

Zeneca set to become a Miracle for £37m

NEWS

Zeneca has sold its Garden and Professional Products business to newly-formed Miracle Garden Care Ltd for approximately £37 million.

The new owners will be taking over all existing staff and the full range of professional products which includes Longlife and Ultra-Green fertilisers, Daconil-turf, Greenshield and Casoron.

The chief executive of the new company is John Wilson who is leaving Zeneca (formerly part of ICI) after 26 years. John was both general manager of Zeneca Crop Protection (the UK arm of Zeneca Agrochemicals) and Zeneca Garden and Professional Products.

He confirmed that the new company will continue to supply the same products with the same brand names using the same people.

Miracle Garden Care Ltd's principal shareholders are Advent International Plc and Charterhouse Development Capital, who led the purchase, and Stern's Nurseries, proprietors of the Miracle Gro brand of garden products.

Production facilities at Howden, North Humberside, will continue to be part of the new business.

More tragedy at Welsh club

A third tragedy has hit Southerndown Golf Club, near Bridgend, South Wales. Assistant greenkeeper Christopher Thomas, 20, was struck by an Inter City train on a railway line close to his home. Earlier in the week the club heard that former head greenkeeper John Walsh, 36, who had retired due to ill health five years ago, had died. "He fought a long and hard battle against cancer, was well known locally and well respected," according to Peter Lacey of BIGGA's South Wales section.

These tragedies follow the suicide last year of head greenkeeper Stuart Lindsey.



For the second year running, managing director Graham Dale picks up the 'Mr Toro International' award on behalf of Lely UK. American manufacturer Toro gives the award annually to the distributor who shows the most outstanding achievement in all aspects of its service to Toro commercial customers. Presenting the award is Bob Buckingham, left, sales manager Toro Commercial Products (Europe).

Avoncrop joins our development fund

Avoncrop Amenity Products is the latest company to back BIGGA's Education and Development Fund. This brings to five the number of new companies already in Golden or Silver Key membership for 1995.

In welcoming Avoncrop Amenity Products as a Silver Key supporter BIGGA's executive director, Neil Thomas commented, "It is significant that such a well-respected regionally based company should choose to support the Education and Development Fund at a time when the Association is about to utilise the resources of the fund on a regional basis through the planned localised management training courses. The backing of regional companies such as Avoncrop Amenity Products can only strengthen the regional resources and support for our members".

Avoncrop Amenity Product's membership brings to 16 the number of companies in either Golden or Silver Key membership.

On credit

BIGGA now accepts plastic. You can use your VISA and Access cards to pay your membership fee and buy BIGGA goods, such as blazers, ties and jumpers.

Zeneca and Terralift

The January issue of Greenkeeper International carried a newsletter from Terralift Fertilizers. Terralift would like to make it clear that no slight was intended on ICI/Zeneca or its products. The use of the name ICI in the article relates only to the 'Greenkeeper of the Year' Award.

Terralift acknowledges that its fertilizers are one of several being considered by David Walden, the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year.

Any embarrassment caused to David or ICI/Zeneca was unintentional.

FLYING DIVOTS

Attention late subscribers

Has your 1995 BIGGA membership subscription been paid? If not, you ought to be aware that all membership benefits have, strictly speaking, lapsed. Of particular importance is the legal helpline and the personal accident insurance. If you have not renewed your subscription then you are not covered. Consequently, any accident arising after December 31 1994 will not be insured. Furthermore, those 1994 members who have not paid their subscription by February 28 will be taken off the Greenkeeper International magazine mailing list. Subsequent renewals will not be issued with back copies of the magazine free of charge. All benefits of membership will deem to commence from date of payment.



■ Martin Hucklesby, 28, is set to take over as course manager/head greenkeeper at Five Lakes Hotel, Golf and

Country Club (formerly Quietwaters) in Maldon, Essex. "It's going to go places now," he told us with a smile, "It's in excellent condition." Martin, whose father is head groundsman at London Scottish Rugby Club and whose brother works as a greenkeeper at the Burhill Club, Walton on Thames, takes up the new challenge on February 27. At the moment he is assistant course manager/head greenkeeper at Roehampton in Surrey.

■ Gary Cunningham is moving from Menorca to take over as head greenkeeper at Ufford Park in Suffolk. The 29-year-old 10-handicapper is currently head greenkeeper at Club De Golf Son Parc. He takes up his new job at the end of this month, replacing Peter Brooks.

■ Steven Grass, 27, has been appointed head greenkeeper at Brampton Heath Golf Centre, Northampton. He was previously deputy head greenkeeper at Calcot Park.



Ultimate test for drainage scheme

Eleven holes at Aldwark Manor, the Yorkshire course surrounding BIGGA's rented offices, were flooded following a week of heavy snow and rain. This is the view of the 4th and 14th fairways from the 4th tee. The footbridge in the distance shows the normal width of the River Ouse. About £14,000 worth of drainage has been put in over the past three years. Once the level of the river goes down, the greenstaff will be able to see how efficiently it works.



■ **Rochford Garden Machinery of Wincanton, Somerset, is the newest addition to John Deere's dealer network. The business area covers Devon (east of Plymouth), Somerset and West Dorset. Tel: 01963 33713.**

■ **C&P Soilcare Ltd of Nedging, Ipswich, has asked us to point out that its Terralift machine – which places a probe 1m into the soil, blasts it with compressed air simultaneously injecting nutrients – has nothing to do with Terralift Fertilizers. C&P Soilcare can be contacted on 01449 741012.**



Effingham GC first assistant Euan Grant, winner of the Toro/PGA Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award, receives another accolade at the Plump-ton College part-time awards ceremony. He was named as top student on the phase 2/level 2 course.

