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A quick reference guide

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A question of standards

Amongst the dictionary definitions of standards are a measure to which others (should) conform or against which others are judged and a required degree of excellence. Where therefore stands the profession of greenkeeping and indeed our Association in this regard? As a positive statement, the lead from your Board of Management and Headquarters staff is one aimed at professionalism in all we do and in those instances where we are found wanting every effort is made to remedy situations with a degree of urgency. That having been said I suspect that within the profession we are daily surrounded by much complacency and at times a lackadaisical approach.

A recent letter of complaint I received from a golf club concerned interviews conducted for a new head greenkeeper following advertisement in Greenkeeper International. The letter informed me of the discourteous manner in which two applicants invited to attend failed to advise that they were not going to attend the interview. Both had been given adequate time to advise the club of a change of heart. The letter went on to say that the two applicants had completely failed to attend the interview. Both had been given an offer and any known instances of abuse of the privilege should be reported to Headquarters in an effort to ensure that the failings of a few do not penalize the majority who recognise and implement their obligations in this regard.

One other area for consideration. Working out on the golf course in all sorts of weather means that workwear must be practical. That may be stating the obvious but again are standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management? I make no apologies for re-publishing the Code on this page for in this day and age it becomes ever more important that our members abide by a Code to which they pledge themselves on joining the Association. Look carefully at the ten points for the standards set terms of the first stipulation of our Code of Ethics. What Code of Ethics I hear many of you say for often there seems a lack of awareness that we operate under such a code? As a first consideration a member pledges himself to 'Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management'. I make no apologies therefore for republishing the Code on this page for in this day and age it becomes ever more important that our members abide by a Code to which they pledge themselves on joining the Association. Look carefully at the ten points for the standards set.

BIGGA Code of Ethics

This Code is established to promote and maintain the highest professional standards of service and conduct among the membership of BIGGA. Through adherence to this Code, members will gain for themselves recognition of individual integrity, responsibility and professionalism whilst enhancing generally the respect and good will for both their profession and Association.

1. As a member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, I accept this Code and pledge myself to:
   a. Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management.
   b. At all times carry out my duties and responsibilities in such a manner as to reflect favourably on the profession and Association.
   c. Seek to use every opportunity to broaden my professional expertise for self-improvement and the good of the profession.
   d. Follow, as a basic tenet, sound business and turf management principles in exercising the responsibilities of my post.
   e. Observe the highest standards of personal integrity in my relationship with fellow greenkeepers as well as other associated individuals and at all times, as far as I am able, assist my fellow greenkeepers as required of me.
   f. Pursue job advancement only where vacancies arise and not at the expense of a fellow greenkeeper and abstain from any action, comment or communication not founded on truth which is likely to harm the professional reputation or practice of another greenkeeper.
   g. Give endorsements of any kind only upon satisfactory personal experiences of the item identified.
   h. Refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or Profession.
   i. Support at every opportunity the Association, its Regions and Sections in seeking to improve the public understanding and recognition of the profession and golf course management.
   j. Report to the Association any evidence likely to be in violation of this Code of Ethics.

I think so. The inclusion in budgets of appropriate workwear for greenkeeping staff is important – workwear which will be smart and suitable for the tasks in hand whilst remaining essentially practical. Importantly it assists club members in their identification of the greenkeeping crew and helps create the right image. The 'any old thing will do' syndrome will not help the profession's cause and this is an area where, in many instances, an immediate improvement at low cost can be implemented.

What of personal presentation whether it be in terms of arguing a case at the green committee meeting or appearing at an event appropriately dressed. As an individual are you always setting the highest of standards? Now there is a view within the Association that BIGGA members project an image above their station and that ultimately this may not achieve job satisfaction or even the respect of others. It is not a view with which I agree but it is pertinent to the issues on which I have touched in this article. I know the way in which your Board wishes to take the Association in this regard in terms of setting the highest of standards and I believe that this is the prevalent view amongst the membership. What really is the alternative – an acceptance that greenkeepers should know their place with all the implications that will hold for wages, conditions of service, training and indeed job satisfaction?

And large since the advent of BIGGA in 1987, huge steps forward have been taken in the professional development of greenkeepers and consequently in the game's perception of the profession and the esteem in which the practitioners of greenkeeping are now held. Yet it will only take a minority to undo much of the achievement and here I have outlined some impressive trends. If golf as a game has a great deal to do to put its house in order, we as a profession and an Association must strive to ensure that we do not leave ourselves open to unnecessary criticism by an acceptance of standards that may have prevailed a decade ago but are outdated and unacceptable in 1995.
Greenkeepers under fire: from sub-machine guns

Greenkeepers at Ireland’s Balla club in Co Mayo have to take great care when going between the second green and third tee.

This is where the gardai are to be found blasting away with sub-machine guns at a bank of earth. They stop when people pass, but members are, understandably, still concerned.

The course has been used intermittently as an impromptu rifle range for at least 20 years, according to Dick Roche, a member of Balla town park committee, which owns the 18-hole course. But greater use has been made of the practice facility since an officer accidentally shot himself in the leg recently while preparing to go on patrol.

A gardai spokesperson said: “Obviously we can’t set up designated firing ranges all over the country. We’ve come to an arrangement with the golf course, and we do our best not to inconvenience golfers.”

Mr Roche admitted that members found the gunfire a bit unusual. “But we wouldn’t like to lose them. The gardai are paying rent.”

Clearing out

Sisis land clearers, all tractor operated, are now available for hire direct from the manufacturers, for short or extended periods. Rates start at £525 per week. The Macclesfield company has also informed us of a new distributor for the Republic of Ireland - Turfland Enterprise Ltd of Blackrock, Co Dublin.

FLYING DIVOTS

- Edd Hall, 25, has moved from the London Golf Club, where he was deputy head greenkeeper, to The Buckinghamshire to take over as head greenkeeper. “With his experience at the London Golf Club and his four-year degree in horticulture and soil science, he will be a valuable asset to our operation,” says Phillip Chiverton, who was promoted from head greenkeeper to course manager last July. Edd joins a team of 11 greenstaff at the 18-hole private members course which opened in September 1992. This workforce is topped up by six casual staff in the summer.

- Steven Hook has been promoted to first assistant after three years at the club.

- Graham Waller has been appointed head greenkeeper/course manager at Crockett’s Manor Golf and Country Club, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire. Set in over 200 acres, the 18-hole par 73 course and 9-hole par 3 academy course opened last June. “I previously worked at Crockett’s Manor as assistant greenkeeper but moved just after it opened to Oakridge Golf Club, Ansley, Warwickshire, where I was appointed head greenkeeper,” Graham tells us. He returned to Crockett’s and took over from Adrian Porter on March 27.

- The former head greenkeeper of North Manchester Golf Club, Fred Johnson, has died, aged 91.

- Derek Walder BEM, sportsground manager at the Richardson Evans Playing Fields in south London, was installed as the chairman of the Institute of Groundsmanship at its AGM in Edinburgh this month.

- Steve Mason beat 50 other applicants to get the head greenkeeper job at 9-hole Mount Pleasant Golf Course in Bedfordshire. The former deputy head greenkeeper at Welwyn Garden City is now building new tees to give the course 18 sets of tees.

NEWS

Never a club to do things by halves, Wisley has bought 14 Kawasaki Mule 2500s for carrying staff and equipment around the course. Two of the Mules, supplied by R Hunt of Stockbridge, are fitted with Amazon topdressers powered by hydraulic PTOs. These are pre-production versions of a hydraulic powerpack that Kawasaki plan to launch in the near future.
Our greenkeeper.

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HAYTER

Purpose built - Precision made
Golf course, superstore for Grimsby

A new driving range and golf superstore have opened in Grimsby. The accompanying golf course will follow in a few months. The Swingtime Golf Centre features a 27-bay floodlit driving range and a 9-hole, 2,400-yard course created to USGA specification.

"I was genuinely impressed with the quality, design and variety of the course," said Stephen Bennett, the PGA European Tour professional with an academy at the range.

MGC credits

Attendance at the 'Greens' part of 'Grounds and Greens' seminars at Lancashire County Cricket Ground on June 21 will earn three credits towards the BIGGA Master Greenkeeper Certificate. Speakers include George Brown (Turnberry), Derek Ganning (The Belfry), Stuart Stenhouse (Glenegles) and Anthony Davies (Prestbury).

FLYING DIVOTS

Turfgrass scientist Robert Laycock has set up a new agronomy consultancy. During his 20-year career working with turf, his clients and employers have included the STRI, Rolawn, English Heritage and the National Trust. Two years ago Ping makers Karsten (UK) Ltd took over his first consultancy, Turfgrass Science. Laycock will continue to work as a consultant for Karsten on its two golf courses at Gainsborough and to interpret the results of soil and tissue analysis for Karsten Turf Science, the analysis and fertiliser company run until recently by Laycock.

Langton Hall sold and could become 18-hole course

Langton Hall and its Hawtree-designed 9-hole golf course in Leicestershire have been sold to a private South African buyer. He paid close to the guide price of £1 million to the receivers, KPMG Peat Marwick. Harborough District Council have indicated that they would favourably consider a change of use for the conversion of the hall to a 21-bedroom hotel, the 9-hole course into an 18-hole course with a clubhouse, and a residential scheme. Nigel Talbot-Ponsonby, chairman of surveyors Hambers Leisur, says: "Langton Hall's overseas buyer is particularly interested in the residential element of the scheme. It could provide over 15 houses in a superb setting, and will be developed over the next few years."
Fascinating glimpse behind the scenes

A gap does exist between our profession in UK and Germany

In reply to the two letters in the February edition, under the heading 'Jerry Bashing': Firstly, in reply to Mr Walton at the Sennelager Golf Club. I am sorry if you got the impression we were, as you call it, "Jerry bashing." The point was more than anything aimed at the profession and the vastly different practices between the English and German greenkeeper, and was not particularly aimed at the race. Also, if you would like to visit your local Arbeitsamt (unemployment centre), you will see there is no such 'beruf' (occupation, trade, profession) as greenkeeper. In the event of becoming unemployed, which I hope you never do, you would be registered as a Landwirtschaft worker which is 'farmer or agriculturalist' or even Landschaftsgartner (landscape gardener). Let's hope this will all change as golf becomes more popular.

Secondly, I would like to reply to Mr Seve Schmitz. You're quite right, in any work you must earn respect from the people you work with and for. The former has been no problem, whether it be a German or Japanese worker. The problem we had was the golf course owner was an architect who would overrule many decisions made by Mr Bishop. Mr Bishop would explain why the owner’s suggestion would not work etc, only to be told: "Yes, I understand – now do it." To cut a long story short, the so-called fight you referred to took place in court which, due to Mr Bishop's professionalism, which should not have been questioned in the first place, we won.

We cannot understand why many German golf clubs seek British greenkeepers because "they are the best", only then to question decisions made by the head greenkeepers.

Lastly, I would like to thank the response from readers and would be grateful and curious to hear from anyone else living in Germany with regard to any aspects of the profession. We can gain much from these opinions, so it's about you all put pen to paper.

Elaine Holland

Elaine’s partner, Stuart Bishop, is now head greenkeeper of 27-hole Domane Niederreutin Golf Club, due to open in July.

Antony Bindley, East Midlands Section Secretary

A dog with a bone

With reference to two of your articles in the February edition of Greenkeeper International, I would, if I may, make certain observations. Firstly, Commissioner – the fight goes on" by Philip Shaw. I would most certainly agree that aeriation is of utmost importance to any played grass area summer and winter alike. (Committee members and agronomists please take note.) This to this end I would suggest that any golf club official reading this article actively encourage this procedure as often as is possible, it is in everyone’s interest. As for any greenkeeper that is having trouble persuading his or her club of this point, consider two possibilities. Firstly, are you sure that you have effectively "sold" the idea to your committee? (Some really do take a lot of persuading.) Be like a dog with a bone – don’t let go. I have had the same problem myself. Secondly, if you are certain there is nothing more you can do to persuade them to make the correct choice, leave! Yes, leave. Vote with your feet, go elsewhere, as that club does not deserve a conscientious qualified course manager. Take heart, it’s not all doom and gloom. Some clubs have woken up. The others think we do it for our own good, not theirs!

The second thing I’d like to comment on is Paul Bishop’s letter, "Bad and the good". Well, Paul, you are not on your own, (you may have noticed a reference to agronomists above). You state in your letter that you parted company from one golf club – be positive, be glad you are no longer there. I have met good guys but fortunately only one of the other kind. Having given much thought to this gentleman over the years, I cannot decide if it was his fault or not. Think about the following. A number of years ago I took over a golf club which, in the early 1980s, had run into problems and called for help. They were sent an agronomist who was a specialist in a different field of sports turf. So I would ask, who is at fault? The agronomist could have said he could not help for obvious reasons, but surely he should not have been sent in the first place.

Do we need agronomists? I, for one, would say at certain times; a problem can arise which you or your colleagues haven’t encountered before. Then a true golf course agronomist could be invaluable. Do not be discouraged by one or two unwitting people.

For any one who is interested, I am a qualified head greenkeeper of some 30 years, and in charge for over 20. I have been in Germany now eight months and have thus far not regretted the move. If anyone is thinking of the move out here, go for it, it is different to the UK but not as bad as some would have you believe.

Ray Jackson, head greenkeeper, Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club

Not an ideal world

In reply to my earlier letter regarding hard hats, Martin Pethrick (Letters, March) states that, rather than greenkeepers wearing hard hats, it would be better to educate golfers not to hit golf balls when greenkeepers are in the vicinity.

