Video is great, but...  
May I congratulate BIGGA on the production of their first education video, which I think will be of great value to all greenkeepers. However, it should be pointed out that a few points are incorrect.  
To begin, the video shows a green being sprayed with a boom sprayer, the operator spraying whilst turning. All spraying should be done in straight lines, in order to avoid over-dosing on the inside of the turning circle and under-dosing on the outside. In fact, if very tight turns are made, the inside of the boom can actually be travelling backwards! I know this can sometimes be difficult because of the shape of greens, but that is the very reason for using walking booms and not a boom sprayer.  
Secondly, standing still and waving a hand lance over an area whilst using a knapsack sprayer is hardly accurate, making pointless all those calibrations regarding walking speed. For spray equipment with a knapsack the operator should walk over the target holding the lance steadily and at the correct height, as though spraying the whole area, then simply turning the lance on as the target is transgressed.  
I was particularly concerned regarding disposal of unwanted spray material, the video showing the drain valve on the sprayer being opened, the chemical 'gulping' out onto the ground. Granted, the point is made that this is a designated area for the disposal of unwanted spray material, but surely anyone in their right mind would rinse out first, including the first washings, so that there is no risk of a large volume of liquid running off into streams and watercourses, which on hard ground could quite possibly happen.  
Apart from the above, I feel the video is too long and might be better condensed to thirty minutes. Also the mentioning of one particular product seven times could perhaps be reduced to just once or twice.

Chris Mitchell, Course Manager, Royal Ashdown Forest GC, Forest Row, East Sussex

I am a greenkeeper currently employed at Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2012. My comments may draw adverse comments from the four talented individuals who appeared in the video, but I will make a few points.  

The trip to the US starts on January 10. I have been told that the GCSAA trade show in Dallas is one that I won't forget quickly!  
Once again, thank you for looking after us all at Aldwark Manor and for a great night out in Harrogate. I am very much looking forward to my trip to America and also keeping in contact with you all.

Bridie Redican, Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year

May I take this opportunity to thank staff at BIGGA headquarters and the Aldwark Manor Golf Hotel, plus of course Toro Irrigation, Lely (UK) Ltd and the PGA European Tour, for providing two most excellent days when I competed for the Student Greenkeeper of the Year award. I would also like to thank my fellow student participants, especially for their great friendliness toward me. Though not an award winner myself, I know the accolades went to three most worthy winners, all of whom will serve BIGGA most proudly.

Antony Bindley, Braunstone, Leicester

May I begin by thanking you personally for the many splendid articles that have appeared in Greenkeeper International, they are much appreciated.

This has been a tremendous year for me, especially as I have been associated with the PGA European Tour Team. Through the letters column, may I thank Bruce Jamieson and his staff and everyone who made 1993 a year that I will never forget. I would also like to give my thanks to Jimmy Kidd and his staff, who made my stay at Gleneagles such a memorable one.

Paul Brannan, 15 James Nisbet Street, Glasgow

Editor's note. Paul was one of three winners in the Toro-PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year award last year. His prize? Attending two PGA Tour events, plus the PGA European Tour conference at Penina, Portugal.

One little word
Reference my article in “Bones of Contention” in November, before I am inundated with comments that 3/16 of an inch is perfectly acceptable, I hearty agree. The word ‘below’ has been omitted in the paragraph toward the end, which should read…”cutting greens below 3/16 of an inch’. Although just one small word, this dramatically alters the meaning of the sentence.

Tom McKechnie, Carnoustie Golf Links, Angus, Scotland

‘Inspiring’ trade show
A recent holiday trip to the USA gave me the opportunity to visit the 1993 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Trade Show, held at the Tampa Convention Center. After a short drive from Orlando I arrived in Tampa and soon found the convention center. I was welcomed by the Florida turfgrass officials and after speedily registering I proceeded to the first lecture.

The quality of speakers was first class and I especially enjoyed listening to Dr Bob Carroll, who presented a fine paper on HydroJet vs Solid Tine vs Hollow Tine aeration in fine turf. Following the workshop I was invited to their annual meeting and awards luncheon, this again proving to be most interesting and informative. The amount of money generated from sections around the State, from which turfgrass research and their Association will certainly benefit, was encouraging. The trade show itself was inspiring and I made many friends in such a brief period.

Next year’s convention will be held in Fort Lauderdale, 17-21 September, and hopefully I can mirror my holiday accordingly. It was certainly money well spent!

Tony Dunstan, Mill Hill Golf Club, London

Accidents in waiting
I am a greenkeeper currently employed at Costessey Park GC, Norfolk. During convalescence following a heart attack I’ve visited a number of my fellow greenkeepers in my location, have you seen the written findings of the assessment? Which employees and employers cannot afford the time to attend such workshops and rely upon written word prior to action.

