

Greenkeeper

JULY 1982



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Greenkeeper

JULY 1982

Publisher: A. Quick & Co Ltd
Managing Director: Michael Coffey
Editor: Robin Stewart
Advertisement Manager: Kay Moss

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

Front cover: Ransomes' Motor 180. This small lightweight ride-on triple from Ransomes is tailor-made for tees and surrounds. The Motor 180 has a cutting width of 1.8m (71in) and is powered by an 8.2kw (11hp) single-cylinder petrol engine.

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SIGGA selects Greenkeeper magazine

This month, *Greenkeeper* invades Scotland! As previously announced *Greenkeeper* will have its own stand in the greenkeeping section of the Open's trade exhibition at Royal Troon.

Greenkeeper's showing at the Open coincides with the magazine being adopted as the official publication of the Scottish and International Greenkeepers' Association.

From this issue of *Greenkeeper*, SIGGA's supplement, produced by its own editors, will be distributed, inserted in the magazine, to SIGGA members only.

SIGGA and *Greenkeeper* believe this is a logical step forward by the association, which recently reorganised itself along highly professional lines and is fully aware of the benefits of communicating views, news and information through the pages of *Greenkeeper*.

This move will mean that over 350 assistant greenkeepers, in addition to the many head greenkeeper members who already receive *Greenkeeper*, will now have their own copy of the magazine with the SIGGA supplement.

Greenkeeper is proud to be the independent voice, promoting the cause of greenkeepers and good greenkeeping standards, and our success is reflected by a continuing increase in circulation figures.



Greenkeeper

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The Way The Wind Blows

I'M ALL in sympathy with those who have been saying recently that now's the time for reconciliation all round—the main battle for a return to traditional commonsense greenkeeping methods and policies having been demonstrably won by the chap whose name has hovered in the air over all greenkeeping seminars or discussions for years now, whether he was around himself or—most often—not.

All over the British Isles, former sinners of various kinds and degrees (and many of them unwilling or, at least, unwitting sinners, at that) now openly consult his maps, while still staunchly plotting their own individual ways to paradise. More and more, clubs everywhere return to wise counsels and proto-Arthurian methods.

Nevertheless, this past spring and early summer has occasionally had something of a look of world-jamboree-year for annual meadow grass in greens! Three courses running that I played in early summer offered only thick carpets of woolly vegetation as putting surfaces, each strewn with the seedings of millions of *poa annua* shoots.

How can that kind of thing still happen, you may wonder, when so much has been said, written and repeated about how to make sure any such disaster does not assail any course?

It is all rather puzzling. Almost as puzzling as it is to find, occasionally, that a particular head greenkeeper does not actually receive his own complimentary copy of *Greenkeeper*!

Naturally, the assumption is that diligent and conscientious club committee men and administrators are poring regularly over their head greenkeeper's copy, honorably seeking

to improve their own understanding—instead of ordering subscribers' copies for themselves!

I will admit, however, naive even as I am, that the suspicion has occasionally entered my head that there just could have been a club or two here and there that has preferred its greenstaff not to see what has been appearing in *Greenkeeper* and has, thus, failed to pass its head greenkeeper's copy on to him not always entirely by mistake.

An unworthy suspicion, I admit it! But there it is. There do seem to have been one or two greenstaffs not seeing their own copy, duly posted to them.

Where that has happened purely by accident, as it certainly has in nine out of ten such cases, I do hereby beg to appeal to all clubs through whose letterbox *Greenkeeper* regularly arrives, addressed to the head greenkeeper—and that includes every club in the British Isles for a start!—please to make sure that his copy does find its way to him quickly.

I also beg most sincerely to suggest that the club also gets round to ordering half a dozen extra copies, on subscription, for its captain, administrators and green committee members, to all of whom it must be of legitimate interest.

In methods, scope, editing, topicality and economics alike, a magazine dedicated to the cause of first-class greenkeeping and to the men who work in it, can only offer best possible service if it becomes a kind of established partnership between publisher and writers on the one hand, and clubs and greenstaffs on the other.

Since *Greenkeeper* remains now, as always, not just willing but positively keen to publish all reasonable points of view on any topic, especially those from

people with practical experience in greenkeeping behind them, it does seem to me that the magazine has done its best to live up to its own honorable intentions.

Yes, of course, the simultaneous use of *Greenkeeper's* pages by advertisers reminding everyone of their services, or telling everyone of new products and achievements, is economically vital, too. But that comes at a second stage, since wise advertisers need to be sure any magazine is both fully read and fully respected for its independence before seeing good reason to buy space in it.

Meanwhile, let's just make absolutely certain—yet again!—that any greenkeeper reading this anywhere knows the form. *Greenkeeper* publishes ten issues every year. A copy of each issue is posted to the head greenkeeper at every golf club in the British Isles.

Individually ordered copies cost £9.50 a year, including postal delivery to whatever name and address any subscriber asks. Any number of copies (at £9.50 each!) can be sent to the same address.

There is, thus, no difficulty at all about any greenkeeper or golfer—or, indeed, anyone at all—having their own copy posted to his or her home address regularly, either on his or her own subscription or on anyone else's, such as a club's, for example.

So, please don't let's hear about anyone not knowing how to get *Greenkeeper* regularly, or thinking it only goes to certain people. *Greenkeeper* is for everyone! The more the merrier—and the better for the service it can offer in all future issues.

John Stobbs

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Scotsturf '82 For Ingliston

The Scottish zone of the Institute of Groundsmanship is to mount a special one-day exhibition at the Royal Highland Exhibition Hall at Ingliston, near Edinburgh, on Thursday, November 18th.

The exhibition—Scotsturf '82—will include the latest developments in sportsground machinery, equipment and materials and has been designed especially for professional groundsmen, greenkeepers, local authorities, landscape architects, contractors and all those involved in amenity horticulture.

It is also planned to run a health and safety symposium during the morning, tickets for which will be available to local authority amenity maintenance staff, local schools and colleges and those in the industry.

At a cost of £4 per square metre, stands are available at £98, £196, £392, £588 and £784 (all plus VAT at 15 per cent).

The exhibition will be open from 10am till 8pm.

Further information from: The Secretary, William A. Elwood, Inverleith Cottage, 525 Ferry Road, Edinburgh, Scotland EH5 2DW. Tel: 031-552 6943.

Tregenna's Getting Bigger...

St Ives hotel, the Tregenna Castle, now has four new holes, making it a 17 hole par-four course. Work is in progress on the 18th hole, which is scheduled to be completed late this year.