This, of course, is the ideal. Unfortunately it is not an ideal world. Many golfers, regrettably, hold greenkeepers in contempt, the attitude "if they will cut the greens when I want to play my ball they deserve to be hit" is, sadly, not uncommon. Given this attitude, and that greenkeepers frequently use highly dangerous machinery, I believe they should use both hard hats and education, and any other method of protection available, and that golf course management should support and encourage them to do so.

James Smith, Ollerton, Nottinghamshire
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When it is realised that annual meadowgrass is no longer just an annual plant, then it is possible to manage strategies to either eradicate it or live with it. The very nature of classifying plants such as Poa annua var annua and Poa annua var reptans is recognising that it is no longer just plain annual meadowgrass we are dealing with. Therefore it is necessary to manage the turf to the condition that prevails.

As an example, when new greens are sown out with fescue and bent grass, the first invading grass is Poa annua var annua, which is coarse in texture, shallow rooting and bunch type. Conversely, established greens will usually have a fine-leaved, low-growing, deeper-rooting grass, with stolons present which will most likely be the perennial biotype. Therefore, either for control or management of meadowgrass, it is necessary to determine what variety is present in your turf.

In my opinion, there are different classifications for the way meadowgrass is managed and all are applicable to individual situations. The three main categories of management are:

1: NEW GREENS
These are invariably built on free-draining sandy rootzones and are sown with predominantly fescue/bentgrass or, in more recent times, creeping bentgrass (Agrostis stolonifera) of American design. Whether it is fescue/bent or creeping bentgrass, the same challenges exist in preventing the meadowgrass from encroaching on new surfaces. If a good density of whatever grass is sown is established, then the encroachment of meadowgrass is reduced. However, in all fine turf surfaces the real challenge occurs when the height of cut is reduced to produce the speed on the greens that is invariably dictated by television coverage, and in turn good surfaces are subjected to undue early stress.

It is at times like this that the grass thins out, algae appears and the next step is meadowgrass. The 'traditional' way of encouraging the fescues and bent is through aeration and depletion of nutrients, because the meadowgrass are 'opportunist' grasses and always invade an over-fertile area, thus suggesting that poverty will eliminate meadowgrass. This 'theory' is probably the most misleading of all the management policies that have been discussed over the past few years.

Of course, once a perennial grass like fescue or bent has declined and meadowgrass has appeared, the battle is on for which one will survive. In our climate, once the fescue/bent has declined, the meadowgrass will tolerate the practical conditions, ie:

- Continuous close mowing on a regular basis;
- Frequent bad weather including cloudy days;
- Year-round play;
- Compacted soils.

Having said all this, the fescue/bent and indeed the pure creeping bentgrass greens can compete with annual meadowgrass once they are healthy enough to prevent the invasion of the annual strain from establishing. Therefore to prevent encroachment on new greens, the turf sown (ie fescue/bent or a combination of both or creeping bent) should be kept in a healthy condition with good fertility management. This does not mean over-fertilising which has been attributed to meadowgrass invasion in the past, but more keeping the desirable grasses healthy to fight off the 'weed' grasses.

The other main advantage of meadowgrass encroaching new greens is that it is invariably the Poa annua var annua species. This strain is possible to manage through cultural methods such as scarifying, verti-cutting and top-dressing to reduce its impact. Certain chemicals have an inhibiting effect on the annual strain of meadowgrass in this country but
there are no labels for such applications. The most effective way of controlling annual meadowgrass at this stage is through hand-weeding out the invasive plants as they appear. All other methods risk invasion and if the ultimate desire is to prevent meadowgrass, then cultural control such as hand-weeding is the most effective. This coupled with an actively growing healthy sward of fescue/bent or pure bent is the way to ensure meadowgrass-free greens. It is also important to remember that as greens are cut lower for the desire of faster greens, then the risks are increased proportionately for meadowgrass invasion.

2: LINKS/HEATHLAND GREENS
Traditionally these greens are associated with free-draining rootzones and sub-bases (ie sand on links, gravel outwash on heathland) and therefore fescue/bent management should be possible. However, the reality is not so simple and these types of courses go through the same problems of controlling annual meadowgrass. By their very nature and length of time established, the majority of these courses have meadowgrass in the greens. This meadowgrass is most likely the perennial biotype because it will have gone through many years of cultural management and it is surviving because of its ability to adapt to the surrounding environment.

The reasons why meadowgrass would populate a links/heathland green are many and there was a period in the 1970s when fertilising and watering became popular, thus increasing the opportunity for meadowgrass to establish in such swards. Realising the errors of our ways, the 1980s brought about policies of starvation and low water consumption with added aeration to eradicate the meadowgrass established in the 1970s. Perhaps this was too much too late because putting surfaces went through a bad period for smoothness and desirability. Great patience was required by golfers while the meadowgrass died and the fescues/bents were to fill in all the bare spaces created. This did not happen to any great degree of success and invariably meadowgrass colonised these areas again when some fertiliser was applied.

The reasons for the lack of success are many but in my opinion there are two factors that are rarely mentioned in this debate: a) height of cut and b) traffic.

The continual pressure to cut greens low for greater speed has stressed in particular the fescue plants to the point where the meadowgrass becomes competitive and take-over occurs. The high volume of traffic that is so evident on our courses today compared to 25 years ago has an effect also. This is particularly true about winter and spring golf when bent and fescues are susceptible to wear and meadowgrass can easily invade surfaces in early spring. It is known that meadowgrass can grow at soil temperatures of 45°F while bentgrass needs 55°F to grow actively. These wear patterns also extend through the season. How often have you seen a green in late winter/early spring with the centre, where all the wear is, dominated with sickly-looking meadowgrass and the outer edges or contours, where the holes would not be placed, having fine fescues and bent present?

Such conditions prevail on
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That works on contact
many courses and the dilemma facing the golf course manager is ‘Do I fight it or live with it?’ I think that decision should be based on the amount of meadowgrass present and the biotype present. There are many different strains of Poa annua var reptans and if the fine-leaved types are present in the greens it will be almost impossible to eradicate them through cultural methods, ie low fertility, low irrigation and continuous aeration. In such situations, meadowgrass can be stressed to the point of death and if this choice is taken then a few useful tips would be:

- Aerate greens through hollow-tining to remove any excess fibre built up by meadowgrass;
- Overseed the greens in these bare areas with a seed mix dominated by bentgrass but with fescue present;
- Have soil tests taken and fertilise to establish the new grasses with a balanced fertiliser containing nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and trace elements;
- Keep wear away from weak areas by using the edges of greens until establishment is complete;
- Keep height of cut at 1/4in minimum while recovery is taking place.

In managing the greens to reduce meadowgrass, I think it is important to maintain good density of the fine grasses so that they compete for existence. It is also important to carry out renovation programmes based on good greenkeeping principles of aeration, topdressing, overseeding, prevention of insect and disease damage and adequate fertility based on soil and/or tissue analysis. Even with all the above, if putting surfaces are desired during a renovation programme, the approach should be gradual reduction of meadowgrass over several years. Therefore an element of meadowgrass management is required while striving to get rid of the plant longterm.

3: PARKLAND GREENS

Traditionally shaped from the end of the fairway or built up with existing soil with no real subsurface drainage present. Invariably these greens retain water during periods of high rainfall and most times temporary greens are required for winter play. Without generalising too much, and everyone can make their own individual assessment, these types of greens will be dominated with the Poa species. As outlined in the first part of this article, there are two different types of meadowgrass. Old parkland courses will be populated by the perennial biotype of meadowgrass which, as discussed earlier, can be very difficult to eradicate.

These fine-leaved meadowgrasses when managed properly can produce a good, firm, fast putting surface. They are rarely in 100% complete dominance and often will have bentgrass mixed through the sward. The combination of these species can be managed to provide the necessary quality of surface desired. Control of meadowgrass on parkland greens would follow the same guidelines as that on the links/heathland condition described above. The meadowgrass is very competitive in parkland greens because of the water-retentive qualities of soil-based greens. The amount of meadowgrass that tends to be around a parkland course other than on greens is vast, therefore the seed is always blowing and populating fertile areas where other grass species fail.

It is possible to try to reduce meadowgrass on heavy parkland greens but to try and manage for complete eradication can be very challenging to say the least. I feel it is not sufficient to state that all meadowgrass should be eradicated no matter what the individual situations are and fescue/bent should be colonised. To achieve this on parkland courses where the fine-leaved meadowgrass is dominating is impossible culturally and the only way would be spraying out with a total weed killer and resowing with fescue/bent.

It is important to state that many course managers throughout Great Britain and Ireland manage their greens with meadowgrass present and produce excellent putting surfaces. The very thought of stressing that meadowgrass to the point of death with the obvious resulting bare and bumpy greens would not be attractive, in my opinion, to either the course manager or their memberships. It has been well documented over many years why this option of managing meadowgrass to form part of the green’s surface should not be followed and I will not go over it again. However, I will discuss methods of management that favour fine-leaved meadowgrass forming part of the putting surface on greens.

In managing meadowgrass, like any other grass, root structure is essential and therefore aeration is central to any management programme. The primary problem with meadowgrass is its ability to produce thatch and if this is not controlled, problems will always occur, from shallow rooting to excess disease like fusarium and rapid drying out during drought conditions. To have any success with meadowgrass management, thatch must be controlled either through aggressive hollow-tining if it’s present and/or aggressive scarifying/verit-cutting/grooming to help prevent its build-up. Aeration in the form of deep slit-tining and verti-draining is important in those soils that have hard pans or have water restrictions down to 300mm in the soil profiles. Unfortunately, on those greens that have deeper drainage problems it would be necessary to rebuild to modern drainage and sand-based rootzones to ensure year-round playability.

OTHER KEY AREAS IN MANAGING MEADOWGRASS ON PARKLAND GREENS

Fertility Proper applications of fertiliser to sustain growth and prevent die back of the plant. If the plant weakens due to poor fertility, it will invariably get anthracnose disease which hastens the decline of the plant. Base fertilisations on soil analysis but a little phosphorous is important in a spring feed and nitrogen and potassium can be utilised throughout the season to sustain growth. I am convinced of using seaweed liquid and meal type products for their conditioning of the soil and their benefits to root structure. Also, they can be used year-round to prevent meadowgrass from dying off and therefore good surfaces can be prepared early in the growing season. This is not overfertilisation but rather spoon-feeding the grass to achieve the desired results without any harmful side effects.

Aeration This is discussed above and I would stress the importance of carrying out the correct type of aeration for your individual situation, ie there is not much point slit-tining and verti-draining if 2ins of thatch must be reduced – use hollow-tining.

Overseeding Even when managing meadowgrass, it is important to overseed with the fescues and bent to encourage these species to establish. In meadowgrass dominated greens, I see greater success with bent dominated seed mixes rather than fescue.

Irrigation Use only as determined by the weather conditions. Meadowgrass does not have to be over-watered, but a little when the plant is drying out will keep it alive.

In conclusion, each golf course is individual and I do not intend this article to challenge anybody’s personal management policies. I hope I have put across that there are alternative methods of management and indeed I have only scratched the surface, but hopefully this will generate discussion which ultimately leads to solutions.

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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL April 1995
It's nearly 35 years since the first SISIS Rotorake with contra-rotating reel was patented and "took the ache out of raking".

SISIS have come a long way since then and now have a range of eleven scarifiers for both fine and outfield turf - independently powered or tractor drawn. The new Fibagroom sweeps and collects as well.
For greenkeeper, read entertainer

"We actually class ourselves as entertainers, rather than greenkeepers," says Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre's Ian Holoran. "We entertain 80,000 people a year, which isn't bad going."

His employers don't call him a greenkeeper either. His official job title is foreman, although his job description would apply to most course managers and head greenkeepers. And his team of three permanent staff are labelled 'craftsmen/gardeners', although they are all qualified in greenkeeping and horticulture, and all have spraying certificates.

This is just one of the differences I discovered during my visit to this municipal course.

Many golfers view municipal courses as "scruffy, badly-maintained eyesores," according to BBC Golf. But, as the magazine goes on to point out, many of Britain's public courses offer "challenging golf, great scenery, good facilities and deliciously low green fees".

Middlesbrough Municipal is one of these. Opened in 1978 on farmland three miles from the town centre, it is among BBC Golf's list of the 18 finest public courses in the country.

Writer Mike Cable says it has been designed to cope efficiently with heavy traffic. "The
front nine holes are wide open, with broad fairways and big greens to help keep play moving on steadily, while the back nine holes are much more of a challenge, requiring shots into and across the prevailing wind and over becks."

**Different**

Ian, 39, says working on a municipal course is no worse or better than working on a private course, it’s just different. In some ways the municipal course can teach top private clubs a thing or two, especially when it comes to health and safety, training and looking after staff. For example, Ian has monthly meetings regarding health and safety. He recently went to one to discuss the dangers of needlestick injury. Many greenkeepers should be aware of the dangers of catching Hepatitis B and C and HIV from hypodermic needles discarded in woods and copes. They also have verbal/physical abuse forms to fill in if club members have a go at them. They simply fill in the pink form and the club committee deal with the member. “They only do it once. Troublesome members are slung out,” says Ian, chairman of BIGGA’s Northern Region. They also have an impressive internal training programme. Among the courses on offer through Middlesbrough Borough Council are: time management, stress awareness, effective report writing, dealing with aggression, skills in communication, computer literacy, fire extinguishers, Health and Safety at Work Act, manual handling, identifying hazards, preparing for retirement and first aid. First-aid training is especially important because about 40% of the people playing the John Hamilton-Stutt course are retired.

