

# Greenkeeper

AUGUST 1982



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The Common,  
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# Greenkeeper

AUGUST 1982

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**Contributors:** Jim Arthur, John Campbell, Fred Cox  
Eddie Park, Frank Pennink, Donald Steel, John Stobbs.

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*Front Cover: FineX is just one of the Steetley KEY range of fertilisers and dressings for the professional user. A zero-phosphate powder compound—8:0:6 plus iron—FineX is designed for fine turf areas for use April to September. The KEY range comprises further powder products, micro-granular fertilisers and granular compounds.*

*Photo by courtesy of Habberley Golf Club, near Kidderminster, Worcestershire.*

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All advertising matter, editorial copy and correspondence should be sent to: *Greenkeeper*, 121-123 High Street, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex. Tel: 025 55 7526.

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# The Way The Wind Blows

Hoebridge  
Golf Centre.

ONE change of direction over the past decade or so has been the concept of a golf club being a primarily profit-making enterprise.

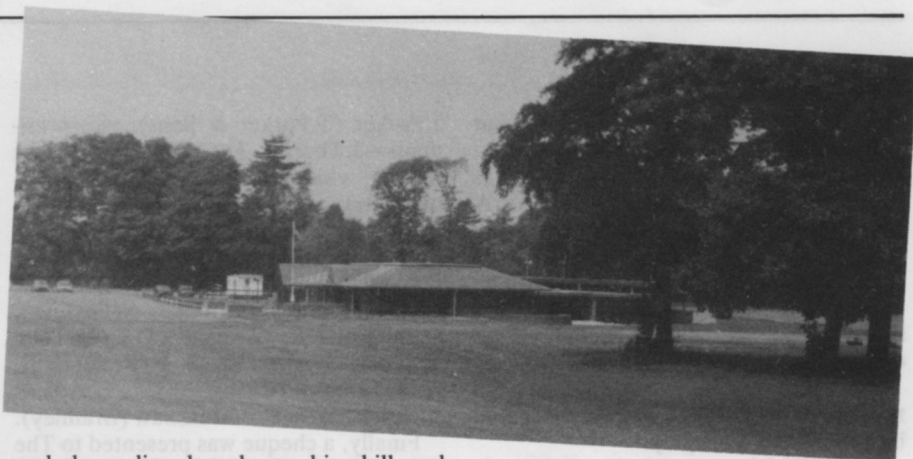
The role of such new enterprises grows apace and is already substantial. Some have proved an immediate success in course management, golf management and profitability alike. Some have hit various kinds of probationary problems, sometimes through an over-amateurish approach, sometimes through an over-commercial one.

"Once we've gained the reputation for being a great place to play, we're hoping to attract lots of people," said head greenkeeper Trevor Pipe at the opening of the new Hoebridge Golf Centre, Old Woking, Surrey.

"It's going to take time, of course, to get the greens on the long course into really good condition. It will take five years to get everything just as we want it.

"Meanwhile, this course opens up a whole new avenue into golf for thousands of people in the area who don't get to play at all."

Trevor Pipe is 35—a good age to be in at the start of something new—ambitious



and depending largely on his skill and efforts and those of his team for Hoebridge's success. A Devon man, who learnt his craft at Budleigh Salterton and Bramshot Hill at Southampton, he came from the head greenkeepership at Hindhead, Surrey to take up this challenge and seems a genuinely enthusiastic apostle for better playing conditions on public courses. The pro is Tim Powell, 31.

The course was designed by John Jacobs, constructed by Golf Landscapes, with irrigation by Watermation. It has

many excellent holes, is enjoyable to play and already in good condition. Even the brand new greens, still understandably a bit coarse in texture (work on the project only began in May, 1980) putted remarkably true, even after an all-day downpour.

The club staff includes six assistant greenkeepers and six assistant professionals. If that seems a lot, there's also a par-three course and a large driving range to look after, while long hours of opening mean shift work for everyone.

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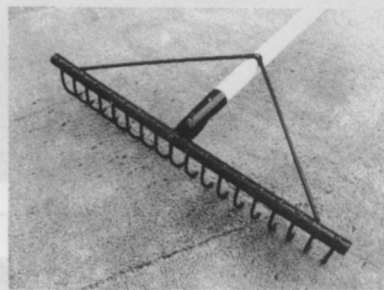


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# News & Notes

## Surrey Section News

The Surrey section held its third AGM at the New Zealand Golf Club recently. An 18-hole stableford for the Cresta Bowl was played in the afternoon by 40 members. A closely contested tournament was won by L.Adams of Leatherhead with 35 points from T.Huntley of Foxhills, also with 35 points—the winner being decided on the back nine. Third was A.Hall of St George's Hill with 33 points.

The winners acquired points towards the Golfer of the Year trophy, presented by Ben Turner of Ripley.

The AGM began with the chairman's address. Talks by the secretary and treasurer reported the section's success.

The new committee is: president—

J.Parker (T.Parker & Sons); vice-presidents—J.Thorpe, D.Craig (Pattison & Co.); chairman—J.McMillan (Sunningdale); vice-chairman—J.Liddington (New Zealand); secretary—F.Brittin (T.Parker & Sons); treasurer—A.Watson (Tyrrells Wood); committee—N.Shade (Foxhills), T.Huntley (Foxhills), D.Johnson (New Zealand), D.Lucas (Old Thorns), A.Armitage (Richmond), K.McNiven (Effingham), L.Adams (Leatherhead), P.Bertenshaw (Bramley).

Finally, a cheque was presented to The White Lodge Centre for Mentally Handicapped. Proceeds from sweepstakes, raffles, a cake competition and sundry contributions amounted to £165.15.

## More Than A Myth



In recognition of Ransomes 150 years of grass machinery manufacture, Jerry Nakatsukasa, managing director of the company's distributors in Japan, presented Ransomes managing director Bob Dodsworth with an unusual picture of hammered metal design depicting two carp.

Appropriately, carp signify strength in Japanese mythology.

The two companies have been working together since 1956 when the then chairman of the Japanese company was president of an exclusive golf club outside Tokyo. He sent a member of his staff to England to find out about golf-course mowing equipment, which resulted in his company taking on the Ransomes franchise for Japan.

Ransomes mowers today are used on courses in Japan, including the famous Karuizawa 72 golf club, which has four Hydraulic 5/7 gang mowers and a self-propelled Motor Triple Mower.



USGA Green Section Record.

## One To Remember...

Traffic control buttons are excellent for control of cars and remind the driver not to stray. There was no turf to the left three months prior to fixing the buttons with epoxy glue at the Suntree Country Club, Melbourne, Florida.

