With concerns running high in respect of the long term impact of pesticides on the environment, public discomfort regarding chemical pollution of waterways, and increased legislation restricting the transportation, use and storage of hazardous substances, there has never been a better time for greenkeepers to take stock of their spraying practices.

Surveys by university researchers have shown that on average, spray operators overlap their chemical applications by 25% to 30% more than the manufacturers' recommended rate. This is an alarming fact from both an environmental view and in terms of wastage and cost. In addition, the potential damage that can occur to fine turf if double dosing takes place under conditions favourable for damage puts this area into the high risk category.

Yet surprisingly, though the chemical debate has been with us for years and more people are worried about the role of chemicals in recreational areas, greenkeepers in the main still rely on sight and 'experience' when it comes to judging the application of sprays. Judging the correct application of solutions comprising 99% clear water is very risky: spray becomes almost invisible when applied to grass, making it impossible for the operator to follow the spray line accurately, causing an inevitable overlap.

In the past the practice of drawing chains behind the sprayer to mark bout width margins on the turf has been tried with little success. Anyone who has seen chains snaking across a fairway and knocked off line by every hump, hollow or twist will soon realise that the chain does not reflect the true spray margin and can be almost impossible to see.

Another method, originating from the agricultural industry, uses a special piece of equipment which produces in a portable tank a foam mixture that is pumped out of pipes at the ends of the boom. This foam is dropped as 'blobs' - at intervals behind the sprayer - with the object of marking the position of the spray boom width. Though clever in its conception, this method rarely works well in practice due to factors such as variability of time the 'blob' takes to disappear (golfers do not take kindly to seeing fairways and greens festooned with foam balls) and the lengthy set-up and clean down time. There is also a significant investment in the initial capital outlay and on-going maintenance. Even if it could be argued that 'blobs' give the operator some guidance on spray bout width, it does not identify any 'skips' or misses due to uneven ground or reveal problems due to faulty spray equipment.

It may have been argued in the past that the chain or 'blob' method of identification was better than nothing. However, neither alternative has widespread appeal and both have their detractors, who see them as flawed.

In the early 1980s some greenkeepers on the other side of the Atlantic, fed up with the 'blob' or chain methods, were obtaining industrial dye products in an attempt to colour their spray solution, which could then be seen by the operator during application. However, many of these were found to be unsuitable - they caused not only long-term staining of the grass, adjacent walkways, fencing and stone.
Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

**MIDLANDS**
June was bustin' out all over at Great Barr GC on the 4th, with the morning round of our Summer Tournament interrupted by a heavy hail storm, which left the course white in a matter of minutes. There were several players in 'the hunt' after the eventful morning round, the afternoon being more enjoyable as the weather improved.

In the event a winner emerged in the guise of Ted Evans, with Steve Wood a close second. The Gross prize was won by Paul Luffman. The course was in excellent condition and a credit to the greenkeepers. For this we thank Great Barr GC, also for granting us the use of course and clubhouse and for catering that was second to none. Finally, a thank-you to our trade friends for supporting us so well.

Our next tournament will be at Edgbaston GC on August 20th and we look forward to meeting all of you again.

Best wishes go to Rhys Thomas on his new job as head greenkeeper at Great Barr GC.

DEAN CLEAVER

**SOUTH WEST**
'Drought? does anyone remember a drought? Certainly in the Cotswolds the last six weeks have been a total wash-out. My neighbour (a keen gardener, few of us left!) was spotted staggering around his lawn with an umbrella, retrieving his garden sprinkler.

Knowle on June 5th, for our match Greenkeepers v Secretaries, was another fine example of a summer's day with incessant rain and a strong wind. But, as they say, it's an ill wind etc. etc. and the weather obviously upset the secretaries more than the greenkeepers, (you don't get cold winds and driving rain in nice warm offices or bars!), and thanks to our super-sub Chris Light, the head greenkeeper at Knowle, who came in with the best score of 36 points, we greenkeepers managed to beat the secretaries by just 11 points.

Thanks were also due to Chris, Kevin and the rest of the Knowle staff for the outstanding condition of the course and to the Club itself for the warm hospitality extended to both teams. We are also extremely grateful to Derek Holloway for organising the match and to Monro Horticulture for providing every member of the winning team with a prize.

I hope that you have all found entry forms coming through in order and if any of you have slipped through the 'regular entry' system and would like to have forms, please give me a call on 0285 651908.

On a personal note, my thanks to Cecil George and Jimmy Neilson for their valuable assistance and to my wife, Edna, for her hard work and support in dealing with 109 golfers. We were drawn but the conditions seemed to make some of our respected trade members a bit under the weather and unfit for play!

We must thank Alan Goodwillie and his council for their courtesy in hosting the Championship, also club secretary, Alan Frame and green convenor Jackie Vetch, who joined us for our day. To Margaret Harrison, club manageress, and her staff for friendly service, hospitality and delicious meals and Duncan Peddie — happy birthday Dunc to you and your crew for the excellent condition of the course.

Exactly 100 golfers took part in the tournament, which may be a record. Originally 109 players were drawn but the conditions seemed to make some of our respected trade members a bit under the weather and unfit for play!

PAUL WORSTER

**SCOTTISH REGION**
The Scottish Region Championships were held at Alloa GC on June 25th, the previous weeks having been the wettest recorded in June for decades and many Clubs were forced to postpone events due to torrential, almost tropical downpours and cloud-bursts that could flood a course in minutes. June 24th was a dry exception and so on the 25th it was with a sense of trepidation that we arrived to black skies and the Ochil Hills barely visible through mist and gloom.

However, 9.30 came and the first 3 ball away to nothing more than a light spitting of rain and high hopes. Ha, fooled again! By 10.30 the rain was a constant downpour with the 14th green — viewed from the clubhouse — looking more like a curling pond in summer than a golf green.

All eyes on 'yours truly' as a mini-conference took place with head greenkeeper Duncan Peddie. Suspend play was the verdict.

On again by 11.40, the troops were still not convinced. Duncan Peddie and assistant Alec Nimmo, with the able help of Kevin Brunton (Souters) and Andrew Mennmuir (STS), both ex greenkeepers, checked the greens. Our grateful thanks to you, lads. Was the Reg. Admin. right? of course he was, for by mid afternoon it was shirt sleeves and a sunshine finish for everyone. Though finishing later than planned, it turned out an excellent day and we were so ready for the presentation, made perfect by the gracious attendance of Alloa Club Captain, Alan Goodwille, who on this, their centenary year, presented each winner with a copy of the Club's history.

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The trophy table at The Scottish is a sight to behold. So many marvellous trophies to win and each containing a voucher contributed by our Scottish patrons — all generous to a fault.

On a personal note, my thanks to Cecil George and Jimmy Neilson for their valuable assistance and to my wife, Edna, for her hard work and support in dealing with 109 golfers. It was good to have old friends amongst us including Joe McKean, whose golf was curtailed by an accident with his caddie car (we hope you are healing nicely Joe!), and George Hampton, 'laughter is the best medicine', eh George? As usual, George donated a generous prize as did Kevin Brunton of Souters.

It was a long day but one to be remembered. Let us herald the Scottish Champion for 1991, Gordon Moir of Fraserburgh, with a scratch 75. Well done Gordon. Further results were: Best nett; Wilson Morrison (Royal Aberdeen) 70. Best head greenkeeper: Duncan Peddie (Alloa) 80-9=71. Best assistant: Stewart Crawford (Ratho Park) 78-7=71. Best apprentice: Neil Chrichton (Tulliallan) 80-8=72. Veteran: Harry Diamond