This high standard of training and attention to detail has helped Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre achieve registration under BS5750, a coveted quality assurance standard. It means the golf course promises to deliver a certain standard of service, ie, that on any given day a certain number of staff will be on site and that at least one of them will be qualified in first-aid, that the clubhouse will be open for specified hours (8am-11.30pm), that the greens will be cut by a certain time (10.30am), that bunkers will be raked three or four times a week, and members will be told in advance that the course will be sprayed with the right chemicals if the weather conditions prevail. In other words, there has to be good communication with the customers. If members have a problem or a question, they fill in a ‘feedback card’ and Ian has to have a written answer back to them within seven working days. The questions and answers are also displayed on a noticeboard in the clubhouse.

“It’s worth everyone going for BS5750 registration because it means you’re accepting a minimum standard,” says Ian. “You have to set a standard you can achieve rather than a vague wish. You have to set out everything, for example your criteria for closing the course.” (See panel on Page 19)

**Budgeting**

Another major difference between Middlesbrough Municipal and private courses is the budgeting system. Everything – yes, everything – has a price. Moving the tee markers 156 times a year costs £2,987 and transplanting 681 trees took 93.3 hours and cost £536 in labour.

“You soon get used to this way of doing things,” says Ian. “And when you come to tender for your own job every three years you know exactly how much you spend on materials, machinery and labour.”

This system came into operation in 1989 with the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CTT). Ian, who has been in the greenkeeping and horticulture business for 22 years and started at the municipal golf course in 1986 as first assistant, is now employed by the Direct Service Organisation, which is contracted by the Client Section (the paymasters) who are answerable to the local council.

This change not only had a big impact on the organisation and admin of the greenstaff but also their maintenance practices.

“One thing Compulsory Competitive Tendering has done is focus councillors to look at the products being used and to question – especially with chemicals – whether it’s the right thing to use, if it’s environmentally friendly, if it’s safe for the user and the customer and what are its effects? They also look at machinery and say ‘You don’t need two greens machines, one will do – it will just take you that little bit longer to do the job. Once you’ve cut all 18 greens you’ve finished with the machine and it’s stood there doing nothing most of the day.”

After peering inside what many greenkeepers would call a “lack of” equipment shed, I saw for myself how much Ian had been forced to streamline his machinery. There was a Jacobsen Greens King, a Ransomes GT, a Ransomes multi-mower, a Hydromain with topdresser and other accessories, an International tractor, a trailer and two sets of gang mowers.

“It’s not a lot, but it’s all we need,” said Ian dismissively. “We have a better back-up service than most golf courses. We can borrow equipment from the parks department. They have nine tractors and six sets of gang mowers.”

With three permanent staff, three extra summer workers and this arsenal, Ian has to counteract the effect of more than 80,000 pairs of feet trampling around the 6,333-yard par 71 course. Demand is high because the course is within a five iron of two housing estates, within a drive of another, and many
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18 GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL April 1995  
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of the big local employers, including British Steel and ICI, have been creating more 'leisure time' for the local workforce. Also, as BBC Golf said, the green fees are "deliriously low". Rounds cost £7.75 weekdays and £9.75 at weekends. Season ticket charges are £240 for adults, £160 for senior citizens and £95 for juniors.

Clay soil
Middlesbrough Municipal doesn't even have the luxury of sand greens to cope with this traffic. The 18 greens are based on clay soil and were built in the early '70s when 30,000 rounds a year seemed a lot.

No wonder the greens are 100% annual meadowgrass, while the tees, fairways and rough are ryegrass.

Ian's maintenance programme is similar to that used by many parkland course managers. He aims to fertilise the greens at the end of April — the exact timing is dependent on a rise in soil temperature. His staff will hollow-tine, followed by a fairly heavy topdressing with two tons per green brushed in.

Ian would like to have fast greens but it's not possible. He never cuts lower than 3/16ths and for some of the summer he raises the height of cut. "When we get more play, usually in and around British Open time, we raise the height of cut to 1/4 to protect the greens and we also feed three weeks prior to the championship."

During the 1989 Ryder Cup they raised the height of cut to 5/16ths to save the greens from the sudden upsurge in demand from people who "weren't really golfers," Ian said, choosing his words very carefully.

The greens are cut daily during the growing season and scarified once a week during the summer to keep the speed up and to maintain growth through the whole year.

The holes are changed at least three times a week during the winter and four or five times a week during the summer.

They are played all year except when it's frosty, but as an insurance the winter greens are maintained all year, treating them the same as tees by cutting them at 1/4, topdressing them three times a year, fertilising them frequently and spiking regularly.

As at most golf clubs, a tee extension programme is in operation to cope with the increased levels of play. But with only three winter staff and a lot of trees to tidy up in the winter, only one or two new tees are constructed each year, using turf from the golf centre's own 2,000sq m turf nursery. "With such a small staff we have to set ourselves targets we know we can achieve."

New tees are built to the same spec as the old ones, so they are not out of character with the rest of the course. Ian admits not all his colleagues agree with him over this, but he replies: "We can't change 165 acres into a championship course, we've got to manage the course as it is."

This goes for the greens, too. "If we made one sand green there would not be the consistent playing surface of the other 17. Yes, it would be nice to have sand-based greens but as someone else said, 'You can't grow grass in a desert'. So you need the water, and in years to come water will be more scarce, and you need to feed them more, so the maintenance will be more costly."

Fairways
Fairways are cut once a week in the growing season at 1/4in. "It usually takes two days to get round," says Ian. The rough, which has been likened to a cricket outfield, is also cut once a week to keep it down to a ball-finding line. That takes one man about four hours.

As well as maintaining the 18-hole parkland course, the Middlesbrough greensstaff also look after a driving range and two spring meadows.

Nature Conser-

vancy, who make two visits a year, advise them on the maintenace of these meadows. Ian also takes advice from British Seed Houses and the Sports Turf Research Institute.

One of the biggest problems with the course is the drainage. Some localised drainage has been installed in the worst areas, and more work is planned but there isn't the budget to do the whole course. Regular spiking of the fairways, hiring a Verti-drain once a year (in the spring), and laying pathways is the answer in the meantime.

"We believe that the expected improvements will further enhance the facilities," says golf centre manager Maurice Gormley.

The trouble is, if they make it more appealing, they will attract even more golfers. Being busy from dawn to dusk most days of the year should be enough for any course — and certainly for any greenkeeper, foreman, entertainer or whatever he's called.
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Lovely atmosphere, no great hassle... and according to one league table, the best nine hole course in the world. Bob Gee of Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club explains why he thinks he's got the best job in greenkeeping.

The only way we'll leave is by being carried out in a box

These men admit they've got the easiest job in greenkeeping. There are only two of them maintaining one of the world's top 100 courses, but they wouldn't swap it for any other position. They wouldn't swap it for a course with an irrigation system, or one with USGA-spec greens.

Bob Gee, 52, has been the head greenkeeper at the Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club, eight miles north-east of Newmarket, for 36 years and Martin Law, 46, has been assisting him for 27 years. They both joined the club from school and plan to stay there for the rest of their working lives, just as the previous team of Harry Rutter and Claude Rutherford did.

"No one leaves, they carry you out in a box. No one wants to leave, it's got a lovely atmosphere and there's no great hassle," says Bob, summing up the appeal of the club, which was founded in 1893, three years after the course came into existence.

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as soon as you drive up and find the course virtually empty, yet there is a notice on the first tee stating 'No three or four balls permitted'.

Royal Worlington is the only nine-hole course in Golf World magazine's top 100 courses, and it has been described by The New Yorker magazine as "far and away the best nine-hole course in the world". Much of its prominence is due to the fact that it is home of the Cambridge University golf team whose ranks have been filled with such influential characters as Bernard Darwin, who used to refer to it as "the sacred nine", Harry Colt, Henry Longhurst and Donald Steel.

Money alone will not buy membership of this exclusive club. You have to know someone or be a Cambridge Blue to get in. This has led to accusations of it being snobby, but we saw no evidence of this during our visit to the club. The atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly and one member bought a round of drinks for the greensman and me.

The 102-year-old club has just 350 members and many of these only play once or twice a year. One member was playing his first round there for 30 years. This is one reason why Bob and Martin think they have it easy – Royal Worlington must be one of the few courses in the country that is under-played. Another reason why they are lucky is that the club was built on a superb parcel of land. It's in the middle of Suffolk, 55 miles from the sea, but the soil is a sandy loam that many links courses would love to own. "It's a fluke of nature. It's perfect for a golf course but not much good for anything else," says Bob.

The original plan in 1890 was to build 18 holes, but some of the acreage was rather marshy, so on the advice of Captain AM Ross, an experienced local golfer, the founders of the club chose to lay out nine holes on the sandy soil at the southern end of the plot and let it go at that. Captain Ross is credited with designing the original nine holes on the 60-acre site. A few changes were made in 1906 by an up-and-coming architect called Harry Colt. Over the last 89 years, no alterations of any consequence have been made.

Members appreciate that. In a fast-changing word it is a refreshing constant. As you drive down the road to the clubhouse, an old brick farmhouse painted cream, it is like entering a time warp.

One could just as easily have been meeting Harry and Claude as Bob and Martin. In fact, I would have liked to have talked to Harry who, during his long reign, set the standard of maintenance for the course. Rutter's secret was a minimum of watering, no fertiliser, and plenty of common sense.

Rutter had some unconventional but effective means of taking care of the course. One was the use of a squareboard rake, an implement whose head is a thin slab of wood through which nails have been driven so that their points protrude. Each March, employing these rude rakes, he tore the famous greens to pieces. A fortnight later, fresh young fescue grass of the finest texture would begin to establish itself. The rake may have gone but many of Rutter's principles are still being followed today.

Original greens

As far as anyone knows, the greens are those laid out by Ross or Colt, and have no drainage system. Yet they drain superbly. One minute they could be flooded, half an hour later they will be dry. "It's nothing we do, it's nature," says Bob appreciatively. He has hollow-cored them once and verti-drained them twice in the last ten years. But they are spiked a lot.

The greens are one of the main reasons why people remember this course. They have some of the most wicked contours in the world. Donald Steel describes the green on the famous par 3 5th as being shaped like a vaulting horse. The narrow green falls away abruptly on both sides – on the right, to a stream and, on the left, to a basin of thatchy rough 20ft below the green. There are no bunkers on this 170-yard hole. None are needed. From either side it takes a very deft recovery to stop the ball on the putting surface and prevent it from slipping down the slope on the other side. Tales of good golfers "ping-ponging" their way to an 11 are common.

The greens are not just renowned for their undulations, they are also famed for their speed. They are always fast (measuring 10-11ft most days on the stimpmeter) and they are in superb condition.

They do not always look green but Bob says: "Colour is secondary. Greens should be firm and fast. We're growing a putting surface, not a crop. It doesn't matter how it looks as long as it puts well."

The sward is 45% fescue, 45% bent and 10% rubbish (Yorkshire fescue and annual meadowgrass). Last year they were overseeded for the first time in 100 years. Bob chose Barenbrug's Bar 1 mixture containing Baruno/Bargreen chewings fescue and Heriot/Bardot browntop bent.

The greens are hand-watered when necessary. There is no irrigation system. Bob believes this is an advantage: "We don't need it. It's ruined more greens than anything. Not through the greenkeeper's fault, through members. They say, 'We've paid all that money for that expensive watering system – turn it on', whether the greens need it or not. 'They're looking a bit dry, put the water on'."

Bob says it is much easier to

One of the toughest greens in golf: the 5th at Royal Worlington

Greenkeeper International April 1995

24
ruin a good green than to make a bad green good. And the easiest way to ruin a green is by overwatering it and overfeeding it. At Royal Worlington they will never overwater their putting surfaces. "We can't. No one's going to stand there with a hosepipe for too long at 6 in the morning. Too little is always better than too much."

Hand-watering also means they can see which areas need it most.

Neither Bob nor Martin have had any formal greenkeeper training. They use the techniques they picked up from their predecessors. Bob was taught by Claude Rutherford, the head greenkeeper for 20 years, who was, before that, Harry Rutter's assistant for many, many more years. The only thing that has really changed during Bob's 36 years at the club is the machinery that's used.

When he came as a boy he used one of the original Ransomes Overgreen walk-behind triples; now he uses a Jacobsen Greens King Mk4 "because members like the greens cut before they play or on a Sunday and there's no way I'm getting up at 4am."

They are cut every day in summer (never lower than 3/16ths and never striped) and once a week in winter (1/4in).

There are no temporary greens and you get the feeling 'temporaries' are as alien a concept at Worlington as the bunkers were as obsolete as the gutta-percha golf ball. But Bob, without meaning to sound arrogant, "because the weather is not that bad. If you look after the greens in the summer, you will not need temporary greens in the winter."

The course only closes if there is snow or if they've had rain on top of frozen greens and the top 1/4in thaws. "If we close the course, they know it's for the good of the course and we're not just being Bolshe." They no longer mix their own topdressing, they buy it in. But since they've been doing this, they've had dry putter problems. They combat this they are using a wetting agent twice a year on advice from the STRI who have been making annual visits for the last six or seven years.

Four times a year (April, May, June, July) they mix a little sulphate of ammonia, potash and iron with the topdressing.

No trolley ban

Trolleys are allowed all year.

"Trolleys are banned from 9am on January 1 to 9.01am on January 1," jokes Bob. "It's a con, they tell people to buy wide-wheeled trolleys and then as soon as there's an ounce of rain they say you can't use them on the course. That's ridiculous. There's as much weight on the bottom of the trolley as there is on the bottom of your feet. You can use markers. But there are a lot of old people who can't play golf without trolleys. There are no trolley bans here," adds Bob, who admitted he uses a narrow-wheeled trolley to cart the hole-cutter around while changing the holes.