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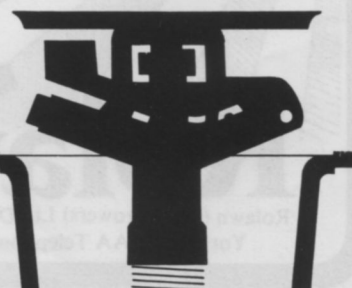
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## What's Going On... Topical items from John Campbell.

Do You Recognise Any Of These Faces?



Older greenkeepers may recognise some familiar faces among this group, taken at the start of an international golf match between Scottish and English greenkeepers. The year is thought to be 1937 and the venue Royal Burgess, Barnton, Edinburgh. *Greenkeeper* would like to see this fixture re-established, possibly to coincide with Windsor or Scotsturf or at another suitable venue...

For students of **golf-course design**, a new book *The Golf Course* has been written and compiled by American golf course architects G.F.Cornish and R.E.Whitton, with a foreword by Robert Trent Jones.

This large, beautiful volume traces the history and evolution of golf courses, analyses the great courses and shows how they were constructed and designed. The book includes biographies of 500 top architects and an amazing list of over 10,000 courses

throughout the world and their designers.

The book's theme is the architect, not architecture, and it contains a detailed account of architects and the growth of course design from a sideline to a full-time profession.

As a reference book for greenkeepers, *The Golf Course* may be lacking, but for anyone with a serious interest in the game it may be worth buying.

It will be of interest to many greenkeep-

ers to know that the **storage of petrol** in plastic containers with a nominal capacity not exceeding five litres is now permitted under regulations laid before parliament. Previous regulations stipulated that only metal containers could be used for this purpose.

It is stressed that only suitable plastic containers, which have been made specially for the storage of petrol, will comply with the new regulations. They

*Continued on page 9...*

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## What's Going On... Continued.

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Ransomes personnel participating in the annual conference of the **IPRA** at Guildford were Guy Catchpole, director; John Wilson, sales manager and Brian Mitchell, technical manager. They dealt with a paper on *The Economics Of Cutting*. With their combined knowledge of all aspects of grass cutting, this was a paper well worth listening to!

**Jim Sargent**, head greenkeeper at West Essex Golf Club, had a few problems as a result of recent thunderstorms that affected the county. Jim had just filled bunkers with fresh sand when heavy rain washed the sand out of the traps. Lightning caused severe damage to four trees on the course—two of which were mature oaks, involving him and his staff in many hours of extra labour tidying up.

Among the many cups competed for annually at the SIGGA National Tournament is the **Friendship Cup**. This handsome silver trophy was presented to the Scots by the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America a few years ago as a gesture of friendship and goodwill.



This year, the Friendship Cup went to **C.Kennedy** of Hagsgs Castle.

### SIGGA National Tournament Prizewinners

SIGGA Trophy (Scratch)	<b>J.Taylor</b> (East Kilbride)
Ransomes Trophy (First Class)	<b>D.Gray</b> (Prestwick St N.)
	<b>A.Purdie</b> (Broomieknowe)
	<b>G.Roberts</b> (Huntly)
Pattisson Trophy (Second Class)	<b>A.Nicholl</b> (Balgreen)
	<b>A.Glachan</b> (Cardross)
	<b>J.Paton</b> (West Kilbride)
Sports Turf Research Trophy (Third Class)	<b>R.McDougall</b> (Hilton Park)
SAI Prize (Head Greenkeeper)	<b>T.Parker</b> (West Kilbride)
(Assistant)	<b>J.Wallace</b> (Wishaw)
(Apprentice)	<b>J.Gilmour</b> (East Renfrew)
Souter of Stirling Trophy (Registered Apprentice)	<b>R.Brewer</b> (Douglas Park)
Friendship Trophy	<b>S.Crawford</b> (North Berwick)
St Mungo Trophy (Section Winners)	<b>C.Kennedy</b> (Hagsgs Castle)
Veterans' Prize	<b>West Section</b>
Visitors	<b>J.Paton</b> (Turnhouse)
Trade Golf	<b>D.McKinnon</b> (Crow Wood)
Trade Putting	<b>J.Souter</b> (Souter of Stirling)
	<b>R.Aitken Jnr</b> (Richard Aitken)

The Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley is holding three five-day courses on the theory and practice of turf construction and management. Soils, grasses, turf diseases and pests, drainage, watering, fertilisers and machinery will be covered. The courses start on October 25th, November 1st and 8th and the fee is £75 for members and £82.50 for non-members (plus VAT). Details from the secretary on 0274 565131.

# Spotlight On...

**The PGA has taken a progressively keener interest in the preparation of courses for its tournaments. George O'Grady is a tournament director on the PGA European Tour. *Greenkeeper* interviewed him during the Martini International at Lindrick earlier in the season.**

*Greenkeeper:* First, what does your job entail?

O'Grady: I am employed by the PGA European Tour to look after the interests of tournament golfers and sort out any problems they may have. Besides myself, there is Tony Gray and John Paramor and we oversee all tournaments on the tour in rotation. For instance, I always do the Martini and the Benson & Hedges.

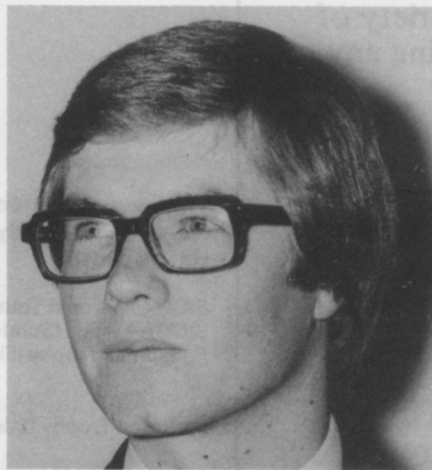
*Greenkeeper:* So, from the day the tournament is announced, you visit the club, chair planning meetings and act in an advisory capacity to both club and sponsor.

O'Grady: Yes. The Martini International is, of course, Martini's tournament, but, as with any sponsor, the company has to be approved by the PGA before it can put a tournament on. Martini is one of the oldest sponsors of professional golf in this country and knows exactly what it is doing. When we go to clubs that have not hosted tournaments before—or accept new sponsors—there has to be a body that lays down certain guidelines on how the tournament should be run. We now have considerable experience in this and it is our aim to go on expanding and improving the tour all the time. Any tournament is a bringing together of ideas from the sponsor and the host club and we supervise all this to ensure a successful result.

*Greenkeeper:* The PGA European Tour realises the need to have consultant advice on courses hosting tournaments, in the same way as the R&A championship committee appointed its own agronomist in 1972. You now have that same agronomist—Jim Arthur—and also Bill Duston, who helps in the detailed presentation of the course in the weeks leading up to the tournament.