Stewarts Supplement Staff

Two new appointments have been made by Stewart & Co Seedsmen, suppliers to the Scottish sports and amenity turf market, to strengthen its sales and financial staff.

Robert Bruce has been appointed to the new position of regional sales representative for Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway, while Edinburgh accountant Colin McCulloch has become a director of the company.

Robert Bruce, 37, has wide commercial experience and will be furthering Stewarts' strong connections with golf clubs, bowling clubs and sports grounds in the west of Scotland. He is married, has two daughters and lives at Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire.

Colin McCulloch, 30, was educated at Forfar Academy and Edinburgh University before qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1974. He is married, has a daughter and lives in Dudley Grove, Edinburgh.

BGGA Surrey Section News

The section's summer programme of golf meetings got off to a great start at the RAC Epsom where a spring tournament was held during May. Bob Wiles and his staff prepared an excellent course, despite the uncooperative weather. Thanks went to the club's catering staff for looking after the appetites of 40 greenkeepers!

Winners: (Scratch) PGA Cup and Ransomes Watch—**K. McNiven** (Effingham); (Handicap Senior) Jimmy Tarbuck Trophy—**R. Barham** (Worthing); (Handicap Junior) Bert Watson Bowl—**J. Liddington** (New Zealand); (Over 55s)—**R. Johnson** (Effingham).

The committee advises members that the treasurer's duties of the section were taken over recently by Bert Watson. In future, payment of subs and all enquiries

An Alternative

Dunlop recently opened a new synthetic soccer pitch in Nottingham.

The pitch is a result of a research programme, jointly undertaken by Dunlop Sports Surfaces International and Nottinghamshire County Council to develop a synthetic surface that reproduces as closely as possible the characteristics of natural turf.

To achieve this objective and overcome problems associated with existing artificial pitches, such as excessively high bounce, Dunlopark is the first synthetic pitch to use the existing natural earth foundation.

regarding finance should be directed to Bert at 27 Oakridge, Dorking, Surrey. Tel: Dorking 881646 (evenings).

In addition to the publicised summer programme of golf meetings, a day's golf is being arranged at Littlehampton GC on Tuesday September 7th. Any member wishing to be included in the party should contact either David Johnson on Byfleet 48818 or Jim Liddington on Byfleet 45495. It will be necessary for the organisers to have an idea of those wishing to go for provisional arrangements to be made.

If payment of 1982/83 subscriptions is further delayed by members, their names will be struck off the membership list. Those who have dues paid by their clubs should check that the fee has been sent.

• *Trade member Roy Mephram, late of Andrews, is now with Chobham Mower Services.*

Rigby Taylor To Represent...

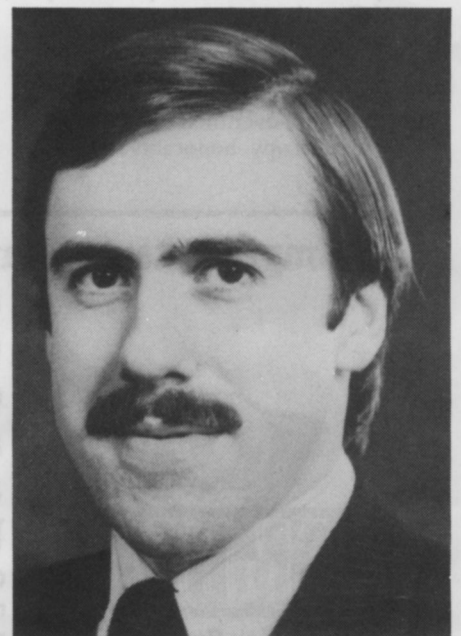
Rigby Taylor has been appointed the main distributors for Pressure Jet Markers in Lancashire.

This new relationship with Pressure Jet Markers is in line with Rigby Taylor's policy of associating with companies that have achieved market leadership in their respective fields.

Further information can be obtained from Rigby Taylor at Bolton. Telephone 0204 389888.



Robert Bruce.



Colin McCulloch.

News & Notes

'Groundsman' Of The Year Leaves For The USA

Julie Ann Hough, the 19-year-old IOG Groundsman of the Year is pictured leaving London Heathrow Airport at the start of her 10-day visit to the United States—an award presented by Marshall Concessionaires.

During her visit to Wisconsin and Kentucky, Julie was the guest of Jacobsen and Bunton, visiting plant, local authority parks and recreation departments, municipal and private golf clubs, country clubs, nurseries, sports complexes and research centres.

Julie is a trainee with the parks and recreation department of the Vale Royal District Council in Winsford, Cheshire. She was accompanied by Richard Frost for the IOG.



What's Going On... By John Campbell

The **Parker/Sisis** field day at the London University Athletic Ground was well attended despite some heavy showers in the morning and there was a good gathering of groundsmen and local-authority officials to watch demonstrations of Sisis equipment.

Of interest to many was a new turf-cutting implement that has been designed to meet the needs of Sisis Hydromain users who periodically require turf to be lifted and usually have to hire a machine for this purpose.

The Sisis Turf Cutter is operated by the three-point linkage of the Hydromain and a simple control lever raises and lowers the unit. A unique weight-transfer system ensures good penetration and holds the blade constant at the required depth. Thickness of turf is adjusted by means of twin depth control wheels. The purchase price is equal to the average cost of hiring a motorised turf cutter for a week.

Greenkeepers and golf-club officials from Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire attended a recent turf-management seminar at Beaconsfield Golf Club organised by **Turners of Wheatley**. There were contributions from **Autoturfcare**, which exhibited Toro machinery, and **May & Baker**, which introduced some of its new products including Ringmaster for the control of fairy

rings. **Steetly Chemicals** also gave a brief summary of its turf-care products. Mr E. Trigg, managing director of Turners, gave an interesting presentation on the diversity of his company's involvement in the recreation industry.

I met up recently with my old friend **Bill Bowles**, president of the IOG. Bill was, as always, in good form. He is one of the most knowledgeable men on the subject of sport and recreation and runs a very efficient operation at Eton College where, among his many responsibilities, he upkeeps a fine golf course. Bill is a highly respected figure in the institute and has done much to raise the status of groundsmen all over the country.

Greenkeeper was the guest of the **Scottish and International Golf Greenkeepers' Association** at its golf championship held at Hilton Park, near Glasgow. The event was exceptionally well organised and there was a wonderful array of prizes, thanks to the many trade sponsors who always lend unflinching support.