Another reason Bob feels lucky is that he has a superb chairman of green. Derek Rains has been in his post for five years and often lends a hand on the course. "He goes out on the tractor and pulls a dragmat across the greens. But he's not very good with a shovel," says Bob with a smile. One of his farm workers, Brian Hobbs, helps out on the course too, bringing a JCB with him to construct tees.

New tees are one of the few signs of change at the course. While other courses move bunkers to take account of technological advances in the game, many bunkers at Worlington lie in wait in case anyone turns up with a gutta-percha golf ball. But Bob was quick to point out that not all the bunkers were as obsolete as they appear. The bunker by the putting green, which you're not allowed to practise out of, comes into play if they swap the 9th green and the putting green.

One of the most famous throwbacks to the olden days is the small hole in the wall of the club-house lounge. That's the bar! Although they don't like change, one change is imminent for Bob - his first contract of employment is being drawn up.

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Jacobsen/Textron, the American conglomerate worth approximately £6billion, is expanding its European operations with the help of a man who would never grab the limelight.

As managing director of Jacobsen E-Z-Go UK Ltd, he is a marketer who puts sales promotion and advertising way down his list of priorities and whose image is as far removed from Saatchi and Saatchi as you can get.

Yet René Orban took Jacobsen/Textron successfully to Australia, developed the Irish market and has seen a 100% increase in UK sales since he took over six years ago. Textron has now given him their E-Z-Go golf car range for the UK and made Textron Finance Corporation (TFC) available for the first time outside the US under René’s control. He must be doing something right! I set out to discover the secret of his success.

In 1989, after 30 years in the business with Kubota, Yanmar and Massey Ferguson, René was head-hunted by Jacobsen/Textron to manage its operations in the UK. Formerly under the control of Orag, the company’s European distributor, Jacobsen had gained a bad reputation for supplying spare parts and suffered from lack of financial support. The parent company created a UK subsidiary at King’s Lynn, bypassing the European operation and pumped money into the enterprise, airfreighting parts directly from the US. By the time René took over, the Jacobsen name had regained a place in the UK golf market, but there was a desperate need to consolidate.

“My immediate task was to regain credibility by creating a professional operation and managing the UK sales. Up until 1989, sales had been haphazard, with a mixture of direct selling from the main office and indirect selling through dealers.”

René created an exclusive dealer network of hand-picked individuals and cut out direct sales altogether. Research showed that UK customers liked local access to products and relied on a strong personal rapport. Up until this point, René admits that the reputation of Jacobsen dealers in the UK had...
been poor. "They came bottom of the list, both for supply and service," he said.

The dealers immediately became "stocking dealers", receiving new machines on the premises, with regular training from Jacobsen UK. René's four business managers (deliberately not called sales managers), were appointed primarily to support their dealers and develop new business. René insists that Jacobsen dealers are not customers. "There is only one customer - the customer," he says. "Without wanting to sound too American, we look on all our dealers as business partners."

By 1990, as the business moved to new premises in Kettering and a full-scale distribution centre was set up, dealers could expect the list, both for supply and service, to new premises in Kettering and regular training on preventative maintenance, fitting and operation, specifically trained demonstrators ready to go anywhere in the country and support from a business managers, when approaching major clients. New product information was provided by Turf Talk, the company newsletter, which has grown from a four-page hand-out to a mini magazine.

This year has seen the launch of the customer service log book: building on the success of the customer satisfaction survey. It's a form which evaluates every aspect of the customer's experience with Jacobsen from the "sales person's understanding of his needs" to the "overall rating of the product". All forms are fed into the computer with the results going back to the US for analysis before returning to the UK and René, the dealer and business manager. This vital information system which has been operating for over two years relies heavily on customer participation. Not everyone likes filling in forms, but the incentive - having bought your machine - is a free set of the product. All forms are fed into the computer with the results going back to the US for analysis before returning to the UK and René, the dealer and business manager.

Astonishingly, the dealer/business partner, a great which sets him apart.

"It's important to exchange new ideas and concepts to our products."

René will say that the fundamentals of business are the same, "A professional approach, creating the confidence to buy", perhaps his secret lies in his personal system, evolved over the years which employs in his words, "The best use of our people resources and applying these to our products."

Considering the fierce possessesiveness displayed towards his staff, the staunch back-up of his dealers/business partners, the commitment to training both dealers/business partners, the Jacobsen/UBG - René was one of the first to join the Golden Key Circle and the brains behind the Ecology Booklet out next month - perhaps it is the value and recognition of people which sets him apart.

As an employee or a Jacobsen dealer/business partner, a great deal will be expected of you in return for first-class support. As a customer, you can rest assured, for as the man says, "Selling is the ability to deliver."
Job Shop is a new service provided by Greenkeeper International which will give greenkeepers:

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Around the Green
Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

CLEVELAND

There was a good attendance for our February meeting at Darlington GC. Gerald Brady, regional manager for Rhone-Poulenc Environmental Products, talked about the new Guardian grass seed coating which prevents damping off and fusarium and the new selective weedkiller Spearhead.

Our membership is now 97. Congratulations, chaps! I hope to see many of you at Weareside GC on April 27 when our Spring Tournament gets under way at 1.30pm. Bring a friend or guest partner, it's a great opportunity to meet other greenkeepers and have a chat. Our two golf organisations are Bob Lawton and Chris Fiddel.

Saltburn GC has promoted Alan Reed to first assistant.

BRUCE BURNELL

EAST SCOTLAND

It is with regret that after 17 years as secretary of the east section, I have to announce the resignation of Willie Blair. Willie has been a stalwart member of both SIGGA and BIGGA, giving both his maximum support and time.

I have extra reason to be sorry as without Willie's guidance I would not have had a greenkeeper. Through the past few years Willie has not had it easy, but has always had a smile and willingness to help other members. I am sure I speak for nearly all members who came into contact with him when I say I will miss the shout of "Til have a vodka, lime and soda." Thanks for all the work, Willie, and please don't be a stranger.

However, BIGGA needs to move on, so a big welcome to Robert Hogarth, our new man at the helm. Please bear with us until we get things sorted out and normal service will be resumed.

PETER ORMISTON, Chairman

...Greenkeepers on the move in east Scotland: Stevie Dixon — Newbattle GC to Kingsknowe GC; Graham Hobbs — Torphin Hill GC to Bathgate GC; Stuart Cruikshanks — Bathgate GC to Deer Park GC; Billy Hudson moves from first assistant to head man at Newbattle GC; Rory Campbell, assistant at Muirfield, takes over as head man at Torphin Hill GC; and Michael Osborne moves from Newbattle GC to Murryfield GC as an assistant.

Dates for your diary: The spring outing at the Glen GC on Wednesday April 12 will soon be upon us. So let's see a big turnout as this is the second qualifier for the Hayter tournament. Another skittles night has been arranged for you at Right Wing, Willowbrae Road on Friday April 28. I hope to see some new faces at this one. Andy Hastie, course manager at Dalmahoy GC, would like some volunteers for bunker raking duties during the Scottish PGA Championships at Dalmahoy on May 17-21. Anyone interested should contact me on 0721 722832.

ROBERT HOGARTH

EAST OF ENGLAND

As I sit here trying to think of something to write to all of you East of England section members (quite a difficult task because I do not get any information regarding appointments, retirements or any other gossip sent to me), it crossed my mind that our section chairman, David Walden (ICI Greenkeeper of the Year), was probably mid-air somewhere over the Atlantic on his way to the Superintendents' Show in San Fransico (lucky blighter). Maybe our section might find it easier to nominate someone for the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year award in 1996. Having seen what David has accomplished, we should be inundated with head greenkeepers proposing to follow in David's footsteps.

A new golf fixture which will take place this year is a match with our neighbours, East Midlands. The first match will take place on their turf. The date and time are to be confirmed.

Membership in our section seems to have taken off. In the last month I have had ten applications to process. This brings us close to 100 members and can only be good for the section and BIGGA. It is especially good to note that Kenwick Park have had five members join, so see if you others can get fellow greenkeepers also to join.

New members that I would like to welcome to our section are: Peter Tubey, Mason Appleby, Robert Vickers, Geoffrey Henderson and Stephen Dobbs of Kenwick Park GC, David Sankey of Grimsby GC, James North of Sandills GC, David Williams of Southwell GC, Ian Harvey, Mark Shaw, Andrew Davies, Paul Dawson, Richard Erratt, Craig Tildmarsh, S Palethorpe, Ian Hughes, Paul Sewell and Mark Kite.

Thanks go to Scottish Grass Machinery for presenting by Roy Auld.

ROBERT HOGARTH

MIDLANDS

When I went up to Harrogate for BTME, it snowed heavily, and I thought it was great — as long as it did not come south. Having had so much rain in February, I was beginning to wish for 4ins of snow, to give the greens a break from the constant golf! Mind you, I have heard those two favourite comments over the last few weeks: "Why isn't the course open, we've had no rain?" and "The course should be closed, it's far too wet!"

I hope Midland Section members have entered the Zeneca Premier Greenkeeper Award, if not, ring HQ for details.

I would like to welcome all our new members, including: Roland Broadley, Andrew Minshill, Scott Whale, Ian Turley, Kevin Treagartha, Craig Roberts, Robert Rowson, Ray Harvey, Mark Shaw, Andrew Davies, Paul Dawson, Richard Erratt, Craig Tildmarsh, S Palethorpe, Ian Hughes, Paul Sewell and Mark Kite.

New trade association members are: Nick Bennett, George Attwood-Harris and Ivan Toon.

If anybody did not receive a fixture list and entry sheet, contact Sue or me, and we will send you copies in the post.

I hear Adrian Porter is moving back to Leicestershire to a new job from Crockett's Manor Golf Club. We wish him well.

Finally, an interesting new technique is being tried by Sean McDade of Harborne Golf Club. Sean is learning ballroom dancing in an effort to cut down on compaction on the greens when changing holes etc. I will keep in touch with Sean and let you know if the technique is working. Seriously, though, good luck with this new hobby.

KIM BLAKE

NORTH SCOTLAND

I wish I had kept my big mouth shut about the weather! Yes, it has still been very mild, but we have had more rain in the north this winter than I can ever remember, especially in the last few weeks. Even here at Tain on sand we have had to open up and rebuild drains long forgotten as they never had to do much. I fear for greenkeepers on inland clay-based courses. Let's hope for a good early spring.

New memberships are beginning to roll in now; here are the latest: Alastair Ross, Royal Dornoch; George Atiken, Peterculter; James Morrison from Turriff who actually works on a course in the Arabian Gulf; and Roderick Ogilvie, the proprietor of Broughty Links.

Finally, you will all be receiving a fixture card of golf events and seminars in our region. This is with the help of Howard Storey and John Deere Limited. Many thanks to them.

Anything of interest please contact me on 0733 260297.

GRAEME MACDONALD
claim a longer hole in one, I wonder.

In response to repeated requests for a section dinner/disco, the committee in the guise of Hugh Maclatchie and Dougal Duguid have arranged it for Friday November 24 1995 at the Westhill Hotel near Aberdeen. The cost will be £12 per head and a good deal for any one wishing to stay over is bed and breakfast for £20 per head. Tickets go on sale at the spring outing at Newmacher next month. This may seem early but we need to know if there is a demand for this night as if we have to cancel, the earlier we do it the less it will cost the section. If you want to go, you can book your ticket in May and pay sometime over the summer, at least we will have an idea about the numbers early on.

Hopefully this will become an annual event, it is up to you. We are currently looking into the possibility of holding our AGM in the afternoon of the 24th at Westhill Golf Club, with golf before, details to follow.

Finally, have you sold your 200 Club ticket yet? Remember, the first draw is next month and all tickets have to be sold prior to that. This is the major fundraiser for the section with proceeds used to keep the costs of outings down and subsidising the dinner/disco.

IAIN MACLEOD

SURREY

Congratulations go to Chris Keen upon his appointment as course manager at Reigate Hill GC, to Douglas Brand, formerly of Brandytree GC in Essex, upon his appointment as course manager at Betchworth Park GC and to James Watson who is moving from Wisley GC to take up the head greenkeeper position at Clandon Regis.

Hopefully by now you will have received a full list of events for the coming season. I hope they will be well supported. If by any chance you have not received a fixture list, please contact Derek Walder on 01737 246088.

If you wish to enter the Huxley Bowl this year, please return slips as soon as possible so that the competition can get under way, thus avoiding finishing late in the year.

Forcoming dates: May 4 – Spring Tournament and Hayter qualifier, Blackmoor GC; June 6 – The Cresta Cup at Kingswood Golf & Country Club; June 21 – South turf Exhibition, Motspur Park. Those of you interested in the dinner-dance at Reigate Manor Hotel will be pleased to hear that it has been booked again for November after last year’s success.

DAVID GIBBS

WEST SCOTLAND

Spring is upon us with the sun shining and grass growing non-stop. Who’s kidding who? Well, you never know, maybe next year.

The recent games night arranged at the Claremont Bowling Club once again proved a successful evening. The winners on the night were D Mowatt (once again!) and S Taylor, with runners-up S Ballantyne and S McGeechay. Our thanks for this good night go to John Scott (Nairn Brown) who organised everything including those tasty pies. Thanks also go to the Claremont members for allowing us the use of their club.

The recent trip organised to St Andrews proved very successful although the golf museum closure was somewhat disappointing. A good day was had by all, with a break away from the constant rainfall on this side of the country. Our thanks go to tour guides Gordon Moir, Eddie Adams and Mark Brunton. Thirty-five people turned up for the event, it just goes to show people are interested in what’s happening elsewhere.

The spring outing has been arranged for April 25 at Lanark GC. This was at short notice, so thanks indeed to Lanark and their head greenkeeper for responding so well.