O'Grady: There is no doubt the role of the PGA has widened tremendously since I first came to Lindrick for the Sun Alliance Match Play Championship in 1975. I joined the PGA in 1974 when there was just Tony Gray and myself, the secretary Colin Snape and a chap who

looked after the scorecards. We did not pretend to know a great deal about how courses should be looked after. Over the years, we have learnt a fair bit about the subject. In particular, we are reasonably confident about what should be done—and this is my own expression—in order to 'tart up' a course for the week of the tournament. The long-term health of courses was never our province and some time ago we became aware of the improvements on courses that Jim Arthur advised, once the remedial work had been carried out. In particular, the move back to the traditional values of golf—firm, fast greens capable of holding a well-struck shot—was most impressive.



**George O'Grady.**

*Greenkeeper:* Bill Duston has been chairman of the green committee at Fulford for something like 12 years and has had to prepare for a tournament on some ten occasions. He must be the most experienced man in that field in the country.

O'Grady: Yes. I remember when we first went to Fulford. Even Bill would admit the greens were not very good, being particularly prone to flooding. Jim was then called in and, since then, things have rapidly improved to the point where the players rate the greens as consistently some of the best in the country. There is a reward for the good shot, but the bad shot will still go skittling through the back of the green.

*Greenkeeper:* Although you have all this advice available, perhaps last year was not exactly a vintage one in terms of courses played. There seemed to be some very good ones and some which were definitely not so good. Obviously, the PGA does not have an entirely free hand in deciding which courses should host tournaments. To what extent does this bother you?

O'Grady: We have to recognise that professional golf is about commercialism and that sponsors want to have a say about the area in which they want to hold a tournament. One major advance in recent years has been the fact that television rights are now vested in the PGA. We have a contract with the BBC to televise a certain number of tournaments each season and it is of primary importance to them that they televise tournaments on good courses. This fits in with our own ideas and, to that extent, we can dictate to sponsors where the tournament should be held. However, with non-televised tournaments it boils down far more directly to raising the money from a sponsor, who can decide exactly which course the tournament should be held on. We have to take a sensible view. A course would have to be really bad to be blacked by the PGA. We continue to offer advice to any course holding a tournament to try and bring out its best features, even if it is not generally regarded as a major championship course.

*Greenkeeper:* Do you think that one day you will have a 'circuit' of a few courses regularly holding tournaments?

O'Grady: I think so. Maybe not at present, but by the end of the decade that will definitely be the case. More and more is being asked of clubs hosting tournaments. We used to be able to say to them: 'you will have a bit of hassle the week before and during the week itself, but by the week after you will not know anything has happened.' Now we are taking bigger crowds, tented villages are much expanded with company hospitality tents, TV scaffolding and grandstands abound—the whole thing means far more

# Spotlight On...

upheaval than used to be the case. Some of these facilities are very expensive and become prohibitively so at clubs that have no experience of previous tournaments. Also the standard of presentation of the course is becoming higher every year and members have to accept weeks of work before the tournament to bring it up to the desired peak. Whether or not some of our major courses will consider putting up with this every year is debatable, but it is certainly our aim that tournament golf in this country should be played to the highest standard on the best courses.

*Greenkeeper: After eight years in the job you must have a lot of experience in dealing with players and assessing their reactions to courses. What do you think are their main playing requirements of a tournament course?*

O'Grady: There is no doubt we are absolutely wedded to the principles of course preparation that produce traditional British golfing conditions. In other words, those principles Jim Arthur has done so much to re-establish over the last decade or so. This means producing firm, tight fairways and firm, fast greens, which will hold the well-struck shot with fairness being the key note. I feel we have lost much of the greatness of British golf over the last few years, with the tendency to over-water and over-fertilise courses. In particular, this has produced thatched greens that will not grip a well-struck shot—though such greens may be so heavily watered that they appear to do so. Although a putting surface of reasonable pace can be achieved by shaving the green, it is only the correct combination of root structure and the right grasses that will produce the surface with all the characteristics we want.

It has been most interesting to learn more about this at Lindrick this week. We have had hot, drying conditions and there are many courses I know on which such weather would have produced a concrete playing surface on the greens, which could only have been counteracted by considerable watering. In fact, such watering has not been necessary and throughout the week the greens have retained the firm, fast playing characteristics we like to see. Naturally after six weeks of drought, the fairways have been hard and fast running but, even so, such a surface produces a perfect lie from which to control a golf ball.

*Greenkeeper: Lindrick has been following Jim Arthur's advice for nearly four years and, in that time, the club has swung the flora on both greens and fairways back towards a predominance of bents and fescues. The resilience of the greens in particular is markedly improved. Preparing a course for a tournament in May can't have been easy, particularly after a hard winter, and with a lack of rain, the club can feel it has produced a fair course, which is exceptionally fast running.*

O'Grady: Yes. This point about fast-running courses is an interesting one. Until recently, with the exception of Turnberry in 1977, a fast-running course usually simply meant one that had burnt off and was like concrete. I have been surprised this week to see that the better golfers were still able to exert a marked degree of control over the ball when getting it to grip on the greens—in spite of little water having been put on them. If you don't actually see this with your own eyes, it is difficult to believe, but I can assure readers it definitely happens!

*Greenkeeper: But it can only be done with a ball played off the fairway—as soon as a ball runs into the semi-rough or rough, a player has lost control. A player who hits the perfect shot to the pin from the fairway gets a genuine reward and since a tournament course should be set as a scholarship test for the professional golfer, we expect to see the better golfers coming through.*

*Incidentally, it has been a source of amusement to watch the reactions of players when they have seen moisture meters in use. Few professionals appear to have seen them before. They do enable you to keep an accurate check on the moisture content of the soil on the greens and thus avoid watering at a time when many people think it necessary.*

O'Grady: It has certainly been a great surprise to me to see the high levels of moisture content—60 per cent to 80 per cent—present in Lindrick's greens. I am sure the same could be said for most of the professionals. This is all really part of the same subject, namely improved standards of presentation and preparation of courses with the emphasis on using the much higher standards of knowledge and understanding of greenkeeping now available.