The Hilton course was in marvellous condition due to the efforts of Bob McDougall and staff. Over 100 members and guests were catered for by hard-working clubhouse staff, with excellent meals under the direction of club stewards Mr and Mrs John Johnstone.

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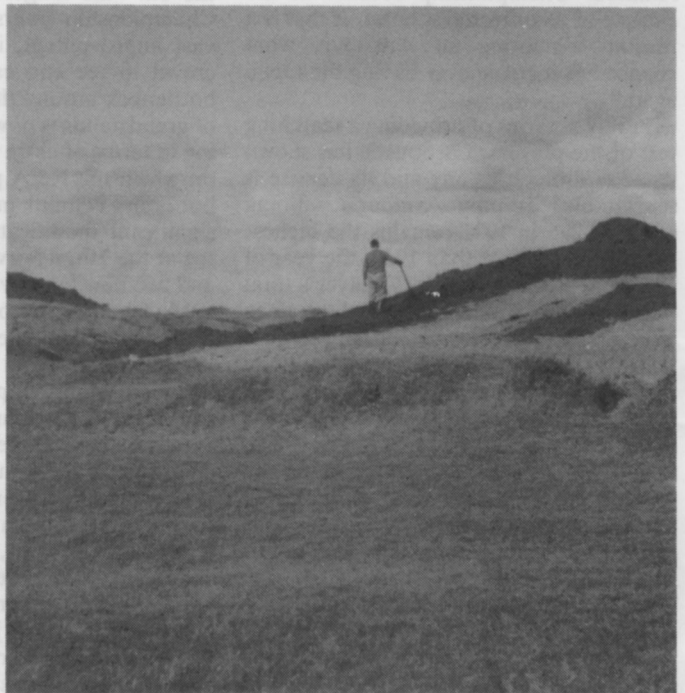
News & Notes

Royal Birkdale Reshaped

Brian D. Pierson (Contractors) has recently been engaged in alteration work at Royal Birkdale, completing major changes to the 1st and 6th fairways. Disruption to the course is shown clearly in these pictures. Work was finished to the Royal and Ancient's satisfaction in February and included fairway drainage to the 6th, which had previously been a wet fairway.



Work on the 6th fairway at Royal Birkdale.



A new start is prepared for next year's Open.

A Question of Design

Donald Steel considers the future of our Open Championship courses.

WHILE talking to Henry Cotton at the Dunlop Masters, he expressed a belief that the Royal and Ancient would one day have to build its own course for the Open Championship, following the concept of the new PGA course in Florida. It is not a new idea and, needless to say, not quite as simple as it sounds.

Assuming the ideal site could be found, the cost of development would be enormous and there would be the distinct possibility of an end to the tradition of playing the Open at the seaside, which I cannot see being universally popular.

So many considerations have to be taken into account these days in choosing an Open course that the present list is bound to be restricted and even some of those on the list have obvious shortcomings of one sort or another. Besides its quality as a test of golf, the venue must have adequate space for car parking and tented villages, easy access, ample hotel accommodation and easy movement and control of the vast crowds that are now commonplace.

As long ago as 1925, Prestwick showed itself unable to cope with large crowds. In 1967, Hoylake found difficulty over car parking and had insufficient space even then for all the exhibition tents. Only recently, Carnoustie lost next year's Amateur Championship because of the closure of its only major hotel. If that is a reason for losing an Amateur, what chance has it got of ever having the Open again?

Purely in terms of providing a searching test of the players, Carnoustie has shown itself as difficult as any and its demise is regrettable. Tommy Armour's winning score of 296 in 1931 remains the highest since 1925—higher than 1937, the year of the great storm—and Gary Player's total of 289 in 1968 remains the highest since 1947.

Sadly, as with St Andrews, nobody takes the credit for designing Carnoustie in the first instance, although James Braid made some notable changes in the 1920s, which resulted in its graduation to the Open rota. Certainly, very little, apart from some new tees, has been done to it since then. Indeed, nothing more has needed to be done.

One of the lasting tributes to the Old Course at St Andrews is that it examines Jack Nicklaus as well as it examined Bobby Jones or J.H. Taylor, although in calm weather its defences have worn a little thin.

Isao Aoki's 63 at Muirfield in 1980 and Tom Watson's 64 showed that, when the air is still and the greens holding, seaside links are more vulnerable to low scores than any other type of course but, for some years, the R&A has been aware of the need to make what changes and improvements are possible on our Open courses, working to suggestions from players, the advice of golf-course architects and, in some cases, forced by the needs of necessity.

For this year's Open at Royal Troon, for example, the 9th green had to be moved in order to allow freer crowd movement round the back while Sandwich last year had to be considerably modernised in this respect. The fact that at Troon the old 9th green was a blind target for the second shot made Frank Pennink's alteration an added bonus but, as Troon in 1962 and 1973 produced the lowest aggregates in over 100 years up until that time, Troon has been more conscious than most of the need to up-date.

When The Big Boys Arrived...

For the arrival of Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus in 1962, the 4th was lengthened; the 11th, which cost Nicklaus 10, became a fearsome hole amid the gorse with its greater threat from the railway and in 1973 Charles Lawrie designed a new green for the 6th—the longest hole on any Open Championship course. Besides being a vast improvement, it was easier for the crowd to see and eased something of a bottleneck around the 7th tee. The siting of grandstands is now extremely demanding in terms of extra space and something on which the R&A places due credence, but Frank Pennink made one or two more significant modifications, such as a new tee at the 7th, a fairway bunker at the 1st and two new fairway bunkers on the 9th.

My last memory of the 1st hole is Paul McKellar driving the green at the start of the afternoon round in the 1978 Amateur Championship, but perhaps the best illustration of the way in which changes are made, or have to be made, for an Open centred on Sandwich last year.

By common consent, Sandwich's return to the fold rested on the building of a bypass round the town, but its old-fashioned character also needed revising and, here again, Frank Pennink was the man entrusted with the job. In place of the quaint punchbowl green at the 3rd, a new short hole was constructed in the lovely dune country to the left and a far more demanding drive created over the huge

hill at the 4th.

The short 8th was eliminated as having too much in common with the 6th and was turned into a stern par-four. The 7th was stretched to leave a big carry off the tee and to give a better balance of short holes between the two nines. The 11th was converted from a short two-shotter with a blind drive to a long one-shotter to the existing green.

There were new tees for the 1st and 15th, classic par-fours, and a view of the 14th fairway with the removal of part of the hill, which hid it from the tee. This, incidentally, will be removed still further in time for the 1985 Open and Pennink has already discussed certain other modifications with the club and the R&A.