My comments may draw adverse comments from greenkeepers and employers in this area, but I will stand by my claim and issue a challenge to readers to answer these questions honestly;

1) In carrying out a risk assessment, is it necessary for an employer to record any significant findings?
2) Should someone, identified by name, be responsible for health and safety on the course?
3) Do employers have to support people by whenever a competent, correctly dressed, individual is using a chain saw, just in case?
4) What is commonly regarded as the first level of noise output, and how can one determine if a machine exceeds this in a normal working environment?

Did anyone get all of them right? Does any golf club comply with all these regulations? Should people care? In answering yes to the last question, readers should remember that the test is a small selection from H&S regulations. They affect everyone and are enforceable by law.

Answers:
Q1. Regulation 3 (4) Management of Health and Safety at Work: Where the employer employs five or more employees he shall record the significant findings of the assessment and any group of his employees identified by it as being especially at risk. Are there more than five employees at your location? Have you written reports of your findings of the assessment? Which employees at your location are identified as being at risk?
Q2. Regulation 6 (1) Ditto: Every employer shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), appoint one or more competent persons to assist him in undertaking the measures he needs to take to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed upon him or by the relevant statutory provisions. Par (6) and (7) refer to self employed employees and employers cannot afford the time to attend such workshops and rely upon written word prior to action.
persons who have sufficient experience or knowl-
dge to undertake the measures necessary to
comply with the provisions. Is this true at your
course? If not, who is the necessary competent
named individual and what individual’s name writ-
ten down in the record?
Q3: Regulation 7 (2) Ditto: Every employer shall,
without prejudice - b) enable the persons con-
cerned (if necessary by taking appropriate steps
in the absence of guidance or instruction and in
the light of their knowledge and the technical
means at their disposal) to stop work and imme-
diately proceed to a place of safety in the event
of their being exposed to serious, imminent and
avoidable danger. The key word is immediately. Are
your procedures capable of immediate reaction?
Q4: Noise at Work. Noise guide No 1. The first
level is set at 85 decibels. Determination of a
machine’s output can be made by carrying out the
following; or continue the test for longer than
two minutes, as hearing damage may occur if per-
sontal are exposed without adequate protection!
a) Ensure that the machine is parked safely. b)
Only use trained and correctly attired personnel
in the test. c) Check that there is clear view of any
debris or other contango. d) Start the machine. e)
Run at full throttle and with due caution attempt to
carry out a conversation with the operator. f) Can
you hear what is said using normal voice projec-
y? Yes -arters are operating on or below
the noise level. No - the machine is operating
above the minimum level and ear protection must
be provided, training given in its use and opera-
tors instructed to wear it.
Raymond Wigley, Cortessey Park GC, Norwich

Lost opportunity

It was with increasing dismay that I read the
thinly veiled advertisement (article) “Lock It Up”.
What a lost opportunity to address some important
points to ensure yard buildings are constructed in
accordance with good practice but more vital to
to mention the new EC/HSE legislative framework!
Employers reading the article will be tempted to
construct ‘sheds’ in the same old way as - I find
so depressingly often on my rounds. May I appeal
to all you involved in the design and construction of
yard buildings to bear in mind two vitally import-
ant matters: 1) Where employees are gathered within a build-
ing for any length of time eg. workshops, rest
areas etc., there must be a safe means of rapidly
escaping in the event of an emergency such as a
fire. Building such rooms within a ‘shed’ with
security only in mind (no doors or windows)
amounts to nothing less than a death trap. The
collection of stoves and small tools in the main
storage area frequently make it very diffic-
ult to get out in a hurry. Very often too the
source of a fire will be a hot machine just parked
right in front of the most obvious means of
escape. Modern design and materials can ensure
that the construction of doors and windows will
give security as well as safety.
2) Little thought is given to the relationship
between pesticides, oil or petrol stores, work-
shops and rest areas. It is not unusual to find new
buildings with such stores right next to areas
where employees are working or at rest. Add to
this the fact that there are no external exits and
you have an accident waiting to happen. There is
plenty of guidance available to builders and
designers to help them avoid disaster, but I won-
der if they ever read them?
Too many mistakes are being made in yard
building design which employees have to live
with. It is a pity that Inspectors do not pay more
attention to this important aspect of health and
safety at work. A few well placed Improvement
Notices might go a long way towards getting the
message across.
I would appeal to all involved in the provision
of yard buildings: make health and safety one of
the first things you think about, don’t leave it to
the end user, the people who have to work about
Jon Allbutt, Cherry Tree House,
Sunningvale Rd., Biggin Hill, Kent

Is this a first?