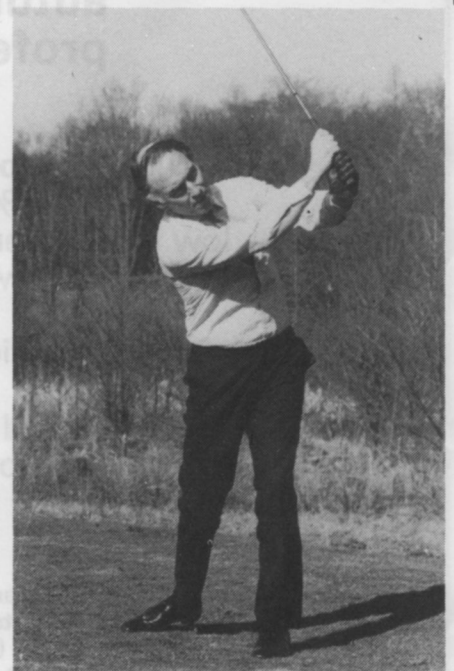
*Greenkeeper: One of the many*

*contributions made by the PGA to greenkeeping has been the greenkeeping conference for tournament courses, held at Wentworth. This has been a great success. I suspect your interests, though, go further than tournament golf. What are your feelings about the increasing popularity of the game?*

O'Grady: We have some definite thoughts on this as it directly affects the professional game. New people coming into golf are a major source of income and any professional sport must take a responsible attitude towards its amateurs. We moved our headquarters from Kennington Oval to Wentworth a year ago and now have improved facilities for entertaining people who we feel are important to the development of the game.

The greenkeeping conference was set up to allow for a fusion of ideas between chairman of green committees and head greenkeepers from clubs hosting tournaments. We usually invite a touring professional to give a short address and then Jim Arthur and Bill Duston have a few words to say. It is meant to be a pleasant day out in which people get to know each other and can exchange experiences and ideas.

Recently, the Sports Minister Neil Macfarlane came down to play a round of golf with myself, Neil Coles and Bernard Gallacher. Mr Macfarlane is a great ambassador for the game and told me he



Neil Macfarlane.

## Spotlight On...

has taken an interest in three public courses in his constituency. Apparently, they were not in very good condition—to say the least—and he is concerned that, with much increased leisure time, people should have the opportunity to play their sport using facilities that are as good as possible. A chap paying his £5 or more at a public course ought to get a rather better deal than he seems to be getting at present. The trouble seems to be that once a course has been built by a local authority, it is heavily played and seems to be run into the ground. This must be a major headache for the greenkeepers involved in maintaining such courses.

*Greenkeeper: The demand for these courses is quite staggering. The Sports Council once estimated that Yorkshire alone needed some 90 new courses!*

O'Grady: We do have a problem in this country in the way we develop new courses. In America, new courses are funded by selling the land around them for real-estate development. This is not allowed in this country and it is,

therefore, difficult for developers to make the return on capital they expect. Also, few pieces of good golfing land seem to be still available. Woburn is an example of a good course built recently, but certainly nothing like enough are being completed to relieve the pressure, particularly on public courses. Additionally, and this is not surprising, members at private clubs do not particularly want to have their own facilities over-used. They expect to be able to go off the first tee without too much of a wait and then be able to get a drink in the bar afterwards without too much of a fight! Most people who play golf lead a busy life anyway and, therefore, cannot afford more than three of four hours for a game of golf. This is another problem for those playing on public courses—the round itself can take up to five hours.

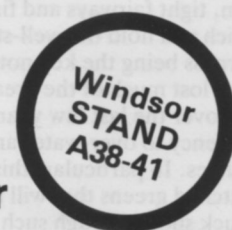
*Greenkeeper: You have met Dr Peter Hayes, the new director of The Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, who is obviously going to have a considerable influence on the direction of the game in years to come. One of his main concerns*

*for the future is the question of greenkeeper training. Does the PGA have any views on this?*

O'Grady: Everyone involved in the administration of golf, be it amateur or professional, has come to realise that this is one of the most important future aspects of the game that must be sorted out. We certainly support—actively where we can—any moves that can be made in this direction. For years, greenkeeping has been a skill handed down from father to son. Vastly increased play is now meaning that we have to employ more logical and scientific methods in our treatment of courses and therefore, we shall need much higher standards of greenkeeper training than in the past. The PGA European Tour relies on the greenkeeper to produce great golf courses. In a more general sense, the ordinary golfer relies just as heavily on the greenkeeper to produce his own golf course. The fact that *Greenkeeper* is increasingly talking to so many people involved in running golf is an indication of the future importance of greenkeepers in the game.

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*Jim Arthur discusses...*

## 'Look alike' in fine turf management

WHILE it is quite correct to state that the standards aimed at in one sport are unique to that sport, there is probably a closer link between golf and bowling green management than in any other sport.

The main difference between sports such as cricket or tennis, and bowls or golf, is that in the former the ball has to bounce, and bounce truly, but in the latter, there is no such need and, indeed, a resilient though firm and true surface is demanded.

Consequently, the major difference in the management of cricket and bowls is that there is no need to roll bowling greens, but cricket wickets must be rolled to consolidate them. Purists might well say that cricket is not played on grass at all, as wickets are shaved, and the actual playing surface is soil—or the soil-based top dressing—held together with grass roots!

I know my view that rolling is not needed as routine management on bowling greens as well as golf greens may cause some raised eyebrows, but news that the Wimbledon tennis courts—and especially the centre court—are averred to be suffering from the effects of over-rolling and that more, intensive, deeper aeration is prescribed by Jim Thorn, now in charge of the All England Club's courts, comes as no surprise to me.

I would only differ in suggesting even deeper corrective aeration in the winter than Jim Thorn proposes. Paradoxically, the deeper the slitting, the less the surface disturbance, as a general rule.

It really must be accepted by even the most die-hard exponent of rolling that regular rolling can only compact and consolidate the surface—especially of plastic, wetter soils, with a higher silt/clay content. It cannot level—it merely ripples levels and seals surfaces.

There is no nice flat pastry board under bowling green turf and, at best, the roller leaves the soil in slightly raised rink ends—at worst, in undulations. It is like trying to roll out pastry on a cushion.

If the roller is to work at all, it must sink into the surface and move it like a ripple in front of it. On dry or hard spots, the roller rides over, leaves a ridge and so 'washboarding' starts.

Of course, bowls is not a winter sport on grass, so there is a fairly long rest period. This, in fact, can do more harm than good unless the period is used to good effect,

with an intensive winter programme. It is rather like championship tees, rarely played between one Open and the next on our Championship links. They get very soft and puffy and need play to firm them, and the problem is to get less heroic golfers to use them.

Consequently, bowling greens may need a light roll once or perhaps twice before the season starts, to replace turf lifted by frost. Even using a compensated beam roller, which minimises rippling as the weight is bridged on the outside rollers when crossing a hollow and where the weight of all three rollers is concentrated on the centre one of a ridge, there is no way rolling can level.

Yet, in bowls (not, of course, the crown game) a level surface is vital and this we can achieve only by top dressing, carefully screeded into a true surface, not by eye alone, but by a screeding board, aided with drag mats to work the material into hollows and off ridges, slight though these may be.

