main pipe. It was not long before Norman had a telephone call to his bungalow asking if course alterations were to include a lake.

A new piece of equipment, acquired this year on a recommendation from the consultant agronomist from the STRI has been the Australian manufactured Multi-core. This versatile machine has sets of hollow tines of various sizes, including some as slim as a pencil.

Some time in the future, but for the present, Nick Price was floating off into the Irish Sea.

A submersible pump switches in when the private clubs of Royal Troon and Portland are under the same management, but have separate clubhouses. To further complicate the arrangements, the ladies play the Portland course, but on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, they are allowed to play Royal Troon, though he agrees he has not tried it. Though according to Norman, once the local press had the glimmer of a story that there had been a sea invasion it was not long before they were predicting that the Open Championship course was floating off into the Irish Sea.

Water is the one commodity that is needed prior to the beginning of July. This part of the Ayrshire coast has suffered in common with others from a pre-longed period of drought. Fairways need cutting barely once a week and the rough is little longer than the cut grass.

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As Norman told me that it is as if there has always been running water below runs pure Scottish water, “Quite good enough to drink”, says Norman, though he agrees he has not tried it. A subsmerible pump switches in when the storage tank drops by a third. Watering changed over some years ago from Toro. A 22,000 gallon storage tank is fed from the Gyaws Burn, which conveniently runs through a pipe under the soil and machinery shed.

Under a wooden trap, some fifteen feet below runs pure Scottish water, “Quite good enough to drink”, says Norman, though he agrees he has not tried it. A subsmerible pump switches in when the storage tank drops by a third. “Even in the longest period of drought there has always been running water through the burn”, he added.

His irrigation will need updating with the latest computerised system at some time in the future, but for the time being it handles the two courses adequately. Two new safety cut outs have been incorporated recently, but
a wet day.

Another good buy in recent years has been a small Kubota compact tractor, offered initially by a local caravan site owner in financial difficulties, who had used the machine with rotary cutters. The club thought at the price it would be ideal for rough cutting, but they have discovered the compact is multi-functional and is in constant demand for all manner of jobs around the course.

Norman added that they never thought they had need for a small compact tractor, though since it arrived it has never stop working.

One hazard for golfers playing the links over which he has little control is the nearby Prestwick Airport. Jumbos taking off for the USA and Canada, fly directly up the length of the course, with ear shattering noise. During the Open Championship, air traffic control have agreed that if conditions are right they will endeavour to change the flight path to direct aircraft away from the event, but if the prevailing wind is not in their favour then there is nothing to be done.

It is to be hoped Concorde will not be making an appearance as a spell of recent training flights shook the surrounding properties to their foundations.

There is always a warm welcome at Royal Troon for visiting greenkeepers and course managers, a welcome that Norman thought might be extended to him on a recent trip to the USA. He mentioned to the Committee that he would like to visit Augusta and as Charlie Yates, winner of the Amateur Championship in 1938, had an official position at America’s most exclusive club it was suggested he should be contacted to make the necessary arrangements.

Norman, not wanting any special treatment, decided it was not necessary, so he drove the 100 miles from his holiday home to the course and arrived unannounced.

He explained to the gate keeper, who he was, where he had come from and was somewhat “miffed” to be told to turn his car round and go. “I don’t care where you’ve come from, nobody, but nobody comes past these gates”. So he had no option but to drive a hundred miles back without seeing a blade of grass.

Later however he was introduced to other golf courses in the USA, where he said the welcome was quite outstanding. Not only was he given a conducted tour but a golf buggy and set of clubs were put at his disposal.

It was only after his return that he discovered Charlie Yates lived in the same town where he was staying and he passed by his house almost every day!

“l may have another go sometime in the future”, said Norman, “but this time we will make prior arrangements”. We are sure this warm and friendly Scot, will be given the red carpet treatment.

But to return to the Open Championship. Just who will emerge as the 1989 winner. Will it be a repeat for Seve Ballesteros, can Nick Faldo, the US Masters Champion add another crown, will Curtis Strange make it an Open double? Norman Fergusson has a sneaking regard for Nick Price. He would have won at Lytham had not Ballesteros produced a final round of 65, a score only achieved once previously on the last day of an Open Championship.

Although it is said a competitor only has one chance, Price has been there twice, perhaps it could be third time lucky. I am going to take Norman’s tip with a small wager.
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How to manage a course in the Swiss Alps

Ian Tomlinson, the greenkeeper who took his British "know how" to Europe and has never regretted the move. Here he discusses some of the problems he faces at Lausanne.

It is more than six years since I left England to work in the Romand (French) part of Switzerland, at Lausanne Golf Club. Without hoping to seem too unpatriotic, I cannot see myself returning to the home country in the conceivable future because, to be frank there is so much opportunity on the Continent to enjoy such a high standard of living. Though hand in hand with the "good life" goes the necessity to earn it. That means hard work, long hours, accountability and all the responsibility required to manage one of the best golf courses in Switzerland.

The golf boom has hit Europe, including Switzerland, small as it is, in a big way. Our problem is finding suitable land for a course in a country where two thirds of the terrain consists of mountains and lakes, which raises the cost of an adaptable hundred plus acres to astronomical prices. To give you an example of the money involved, the land around Lausanne Golf Club is currently fetching £105 per square metre, so with a calculator you will be able to work out for yourself the purchase cost to lay down a new 18 hole construction. (Editor's note: For those without a conversion table there are 4,047 sq. metres to the acre).