On a sad note, Tommy Young of Kilmalcolm passed away in December. Tommy was head greenkeeper there for ten years, and a past chairman of the West Section. He was an honorary member at the club and a past champion in 1949 and 1959. Our thoughts are with his family.

Finally, I’d like to wish Alistair Connell of Cawder GC every success in his new position at Collingtree Park. Alistair has proved a valuable member of the section over a long time and he will be greatly missed, not for his foot-ball skills, I might add.

If anybody has any information to pass on, then please call me on 041 9425554.

STUART TAYLOR

BUCKS, BERKS & OXON

I hope, by the time this report is printed, the rain has stopped and the golf courses are dry enough to put machinery on.

Once again the section has been fairly quiet with very little news to report. This gives me the opportunity to thank several active members of the committee who recently resigned.

Firstly, Simon Edwards for balancing the books over the last year as treasurer, and also Bernie Wall and Lachlan Morrison for carrying out all golf administration duties.

Over the past four years it has become very difficult to obtain golf courses for our events, because clubs are reluctant to give up a valuable business day. It’s down to time and effort from Bernie and Lachlan that we’ve had some splendid venues. Due to public demand, there will be a five-a-side football tournament on Sunday April 30 at Wycombe Sports Centre. Entry will be £10 per team. It is hoped this will be well represented – the more teams, the better the event.

If you are struggling to make up a team of greenkeepers, then persuade some of your friends to join in. If this event proves to be successful, then a league will be formed next winter.

On the education side, we are putting together a seminar to be held soon and details will be posted in due course.

Before signing off, congratulations to Dave Goodchild and Katie on the birth of baby ‘Augusta’ in December.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

SOUTH WEST

Welcome to several new members who have joined the ever growing section over recent months, amongst them Neil Taylor from Mendip Springs Golf Club, and Michael Fawcett of Marlborough Golf Club.

Whilst on the membership theme, it was pleasing to see so many new faces at Lansdown Golf Club when we held our winter competition and lecture. Support for section events is slowly increasing, so for those who haven’t got involved yet an open invitation is extended to all. If you don’t play and would like to participate in the day, ring me prior to the event and I could possibly arrange a course walk with a member of staff from the respective club.

It is always difficult to arrange a winter competition during February. After all, who wants dozens of greenkeepers scrutinising their course during periods of bad weather? A call from course manager Guy Woods the night before the Lansdown event highlighted the problem. He reported that it was snowing heavily but at worst there would be 18 temper- atories. The day’s weather though proved somewhat better with a strong breeze and virtually no snow left. Considering this and previous months’ weather, the course was in excellent condition, with fairways, tees and greens all cut. Thanks to Guy and his staff for the time spent in preparation, to Lansdown for allowing us course courtesy and to the caterers for a tasty lunch. The results were: 1, M Newman 35 pts (back 9); 2, S Frankcom 35 pts (back 6); 3, S Sage 35 pts; 4, N Perkins 34 pts; 5, P Godwin 32 pts (back 9); 6, C Tozer 32 pts. Thanks to Avoncrop and BS Mowers for their generous prize donations. The day was rounded off with a talk by Andrew Venables of Fairways on wildlife management of a golf course.

Nominations are now being taken for this year’s Zeneca Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. This extremely worthwhile competition aims, in Zeneca’s words, “to find the greenkeeper who gets the best from his or her course with the facilities available.” First prize is a visit to the GCSAA Conference in the USA. The closing date for applications is May 31 1995. If you are interested, give me a ring on 0117 9793127 for an application form.

Finally, another reminder that Westurf takes place at Long Ashton GC on April 26. Your full support should guarantee another successful year.

KEVIN GREEN

DEVON/CORNWALL

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BIGGA: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE
the room in case they missed anything. On reflection, perhaps we should have asked Jimmy to speak at the AGM.

With regard to the formation of a section football team, we held a ‘trial match’ at Dalgety Bay recently and from the commitment of everyone who participated it may not be too long before some of the Premier League teams are showing an interest in the Section (I’m sure there are a couple of teams who could do with our assistance right now.) Details of the match against the West Section will appear in the near future.

Congratulations to former section member David Murdoch on his appointment as head greenkeeper at Liphook GC. David served his apprenticeship at Dunfermline GC before deciding to take his skills south. Well done, David! Congratulations also go to Ian Jarvis of Alloa GC who, at the time of writing, was just about to give up the single life and settle down to ‘wedded bliss’, well that’s what he is trying to tell himself.

JOHN CRAWFORD

SOUTH COAST

The section workshop at Sparsholt College was run by Frank Newberry, a well known figure to greenkeepers who attended courses at Aldwark Manor. Seventeen members attended – it was necessary to keep numbers down because of the hands-on nature of these workshops. For those who were disappointed at missing out, there is to be another one during the autumn.

The feedback from those who attended was very positive with a general request for a follow-up programme. On behalf of those attending I would like to thank the industry sponsors for the day – Rowes of Chichester, Romsey Garden Machinery and Rolawn.

The winter social programme for ’95/’96 is being prepared and your thoughts for suitable events are requested. Please send your ideas to me at 45 Consulate Close, Shoalings, Southampton SO19 1EN.

We were all pleased to hear of the appointment of Jeff Drake as head greenkeeper at the Hampshire GC. Jeff worked for many years at Salisbury and South Wils and Eriestoke golf clubs before joining the Hampshire in September 1993 as deputy head greenkeeper.

The committee has been asked by Bob Young of Sparsholt College to emphasise on all members and especially head greenkeepers/course managers the importance of supporting our trainees. It is incumbent on us all to give them our support!

ALAN MITCHELL

NORTH WEST

As I write these notes, the rain, as usual, is lashing down and I am trying to remember when we last went 24 hours without rain or snow. This winter must have been a night mare for anybody involved with the mainte-

nance of turf. The grass has hardly stopped growing, and conditions are so wet that even normal winter maintenance cannot be carried out.

Let’s hope the weather is fine for our golf match against the North Wales section at Northop GC on Tuesday May 2, tee off 1.30pm. A team of 16 is required so if you are available, please ring me on 0151 7245412.

A few movements to report this month. Stephen Worthington has moved from Prestbury GC to take over as head greenkeeper at Macclesfield GC, Peter Cross has moved to West Derby GC as assistant greenkeeper, and Andrew Mannion is moving from Warrington GC to Southern Down GC in Mid-Glamorgan as assistant head greenkeeper.

BERT CROSS

MID ANGLIA

Brocket Hall course manager John Wells, star of last month’s magazine, gave 20 Mid Anglia section members a guided tour of the course. He went into the history of Brocket Hall and the difficulties faced when setting up a new golf course with predominantly sand greens.

Thanks to John and the management of Brocket Hall for allowing us to see the course. It was disappointing to hear stories of the planning process and the enormous effort being made to turn the course into a fair test of the links.

We are looking to secure Brocket Hall as the venue for our Autumn Tournament towards the end of October. As soon as this is confirmed, I will let you know.

Our Spring Tournament goes ahead on the 25th of this month at Royston. The format will be 18 holes in the morning (medal), which will be the qualifying competition for the Hayter-Beaver Challenge, followed by 18 holes stableford in the afternoon.

Several changes to the rules of the Lodgeway Fourball competition have been decided. These are: 1, The main draw to be drawn out of a hat (not regionalised); 2, 8 leagues; 3, Quarter finals to be drawn; 4, Semi finals to be drawn – to be played on a neutral course decided by mutual consent among the competitors. If the committee cannot agree, the committee will decide the venue; 5, The final will be played over 36 holes unless exceptional circumstances intervene; 6, All matches to be played to a win.

Ashridge GC is confirmed as the venue for this year’s Texas Scramble/Christmas Tournament, to be played on Friday December 1.

Matches against the Midland Section and the London Section, are currently being arranged for later in the year.

New members to welcome include: David Smith, Alan Smith, Duncan Flower, Ian Turnbull, Chris Slimm – all from John O’Gaunt GC; Peter Tiffiney from Weston Turville GC; Thomas Hooper from South Beds GC; Ian Cropper from Hanbury Manor; Thomas Bowden from the Family Golf Centre; David Wright and Gareth Knight from Brocket Hall; Stephen Burritt from Knebworth GC; Brian Nolan from Kingsway GC; Anthony Perkins from Verulam GC; Mathew Towler and Michael Cutmore from Welwyn GC; and Timothy Lower from Delapre Golf Complex.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Colin Robinson on his appointment as course manager at John O’Gaunt GC and Steve Mason on his appointment as course manager at Mount Pleasant GC.

PAUL LOCKETT

GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL April 1995 33
New products added to the Mascot range from Rigby Taylor will be on display, and Zeneca has two new mini granular products for 1995, Cleanneln (weed + feed) and Renovator (weed + feed + mosskiller). The new herbicide Touchdown LA will also be featured. British Seed Houses has recently launched Providence Creeping Bentgrass which has been bred for European conditions, and Scotts UK has two new ranges of fertiliser. The English Golf Union will be making its debut at the show, exhibiting alongside various colleges, the IGG and the STRI. Farmura has a major new addition to its range – Inhibitor – for the natural management of fusarium. And there’s lots more! So why not start your season positively and come to the show that’s in the right place at the right time. Bristol’s Long Ashton Golf Club, the hosts again this year, is an ideal venue for this prestigious “little” show. Ring 01803 844056 if you would like a catalogue or further information.
The availability of good quality mature turf containing the right grasses for a variety of situations and growing on appropriate soils is the acme of perfection. Whether considered good fortune, or the result of careful planning and foresight depends on your point of view, but the head greenkeeper or course manager who has developed such a resource can be forgiven for regarding it as better than money in the bank should disaster strike.

Advancing years bring some compensations but one's attitude tends increasingly towards pessimism. My beer glass is more often half empty nowadays than half full. With the sheer volume of traffic on our golf courses these days, both men and turf are under a good deal of pressure. The potential for disaster to strike is always there, from hydraulic oil pipe rupture and spillage to an overlap using a spray or a mistake with the weather forecast and having wetting agents or fertiliser down and then being stuck with a hot, sunny day.

There is sure to be a sod's law which states that if a disaster is going to happen, it will happen the day before or the morning of your major club competition. Only you can minimise those risks, but a good turf nursery may well help you retrieve the situation if the worst happens, and we all have our fair share of vandalism these days.

**Greens**

Before assessing the desirable qualities for turf that will be used on putting surfaces, take into account the playing requirements for that area. Is the turf likely to be used to repair an area damaged by disease or winter kill and will the green be required to be in full use at normal cutting heights as quickly as possible? The same query must be answered if a green has been reconstructed and needs to be completely returfed.

The reason for asking yourself this question is quite simply that most commercial turf grown from seed is barely 12 to 14 months old when it is sold, and relatively immature. Such material is certainly strong enough to cope with the stresses of lifting, handling, transport and relaying, and a good product will certainly look mature. Unfortunately, it will not cope at all well with normal green mowing heights and regular heavy play within months of laying.

How often do you see patches of new commercial turf introduced into putting greens which either gradually decline and die off, or remain weak and thin for two or three years affecting the smoothness of surfaces, never really blending in properly for a long time. In my opinion, the vast majority of commercial turf requires a "grow in" period before it can be expected to support close mowing and regular use. That period can take from nine months to two years depending on when the turfing is completed, the area of country and weather conditions.

One or two growers can now supply more mature sod, at a price. If you can afford it, that's fine, otherwise grow your own turf nursery.

Many clubs utilise part of the practice putting green for repairs, but that is never a really satisfactory solution, more of an emergency stop-gap. Far better to have a properly developed and maintained nursery area. Having a source of mature turf on site certainly widens management options. No longer is there need

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*Prepare and re-sow stripped areas in spring*
for ugly bare scars from winter disease or other forms of die back, even if tucked away at the edges of the putting surface. You can actively set about removing edges of the putting surface. You disease or other forms of die for ugly bare scars from winter as well as regular wear and tear.

The qualities we are looking for in turf include the correct grass species, ie a blend of fine fescues and browntop bent with very little annual meadow-grass and no coarser grass species. For most inland sites there should be at least 50% or more strongly established bent in the sward. Fescues generally take longer to achieve a mature sod that can cope with normal summer mowing heights as well as regular wear and tear and whilst a good proportion of them is acceptable for use on links greens, too high a proportion can lead to problems inland. The grasses should be growing in a free-draining medium that matches the soils on the existing greens. Even on older established courses the top profile will be fairly sandy as a result of regular topdressing, and there is no point “capping” that by laying on it a turf growing in heavy loam. The turf must also be free of soft, fluffy organic material at the immediate surface, and preferably used to regular mowing at the normal putting green height of cut.

Tees

The situation with regard to obtaining suitable turf for tees is far less demanding. The type of grasses forming the sward are less important, although on most courses a blend of fescues and browntop bent will still be the aim. A small amount of annual meadow-grass will not matter and quite often the finer-leaved cultivars of smooth-stalked meadow-grass are included because these can blend well with the other fine-leaved species and established rhizomes improve recuperative powers following wear.

Perennial ryegrass is still regarded as unsatisfactory for tees on the vast majority of courses because of its open, tufted habit of growth, coarse, fibrous leaves and stems which are difficult to cut cleanly and intolerance of mowing at or below 12mm. The soil type the grass is growing in is also less important, although obviously it is desirable to have it established in a sandy soil if the turf will be used over a special rootzone mixture even on tees.

Normal commercial turf, given a reasonably sward at all, might be expected to cope acceptably with summer play after turfing in the previous autumn or early winter. Do not expect miracles of course, such turf is still relatively immature and it will do better under a more relaxed mowing height, with regular divot repair, generous nutrition and irrigation when required.