The quality of top dressing is vital to ensure free drainage and resilience combined with firmness, but sand alone must be avoided.

### Amateur experts

Bowling greens, under the eagle eyes of several hundred members are even more vulnerable to amateur experts than golf courses where at least a vastly bigger acreage dilutes their attention!

I have seen, sadly, too many bowling greens where cure and counter-cure had left unbelievably high levels of fertility and all the original grasses had been replaced with a dense, soggy thatch of annual meadow grass. By applying the same rules of thatch control, including intensive deep aeration and regular verticutting plus limited irrigation and minimal fertiliser treatment, based on nitrogen only, in only two seasons thatch has been eliminated.

I am reminded of one long established bowling club in south London. Conditions five years ago were appalling. There was no basic drainage problem, but there had been "gross over-watering, over-feeding and under-aeration." Fertiliser treatment, as advised by an inexperienced advisory officer, "had been unbelievably high." There was 2in of thatch and talk of relaying the greens. Every three to four

years, lime was spread at 2oz per sq yd.

Within a year of treatment starting (in 1978), I was able to report almost complete elimination of thatch, firmer, better drained bowling surfaces and a change of grass type to *Agrostis*. This green is now one of the best in the south and yet five years ago lifting and relaying to get rid of thatch was considered by the advisory officer (who was still recommending gross over-feeding) as the only possible cure.

Golf greenkeeping and bowling green maintenance have much in common, especially bad advice!

In fact, bowling green maintenance should be easier as, at the end of the season, only the weather can stop an intensive remedial programme, based on aeration and top dressing and emphatically not on rolling. Even during the season, regular daily mowing gives all the polish that is desired.

I fully accept that a bowling green gets a lot of concentrated play and, therefore, compaction, but this is for a relatively limited period—and not to be compared with the all-year-round pounding given to golf greens, especially under winter conditions with wet soils suffering disproportionately severe compaction.

Basically, the rules of greenkeeping are the same for both areas of fine turf, though finer points of presentation are naturally different.

If you want a good green you must change the grass type from annual meadow grass to bent (*Agrostis*) or fine fescue. This means a lot of aeration and some clubs will now slit tine in the bowling season, even though they have a long winter period to correct compaction without making holes in the summer, inconspicuous though they may be.

We must cut out phosphates and potash—nitrogen only and not too much of that—and no autumn fertilisers, but plenty of sulphate of iron.

The greatest single influence is the mower, frequency being more important than even height of cut. An early start in preparation is vital, yet the weather in spring is usually no more helpful to bowling-green keepers than to golf. April is a winter month, but at least bowlers are not clamouring to be on to their greens the

*Continued overleaf...*

## Jim Arthur Continued...

moment the sun shines.

It is generally accepted that sea-marsh turf makes the best greens, but selection of turf is vitally important. Most Cumberland turf comes from Lancashire and there is a lot of bad turf about.

The base must be sandy and not a heavy silt. Most marshes have been lifted so often that the base becomes siltier and wetter and then sea meadow grass (*Puccinellia maritima*) gets in. Once this leaves its maritime environment and is subject to regular close mowing, this needle-leaved grass soon dies.

Unfortunately, the best marsh turf is now the most inaccessible and can be reached only before autumn equinox, so great care is needed in selecting turf for a new green—and some, indeed, are seeded. It is significant that the best fescue turf occurs where conditions are less fertile—all plant foods having been washed out by tidal flooding and with high salt levels.

However well drained the foundations of a green are, if thatch develops, greens will be slow, soft and prone to flooding and intensive aeration is the only effective cure. Better still, prevent thatch forming by following the three basic rules of greenkeeping—deep aeration, minimal fertiliser (with nitrogen only) and limited

irrigation, designed merely to keep the grass alive.

Just as in golf greenkeeping, it is not part of my brief to tell greenkeepers how often to change holes regularly to spread wear, so it is with bowling green maintenance in regard to rink-end repairs and spreading wear by staggering rinks.

In repairing worn areas, seeding is sometimes unsuccessful, as it must be carried out before the end of the season, and even if introduced down shallow, closely-spaced, hollow-tine fork holes, rubbed in after being pre-germinated in damp compost, it is likely to be penalised by close mowing.

If you turf—and this demands a high level of skill in keeping levels, avoiding scalping on the one hand and settlement on the other—then a small turf nursery maintained exactly like the green is essential. If it is seeded, it should really be two years old before used if it is to survive wear the next mowing season.

Some clubs, in fact, deliberately mow slightly higher for one width on the perimeter to give a little more grass to aid walk-on wear—sensible technically, but perhaps unconventional visually. As with all sports turf, increasing wear from increasing intensity of play is the most serious problem and can be corrected only by even more intensive aeration.

I hope I never live to see bowls played

all the year round on artificial surfaces, but I am certain that golf, at least, will never be. Suggestions that golf greens should be laid with artificial turf are patently nonsense. Quite apart from the fact that the variable texture and quality of the green makes the game and there can be no substitute for the challenge, variability and interest of grass putting surfaces, it would prove well nigh impossible to change the hole. To those who contend this is not necessary on plastic turf, all I can say is that it would be a damned dull game playing to the same pin position for 365 days a year!

Another factor I found to be a considerable problem in the days when I had time to advise bowling clubs was that they were so often totally enclosed by dense, evergreen hedges, which create stagnant air conditions and predispose the green to attacks of fusarium patch disease, as well as preventing the turf drying up quickly.

Light and air are vital, as is a through draught, to produce healthier turf and lower humidities.

•Jim Arthur's new address is:  
12 Sherbrook Hill, Budleigh Salterton,  
East Devon.

There is no truth in the rumour that Jim is retiring. "There is still much to be done," he said.

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# Watermation

# Committee Comment

TRAINING for greenkeepers has been mostly conspicuous by its absence. The traditional pattern has been for the old hand to pass on a series of empirical 'methods' supplemented by lectures at greenkeepers' meetings. I have attended many of the latter, usually given by unqualified personnel with trade connections and I can testify how confusing they can be. As one young greenkeeper said to me recently: "They're rubbish, aren't they?"

The main drawback to knowledge not based on science is that accurate predictions are impossible. We really cannot blame those connected with greenkeeping for swallowing the 'fertiliser plus water' theory. There was no way they could assess the likely side effects.

Now, with the return to ecology-based management, it is equally difficult to understand methods that must seem very strange.

It is the role of the green committee to bridge this gap in knowledge.

Let us suppose you have a course in poor condition and you have called in an advisor. Hopefully, he would be fully trained—university level in botany and ecology and with a sound practical knowledge of machinery and methods.