This is indicative of the fashion that has been set, although there is a limit to what more can be done and, in the case of Royal Lytham, saturation point has virtually been reached. Sandwich is fortunate in the space the course occupies and in the space it has available overall. It contributed enormously to the success of last year, but it shows that any new permanent Open site would require about 300 acres to provide everything, including spectator mounds and, even assuming that amount of land could be found in a central position in England or Scotland, it would be prohibitively expensive.

So the trend seems likely to continue in making such changes as are possible and desirable on established and proven links, but next year sees a return to Royal Birkdale where many changes have been made since Palmer's epic victory in 1961. More, too, have been completed for next year by the firm of Brian Pierson, who also carried out Pennink's proposals at Sandwich and Troon and did some work for the Open at Turnberry in 1977.

The hill by the first green has been reduced; there is now a gap between the dunes off the tee at the 6th and the club has unearthed a new 18th tee; otherwise, everyone has grown accustomed to the new short 12th, the lengthened finish and have forgotten that the 17th was ever a short hole.

In keeping with other Open courses, it is hard to see what else can be done, but there is no doubt that, unless some close watch is kept on the manufacture of clubs and balls, there will come a day when courses and course architects will be powerless even to maintain a status quo. That would be disastrous for golf as well as for the Open.

A message for greenkeepers...

Dictate your own future

Jimmy Kidd is the secretary of SIGGA's west section. He believes that greenkeepers' career prospects rest very much in their own hands...

THE future of greenkeepers is no different from that of any other tradesmen. It is dependent entirely on the employment opportunities existing at any given time. At present, the demand is reasonable for good, time-served, certificated greenkeepers with a few years practical experience at respected courses.

The demand will lessen as the mass of unemployed look to re-training and, subsequently, greenkeeping as one of the best long-term bets. It is, after all, part of one of the biggest growth industries—i.e. leisure—as more and more people find the time to play our courses and the clubs, themselves caught in an inflationary spiral, take in more visitors to make ends meet.

It is, therefore, certainly not the time for complacency in the profession. The first to feel the pressure will be the un-certificated assistant, then the head greenkeeper who is not willing to keep abreast of innovations and new methods of greenkeeping. Already, club officials are looking to having just a head greenkeeper and one certificated assistant and little else in the way of qualified staff.

Many courses are appointing general managers with the result that many of the head greenkeeper's past responsibilities, such as meeting representatives of the trade and ordering requisites, etc. are taken from him.

How then does the greenkeeper of the future combat the lessening of his authority and compete on equal terms with the other senior members of the club staff, the professional and the steward?

Many greenkeepers carry qualifications far in excess and harder-earned than the latter two and, yet, carry less respect within the club.

I believe the road to success for any greenkeeper has to be through good communications, plus qualifications. You have to learn to communicate your thoughts, ideas and needs and then justify them with action at all times, on the course or around the clubhouse. It is otherwise

difficult for club members to accept you as a true professional.

Why leave your green chairman to communicate for you? He may do a poor job. You have to learn to communicate with club officials using the written word in a strong and dignified manner. This is public relations. A large part of our job is a PR exercise.

You must learn to prepare in writing each year a programme for the ensuing year, tied to a long-term strategy. The long-term strategy should ensure that no follies occur with each change of officials or, at least, that it lessens the risk.

You must project a budget of your expected expenditure for each item on the course in good time for the treasurer and the finance committee to study while preparing a total club budget for the following year.

You must then supply in writing a progress report on that budget for each committee meeting. Many greenkeepers confronted with capital expenditure accounts, plant replacement budgets or progress reports on a budget bury their heads in the sand. The green chairman then has no option but to speak and act for them. It is imperative, therefore, that the greenkeeper meets with the green committee as often as possible if he is to retain his credibility as a professional in his own right.

Manager

You have to become a good manager of the club's time, labour and money. Check all accounts as the treasurer passes them to you against delivery notes before returning for payment. Keep records on all things related to course upkeep—fertilisers, treatments, fungicide applications, dates of same, weather, etc. Don't be afraid to take bookwork home with you—all good managers do.

The greenkeeper working at getting

these things right is on the road to an active involvement in the management of a club. You will also, undoubtedly, derive a greater satisfaction from your work.

It was interesting and very impressive to note on a visit to the American Superintendents' Conference in Los Angeles last year that each superintendent spoke at length on the history of his particular charge, architect, etc. One superintendent, as we discussed greenkeeper status, believed visual communication was as important. He felt it was imperative to be as well-groomed as possible at all times. As he put it: "If you look like a bum, you may well be treated as such."

Learning to be a good manager is the future for the greenkeeper. Train people and delegate responsibly. If you find yourself saying: "the only way to get things done is to do them myself," then you are not a good manager.

Learn to manage the budget you projected, the long-term strategy you helped put together, and to manage the written reports to committees on the progress of winter work, staff training, etc. Keep one step ahead of your green chairman, but always work with him in the interests of your club and its members.

Each potential course manager, as he progresses from club to club, must prepare himself fully for each interview. Too many greenkeepers seem only to ask: "what's in it for me?" Visit the course and acquaint yourself with the layout and form some definite ideas about what you can do for it. It could just be you can convince the club that the extra financial outlay to hire you would be a long term gain.

The future for greenkeepers would also be more secure without the tied-house system, which is, thankfully, beginning to be realised by many greenkeepers. This inflation-proof perk keeps many greenkeepers totally diversified from household budgets, such as mortgage, rates, rent, heat, light, etc. with the consequences

Continued overleaf...

Dictate your own future... Continued from page 11...

that budget control does not come easy.

It is in the interest of the profession that greenkeepers come to terms with the realities of buying a home. The ever-increasing asset of the club can become, in your declining years, your ever-increasing insecurity. It must be in the interests of greenkeepers—and clubs—that they be able to control where and how they live by means of a just wage for the job.

Learning to be a good manager is essential, although you should never hesitate to call in an expert in good time when problems do occur.

This brings us to the roles of the relative greenkeepers' associations. In the Scottish And International Golf Greenkeepers' Association, we have realised our goal by the appointment of a professional secretary. He is past president of a golf union, past captain and green chairman of a large golf club. And a man involved in many areas of golf-course life, who is able to speak authoritatively on many subjects to many people.

We are now of the affirmed intention that the register of greenkeepers, as it applies to Scotland, should pass into our

hands, so we may provide a better employment register for our clubs. It has always been the aim of the Standing Conference For Greenkeeper Training and the subsequent GTC that the associations eventually run the register.