I have a brother, a brother-in-law, a cousin
and an uncle, all greenkeepers at various courses, all
of whom thoroughly enjoy their work. John
Phillips, the uncle of this group, until recently
worked at The Broom Hill G&CC in Vancouver
Island, Canada. I say until recently, because dur-
ing June 1993 he suffered a fatal accident, involv-
ing a tractor.
Our family were, of course, saddened by the
tragedy and by our loss, but it has come to light
that we were not alone, for the golf club where
he worked thought so much of his work - and of
John as a person - that they have re-named their
back nine after him. The new name is The
John Phillips Memorial Golf Club. Each Septem-
ber a competition will be played in his honour.

We are all very proud of this and many of our
golf playing family hope to one day visit Vancou-
ver Island to play in the competition with mem-
ers of the club, an honour indeed.
I wonder, is this a first for greenkeepers?
Andrew Phillips, Glynhir GC, Dyfed

Tree grants available

May I draw to the attention of readers the large
grants that are now available from the Forestry
Authority for tree planting? These grants are
available to all land owners, including golf
courses, and are paid out under a Woodland
Grant Scheme over a period of ten years. There is
also a supplement for planting improved grass-
land, which is paid out at the time of planting.
We recently prepared a budget for tree planting
in 15 different areas on a golf course and over a
ten year period the grants will cover the total cost
of the tree planting and subsequent maintenance.
Eamonn Wall, Woodland Consultant, Dollar,
Clackmannanshire

Course is right on target

I would like to thank all the staff at BIGGA and
all the lecturers for a most interesting and enjoy-
able week on your Year One Management
Course. I found it of great benefit and will be
looking forward to coming back for Year Two.
If any greenkeeper is thinking of going on the
course, I would thoroughly recommend it.
Thanks again for a great week.
Perry Smith, Deputy Head Greenkeeper,
Bromley Golf Club

Wrong hills

Your top photo caption (page 19, October issue,
featuring Kingsknowe GC), indicates that the
Braid Hills are shown in the background. Not so,
these are the Pentland Hills.
Allen Wood, Braid Hills GC, Edinburgh

Bidding a fond farewell

My time on
Greenkeeper

International is finished, to
my regret if not to
yours. Looking back over
the small mountain of
issues it has been my
pleasure to compile, I
grinned at one comment
which appeared in my first editorial, recall-
ing again the pithy words of an unidentified
but oh-so-observant wordsmith: “Writing a
column is easy,” he declared, “All you have
to do is sit at your typewriter until small
drops of blood appear on your forehead.”
Thirty five issues have come and gone,
some with more blood-letting than others,
and though occasions were legion when
“small drops of blood appeared on my
forehead” it seemed, more often than not,
that blood appeared on my fingertips as
well, for the equivalent of something
approaching two block-buster novels has
been thumped out on the keyboard of my
trusty old Apple Macintosh; far more than
any trifling ‘bloody’ column and, in truth,
much more fun.
Editorial guess-work is at best an imper-
fect science. In trying to discover where
readers’ loyalties may lie, I’ve found no
reliable way of discovering which elements
in this magazine you’ve secretly pinned to
read – or those you’d be pleased to see the
back of – while any ‘research’ I might have
undertaken (in the main, listening to every
greenkeeper I ever chanced to bump into
for more than a few moments) – served
merely to offer guide-lines to those features
you most enjoyed (without exception, the
controversial ones), whilst failing to throw
up any revolutionary or untired ideas.
Striving always to present all sides of the
greenkeeping conundrum, often at no small
cost to my firm (some would say
impatient) beliefs, in so doing I’ve held
true to the doctrine of John Stuart Mill
(1806-1873), whose words are writ large
above my computer screen: “We can never
be sure that the opinion we are endeavour-
ing to stifle is a false opinion; and if we are
sure, stilling it would be an evil still.”
My departure should not alter your
expectation of good things to come, for
a tantalising array of delectables will I am
sure continue to appear within these
comfortable old pages, pages that I have
come to regard as my own. There will be
words that please and words that infuriate,
words that inspire and words that are best
read with a sharp instrument close at hand.
If you think you are addressed in a con-
descending manner, or you suspect
pontification, grasp the matter firmly: your
letters page was never dull, make sure it
stays that way.
So farewell. Be of good cheer, trusted
friends – and be kind to your new editor.
This old editor cum columnnist cum
photographer cum copy boy isn’t about to
kick the bucket, he’s simply taking a well
earned blood transfusion. The drip is deep
in the artery, the bottle flowing with a
translucent amber fluid that contains
reputedly miraculous healing powers!
DAVID WHITE

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