You will then be faced with a twelve-page report giving you a complete botanical analysis and leading into an analysis of the physical condition of the soil. There will probably also be comments on the state and deficiencies of your machinery and priorities arising thereby.

I believe most strongly that the first essential step is to explain all this in full to all members. Let them see with their own eyes sections of thatch (if present), pieces of meadow grass greens and pieces of bent/fescue. Explain the advantages and explain the plan of action.

Failure to do this will mean an immediate outcry when treatments start, probably with heavy aeration and starvation of meadow grass. There will be a period of even worse conditions than at present and this must be explained honestly and fully.

I would even bring in some knowledgeable person to lecture on the subject and certainly make the report fully available. Members are extraordinarily helpful if they know what is going on and very unforgiving if they don't.

Now you have carried the committee and members with you, your greenkeeper is protected from attack by 500 potential critics. The whole basis of your plans will be that you will provide the best possible conditions for deep-rooted fescue/agrostis greens, which will also be the worst possible conditions for annual meadow grass. That sounds easy, but in fact to do so smoothly is incredibly difficult.

With thatch, of course, the first thing is to get some air into the stuff. Really heavy and regular slitting gets the job over most quickly and heavy top-dressing will keep a reasonable surface going. With meadow grass, probably our chief weapons are aeration, drought, starvation and fungal diseases.

This is where I think it is so difficult for a man trained to water, feed and use fungicides to accept the direct opposite. Feeding with limited, purely nitrogenous fertilisers, sulphate of ammonia, dried blood and hoof and horn is still acceptable, but anything with phosphate or agricultural granulars is out.

Controlled withholding of water in a drought is very effective. Once the fescues and bents begin to reappear, we must check regularly with the meter that the lower top soil is still moist, but we can let the surface soil dry out for some time and watch the meadow grass set seed and die!

There is, as yet, only one selective killer of annual meadow grass. No, not a chemical, but our old friend fusarium disease. So, we don't stop it, as it is only attacking the grass we don't want. Obviously, that can be a bit vicious if we get prolonged lying snow, as we did in the early part of last winter. But, so long as everyone understands what we are doing and that the recovery the next year will be with the highly desirable species, all will be well.

I have seen too many courses fall into the trap of half-way measures. Perhaps they buy a slitter with inadequate penetration depth or perhaps they continue to use a general fertiliser or fertilising compost to keep things green. The result is total disaster and a membership who cannot understand the failure.

You can't hope that to just buy a slitting machine, however expensive, will put everything right. The whole management must be altered.

This is an area in which research is needed more than any other. There must be a better and quicker way to transform a thatched meadow grass green into a firm, fine-grassed green. It was entirely predictable that approaches by chemicals or seeding with improved cultivars were bound to fail. But there may be a better way.

In the meantime, we must stick hard to well-proven, though difficult, methods and remember it really is a life sentence. Thousands per cubic inch of those poa annua seeds are lying there dormant for conditions to change in their favour. It may be renewed compaction or too much water and fertiliser. They will grab the chance and move back in as an invasion of living plants.

Eddie Park

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# Out On The Course

## The Royal West Norfolk club at Brancaster has its own system for running the fine linksland course.

BRANCASTER is not of a calibre for today's major events, having a length of 6,200 yards. For all its humps and hollows, dunes, threatening runnels and wildernesses of creek and salt marsh, formidable arrays of sleeper-barricaded cross bunkers and all-or-nothing greens, it remains an augustly kindly links, allowing reasonably well-hit shots to keep the ball in play for a par at any hole.

This is very much a private club. Visitors will be welcomed by prior arrangement on weekdays, if reasonably competent players and willing to abide by (mostly unspoken) traditions.

The etiquette of golf automatically applies and players upon the course treat each other with all the courtesies that once ruled almost everywhere. It is that kind of club.

The greens are quite beautiful—not only interestingly shaped, but composed mainly of the finest, best-adapted grasses and mown perfectly with hand mowers to give fast, true surfaces.

For many years, the club had the benefit of the long local expertise of Percy Fisher, who retired in 1966.

After his regime, the club took professional advice from various outside organisations, which proved to be wrong for this links course. The use of fertilisers on greens and fairways and excess watering produced large areas of rye and annual meadowgrass, which did not marry into the fine grasses natural to the area. Bare greens and fairways covered in weeds became all too obvious. The course lost its character and excellent playing surfaces.

In 1977, the green committee inspired by K.K. Smith, a recent president of the EGU, called in Jim Arthur as the resident consultant agronomist. A policy of reverting to the natural methods of greenkeeping was evolved and the use of chemical fertilisers banned. These were replaced by dressings of carefully graded soil mixed with dried blood and powdered hoof and horn and a little sulphate of ammonia and iron.

Water was carefully monitored, using only the amount necessary in this area of low rainfall to keep the greens active. Weeds on greens were, whenever possible, removed by hand—spraying being



A view over the course from the shoreside dune range towards Brancaster Staithe.

used only when time and labour were not available.

Aeration by slitting and tining was increased, together with a concentrated programme of scarification. This, over the past four years, has proved to be very successful. Little meadowgrass can be found on the greens and a healthy mixture of fescues and agrostis has produced again the fast, firm putting surfaces that were once the hallmark of Brancaster.

The fairways have also been constantly slit and weak areas dressed with peat during the autumn. This is resulting in strong grass growth and a gradual elimination of star weeds and sheeps fescues. These policies will continue.

In future, a planned programme of aeration, scarification and light natural dressings will form the basis of Brancaster greenkeeping. The aim is to produce fast, true greens composed of fine grasses with fairways suitably grassed as befits a links course. The virtual elimination of all annual types of grass and their replacement by fescue and agrostis is the ultimate objective.

Sheltered from the main tide and blast of the North Sea and its winds, there the shore is extending itself.

Further along, at the clubhouse end of the links, the elements are beginning to eat into and undercut the range of dunes that protect the course.

Accordingly, every bit of tree-root and branch the club can find goes on to that part of the beach to help protect the main range of dunes. Back in the 1920s, the club lost two of its holes to the sea and has no intention of losing any more.

It takes all the diplomacy the club can muster to keep persuading the public to enjoy the beach itself, but to keep off the dunes.

The National Trust, which now owns the beach and on whose behalf the club maintains access to it between clubhouse and course, together with a car park, lends its support.

The trouble is that nothing speeds up any potential disintegration of back-of-beach dunes so dangerously as the public climbing about on them. So long as maram holds a range of dunes together,



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# Out On The Course

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blown sand can be held, too, and add to the bulk. Once the sand is trodden loose, though, Brancaster's continual sea winds reverse that process.