Golf is still a sport for the rich in Switzerland and for that reason is not popular with the media. Because it is of necessity a pastime of minority interest to the bulk of the population, planning permission for new courses has become difficult to obtain even if someone is prepared to put up the capital. One or two new courses have been built, but when this is equated with membership joining fees of £15,000 to £25,000, you can see why it is regarded as only a sport for the ultra wealthy. So we find ourselves in a position not unfamiliar to the UK, where not enough new courses are under construction to cater for demand and those that are in existence, like ours at Lausanne are getting heavier play.

Last year in a Golf World survey Lausanne was rated in Europe's top 14, an accolade guaranteed to increase our fair share of visitors. Add to that the 1,130 members of the club, who also want to play the course and it is not difficult to imagine the pressure we are under throughout the playing season.

Unfortunately our greens were never constructed to take this volume of traffic so it was inevitable that problems had to arise. The first of these was drainage and you will see why from the photographs by the packed clay in the pipes.

Further investigation on a work plan to install a new drainage system on six of the greens, revealed what must be to a greenkeeper a "horror nightmare". Within three to four inches of the green surface we found a layer of yellow and blue clay. Digging deeper to a couple of feet below the surface we discovered the original natural turf which had not seen the Swiss sunshine for nearly 70 years. Below this was drainage and you will see why from the photographs by the packed clay in the pipes.

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The obvious solution to such badly constructed greens would be to rebuild them all, but then one is faced with the difficulty of convincing the members, who only seeing the playing surface are perfectly content as they are.

The course is at an altitude of 3,000 feet above sea level, closed by snow for three months of the year, so the prospects of shortening the playing season even further by having the greenstaff re-building the greens is certain to be a most controversial issue.

Since last year the club are now more aware of the problems we have with the greens as Jeff Perris from the STRI at Bingley was invited to survey the course and submitted a detailed report on its condition. Jeff's recommendation was a reconstruction of all 18 greens over a two or three year period, so it is now up to the membership to decide.

Last year a new Chairman of the Green Committee was appointed, who misunderstood his role from day one of taking office. He would decide a work programme and set down how and when it should take place.
This was naturally a receipt for disaster, so after five months of disagreements he finally resigned. The outcome has been every greenkeeper's dream! The general committee decided to dissolve the green committee, not appoint a new green chairman and pass to me, the total responsibility for running the golf course.

It is a pity more golf clubs in the UK do not adopt a similar policy and allow the man in charge of the course to maintain it as he thinks fit and be accountable for its condition and playability.

The course suffers from the damage that has been caused to the trees from aerial pollution carried on the winds for hundreds of miles from the industrial regions of other countries. It is a problem which is showing little sign of improvement despite the now growing acceptance and concern expressed in the European Parliament.

I have just marked another ten trees that need felling and the thought has occurred to me that if destruction continues at this incredible rate, how long will it be before the grass succumbs to environmental pollution. To give an idea how devastating is the problem, we have had to plant over 250 new trees in the last three years.

About four years ago we had a new irrigation system installed by Watermation, which apart from odd teething problems has been fantastic, that is until last year when we had a major catastrophe - lightning!

Because of the altitude and the surrounding mountains, the course is exposed to a number of violent electrical storms during the long hot summer.

Last year following one of the more severe outbreaks I arrived at the course to find lightning had gone to earth and charged up the underground electric control cables with millions of volts, blasting the electronic decoders to bits, stopping at the T.W.I. controller which had to be replaced.

Watermation were called in to study the problem and this season we have had fitted 30 new lightning protection devices to the electric cables so if we are hit again it will take the sting out of the charge before it arrives at the central control box. Only time will tell if it works. Meanwhile every thunderstorm will be viewed with some foreboding.

As far as purchase of maintenance equipment is concerned the club have been most supportive. We bought our own Verti-drain to loosen up the heavy clay in the sub soil which has made an immense improvement to the root growth.

Another excellent buy has been a JCB, bought after we paid a local contractor to put in a fairway drain 200 metres long and a metre deep and the cost was £7,000! As we will need to replace a couple of miles of new bunkers in hours and built new tees. After just one season in use this has proved to be a most intelligent investment.

Thankfully we have had little turf disease for the past two years, perhaps a sign that our management programme is moving the course in the right direction.

Despite all the work that needs doing on the course I have taken on the job of organising the first Swiss Romande Greenkeepers Golf Championship, which will include staff from six clubs over the border in France. One of the missing ingredients to working abroad is the lack of regular contact with one's colleagues, unlike in England where one can almost lean over the hedge to discuss a predicament. If this event can become an annual affair it will bring us all together at least once a year to exchange views.

Here we have only 32 clubs throughout all Switzerland, necessitating a rucksack, climbing boots, ropes and crampons for an expedition over the mountains just for a chat!

One of those who has given me great help since I arrived in Switzerland is Leslie Beetham at the Club de Bonmont, opened in 1983, between Lausanne and Geneva. Leslie is to take over a new Robert Trent-Jones project in mainland Spain and I would like to take this opportunity to extend to him my best wishes and those of greenkeeper colleagues who have valued his friendship and advice.

Top 10" of green 4. Note no top soil just pure clay

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Bob Moreton - Head Greenkeeper
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Steve Tingley - Head Groundsman
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