We are also of the opinion the associations should each have the use of a centrally located course, where proof of practice has to be supplied to a body of greenkeepers before final registration be granted.

It is also the association's duty to assist the colleges in the organisation of in-service training courses, such as the marvellous effort by the Elmwood College at Cupar recently, which held a successful one-week management supervisory course.

With course managers organising and subsequently lecturing during the week, a perfect example of greenkeepers involved in the running of their own affairs is shown.

The future for greenkeepers also lies in associations publicising their efforts through the media, whether it be *Greenkeeper*, newspapers or television,

and by their own professional competence, which should be there for all to see.

A greenkeeper friend of mine used to say that there was no natural progression beyond head greenkeeper. I feel that with our new Scotech syllabus, plus a third year national diploma level on all weather surfaces, further progression is now available through jobs such as course manager to a country club, or as a sports complex manager.

To conclude, if you apply yourself to this profession and set personal goals, there can be a good profit, but it just doesn't happen—you have to make it.

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Sand-only greens

IT SEEMS I must venture yet again into the lion's den to clarify some of the points which have been raised after my passing condemnation of gimmicks in general and sand-only greens in particular.

I read with total incredulity the comments of those defending sand-only green construction. I accept that in some, at least, of the thankfully few examples in this country, associated faults in construction and specification were as much responsible for the disastrous end results as the initial concept. Perhaps it is as well to try to divorce the problems caused by use of the wrong grass from those due to sand-only construction.

Sadly, British golf greenkeeping has always tended to be swayed by siren voices—and all too often the motive is commercial, not technical. Do not think I decry the profit motive—but I do condemn the prostitution of science to commerce.

When seeking new ideas it is natural to look over the Atlantic with its vastly greater markets, but before 'lifting' new concepts in their entirety, it would be best to vet them!

Decisions are so often made not by those competent to decide by virtue of technical skills or experience, but by amateur advocates, who would not know a grass from a rush!

Hence the highly regrettable introduction of Pencross bent—bred (if one can use that term for a mongrel grass which is a mixture of strains) for a specific purpose which exists in Europe only in hot Mediterranean climates. One of the problems with that useful and diverse species, *Agrostis* (bent), is that it is by nature primarily a grass of temperate

By Jim Arthur

climes—standing cold far better than heat. Under the stress of hot summers and inevitably heavy irrigation, many strains of *Agrostis* do not perform well—and Pencross was designed to meet that need.

Since in all the cases I have seen where it has been used, conditions could hardly be more different from those for which grass was bred, it is not surprising that it started to die out and remedial measures, unwisely used to restore the situation, rapidly accelerated its replacement by annual meadow grass. Now, most of those sand/Pencross greens show mostly thatchy annual meadow grass and very little bent.

Produces thatch

Pencross also has another fault. Of all grasses, even more than annual meadow grass, it produces thatch at a phenomenal rate. I know cases where twenty and more boxes per green are taken off every week with even moderate verticutting. I am not so concerned, as some may be, at the very poor winter colour of Pencross—but it certainly is unattractive outside the 'growing season'.

Thus, it is important to distinguish between the separate causes of the problem—construction and the wrong grass species.

Other problems with sand greens were that original irrigation systems generally employed the wrong (fixed arc) pop-ups—with no adjustability and so, with full

circle heads, undrained surrounds received the same water as over-drained greens and became bogs. With fixed arc, part-circle heads, it was not possible to catch every missed area—e.g. from the effect of wind, and so areas were missed and died. One must have total adjustability—and use it!

Some of our sand-only greens also have grossly inefficient under-drainage—the worst perhaps being where the total drainage was taken into a very small sump cut in the impermeable soil, and not provided with any overflow drains. In consequence, the sumps soon overflowed and first the surrounds became liquid mud and then the greens base filled up with water!

Some of the other disadvantages of even the best-constructed sand-only greens are admitted; a slower start to spring growth; the need for more, or at least more frequent feeding—and the linked danger of annual meadow grass invasion; together with drainage problems and poor root growth, especially if a concreting sand was used. Few sand greens which I have seen have any root development—but then most are shallow rooting annual meadow grass anyway.

Yet advantages are claimed which are debatable—or at least are based on comparison with badly constructed thatchy greens, without special under-drainage. To claim, however, that one major disadvantage is that they "provide a receptive surface for a ball played into them correctly" is highly arguable.

Some that I have seen, when intensive irrigation has stopped, even for a day, are

Continued overleaf...

See you at the Open...
Visit *Greenkeeper's* stand in
the Exhibition Tent at Royal Troon
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All welcome!

Sand-only greens... Continued from page 13...

as 'receptive' as a matting wicket on concrete!

It seems a long time since 1976, but perhaps we may yet again see another prolonged drought and if irrigation is stopped or even reduced, what price annual meadow grass-dominated sand greens then! Whilst drought will not kill deep-rooting grasses—it will certainly kill off annual meadow grass—and overseeding with a fescue/bent mixture is an expensive and not wholly successful remedial ploy!

From this you may deduce that I think that with so widely varying conditions we must be careful not to blindly adopt American concepts which have been proved to suit their conditions and not ours. For one thing, we have different climatic and soil conditions to most of the States; for another it is a different ball game, played there mostly in the air, here far more on the ground! And all this quite apart from the financial aspects!

Not that I am opposed to all American ideas—but they need to be adapted before they are adopted. Triplex mowers and pop-ups are, I think, absolutely essential to minimise interference to play, but they are not without their critics—even if, to be fair, we should criticise more their faulty operation than the concept. Furthermore, it is very arguable whether they do a job better, but the days of night watering by hand on overtime rates are a thing of the past!

I have been taken to task for being critical of the USGA Green Section specification for putting green construction, and by so eminent an agronomist as Al Radko, their recently retired past President, with whose views I so enthusiastically agreed. He will certainly always be remembered in

greenkeeping history for his phrase 'Green is not Great'—as well as for many other aspects of his advice.

I do feel, however, that he took me up wrongly—since what I was specifically criticising was the adaptation of his specification by those who built these problem sand greens, often using concreting sand only, which has all the permeability of a tar macadam road, or such miniscule proportions of peat as to have no significance on results. The USGA specification uses sandy soil on a specially drained base and this is precisely what I have been using for the past decade—save only when building greens on sandy links.