Choice in this situation therefore boils down to a question of cost, and the quantity of turf required. Where you have the nursery space available and the time to manage it properly, a nursery for tee grade turf is well worthwhile, especially if embarking on a tee extension or enlargement programme spread over several years.

Fairways/traffic routes

Widespread weakness or damage due to drought or wear on fairways will normally be best tackled by appropriate surface treatment, seedling, mild feeding and, in dry situations, irrigation during the summer can often be the key to success. Large areas of turf for fairway repair are therefore unnecessary. It can, however, be useful to have some mature fairway quality turf available. This comes in useful for patching repairs on drought-prone mounds, local heavily trafficked areas, especially at the edges of bunkers, on green surf

rounds and anywhere that contours funnel feet and trolleys and which come into play.

Such places can seldom be given special treatment during summer, especially watering, and on dry slopes or mounds that can be vital to survival of grass often rather thatchy and young commercial turf. Material like that cannot cope with heavy foot or trolley traffic either, unlike the tees which get a rest between periods of wear.

Bunker turf

The traditional and still best way of retaining and holding a face on links bunkers, especially those facing full sun all day, is to build up a revetted wall of turf. As might be expected, that requires a good deal of the right sort of turf and on a regular basis. Turf walls receiving full sun all day combined with sand splash, wind and normal erosion often survive no more than three or four years, so a regular replacement programme is essential. Where there are many bunkers on a course, up to 2 or 3 acres can easily be used per year on renovations and rebuilding throughout autumn and winter.

On many links, suitable areas of turf for this purpose in the rough have been plundered over the years to the point where there is very little of the correct type of turf remaining. Commercial turf is totally unsuitable for bunker revetting and even where this is used on bunker heads, it can be a disaster unless very carefully managed and watered in its first year. For these purposes, nursery turf really comes into its own. Because natural regeneration of turf on the links can be such a slow process, a special area which can be resoiled when necessary, irrigated in summer and which is reasonably convenient for regular maintenance is now more a necessity than a luxury.

Above all else, turf for revetting must be a tough, mature sod with a well developed fibrous root system which can be cut 50mm thick, will handle easily and build up into a solid turf wall. Grass composition is of less importance but for neatness, general appearance and ease of maintenance, the finer grasses are best.
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Establishment
An area close to the maintenance base is ideal since it is then unlikely to be neglected. It can also double as an area for small trials with materials and for setting up machinery before venturing out onto more important fine turf playing areas. The chosen place should be away from areas that come into play, although space considerations often mean part of the practice ground may have to be utilised.

There should be a good 100 to 150 mm depth of sandy topsoil, especially for putting green turf. If not, ensure that a sandy rootzone is at least provided on that area. A means of irrigation is useful on inland sites, essential on links to allow sure establishment, rapid growth and development of a mature turf and also to ensure that you can recycle a small area on a regular basis.

For quality greens turf on most sites, it is usually best to buy in a good commercial turf to establish the area. Then, manage it carefully for 12 to 18 months until it matches the existing greens and is mature enough to take close cutting and play.

Seeding is clearly an option, but you must have a clean seed bed free of weeds and particularly weedgrasses such as annual meadow-grass, Yorkshire fog grass and perennial ryegrass. Many high hopes of developing a turf nursery have foundered through being swamped by these coarser species. Where you can start clean through adequate fallow and cultivation, or on a naturally clean soil, produce a seed bed in late summer and sow during the period July through to early September. A small amount of an NPK fertiliser should be worked into the seed bed followed by sowing a standard fine grass seed mixture containing top-class cultivars of chewings fescue, slender creeping red fescue and browntop bent chosen from the tables in the current STRI publication "Turfgrass Seed".

Sow on to a firm soil bed with uniform surface levels at no more than 34 g/m² and very carefully hand rake or lightly harrow in; on sandy soil finish off by flat rolling. To ensure even coverage, split the total amount of seed and sow each half in opposite directions. Final raking should be at right angles to the greatest slope, especially on seed beds which will not require rolling afterwards.

Any areas to be sown for tees or general purpose material that could be used on fairways, traffic routes or bunkers should be clearly defined and sown with an appropriate seed mixture.

Management
Once fine turf has reached 50mm height from sowing, top over with rotary mowers twice at a height of 30mm. Then, gradually lower the height of cut by stages over several months to 12mm and in the second summer down to 6 to 8 mm. Always box off grass clippings. Top dress if you have to, but it is far better to spend time and effort achieving a really smooth, firm soil bed before sowing, and which will allow close mowing afterwards. Feed regularly and quite heavily with nitrogen-based fertiliser at between 150 and 250 kg N/ha.
A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly.

during the first year to achieve rapid development of a strong, dense sward. Once the grass has established properly, reduce feeding to just basic maintenance of one or two nitrogen feeds and control thatch and any weeds as necessary.

Irrigate carefully in summer, particularly during the first year when rapid development of a dense and strong sward is vital. After that, use water at lower rates simply to maintain some growth, but at the same time aiming to develop a harder, tougher, more mature sod.

The same basic approach will be appropriate for other classes of turf from seed, although fertiliser treatment could be reduced. Maintain the sward at the height appropriate for its intended final use.

By buying in commercial turf intended for greens you can gain the establishment year. Such turf may need topdressing to ensure a true mowing surface, keeping it topped initially at 12mm until roots are established strongly and the sward is growing away. Feeding will not be required at quite such high levels as from seed, but on sandy soils up to 150 kg N/ha may still be required to ensure vigorous enough growth and rapid development of a dense and mature turf. Commercial material often needs a bit more light raking or verticuting initially to reduce the often soft, fluffy thatch that comes with it. Afterwards, reduce these operations bearing in mind that to achieve maturity a turf must develop a strong mat of stems, roots and partly decomposed material at the surface which produces a tough mat that gives resilience and the wearing properties we are looking for.

It is, of course, possible to work existing swards down, after all most of our older courses started life that way, even putting greens. Tees and general purpose turf can readily be worked down from rough simply by vigorous initial harrowing, flail mowing and, where necessary, surface level improvement. One or two feeds the following summer and a gradual reduction in height of cut combined with light raking and any weed control needed will soon produce results.

Bear in mind the need for regular preparation and resowing of areas that are stripped of turf over the winter. On sandy soils there will be a need to rebuild a suitable depth of topsoil from time to time, easily accomplished by spreading a skim of topsoil and then thoroughly incorporating this into the underlying sand to produce the very sandy mixtures suitable for links.

Conclusion

Commercial turf is often a clean, well-grown product, but it does have some limitations. Knowing and appreciating these, you can often tailor the situation to suit your own club’s circumstances and requirements, and developing a turf nursery will often give you the best of both worlds.

A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly. Indeed, it is not unknown on some sites like this for the turf to be cut and lifted, leaving 25 mm wide bands of grass between the stripped out rows, and for the area to recover within a year. It goes without saying that however the used area of nursery is re-established, a little protection from traffic or play if it is a part of the practice ground will help.

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NEW PRODUCTS

A low-cost, lightweight transporter equipped with the option of either petrol or electric power units has been introduced by grass machinery manufacturer Ransomes.

Specially for use on turf or hard surfaces, the Sprinter utility vehicle, pictured above, is designed for all applications requiring fast, efficient, and cost-effective movement of light goods, tools, or work materials around golf courses and sports complexes.

The four-wheeled Sprinter has a polypropylene body to resist knocks and bumps while its tubular steel frame and heavy-duty suspension give a smooth, comfortable ride. Rugged moulded bumpers are fitted at the front and rear for added protection.

The petrol engine available for the Sprinter is an air-cooled unit developing 8.5hp and fuelled by a 6gal (28 litre) tank. Alternatively, customers can specify the electric Sprinter which has a 36-volt direct drive motor powered by six 6-volt batteries. Equipped with electronic speed control, the system gives an operating range of up to 30 miles from a single charge, depending on temperature, terrain and load.

The Ransomes Sprinter has a manually-tipped, polyethylene dump box suitable for carrying tools, work materials and other light loads. Maximum payload of the vehicle, including driver and one passenger, is 600lb (364kg).

The price of the petrol-engined Sprinter is £4,100. The electric model is £3,950, to include a battery charger with fully-auto.

After two years of development and testing, Dennis has added the 24in FT610 to its range of fine turf machines. Designed with greens and tees in mind, the FT610 can be used to cut, comb, scarify, de-thatch, brush, roll, sorrel roll, or slit, simply by removing and replacing cassettes – a job which takes less than a minute and requires no tools. "This variety of functions performed by a single power unit allows for year-round usage with cost-effective savings in time, money, and storage space," says managing director Ian Howard.

Other features include:

- Variable drive speed, independent of engine revs, gives the operator total control (including cuts per metre/yard).
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- Simple backlapping facility on removed cylinder cassette.

Price starts at £1,850 without cassettes. Cassettes start at £328. Tel: 01332 824777.

Huxleys report an amazing response from customers for its new Soil Reliever Vertical Deep Tine Aerator. Orders have exceeded initial expectations and include Carnoustie Links, Helensburgh GC, Radley College, Tyneley Park GC, Shrewsbury GC, Parker Hart Contract Services, Corshampton GC and Sundridge Park GC. Director Paul Huxley says: "On all demonstrations, customers have been tremendously impressed by the Soil Reliever’s speed, smooth operation, clean finish and robust construction. Use of the hydraulic link attachment allows the operator to regulate aeration depth from the driver’s seat, and routine maintenance is minimal."

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A number of mammal and bird species, such as rabbits, badgers, Canada geese and moles, are known to cause problems on golf courses.

Greenkeepers are the ones who have to deal with the problems—humanely. Public attitudes to wildlife management are such that the welfare of wildlife is quite properly a major concern and therefore greenkeepers will have to manage these animals in a humane manner. There is also legislation in place which prescribes the way in which many animals can be managed.

Wildlife on a golf course may be of considerable ecological importance and in addition may make a course more marketable in terms of the course’s aesthetic appeal.

Therefore, the objectives must be to manage any species only when numbers increase to a level where they are causing economic losses to the course and then only to take such measures as necessary to reduce losses to non-economic levels.

Problems encountered and management solutions available are detailed below:

**RABBITS**

Rabbits cause problems by digging burrows and these are particularly prevalent on slopes and banks where drainage of water is more efficient. Digging occurs throughout the year but is more common in spring when new nesting sites are being dug in preparation for the birth of young. On flat ground, burrows are usually no more than 1m deep. Rabbits also cause damage by digging smaller, shallow scrapes in the soil and by eating the bark of newly planted young trees.

Under the 1954 Pests Act, it remains the legal obligation of occupiers of land to take steps to destroy wild rabbits on their land...
Fencing can be 90 per cent effective or, if this is not practical, to prevent rabbits from causing damage on adjoining land. Rabbit numbers can be reduced by gassing their burrows, by ferreting, trapping or shooting but gassing is at least twice as effective as any of the other techniques. Numbers are best reduced between November and March because they are at their lowest at this time of year due to natural mortality. Any action taken before winter will only replace rather than add to this mortality.

Non-lethal methods such as fencing can be used to exclude rabbits from parts of the course and if properly maintained can be over 90% effective. Chemicals marketed as repellents are also available. They are sprayed onto the turf. Data on the effectiveness of these compounds is at present limited, although we are currently undertaking trials on one product. Finally, tree guards can be used to provide effective protection for individual trees.

BADGERS
Badgers damage turf by digging holes when looking for food, such as insect grubs or worms, and this can occur throughout the year. Badgers and their setts are, however, protected by legislation which makes it an offence to interfere with badgers or their setts without a licence. Therefore, preventing badgers causing damage is a complex problem which could not be adequately covered in this article. However, an extensive booklet for this purpose, called 'Problems with Badgers?', is available from the RSPCA (Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG).

CANADA GEESE
Canada geese cause damage to the grass particularly around ponds and lakes on a golf course by excessive grazing and trampling of the ground and they may make areas unplayable as a result of excessive fouling. Their droppings may also pose a potential health hazard if players eat, smoke or drink without washing their hands after handling golf balls which may have landed in the droppings. In addition, during the nesting period geese may become aggressive towards members (although some greenkeepers may not see this as a problem).
Canada geese are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which requires that a licence must be obtained from the DoE or MAFF for certain types of management procedures and for any control carried out during the close season (February-August inclusive). These procedures include egg pricking, egg substitution and shooting during the close season or at night. However, the Act does not allow licences to be issued if the only purpose is to prevent damage to amenity land and therefore it is unlikely that one would be issued for management on golf courses.

Procedures not requiring a licence include fencing along the edge of ponds or lakes to deny easy access to adjoining grass. This may make an area less attractive to the birds and, consequently, may lead to a reduction in numbers or divert geese from greens to areas of rough where their grazing may be less damaging. Also, altering the habitat, for example, by allowing the grass to grow or planting shrubs, can be undertaken to break up the open vistas preferred by geese along the water's edge and this may discourage them from using the area. Newly planted shrubs should, of course, be protected by fencing during establishment. Visual scarers can be used but, although they can be effective, they may be unacceptable on aesthetic grounds.

MOLES
The most obvious damage which moles cause is the hills of soil produced as a result of digging their underground tunnel systems which can be several hundred metres long and can run at depths of up to 2m below the surface. Moles are managed by poisoning, by gassing and by trapping. Poisoning is carried out by placing worms treated with strychnine in mole runs. However, the sale or supply of strychnine for general purposes is prohibited under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1933, except to those with written authority from MAFF to purchase it for the express purpose of killing moles. Written authority will be given only to those who have received training in the technique and further information on how to obtain training can be obtained from MAFF offices. Treated worms should be placed in deep rather than surface runs to prevent these worms becoming a hazard to other wildlife. Gassing is conducted mainly by placing tablets which generate phosphine gas into mole runs. Traps, which kill moles, should also be set in deep rather than surface runs and should not be set in mole hills. Control is best done between October and April when moles tend to be most active and their workings easily seen.