FLYING DIVOTS



Brian O'Hara has been appointed to the new post of business development manager with Tip Top Turf. Based at

Newton Longville turf nursery, he will be responsible for developing stronger links with existing and potential customers as the company expands into supplying sand, soil, turf dressing and complementary products from Bailey's of Norfolk. Tel: 0908 270701.

■ **Buyers of Rite Feed organic fertiliser could win a trip to Florida. With every drum bought, the purchaser's name will be entered into a draw with the winner going to the GCSAA show in Orlando in February '96. Derek Ganning of The Belfry will make the draw on October 5.**

■ **Writtle College in Chelmsford has been granted university status. It is only the second college serving land-based industries in the country to be granted the status.**

■ **The Welsh College of Horticulture has been named Horticultural College of the Year for the UK by the National Farmers' Union and The Grower magazine.**

■ **Brian D Pierson (Contractors) Ltd has secured two new contracts: a new 27-hole project, Forest Pines Golf Course, near Scunthrope, and the redevelopment of Chestfield GC in Kent following road improvements in the area.**

■ **Collier Turf Care (Dist) Ltd will be holding an open day in Norwich on February 23. Tel: 0603 870944.**

■ **Ransomes has sent £250,000 worth of turf machinery to the first all-grass golf course to be built in the Gulf state of Qatar, the recently completed Dana Golf Club near Doha.**

■ **A local builder has bought 110-acre 18-hole Libbaton Golf Club at Barnstaple, North Devon, for close to £1 million.**

FLYING DIVOTS

■ The head greenkeeper at Shirley Golf Club, Solihull, was found dead in his car on the course. 44-year-old Trevor Stone, who had been at the club for about 19 years, was discovered by a fellow worker at 8am. The car's engine was still running and police believe he had been in the car all night.



Scottish Grass Machinery Ltd has appointed John Pollitt (left) to the new post of general manager of the Perth

operation. His previous jobs include executive appointments with Arthur Bell & Sons, United Distillers and Motorola.

■ Independent irrigation consultant Philip York has been elected chairman of the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association. He succeeds Paul de Rham, who completed his term in office last month. Philip says: "My objective will be to ensure not only that standards are maintained but that end-users, our customers, will receive even better help, advice and value for their money. This can be achieved by broadening the base of the Association. This means encouraging individuals interested in the technological advances, agronomic implications, the application and use of irrigation to join the BTLIA".

■ East Anglia-based brewing and pubs giant Greene King Plc is reputed to have paid £1.75 million for the 210-acre Langdon Hills' 25-bed Hotel and Golf Club at Basildon, Essex. Plans include refurbishing the site to provide a pay-and-play facility and adapt the existing clubhouse.

■ Essex-based Eastern Tractors has moved to better equipped premises in Chelmsford. Bought out by management last year, Eastern Tractors is now planning to expand and has become Hayter's agent in Essex and north London.



Plum placements for students

These three turf science students from Myerscough College have landed placements at major American courses.

The students, all on the three-year BTEC National Diploma course in Turf Science and Sportsground Management, have secured 12-month work placements that many experienced greenkeepers would die for.

Following last year's successful

placement at the Pinehurst Resort and Country Club in North Carolina, 21-year-old Carl Horrax's placement supervisor recommended him to staff at Augusta National. He's going there shortly to help prepare the course for the US Masters.

As a result of Carl's success at Pinehurst, two other students – Julian Jackson, 20, and John Stevenson, 21 – are following in

his footsteps and heading for Pinehurst Resort.

Not pictured but also heading west are Robin Jackson, 25, who is going to Fiddlesticks Country Club in Florida and Chris Knowles, 21, who is going to the Double Eagle Club in Ohio. Chris could not ask for better conditions in which to further his training, working alongside Master Greenkeeper Terry Buchan.

Apart from broken ankle, Robert's cup floweth over

One of the golden rules of golf is 'keep your eye on the ball'. But for 600 greenkeepers that rule has changed.

For them it has become a case of keeping an eye on the hole. Doing that has just paid off for Royal Dornoch course manager Robert Paterson.



He has just become the first winner in Britain of a set of Regal golf clubs presented by Golf Media, which sells advertising inside golf holes, with each golf club in the scheme getting 20% of the advertising revenue.

Golf Media claim 25% of all golf clubs in Britain have signed up for the scheme. Robert, 31, centre, is pictured being presented with the £500 set of clubs by Golf Media director James Horlick, left. Also pictured is Robert's colleague, John Duncan.

Robert hasn't been able to try out his new clubs yet. The day after the presentation he broke his ankle playing squash.



■ Recently retired course manager Gerwyn Price is being sent packing by BIGGA. As the winner of our draw for members who recommended two other people to join, he has been sent a £600 holiday voucher. When we told him of his success, far-flung places were furthest from his mind. The former Maesteg GC man hinted he'd be going places in this country. "I've never stayed in a four-star hotel," he said. "I might do that for a week with my wife."

● Viscount Whitelaw is pictured with Barry Heaney, making the draw at BTME.