Best results

My specification differs, (well, it would, wouldn't it?) in that I have found by far the best results from using a uniform, large grade, clean, non-decomposable aggregate, i.e. flint, 'reject', granite, or hard sandstone (never limestone, which, on the acid soils which produce our best inland courses, fizzes quietly to itself for years before going as solid as native chalk and even more impermeable).

This gives maximum drainage to the 5 yard spaced laterals of the herringboned under-drainage. It has to be blinded with ash—not sand which filters straight through.

The quality of soil used is highly critical and its permeability quotient has to be checked before use, if necessary, by laboratory tests—to determine how much sand proportion to use. It must be virtually free from any clay or even silt fractions. We do not want peaty greens—but we equally do not want sand-only greens.

Such soils are scarce, but they can be found and are well worth the high cost of haulage—and good sand is not cheap today either!

These greens will still be good in 50 years' time. The sown fine fescues and *Agrostis tenuis* turf will not be significantly invaded by annual meadow grass if management is correct.

These greens will be firm yet receptive and they will not be slow to start in spring—in fact they will be almost as good in mid-winter as in mid-summer. They do not suffer from disease. They are less accident prone and easier and cheaper to maintain.

Furthermore, there is a major contrast between surrounds and putting surfaces, and one of the many criteria of good greens which I apply is that it should be difficult to distinguish the two areas, which should differ only in height of cut—and never botanically.

Those who so enthusiastically advocate sand-only greens remind me of Aesop's fable about the fox who fell into a well and could not get out. He persuaded a passing goat that the water was fine and he should come on in. Immediately it did, the fox jumped on the goat's back as a convenient escape route and left it to drown. Hopefully, there will be few more goats to rescue the foxes.

Those laying down trials with green construction have confused the issue by scientifically inaccurate trials—with no example of the best of modern British construction, and even sowing annual meadow grass on 'conventional' construction to emulate 'a typical British green'! We can argue whether such greens are typical—what is unarguable is that they are grossly unsatisfactory for 365 days a year play!

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Open '82

This month, the Open Championship will be contested at Royal Troon.

The week—as with the build-up to the tournament—will run with predictable Royal and Ancient efficiency.

Greenkeeper talks to John Salvesen, chairman of the championship committee, about the R&A's role in this and other championships.



John Salvesen.

Greenkeeper: Can we begin by asking what your job involves?

Salvesen: Well, I suppose it's to see each of the championships for which the R&A is responsible through to a happy conclusion.

Greenkeeper: Does that mean you are in total charge as far as the R&A is concerned?

Salvesen: Apart from myself, there is a committee of about 12, though for some competitions, such as the Boys' Championship, we don't need all the committee. Those who live in England do the championships there and the Scottish championships are done by those who live in Scotland. For the Open Championship, we need not only the full championship committee, but also the rules of golf committee.

Greenkeeper: How did you actually get into this job? You have obviously been involved for some time.

Salvesen: I was fortunate enough to be elected a member of the R&A and because I am a bit of a golf 'nut' someone thought I might be of some use on the championship committee. They asked me if I would join them and I did.

Greenkeeper: When was that?

Salvesen: I joined in September 1968, but

you are only allowed to do four years on the committee and then mercifully you get one or two years off. However, I was immediately put on the rules of golf committee, so I have never had any time off since then!

Greenkeeper: For which major championships is the R&A responsible?

Salvesen: First, the Open Championship, then the British Amateur Championship, Boys' Championship, Youths' Championship, Seniors' Championship, Walker Cup and the St Andrews Trophy—which is for amateurs of Great Britain and Ireland against the continent of Europe. The R&A is also co-responsible with the USGA for the Eisenhower (World Amateur) Team Championship.

Greenkeeper: When you actually come to choosing a course for one of these championships, how do you go about it? Clearly, as far as the Open goes, you have pretty much of a set rota.

Salvesen: The Open, by tradition, is always on a links course. Maybe, one day, it might be different, but I doubt it because a links venue is what distinguishes the Open from all the other major Open Championships in other countries with perhaps the exception of Australia. Apart from having a links course, we also need sufficient area round the course on which to put all the other facilities that are now part and parcel of the championship.

Greenkeeper: Moving on to the Open Championship itself, to what extent are you involved in the year leading up to the championship?

Salvesen: We start planning the tournament several years before it happens. Indeed, we have had the first chat about 1985 already. You must realise that we have six full-time paid secretaries at the R&A, which include Keith Mackenzie, the secretary of the R&A and David Hill, the championship secretary, whose job it is to become embroiled in the detailed planning of the tented village, services, etc, which now go to make up the non-playing side of the championship.

Greenkeeper: You obviously make an increasing number of visits to the host club during the preceding months. What do you keep checking on?

Salvesen: Well, apart from the overall condition of the course, I check on the fairways and the way in which the semi-rough is being grown in. If there has been any reconstruction work done, I make sure it is coming on satisfactorily and any lifted turf has to be settled down properly—this is why we have to start planning the championship particularly early. Obviously, I had a pretty worried brow—although I was not actually chairman—at Carnoustie and Turnberry in 1975 and '77, but we all remember now that the courses were in remarkably good fettle when the great day came.

Greenkeeper: During the Open, do you have certain duties to perform?

Salvesen: There is always a championship committee at the host club, which has borne the brunt of the ground work, getting the whole thing into shape. The chief marshal will have recruited his band of stewards from neighbouring clubs—though we may have advised on crossing points—and any number of similar details will have been decided so that, when the day comes, it always seems to work smoothly. Therefore, I have the very enjoyable task of setting the tee and pin placings and, to that end, I am up at 4 o'clock every morning to obtain the detailed weather forecast. Then I meet up with the head greenkeeper and green chairman of the host club and cut the holes for the day and set the tees. Not necessarily every chairman does that, but that's what I happen to do because I like doing it. It's the best time of the day. You meet

Open '82

hares and the birds are waking up and a few early birds are getting in without paying, too!

Greenkeeper: Are there any particular conditions that make you decide where the pin positions should go?

Salvesen: Yes, this is the point of the forecast. If the forecast says heavy rain, you do not place the hole at the bottom of a depression as it might flood. Sun, wind and rain all play a part.

Greenkeeper: You are never going to satisfy everyone on this, are you? Do you ever come unstuck?