Royal West Norfolk came into being in 1891. The story goes that Holcombe Ingleby, a local landowner, while shooting on the salt flats with the then Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), suggested that the adjoining sand-dune country might make an excellent golf course. The Prince agreed.

Ingleby called in one of the great amateurs of those days Horace Hutchinson to help him to design and lay out a course. Later, Hutchinson served as captain of the club for its first nine years.

In 1927-8, the layout was modified considerably at the hands of C.K. Hutchinson. One hole of that course was lost to the sea in the late 1930s. So, after the war, two new holes, the 6th and 13th, were built.

This latter hole is now being extended, with advice from Donald Steel, to turn it into a short par-four dogleg with a new sea-view green on top of a dune ridge.

The decision to change this hole has

been made by the club through its green committee, in whose hands all work upon the course is shaped and guided.

The committee consists of a chairman, club secretary, captain and vice-captain, treasurer, two members and course supervisor.

The policy over the last four years has been determined by the committee from advice by Jim Arthur. Having been given the policy and future planning for the course, detailed work for the year is entirely the responsibility of the secretary and course supervisor.

Golf professional Ray Kimber works out weekly what needs to be done, then checks it through in detail with the secretary before passing on the list to foreman-greenkeeper Alan Mitchell, who takes over from there.

Royal West Norfolk and its secretary are particularly keen on safety in green-keeping work, providing each greenkeeper with a pair of safety boots each year, goggles for use with the Royer shredder and oilskins, etc, to use when putting down weedkillers against daisies

on the fairways out on the golf course.

Alan, Stephen Loose—just back from a working course with Walter Woods at St Andrews—George Ashley, Derek Smith and Charlie Keeler get out the hand mowers three times a week, set to a genuine three-sixteenths and not one shaver more or less.

Although they like their putting surfaces fast at Brancaster, they have set their faces against ever shaving them low enough to make them glassy.

Tees and surrounds are tined as often as possible with the Sisis Autocrat, which has also been used on the greens. They have recently completed a four-year programme of relieving compaction in the greens by putting a sub-air through them, every November, down to seven inches.

A Hydromain slit-tines greens all year round as often as practicable. You can still see a little annual meadow grass left in them from the late 1970s, but not enough to affect putting.

Alan Mitchell and George Ashley believe there is no way any triple can give as good a putting surface as hand mowers, upon which they still primarily depend. The club now has also a triplex mower with which they verticut the greens fortnightly throughout the growing season. They are now also giving the greens one cut a week with that, too.

Royal West Norfolk is no club to modernise anything just for the sake of modernisation. A Royer handles the major work of compost preparation but Alan Mitchell showed me, with some pride, the venerable sifter they still like to use to prepare small quantities of top-dressing.

It once had an engine and belt to drive it, which was eventually disconnected, simply because it rolls so sweetly, steadily and easily-to-the-arm on its crank that it takes no great effort to roll it around by hand.

What Jim Arthur would think of it, I can only guess. But I do hope it stays in action for many more years, as it undoubtedly will with the same grease, oil and appreciation!

Even after about two months of cold winds with hardly a splash of rain, on top of this past cold winter, there hardly seemed to be a genuinely killing lie upon the fairways (rabbits apart).

In a number of places where wear is continual, on some of the approaches for example, their local variety of sheeps fescue still remains unsubduable where all else goes thin, leading to the kind of tufty lie sometimes blamed upon that grass itself.

But, in general, their usual linksland

# Out On The Course



Foreman greenkeeper Alan Mitchell (right) with staffman George Ashley.



How the sea is cutting under the main dune range and how setting brushwood into the beach helps hold it back.

mixture of grasses, herbs and mosses, etc, given a little bit of growth in it, offers all any reasonable golfer needs of a seaside fairway.

The course lies on a narrow strip of linksland between shoreside dune ranges and the salt marsh that runs from the harbour of Brancaster Staithe.

The lane from the club to Brancaster village goes under water during high spring tides for several hundred yards. Beside it, there is a new bank, built after the old one was broken through a few years ago by rough seas.

After crossing paths between the 17th and 2nd, the holes go out along the saltmarsh side, then back in along the sea side. There are two, rightly, famous holes—the 8th and 9th. For the first of them (476 yards), you have to hit a strong drive over one arm of salt marsh in order to carry a second one with a wood to the green.

The 9th is, if anything, even more splendid. Like the 8th, it is perfectly simple in essence. You drive at an angle over a wide stretch of marsh, with a small creek meandering through it, to a wide band of fairway running forward to about 50 yards from the flag. But between that and the green is a deep cleft of marsh and protecting the green completely is a four and a half foot face of old railway sleepers.

At Brancaster, there's a highly traditional character of bunkering. Although the club has a partiality for little pot bunkers, lurking out of sight around the

putting surfaces, in general when there's a bunker, there's a bunker, indeed!

Faced with something 25 yards across, sleeper-fronted to eight feet high at the 2nd, 3rd and 15th, even the least sensitive of transatlantics might be hard put to describe it as a trap!

The first nine holes have two short holes. The return nine, running east to west against prevailing winds, has only two holes over 400 yards. It includes two short holes and at least three of the shorter par-fours call for accurate second shots.

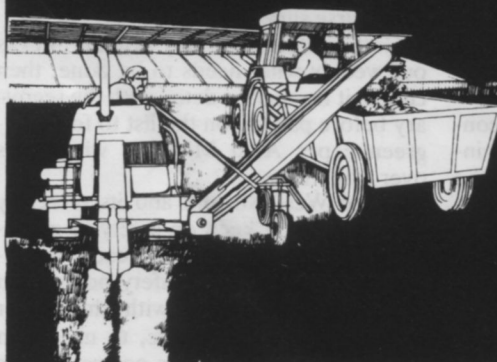
There is an annual match between club and village club and school members are allowed upon the course on the same criterion as those of the parent club, once they prove competence.

Other matches the club play (all at home, for it has never travelled) are fairly few and with such golfing societies as the Oxford and Cambridge, Army, Guards, Seniors and the Oxbridge university teams.

Brancaster also plays host annually to the Grafton Morrish tournament. □

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# Trade News

## Nickerson Turfmaster's New 70 Inch British Triple Grasscutter

A new professional grass mower has been launched by Nickerson Turfmaster. The Turfmaster 360, which features three cylinders and has a maximum cutting width of 70in, is ideal for cutting tees, approaches to greens and the backs of bunkers.

Its high manoeuvrability also means it is ideal for confined areas, such as ornamental gardens, housing estates, schools and hospitals.

The machine is the only triple mower of its type to be both designed and built in Britain and is the result of three years development.