Try a course on wildlife management

A course to provide greenkeepers with training in aspects of wildlife management is being provided by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) starting this autumn in conjunction with BIGGA and the GTC. CSL is also able to provide consultancy advice to greenkeepers and further information on both these aspects can be obtained by writing to Gordon McKillop at the CSL, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Tanglewood Place, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3LQ.

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TORO
Seven greenkeepers, seven different tractors: Hugh Tilley found out how each fared in their own environment

Tractors are a prime part of the machinery fleet on most golf courses, their main functions may be hauling a trailer, aerating, loading, mowing or any of many other tasks. Their ability to provide traction, carry or drive an implement, or provide hydraulic flow and pressure makes them versatile and cost effective work horses. However while most tractors are extremely versatile the specific requirements of certain courses often determines which abilities are most important and so which tractor is most suitable.

Most golf course tractors are in the 25hp to 70hp power range and while those below 45hp are often tagged ‘compact’ there is considerable overlapping in specification and price. Not all tractors are equal, the standard specification of one tractor may be significantly higher than another, on the other hand sophistication usually costs money, so a basic tractor may offer best value, especially if it is only needed occasionally. Tyre and transmission options need most careful consideration, four wheel drive may be an option not needed by all. Specific equipment, such as a loader, may call for extra hydraulics or a larger pump while a cab may be a desirable option for ‘compacts’ usually quoted with basic roll-bar.

There is almost infinite scope to match machine to specific requirement, which is just as well as the needs of each golf course is as individual as its greenkeepers and traditions. This makes it impossible to try to compare one tractor against another. Nevertheless specific requirements often indicate a specification and this may be found as standard or at little or no extra cost in a particular model. Existing equipment and main line operations, such as deep aeration, trailer and loader work or gang mowing often determine the power, weight and transmission requirements, or there may be a price constraint. Another and very important reason to select a specific make and model may be the ability of the local dealer. Thus this feature is not an attempt to judge one machine against another but to appraise them against their environment and the expectation of their respective greenkeepers.

The Belfry has a fleet of eight tractors of varying sizes, but the selection of a Massey Ferguson 1260 was largely determined by the need to operate a deep line aerator. A prime consideration was the strength and credibility of the dealer support, and Derek Ganning, course manager, stated that they would not contemplate going to a supplier who could not provide the level of support they at The Belfry consider essential. The course has considerable favourable past experience with ET Breakwells at Shirley and while Breakwells had just changed their tractor franchise, Derek said it was not as if MF was an unknown make, furthermore the quoted price was competitive. While the exact price was not quoted to Greenkeeper International the suppliers did hint that it was in the region of £17,000.

The Belfry had demonstrations of both the MF and one other similar machine before making their decision. Options specified included cab, front weights and extra wide turf tyres. As the machine was to be used extensively on tees and greens the requirement for the widest possible tyres is obvious. The machine has four wheel drive as standard. Front weights are required to ensure stability with the 1.6m wide Wiedenmann Terra-Spike and this is more important due to the fact that the tractor has a high lift capacity of 1300kg at link ends. Although The Belfry cannot be considered a hilly course, tractor stability is important and they had noted how compact tractor and Terra-Spike are as a combination.

Another and very important reason to select a specific make and model may be the ability of the local dealer. Thus this feature is not an attempt to judge one machine against another but to appraise them against their environment and the expectation of their respective greenkeepers.
John Deere 855 at Bowood Golf & Country Club

The second tractor considered is a John Deere 855 of which Bowood Golf & Country Club in Wiltshire have two — alongside several other models in the same shade of green. Of the two machines the more interesting is their loader tractor as this is equipped with both front loader and a back hoe. Used to load top-dressing as well as for trenching and similar work, “It is,” says Duncan Bawcutt, course manager, “perfect for what it does.” Although about four years old and with a modest 1200 hours on the clock, it has never had any problems, “just one set of seals, damaged by string around the axle”. The three cylinder direct injection diesel engine is rated at 24hp and it is, says Duncan, a superb engine which always starts first time and uses no oil. “Furthermore it is quiet, unlike others I could name.”

However perhaps the most important feature of this tractor is its drive train (transmission in American) which is hydrostatic. Used as a loader this means quick gearless speed and direction changes making for fast work cycle times. Of course it also has power steering and four wheel drive, features which Duncan considered essential for such a use. Operation is so simple to use that the tractor is frequently ‘borrowed’ by other departments on the estate. Bowood have their own fitter, Tony Rumming, and he particularly likes the tractor because it is “simple to work on”. He said they operate a slightly extended service schedule, although based on the JD recommendations, because, “we use better oil.” Asked about the cost of replacement parts, his comment was that if you never need any, it did not matter how much they cost. The one modification which Tony admitted having made to the tractor was to the exhaust as the standard outlet is a stub on the side. To this he had added an upright pipe to emit the exhaust gas above the operator’s head.

When first bought the tractor was simply equipped with the JD 70A front loader which was counterbalanced by a concrete block lifted on the rear links, however the versatility of the unit was later increased by the purchase of a Lewis Landlord 300S back hoe for trenching and ditching. An important design feature of the tractor, and one which makes it suitable for loader and back-hoe, is the substantial frame built into the tractor as this gives strength and rigidity to take the stresses and strains of the work. Mounting and demounting both loader and back-hoe is quick and easy, about two minutes to remove the front and perhaps ten to clear the back. The back-hoe mounts on a sub-frame and is held with two bolts while the hydraulics are self-contained and driven by a PTO pump. The front loader has a built-in stand which flips down when required to remove the unit.

Another feature of hydrostatic transmission is the ability to vary speed instantly, and Duncan said this makes the 855 particularly ideal for topdressing. The tyres on Bowood’s 855 are ‘oversize turf, and are interchangeable with those on the larger 33hp JD955.

The engine is a direct injection three cylinder diesel, with a two range transmission giving maximum speeds of 8 and 11mph. The PTO is live and independent, and a mid PTO is available as well as the conventional rear one. All up weight without loader and back-hoe is well under a tonne.

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Zetor 5245 at the Chesfield Downs Family Golf Centre

The Chesfield Downs Family Centre has two Zetor tractors, one five years old and another just three — and they expect to buy another shortly. Course manager is Chris Brook and he joked about the cab being big enough to be a dining room. In fact with extra seats it is both roomy and safe to carry one or two passengers, in addition it is quiet and comfortable. But of course the most important reason for Chesfield Downs' purchase is financial. Zetors represent exceptional value for money, and Chris made no bones about the fact that they equal cheap horsepower. The original machine cost £6,500 with interest free repayments spread over four years, and while changing circumstances and inflation together with increases in specification have raised the cost of a replacement, Chris still does not expect to pay more than £12,000, interest free over three years for four wheel drive and 50hp.

Chesfield Downs do their own servicing on the tractors, ensuring that oil changes are carried out regularly and everything is kept up together. The dealer, Lodgeway Tractors, has been very supportive, but there have been no reliability problems on the tractors, although they have experienced one clutch cylinder oil leak, and the lights have posed some problems — but Chris said these are not vital to them. Those replacement parts which have been needed have been inexpensive too.

Ford 1520 — Faringdon Course

Fitted with a Lewis Landlugger 22 front loader and 4 in 1 bucket, Faringdon GC's Ford 1520 "does everything," according to owner Roger Carpenter. Bought two or three years ago, the tractor has played a large part in making thisnine hole pay and play course at Faringdon, Oxfordshire which is run by the owner very much as a hands-on operation.

Roger tried out a number of competitive machines before selecting the Ford 1520 from T H White Ltd, whom he cannot praise highly enough. In comparing it he commented it 'eats' the competition, and was 'ten times better' than another well known make. In particular the transmission is far more efficient and has a very effective lifting ability, both on the linkage and with the loader. Roger has not found it running out of power, but he did say that he would have the next model up in Ford's range if it had hydrostatic transmission.

With the loader and 4 in 1 bucket the tractor is an extremely versatile unit which is used for all manner of lifting, levelling and shifting jobs. Roger said that the transmission made operating it so easy, "you just rock the foot pedal to go backwards and forwards, and of course steering is fully hydrostatic." Furthermore the lift height on the loader is sufficient to load the normal tipper lorry. It is kept on and used as a front weight when operating with the Amzone Groundkeeper and other implements on the back. The Groundkeeper is also a tool which has multi-purpose use at Faringdon being used to cut long grass as well as for collecting leaves, rubbish and grass clippings - "it'll take up anything," Roger commented.

"In fact the only time the loader comes off is when I go spraying the greens and I want the least possible weight". The listed weight of the tractor is 1034 kgs and it has a 874kg linkage lift capacity. The tractor has a 23hp 3 cylinder engine and hydrostatic transmission, four wheel drive and wide turf tyres. Its service and reliability record is impeccable and certainly Roger was no less enthusiastic than the other users to whom Greenkeeper International spoke.

Seven FAVOURITE tractors

The Zetor 5245 is powered by a 50hp 3 cylinder direct injection diesel engine with a ten speed transmission. One of the features of the transmission is that it has two low speed gears at the bottom of the range which are ideal for working with a deep tine aerator — Chesfield Down has a 1.6m Terra Spike, whereas some tractors need a special creep gearbox.

Although the Zetor is larger, more powerful, and heavier than a 'compact' tractor there is now a well established option to fit wide low ground pressure tyres, and Lodgeway Tractors say that they can fit GoodYear 'Softrac' tyres which give even lower ground pressures, these tyres made specially for turf production fit as if made for the tractor. In summing up, Chris said, "Yes — we're very pleased with them," but perhaps the fact that he is considering buying another is the ultimate seal of approval.
Kubota ST30 at Laleham Golf Club

At Laleham alongside the Thames in Middlesex the need was for a compact tractor which was very light and versatile, and which could be used for tasks for which the Cushman was not well suited, such as aeration and other draft work. John Ross, course manager at Laleham, sees the compact as being complementary to turf maintenance vehicles. The club took quotes on several machines of similar specification before deciding on the Kubota ST30 supplied by J Gibbs Ltd of Bedfont.

Particular features of the Kubota are hydrostatic transmission and a bi-speed front axle which means less scuffing of the ground on tight turns when using 4WD. Rated at 29hp and under a tonne in weight, the tractor offers a very high power to weight ratio and John has been able to sit weekly or more often all through the winter, often in front of the golfers without them being aware of it. As a result only about four days play have been lost this winter, and there has been no disease. John stated that a prime reason for buying the tractor was to take a lot of the TMVs' workload as these were in danger of being 'worked to death.' The ST30 has proved itself able to haul the Magna 5 mower, although this will not be a regular task. John summed up operating it by saying it was quiet, comfortable and easy to use, and his only reservation was the relatively high centre of gravity which meant that common-sense is required by the operator, particularly when operating with the loader. However Laleham on the Thames flood plain is basically a flat course. No reliability or service problems have been encountered, the one call made to Gibbs, under warranty, got them on the course within 20 minutes.

The ST30 is fitted with a loader and back-hoe and can operate a deep tine aerator which gives it even more versatility. "You can’t be too flexible," John stated, "the Kubota ST30 gives us exceptional flexibility and we are absolutely delighted with it."
Lamborghini 250 Runner – at Coombe Wood, Kingston-on-Thames

Compact manoeuvrable versatility sums up David Holloway's requirements, however more specifically he needed a machine which could carry a sprayer, could operate on banks and has good dealer support. The Lamborghini meets his requirements well with its 25hp power output, 4WD and full power steering. But the more salient features are that it has good ground clearance and a short wheelbase which allows it to go over the banks which surround many of the tees and greens and then turn round within the limited space available. Iseki and Kubota had also been considered.

David is a staunch advocate of compact tractors finding that turf maintenance vehicles such as the Cushman have their limitations on the course because of their lack of clearance and linkage lift height. In comparison he also considered that the compact tractor is simpler, more sturdy and likely to have a longer trouble free life with a better resale value at the end.

One of the more important implements for the Lamborghini is the 300 litre Hardi sprayer, and David saw particular advantage to the fact that the operator could lift and lower it on the arms when necessary to clear banks and slopes. Nor had it escaped his notice that three point linkage equipment is cheaper to buy and more readily available than that made for TMVs.

A manual transmission tractor was deliberately chosen because it does not suffer loss of speed when climbing a hill in the way that hydrostatic transmission does, this is considered as being of particular importance when using a sprayer. The 250 Runner has a twelve ratio box with full synchronmesh and 'shuttle'. The speed range of from 0.4 to 15 mph gives a very low speed for Verti-draining and similar tasks, although this is not a current requirement.

Double acting spool valves and a full set of six front weights were also specified, the former placed conveniently ahead of the operator instead of in the usual place – around the driver's bottom. Although not equipped with a loader, David was well aware that one is available and easy to fit. The two criticisms he made were that the hydraulic oil filter looked vulnerable and there was little room on the platform for anyone with large boots, particularly on the right hand side where there are two brake pedals, a diff. lock and accelerator pedals all vying for limited space – perhaps a penalty for the short wheelbase of the tractor.

As to service, David has found suppliers Risboro' Turf extremely 'willing and able', but after the first year with a maintenance contract linked to the warranty Coombe Wood will use their own mechanic for most of the work on the tractor.