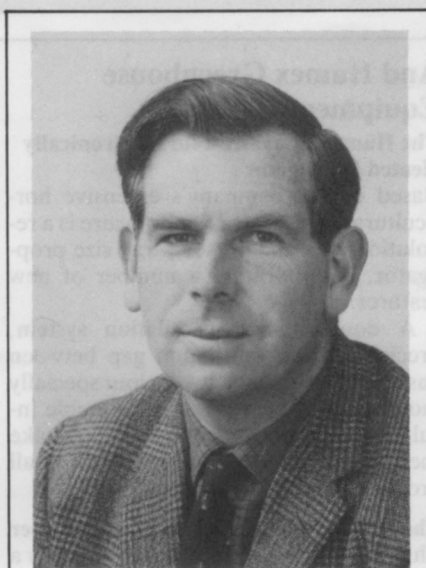
Salvesen: Well, hopefully, no. The only time I came unstuck was at St Andrews when I got up early one morning to get the weather forecast. Having got that, I went out onto the 18th green—it is always good to get the 18th green done before there are too many people about—and looked at my little pad, which told me where the holes should be. I stuck in a tee to see that it was all right—this would be about 4.20am with not a soul to be seen—then put in another tee about a yard away. I looked up and there were four policemen bearing down on me. On being asked what I was going to do, I said I was going to cut holes in the 18th green. That was perhaps the nearest I have come to being unstuck!

Greenkeeper: By holding the Open Championship on a links course, you are hoping to produce a particular type of playing condition. What are you after?

Salvesen: I think links courses should have a fair degree of pace in them—the sort of pace we saw at Royal Birkdale in 1976 and Turnberry in 1977. This is always our aim and it is interesting to find that this is what the top American professionals, such as Nicklaus, Watson and Crenshaw, seem to have in mind. This is particularly true on the greens, but fairways need a little more thought. If you have a course with a lot of rolls and knolls on it, such as many of the fairways at Royal St George's, they should not be too fast, as players then get ugly kicks into the rough. I think the fairways at Royal St George's in 1981 were superb—as good as we have ever seen. Firm, fast greens are essential, but unless a course is set up fairly, it is wrong. No one wants to play trick golf. They soon get sick of that.

Greenkeeper: What about the influence of American golf on our courses?

Salvesen: I have been fortunate enough to visit many of the top American courses and they are certainly looking for fast greens. You don't even have to go to the professional tournaments—look at the Walker Cup at Cypress Point last year. You got above the hole at the 9th (the short one round the corner) and the only way to stop the ball was to put it in the hole! It was superb, absolutely superb, though I would say it could have been fractionally slower and it might have been better. But that is being hyper-critical and Sandy Tatum probably wouldn't like me to say that! One thing in particular that I would be critical of are the collars of rough which are sometimes allowed to grow up rather thickly round the greens and just off the fairways. They also have this device called the Stimpmeter where they roll a



"Firm, fast greens are essential, but unless a course is set up fairly, it is wrong. No one wants to play trick golf. They soon get sick of that."

John Salvesen.

This interview continues on page 19...

number of balls down an inclined plane and then mark off how far the ball has gone. The green may read, let us say, 10.8, but if a green only gets up to 7.8, they will go to the length of putting the mower over again, so that it gets up to 10.8. So, all the greens may be double cut except for one or two greens that are triple cut. Now that seems to me to be an unnatural way of going about things. Why shouldn't that green be fractionally slower by nature?

Greenkeeper: Are you saying that it is possible to get a little too professional in preparing a course for a championship?

Salvesen: Yes. I think it should never be forgotten that this is a game. The professionals know its a game. They come to play in our Open from all over the world and if they thought it wasn't a game, a fair game, I don't think they would come. The climate in America is so different from our own that we shouldn't be trying to copy the conditions produced over there. A lot of damage has been caused by a mistaken belief in what watering and fertiliser will do, compounded by the influence of TV. In this country, I am sure we are aiming to get back to more natural conditions—certainly the R&A is anxious to see this happen. I shall be interested to see what is going to happen at St Andrews in the 1984 Open because Walter Woods is determined to produce firm and fast greens. Indeed, many would say he has got them already and we still have two years to go! There is now a race of good head greenkeepers emerging, who are getting the results we want, particularly because they have paid a good deal of attention to the mistakes made in the past. This is a trend I hope will continue and it is encouraging to see the goods being delivered for valid scientific reasons.

Greenkeeper: Is there a difference in the way you set a course up for an amateur event as opposed to a professional event?

Salvesen: In an amateur event, perhaps you are not so punishing. You must never kill a competitor stone dead, or give them all the toughest holes they can possibly have—you have to strike a balance. Now, in the Open, when I have been cutting the holes myself, I have favoured making it rather tougher over the first two days to eliminate those players the paying spectators have, perhaps, not come to see—in other words, let the ones who are

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Open '82 Continued from page 17...

going to be in at the end have a run at it. Now that may be rather an unconventional way of looking at it. For an amateur event, I think you would want to preserve a higher proportion of more difficult positions for the later stages—eg, the semi-finals and final in the Amateur Championship.

Greenkeeper: What is your opinion of the so-called advances that have been made in recent years in the design of golf clubs and balls?

Salvesen: This is really a question that involves the implements and balls committee and it is up to them to ensure the game is not spoiled by these innovations. I certainly do not see the need to be producing the sort of 7,000-yard-plus courses in this country that have appeared in America and elsewhere. If, as I believe, we are again producing fast, firm conditions on our courses then this should not be necessary. And I am not just talking about links courses, but also most of our inland ones as well. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that the R&A holds many of its championships on inland courses such

as Ganton, Woodhall Spa and Blairgowrie. The renaissance in greenkeeping I believe is happening will take some years to produce the conditions on courses I described—only relatively few courses have so far achieved their potential. But the R&A believes strongly that better courses will produce better golfers, both amateur and professional, and greater enjoyment for the average club golfer.

Greenkeeper: The PGA European Tour has produced a document to guide courses holding tournaments on the finer points of course presentation. Does the R&A feel any need to produce a similar guide for the average golf club?

Salvesen: A difficult question. I am not at all sure it is the R&A's place to lay down the law on this subject. As far as the championship committee is concerned, it appointed Jim Arthur consultant agronomist in 1972 when Charles Lawrie was chairman. Since then, we have generally achieved the sort of conditions that we feel we want when holding our championships. However, there may be

people who disagree with our own particular aims and they must be allowed to make up their own minds. Perhaps it might be possible to give club golfers a better idea of what we imagine to be good and fair golfing conditions by producing a similar document. But they would have to take into account the evidence available on this subject to see if our thoughts could be applied to their own course. I feel such advice might be more acceptable coming from a properly constituted scientific body. On this subject, you would do just as well to talk to someone like Walter Woods, now a director and teacher at Elmwood and ask him for his views. What I am certain of is that there is a general movement in this country back towards the playing conditions we have been discussing, but I would be wary of suggesting that it is up to the R&A to give the main lead in this. When everything 'goes according to plan' there are no problems! When something or several things go wrong, you are supposed to be there to resolve them—and are!

