1) ROUND TRIP AIR FARE HEATHROW/WASHINGTON/HEATHROW — February 6-13, 1985. $418.00

NOTE THE FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS
a) A seven day minimum stay is required.
b) Tickets must be purchased 21 days in advance.
c) The fare quoted is the current fare and has no guarantee until actual date of purchase.

PLEASE SELECT ONE:

_____PAN AM 107 Depart Heathrow 10:15 a.m. FEBRUARY 6, 1985
                   Arrive Washington 1:40 p.m.

_____PAN AM 106 Depart Washington 9:00 p.m. FEBRUARY 13, 1985
                   Arrive Heathrow 9:00 a.m.

_____BRITISH AIR 277 Depart Heathrow 2:30 p.m. FEBRUARY 6, 1985
                   Arrive Washington 5:55 p.m.

_____BRITISH AIR 276 Depart Washington 8:45 p.m. FEBRUARY 13, 1985
                   Arrive Heathrow 8:45 a.m.

2) SEVEN NIGHTS AT THE SHOREHAM HOTEL BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY.
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3) GCSAA CONFERENCE & SHOW REGISTRATION PACKAGE. $150.00**
Permits access to all GCSAA educational sessions, selection of 1 seminar course (see list below), the USGA Green Section Program, the Trade Show during the hours it is open, and 1 ticket to the Banquet & Show, February 12, where former President Gerald Ford will be honored. The evening also includes dinner and entertainment by famed singer Tanya Tucker.

PLEASE CHECK IF YOU WISH TO PURCHASE THIS REGISTRATION PACKAGE.
**Total On-Site Registration Value of this Package $470.00.

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a) Plant Nutrition, February 7 & 8 - 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. both days.

b) Negotiating, February 7 & 8 - 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. both days.

c) Irrigation Equipment & Technology
   February 11 - 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and February 13 - 8:00 a.m.-noon

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PLEASE COMPLETE FORM, ENCLOSE APPROPRIATE PAYMENT (MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO GCSAA)
AND SEND TO THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE.
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1984

Three hearty cheers!

There has been recent acknowledgement, at long last, for the humble greenkeeper—now often referred to as a superintendent—from no lesser mortals than Bob Hope, Tom Watson and Arnold Palmer.

As the daughter, sister and mother of greenkeepers, spanning more than 50 years, I applaud this recognition in the Press. I have often wondered where, without the greenkeeper and his loyal band of greensmen, would the club golfer or professional be?

My father, brother and son, each in turn, have restored fading golf courses with hard work and expertise, for low wages (compared to the tournament-playing professional) and with hardly any recognition. Sadly, my father and brother are no longer alive, but my son carries on the family tradition.

A greenkeeper needs to be a human wonder and a breed apart—not only requiring a love of nature, but the brain of a scientist, accountant and mechanic. First and foremost, he needs a sense of humour, for it still seems that committee members think they know the job better.

I would suggest that anyone complaining about the condition of a golf course and 'know all' committee members spend some time out on the course working as one of the team.

After days of getting soaked through and battling with the elements, they would realise that the greenkeeper does know best. Rarely, at the end of a hard day, is there a welcoming canteen offering a hot meal and there are often no showers for greens staff and only makeshift toilet facilities. It is no easy life—a greenkeeper has to be dedicated to his work.

Thank you, Messrs Hope, Watson and Palmer for bringing to light the fact that, without the genius and hard work of the greenkeeper and his staff, many of golf's pleasures would be lacking.

Remember, golfers and committee members everywhere, your greenkeeper and his staff are your most important assets, so get them to the top of the salary scale now!

Three generations later, I still see the greenkeeper being treated as lowly. Surely, as these three great men of golf have said, it is high time the greenkeeper was regarded in a different light and received praise according to the work he does?

Mildred Scruton

Mildred is the daughter of Stanley Smith, formerly head greenkeeper at Halifax Ogden and Alwoodley; sister of Raymond Smith, formerly head greenkeeper at Bloxwich and Stourbridge and mother of Gary Scruton, who has worked at Bloxwich, Scarcroft, Moor Allerton and is now the head greenkeeper at Otley.

Mildred Scruton
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The reclamation of indigenous turf

Eddie Park continues his series

NEWS that the STRI is to set up a specialised golf and bowling greens section with the active support of Jim Arthur has cheered all those with the true interests of golf greenkeeping at heart. The fact that Dr Peter Hayes and Jim consider their recommendations are so similar as to render closer collaboration essential is no great surprise to their friends. Jim is in the direct line of descent from the old Board of Greenkeeping Research and received his postgraduate training at Bingley from R.B. Dawson and R.P. Libbey. Similarly, Peter is a botanist who has specialised in ecology of grasses and now inevitably finds himself reaching the same conclusions as to remedial treatment of damaged golf courses. With this formidable array of expertise being mustered, there can be no excuse for clubs seeking or adopting less soundly-based advice.