Price had been a consideration, but not an over-riding one, however it was 'right' and it represented good value. In summary, David's comments were "it is a sturdy little tractor, very stable and to date I'm very pleased with it".

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Seven FAVOURITE tractors

Antonio Carraro Tigretrac 5500 on Mendip Springs Golf Club
Bought specifically for autumn and early spring work because of its exceptional light footedness, the Tigretrac 5500 hides 48hp under its bonnet with a 3 cylinder water cooled diesel engine. It has constantly engaged four wheel drive with large wide 31x15.5-15 tyres which spread its almost two tonne weight very well, so well that according to Ian Harrison, course manager, it makes less impression than the human foot. In fact prior to purchase Mendip Springs had the demonstrator on the course and put it to tow a set of trailed gang mowers over one of the wettest spots, and while the tractor made no impression the gang mower wheels left deep ruts - it was virtually ordered on the spot.

Mendip Springs has 27 holes plus a driving range, with eleven of the holes running onto the North Somerset Levels - in other words low lying, flat and liable to becoming very wet. Thus a high powered low ground pressure vehicle is essential if late autumn and early spring work is to be carried out with minimum damage to turf and soil. The main tasks for the Tigretrac are spraying, fertilising, gang mowing and trailer work, however it is flexible enough to be used for a wide variety of tasks including aerating and soil working. The manual transmission with twelve ratios provides ample scope for suiting speed with the requirements of the job and is amply slow enough at the bottom end for drainage and aeration work.

One feature which has yet to be tested is the ability to swing the entire seat and driving console so that the tractor can be operated in reverse. Ian suggested that this would be ideal for operating with a rotary mower in front. The main criticism of the tractor is the cab and ergonomic layout inside it, this Ian suggested was not particularly well thought out, with the cab cladding seeming to be an afterthought. In-cab noise was not a problem as operators use headphones for a radio or ear protectors. BS Mowers of Bristol who supplied the machine, Ian said, have been fantastic, nothing has been too much trouble, they have moved switches, added lights and adapted the cab to our requirements without any extra charge. Neither servicing nor spares seem to be any problem.

Ian is very conscious of safety particularly with young inexperienced operators, here the stability of the Tigretrac is 'brilliant' with the wide tyres and a low centre of gravity it is very sure footed on banks - which may be as well when the result of getting too close to the edge and losing control would be an involuntary bath.

Overall Ian has no hesitation in recommending the machine, for him the price was right, it is a high powered compact golf tractor which does not suffer from being a compromised agricultural tractor, and he does not understand why there are not more of them on golf courses.

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Sandiway Golf Club Ltd requires a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

For our premier 18 hole course situated in South Cheshire.

Applicants must possess a recognised qualification and be experienced in all aspects of course management.

The ability to lead and motivate staff, organise work programmes and maintain health and safety requirements is essential.

Practical knowledge of modern greenkeeping and budgetary control is also required.

Sandiway Golf Club offers rewards and prospects aimed at attracting candidates of the highest calibre.

Applications in writing with full CV to:
Secretary/Manager,
Sandiway Golf Club, Chester Road, Sandiway,
Northwich, Cheshire CW8 2DJ
Tel: (01606) 883247
Greene King PLC
a major operator of Pay and Play Golf Courses
requires a
HEAD GREENKEEPER
at its Essex site and
EXPERIENCED GREENKEEPERS
at its Buckinghamshire site.
Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced persons.
The company offers a competitive salary and good opportunities for career development and advancement.
Applications in writing with full CV to:
Mark Moffett, Area Manager, Leisure - Retail Trade,
Green King PLC, The Brewery, Biggleswade,
Bedfordshire SG18 0JR

The Old Course Hotel
Golf Resort and Spa
St. Andrews
requires a
COURSE MANAGER
The Old Course Hotel has recently completed the growing-in period of the Peter Thompson designed, championship standard, golf course and are now looking for a person of experience to fill the above position.
Applicants should be fully qualified in all areas of course maintenance and management, for this parkland, irrigated course.
The ability to be part of the Resort's management team and to relate well to both peers and guests is vital as well as a good and thorough understanding of administration and budgeting.
Salary and conditions negotiable.
Please apply in writing with full CV and photograph to:
Patrick Elsmie, General Manager,
The Old Course Hotel, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9SP

Hassocks Golf Club
require a
FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER
for our new 18 hole pay and play golf course.
Applicants should have the appropriate qualifications, as well as a proven track record in course management.
Please apply with CV to:
Steve Larbey, 12 Kemps, Hurspierpoint,
West Sussex BN6 9UE.
Mobile: 0850 308152

Lilley Brook Golf Club Ltd
invites applications for the position of
ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER
The successful candidate will be self-motivated, have a good working knowledge of the maintenance of a parkland course, together with experience in automatic irrigation, machinery maintenance and preferably hold PA1 and PA2 certificates.
Please apply in writing with CV to:
The Secretary, Lilley Brook Golf Club Ltd, Cirencester Road,
Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Glos, GL53 8EG.
Closing date 1 May 1995

Inverness Golf Club
invites applications for the post of
ASSISTANT HEAD GREENKEEPER
Applicants must be suitably qualified and experienced in all aspects of course management. They should have a knowledge of Budgeting, Man Management, Health and Safety requirements and be interested in the game of golf.
Salary negotiable, house available.
Apply in writing, with full CV, by 30th April to The Secretary,
Inverness Golf Club, Culcabock Road, Inverness IV2 3XQ

Sheringham Golf Club, Norfolk
Applications are invited for the position of
HEAD GREENKEEPER
(Re-advertisement)
Sheringham is an 18 hole cliff top course fully equipped with modern greenkeeping machinery. The Club is over 100 years old and is hosting several major competitions in 1995. The course is generally accepted to be one of the premier ones in East Anglia.
Applicants must be fully experienced in all aspects of course management and maintenance of machinery.
Persons with 12 years previous experience or more should send their hand written applications together with full CV to:
The Secretary, Sheringham Golf Club,
Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8HG
by 28 April 1995
GREENKEEPER
Salary: £13984 per annum (inclusive) Ref. no: CD/LM/015

Are you enthusiastic, committed to providing a quality service to the public and eager to take on a new and challenging role?

If so, we need you as our Green-keeper at Hounslow Heath Golf Course, an 18 hole par 69 pay as you play course measuring 5,820 yards, which provides some of the most challenging and picturesque holes in the area.

Conveniently situated in West London, the Golf Course is within easy access of the M3, M4 and M25.

You must have a thorough knowledge of the maintenance of Golf Courses, be skilled in the use of all appropriate equipment and have the ability to organise and supervise staff effectively. With a recognised qualification in greenkeeping, you must have at least 1 years experience as First Assistant at an established golf course.

Interested? For an application form please telephone the Recruitment Line on (0181) 814 0358 quoting the appropriate reference number. If you require further information please contact:

Personnel Section,
Commercial Division, Heston Park House,
New Heston Road, Heston, Middlesex TW4 0LW
Tel: (0181) 572 3380

CLOSING DATE: 28th April 1995

We operate a No-Smoking Policy An Equal Opportunity Employer

Ryston Park Golf Club
HEAD GREENKEEPER
An experienced working Head Greenkeeper is required for our nine hole Parkland Course. Applicants must be fully experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping with appropriate qualifications and have knowledge of modern equipment and ability to direct and motivate staff.

Accommodation is not available.
Salary negotiable according to experience.

For further particulars apply in writing to:
J. Flogdell, Secretary, Ryston Park Golf Club,
Denver, Norfolk PE38 0HH

Crane Valley Golf Club
Verwood, Nr. Bournemouth, Dorset
require a
FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Crane Valley is a recently developed, forward thinking, proprietary club comprising 27 holes and a driving range, built and maintained to a high standard.

An opportunity exists for a skilled and enthusiastic greenkeeper to contribute to the next stage in development of the courses to realise their outstanding potential.

Applicants must be qualified with a proven record in course and machinery maintenance.

Salary is negotiable, but no accommodation.

Please write with a CV to: The Course Manager, Crane Valley Golf Club,
Verwood, Dorset BH31 7LE

Whitsand Bay Hotel
HEAD GREENKEEPER
Cliff top 18 hole golf course in Cornwall seeks energetic, qualified, young head greenkeeper to transform ageing golf course.

Applications in writing to:
J. Earle, Whitsand Bay Hotel,
Portwrinkle, Torpoint, Cornwall PL11 3BU

Burnham Beeches Golf Club
Vacancy for
EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED GREENKEEPER

Excellent working conditions. Competitive Salary. Modern 3-Bedroomed Accommodation.

Please apply to:
General Manager, Burnham Beeches Golf Club, Green Lane,
Burnham, Slough SL1 8EG
Telephone No: 01628 661448
The question is often posed; who is the ultimate though—essentially rather-average golfer can be while the vitriolic outbursts of the tournament pro—golf course. Beauty, golf buffs are led now to no way on earth that our by-no-means-mediocre—yet destined for great things. Most of these admirables will hold the distinction of having it usually be governed by his fortunes: how well he has just played. After all, how many desolate experiences does a player care to remember?

What is a great golf course? The most unequivocal thing you can say is that it will possess the very breath of life; a personality, character and (sometimes) antiquity that is clearly its own. Many certainly have the stamp of ancient history about them, while there are scores of great courses that are positively youthful. Still more are mere infant prodigies, yet destined for great things. Most of these admirable courses will hold the distinction of having been created; designed by a golf course architect. Further, though most golf courses are conceived with the object of testing the few to their limit, if their architects’ are anything like the artists we know them to be, they will in addition have painted the broad architect/researcher Geoffrey Cornish, co-author with entitled arts and seminar programme, the first of its kind, addressed. There will be sessions on design con—the strongly held traditions prevalent in our beloved market place. The finale, the icing on cake so to speak, will be when Dr. Alistair Cochrane discusses details from the BIGCA secretary. Tel: 01883—712072. 

Golf’s greatest theatre

by David White

strategical and not from a penal point of view. Fiercely criticised holes often improve the standard of play and ultimately become most popular.’

Scotland’s Donald Ross, who progressed from clubmaking at Forsgan’s workshop in St Andrews, while also studying golf with Old Tom Morris before becoming pro-greenkeeper at Royal Dornoch and, finally, the most active and sought-after golf course architect in America, put his opinion thus: ‘It is obviously the function of the championship course to present competitors with a variety of problems that will test every type of shot which a golfer of championship ability should be qualified to play. Thus, it should call for long and accurate tee shots, accurate iron play (and let me say here that I consider the ability to play the longer irons as the supreme test of a great golfer), precise handling of the short game and, finally, consistent putting. These abilities should be called for in a proportion that will not permit excellence in any one department of the game to too-large offset deficiencies in another. Likewise, penalties should not be unduly severe nor of a nature that will prohibit a full recovery by the execution of an unusually well-played shot. These are the problems presented to the golf architect when undertaking the design of a championship layout.

‘Nature must be preserved both with dignity and integrity’

Though Donald Ross’s object lesson for would-be architects, amateur or professional, was written several decades ago, at a time when the choicest plots of land were still available to golf course architects, its premise holds good today.

How interesting it is to learn also of Mackenzie’s likened the art of golf course construction to that of sculpture, for sculptor and artist are clearly the closest of partners in golf, both working subtle intrigues and entente cordiale activities, first with the signing of a protocol of co-operation between the Institute and AFAG, the French architects’ group, second with a declared desire for closer co-operation between all other organisations involved in the world of golf, including those professional players who have embraced design as a new, often secondary, career.

Finally, the Institute is staging a two-day conference and seminar programme, the first of its kind, at the Wentworth Golf Club on April 20-21. Looking always to the future, the seminar addresses several likely problems head on. A session on ecology will be staged, ie fitting the modern course into a natural image, plus discussions on game improvement, with regard to both human frame and modern implements. With golf balls being hit longer and harder (though not necessarily straighter), there is a greater need for safety and this issue also will be addressed. There will be sessions on design concepts for the modern age, how to make new courses maintainable, how to keep them (economically) watered, plus discussions on the equation that everyone seeks to get right first time — the financial market place. The finale, the icing on cake so to speak, will be when Dr. Alistair Cochrane discusses how we might balance modern day technology with the strongly held traditions prevalent in our beloved game.

Seventy years ago Tom Simpson summed up the need for architectural simplicity: ‘The educated taste admires simplicity of design and sound workmanship for their own sake rather than over-decorated and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.” Thank God, Britain’s architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest craftsmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration, and the crowding of artificial hazards.”
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There's no contest when it comes to choosing the right weight mower for golf course fairways. Look to Ransomes' corner for a choice of Fairway champions which can out-perform, out-power, out-produce and out-manoeuvre any mower in their weight class.

First there's the new lightweight Fairway 250 with 23, 28 and 33 horsepower or the midweight Fairway 300 with a 38 horsepower engine. 4-wheel drive is standard except on 23hp model. Floating head cutting units closely hug the turf and rugged hydrostatic drive grips the terrain for an unsurpassed punch to tackle inclines or mow around obstacles, with even weight distribution to eliminate "bouncing" for a smooth, clean finish.

Before you put your money on any Fairway mower give the 300 and 250 a work-out. They're the mowers that have the right weight for a winning performance on the fairway.

With a 38 horsepower engine. 4-wheel drive is standard except on 23hp model. Floating head cutting units closely hug the turf and rugged hydrostatic drive grips the terrain for an unsurpassed punch to tackle inclines or mow around obstacles, with even weight distribution to eliminate "bouncing" for a smooth, clean finish.

Before you put your money on any Fairway mower give the 300 and 250 a work-out. They're the mowers that have the right weight for a winning performance on the fairway.

Phone free for details on 0500 026208