Greenkeeper: We wish you well with the Open at Troon this month.

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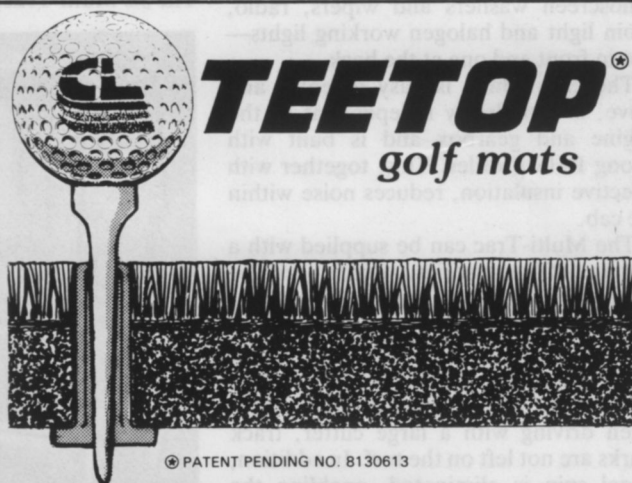
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New From Marshall Concessionaires

Two new machines were unveiled by Marshall Concessionaires recently.

The first—the JL Multi-Trac—is a Danish-manufactured out-front, seven-cylinder, hydraulically-powered, mower mounted on a multi-track 50hp JL tractor.

The second—the Verti-Drain—is from Holland and is designed to relieve soil compaction down to 16 inches.

The JL Multi-Trac's solid structure houses an engine, transmission and steering similar to those found in large tractors, yet its compact size and broad, low-pressure tyres permit it to be driven over lawns without damaging the surface, even in wet conditions.

Its hydrostatic steering and rear-wheel drive make it safe and easy to handle and it easily negotiates pavements, ramps and subways.

The cabin is equipped with an effective heating system, a sliding roof and windows that open for summer operation, tinted windows and a luxurious seat.

Standard features include front and rear windscreen washers and wipers, radio, cabin light and halogen working lights—two in front and one at the back.

The cab, which is easy to enter and leave, is completely independent of the engine and gearbox and is built with strong RHS profiles. This, together with effective insulation, reduces noise within the cab.

The Multi-Trac can be supplied with a variety of accessories, which can be connected and disconnected in under 20 seconds.

The weight conduction system special to the JL Multi-Trac means that wear on the machine is greatly reduced and, even when driving with a large cutter, track marks are not left on the turf. In addition, wheel spin is eliminated, enabling the Multi-Trac to operate effectively on difficult terrains.

Compact design, special tyres, powerful engine and a sturdy gear box, allied to a travelling speed of up to 30 km/hour, are all part of this revolutionary concept.

The Verti-Drain's operating principle combines perforation of soil for vertical drainage with the breaking-up of compacted layers.

The machine has an axle mounted with pegs that penetrate the soil at a special angle. They are attached to the axle in such a way that a back-and-forth movement breaks up the soil beneath the surface without damaging the turf or bringing up any soil on to the turf.



The JL Multi-Trac.



The Verti-Drain in operation.

The holes have a 12mm diameter, can be spaced from 8cm to 12cm apart, and have an operating depth of 10 to 40cm.

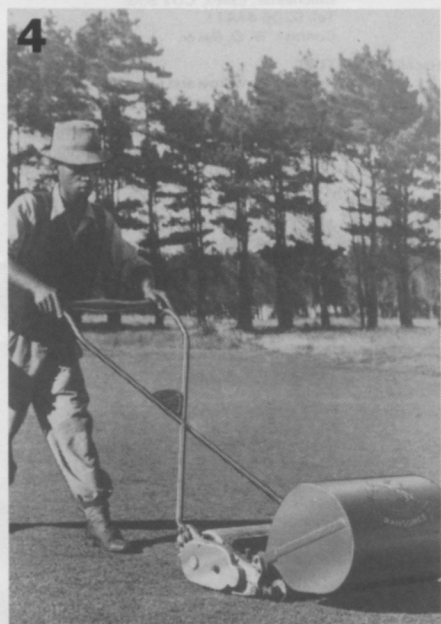
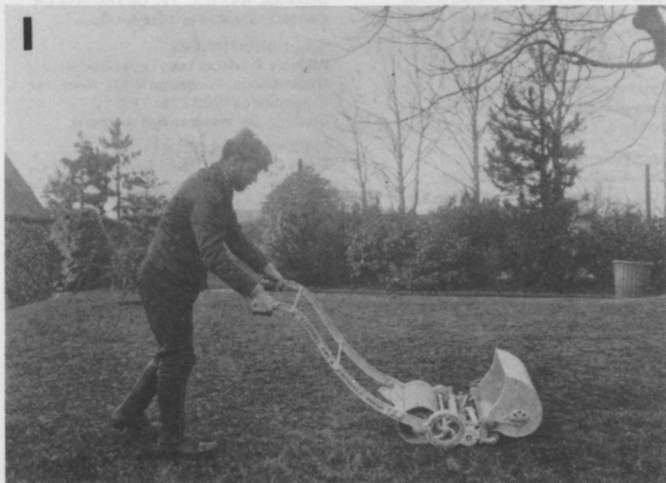
The Verti-Drain fights water surplus successfully, permitting faster drainage of the upper layer, and provides excellent aeration.

The versatile machine can be used for sports grounds, lawns, playing fields, compacted soil at tree bases, agricultural and horticultural land and on some artificial sports surfaces.

The Verti-Drain has an operating width of 2.50m.

Trade News

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1. Pictured in 1897, this Patent Gear Automaton also came with chain drive.
2. A horse-drawn triple mower on a fairway in 1923.
3. An early tractor-drawn quintuple gang-mower pictured in 1925.
4. A Certes hand-mower keeps a green in Africa in good trim.
5. The Gazelle was light and easy to handle.
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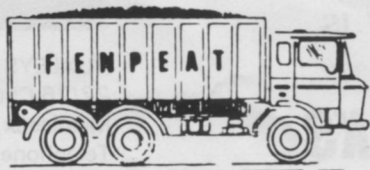
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