Those who, like me, take an interest in vintage books on golf courses and their maintenance might recognise this extract from a book written by Norman Hackett in 1928. 'Are we in this country on the eve of an almost inevitable finds himself reaching the same conclusions as to remedial treatment of damaged golf courses.

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In passing, it has to be said that no good text book exists on greenkeeping. Perhaps early editions of Dawson and Sutton still have some merit. The last three years of the Bingley Bulletin provide up-to-date and sound information. The Bingley Annual Journal is, I suppose, symptomatic of the poor support golf has given the STRI. Bags of research on soccer and amenity grasses, but little of practical use to the golf greenkeeper.

We still hear talk of 'alternative theories' and the need to hear 'all sides of the argument' at seminars. A bit of democracy is all very well, but if it is a device to permit salesmen in disguise to extol the virtues of their system, machine or chemical it can go too far. That is not to say everyone should hold identical views. There must be room for innovation, but we should be very clear that little is really new. Most good practices were discovered by experience nearly a century ago and had been investigated and checked 40 years ago.

Continuity, however, seems to falter in places like golf clubs. People hear of new theories, new chemicals, new machines and with the average golfer's view that course maintenance is really a pretty simple affair, the door is open to the latest gimmick. The salesman is in and although he may know nothing about the basic sciences of the subject, his job is, nevertheless, to sell his product.

There is now a real need for events to follow the course that Hackett was so hopefully predicting 56 years ago—that is for methods of management to be soundly based in plant ecology, as well as soil physics and soil chemistry and for new methods, new machines, new chemicals to be properly investigated by reputable research bodies before they are unleashed on unsuspecting consumers.

I believe the case against target golf in Britain, with resultant problems of Poa Annua, thatch and cost, has been made in full by Nick Park in his Golf Monthly series. I do not propose to repeat the arguments, but rather to work on the assumption that you agree with us that in fescue/bent greens we can have, in this country, the finest golf turf in the world.

Many greenkeepers and club officials have been kind enough to share their experiences with me and it is my present task to present an analysis of the state of the art in the reclamation of fine turf. I meet and hear from many people who are convinced this is the right line to take, but have come up against the difficulties. Many have trodden a lonely path for too long and a sharing of views is always beneficial.

There are some other encouraging
factors, as well as the new alliance between Bingley and Jim Arthur. Most notable has been the splendid effort to get St Andrews back to its old self and we should congratulate Walter Woods and his staff on their success. It takes real courage and determination to produce a course like that. The reward comes not only in praise, but in the knowledge that for the millions watching TV across the world it was a most thrilling spectacle.

After hours of boredom and watching (or, more probably, not watching) some of the events on the PGA European Tour, it was magical. Much the same could be said of the Panasonic European Open at Sunningdale. American commentators rather scathingly, refer to real British golf (the original game) as 'bump and run.' I would rather play and watch it than fly and splash.'

Research

There is already some activity on the golf ball and equipment front. Thanks to the research department of a British manufacturer, we have been able to try some golf balls of lower weight and compression on fast, firm greens. Subjectively, I found them more enjoyable and easier to play but, no doubt, scientific research will follow.

The R&A is showing real interest in these matters and is to be congratulated for using some of the cash from the Open to promote higher standards in course maintenance. Money has already been allocated for research and training and other projects are being considered. At last, there are club officials considering their priorities in expenditure and moving course maintenance to the top. Thus, we have made an encouraging start to the real necessity of educating golfers and I can report that that will continue—not least in Greenkeeper.

So the future may be looking brighter, but we must look harder at the problems of the present. I am inclined to think that there has been too much argument and time wasted over policy setting and not enough on the difficulties of implementing policy, while satisfying golfers at the same time. Much of this will eventually be solved by the provision of adequate finance both to train and reward qualified course managers.

In the meantime, it is important for both clubs and advisors to realise that the present position is far from satisfactory. The annual advisory visit may produce an excellent diagnosis and treatment plan, but implementation in the face of totally ignorant golfers and committees is too often doomed to failure or only partial success. Examples abound of demands for overwatering and overfeeding, as well as requests for “don’t slit this week—we have a medal on Saturday.”