"Users in the UK have been asking for a first-class 70-inch cut machine, which features a whole list of attributes," managing director Matt Templeton said. "It has been developed following research into their needs and advice from turf experts, greenkeepers and groundsmen.

"It is not only a first for Britain, but represents the best value available.

At £3,228, the Turfmaster 360 is the lowest-priced triple mower in the Nickerson range. Tough grass bags and all-weather cabs are available as optional extras.

The new machine, which replaces the long-established Turfmaster 70, has a road speed of 8 mph. The four forward gears cover all situations from tight corners to large areas with cutting speeds of 1, 3 and 5.5 mph.

Three proven rugged cutting units with 8in diameter fully welded cylinders are fitted with counter balanced springs to allow the cylinders to follow undulations and provide increased traction. Transport latches facilitate the cutting units to be folded inside the wheel track width of 55in.

A high power/width ratio means the



The new Nickerson Turfmaster 360, which features three cylinders and has a maximum cutting width of 70 inches, is ideal for the cutting of tees, approaches and backs of bunkers.

mower can tackle the toughest of cutting conditions with the five or seven bladed, free floating cylinders providing up to 84 cuts per yard. Each of the cylinder units can be lifted independently from the driving position by means of automatic latch and release mechanism, making obstacle negotiation easy.

Over ten acres can be cut on three gallons of petrol. And the 360's large diameter flotation tyres mean it can operate on soft surfaces with minimal wheel markings. They also offer a smooth ride and fewer punctures.

High ground clearance means the 360 can easily negotiate kerbs up to 9in high, while its low centre of gravity provides safe operating on slopes of up to 25 degrees. Dual wheels to cope with steep banks of up to 30 degrees are available as

an optional extra.

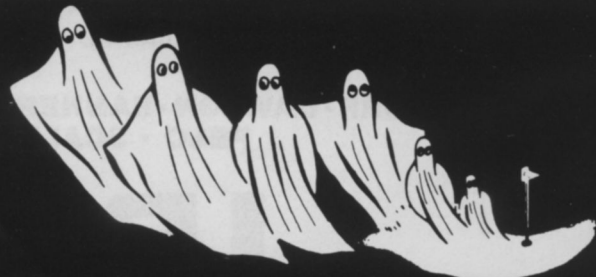
Nickerson claims that development of the 360 has raised the technical specification for small mowers to a new and high level. Apart from transmission bearings that are sealed for life and require no maintenance, the all belt drive (no chains) gives superb cylinder protection. The 360 is also said to eliminate high speed wander—a common characteristic of rear wheel steered machines.

It also incorporates a trim control, designed to help eliminate any variation in the height of cut between the front and rear mowers.

Full details from: Nickerson Turfmaster, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 0427 4776.



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# Trade News

## Seen At Selsdon

Situated in 200 acres of Surrey countryside, Selsdon Park has visitors from all over the world, who come to enjoy the country house atmosphere and luxury of the hotel, as well as its many leisure facilities.

Some 55 years ago, when the property was converted into a private hotel, great shire horses were hauling sturdy oaks out of an ancient forest to make way for the J.H. Taylor designed, 18-hole championship golf course.

Today, one hundred acres of forest with 200 oak trees in prime condition forms a natural backdrop to the course.

With ornamental gardens and large lawns surrounding the hotel, Selsdon Park has a total of some 200 acres of turfgrass to maintain. Management is particularly pleased with the new Ransomes Motor 180 self-propelled triple mower, which was the first one off the production line.

Deputy head gardener Gary Pult said, "I can see what I am doing with this mower and although I have spent the best part of the day on it, I still feel fresh enough to carry on with other duties."

Despite the variety of turfgrass cutting requirements and the size of the area to be maintained, Selsdon Park relies, in the main, on four Ransomes machines.

In addition to the Motor 180 for tees, approaches and lawns, there is a Mounted Hydraulic five-gang mower for the fairways, a 214 gang mower for the rough and a Triplex 171 for the greens.



Mowing the approach to the 9th green at Selsdon Park, deputy head gardener Gary Pult with the first Ransomes Motor 180 off the production line. Besides cutting the approaches and tees, it mows the lawns surrounding the hotel.

## Shell's Low-Cost Low Loader



Paul Tyers (seated) takes delivery of the new Huxleys Red Rider from Vic Maynard, Paice and Sons' professional sales manager.

The 60 acres of gardens and grounds at Shell's Sittingbourne Research Centre in Kent have to be kept in immaculate order.

Quick and reliable transport around the large site is an essential requirement, ensuring that superintendent Paul Tyers can make best use of machinery and staff time. After careful evaluation, Paul ordered a Red Rider low-loading work truck from local dealers Paice and Sons of Maidstone.

"We believe we have purchased the best

motor truck of its type in the country at this time," Paul said. "We particularly like its ease of loading, ability to carry three people and its speed and manoeuvrability."

The Red Rider is built by Huxleys Grass Machinery, 22-26 Church Street, Staines, Middlesex. (Tel: 0784 51123). Demonstrations can be arranged from Huxleys' dealers. The price, complete with long-life electric-start engine and a 1,000lb capacity low-loading, all-steel body, is £1,645 plus VAT.

## New Catalogue From Turf Experts

A new 24-page catalogue, displaying a complete range of products for the care of sporting and amenity turf, has just been published by Stewart & Co Seedsmen of Dalkeith, Edinburgh.

Several sections have been extended, including grass seeds and mixtures, and turf substitutes.

All products introduced since publication of the last catalogue in January, 1980 have been included and there is a new feature on the safe handling of pesticides with descriptions of protective clothing and accessories available from Stewarts.

Copies of the catalogue are available, free, from Stewarts at the Stronghold Works, Mayfield Industrial Estate, Dalkeith EH22 4BZ. Tel: 031-663 6617.

# Trade News

## An Improved Version...

Improvements to the SISIS Tufmo, TMO/26, have developed from operation in arduous and varied work conditions during the past two and a half years.

Among the main modifications to the Mark 2 version are improved chain tensioning, providing constant tension in either forward or reverse; the engine mounting plate is fitted with adjustable brass pads to control free movement of the assembly; operating handles have been narrowed to improve handling characteristics near walls and obstructions and the vertical rotor-shaft is now fitted with adjustable taper roller bearings.

Full details from: SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield), Shoresclough Works, Hulley Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 2LZ. Tel: 0625 26363.



SISIS Tufmo Mark 2.

## Getting Set To Show

The 37th annual IOG International Exhibition, at the Royal Windsor Racecourse from September 21st to 23rd, has attracted 250 companies, which have been allocated with stand space covering a record area of some 30,000 square metres.

Twelve colleges will form an increased educational area.



A busy scene at Windsor.

## "FENDRESS"

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