Some golfers are now more difficult to fool. There is a great thirst for knowledge about course maintenance and in almost every club there seems to be talk of “getting rid of that meadow grass,” etc. But clubs continue to be rather insular institutions and correct information takes time to get around. Committees continue to try to get away with phoney excuses, but increasingly they are being rumbled. The quite appalling conditions on some courses once the wet weather sets in can be so bad I am astonished that anyone wants to play.

It is now some years since I went to a course where, in winter, they played off temporary tees into the rough (the fairways were so wet they couldn’t be cut even in October) and from the rough (having teed up again) on to temporary greens. They purchased their first fairway slitter 15 years ago, but is has stood and rusted ever since. Anyone who has to pick up the bits after perhaps many years of this sort of devoted mismanagement deserves all the encouragement he can get.

To return to my theme—you can’t fool all the people all the time... I remember looking at a series of annual reports of a club where conversion of grass types to Poa annuus both on greens and fairways resulted in an almost annual series of misfortunes. Drought damage, soft wat greens, disease—you name it, they had it. And in 18 out of 21 annual reports, they actually claimed there had been ‘exceptional’ weather. In England?

Twice this year we have seen Press reports of neighbouring courses staging tournaments where one is closed after showers, but the other stays open and play continues. You do not have to be too clever to guess where the aeration is defective. And not all punters are fooled when a course is described as being in ‘marvellous condition’ when they can deduce for themselves by the behaviour of ball meeting turf that the real condition is well scarified meadow grass growing on wet thatch.

That word ‘condition’ is not needed for the aeration is defective. And not all punters are fooled when a course is described as being in ‘marvellous condition’ when they can deduce for themselves by the behaviour of ball meeting turf that the real condition is well scarified meadow grass growing on wet thatch.

Mistakes

For those faced with undoing the mistakes of the past, a prime difficulty is the mania for what I call ‘gradualism’, which requires you to say: “let’s try to get through this nasty business smoothly—there must be a middle way.” We are dealing with nature—a brutal mistress and we are relatively powerless for all our modern technology. Next time you are in a bookshop, take a look at a new book by David Bellamy called The Queen’s Secret Garden. It is a beautiful book about the 49 acres of Buckingham Palace gardens. In such a place, with such resources of money...
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News & Views

EIGGA Annual Conference

Notice of the association's annual conference to be held at Warwick University from March 22-24 is being distributed with this issue of Greenkeeper. The conference will have a wide range of subjects under discussion with speakers from all aspects of the greenkeeping industry.

The opening address on Friday afternoon is to be given by Dickie Jeeps, chairman of the Sports Council. Delegates will then be addressed by 13 speakers before the association's AGM on Sunday afternoon. The president and one of the trustees will be elected at the AGM and nomination details will appear in Greenkeeper together with a formal notice covering the meeting.

It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend the conference, giving demonstrable support to the association.

London

David MacIndoe, who was chairman of the branch during its formation, has left West Herts and moved across the sea to Ireland, where he takes charge of the two courses at Killarney.

We all wish David and his family every success. He will be missed by his many friends and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all his time and effort in ensuring that the branch found its feet. I'm sure his enthusiasm has rubbed off on many of us.

David's successor as chairman of the branch is Tom Low of Hartsbourne and no doubt we can all learn from his wealth of experience.

The dry summer had to end eventually and it did just that on the day of our autumn meeting at Porters Park. Over 40 members and guests enjoyed their golf on a course prepared by Martin Smith and his team. It was, as usual, in excellent condition.

Barbara Norton and her staff made sure everyone forgot the miserable weather by preparing a superb meal. Mike Peters, Norman Exley and Tom MacDonald organised the cards and competitions and my personal thanks go to them as I was unable to attend. Tom Low presented the prizes and entertained the audience with his debuts as chairman.

The results were: 18 hole Stableford, 0-14 section—C.Slater, who won the Parker shield and Rigby Taylor decanter; 15-28 section—A.Grew, who received the Pattisson trophy and the fouroball better-ball medal—C.Barker and R.Cameron.

The branch AGM will be held in March on a date to be arranged—details will be published in Greenkeeper. Application forms for competitions from Ken MacNiven.

East Anglia

When a golf tournament was arranged for Bury St Edmunds, we all knew it would be a good day, but I don't think anyone thought it would be so good. Everyone made us feel welcome, none more so than the captain and chairman of greens.

The food definitely proved the way to our hearts and a special mention goes to Sterlie for organising the course. The food was superb and all the players enjoyed it.

The results were: 1st greenkeeper, 0-18 section—P. Sylvester, 39 points; 1st greenkeeper, 19-28 section—Steve Low.