

Jemima
Puddleduck
saves
thousands
for golf club

NEWS



When a 10,000,000 gallon lake at the Lambourne Golf Club in Burnham, Bucks, cracked as a result of the hot weather, greenkeepers took a leaf out of Beatrix Potter's book, bringing in "Jemima Puddleduck" and 22 of her friends.

In just three weeks the paper-white Aylesbury ducks, halted a 20,000 gallon a day leak and reduced the cost of repairs from

£75,000, for draining and lining the lake, to just £80, the price of an electric fence to keep foxes at bay.

"A time honoured country tradition has beaten all modern technology," said John Millen, Head Greenkeeper for ClubPartners International Plc which owns the course. "Aylesbury or 'puddle' ducks, as they are often known, have been used to maintain farm

ponds for centuries. In hot weather, the sun dries out the banks and leaves thousands of tiny cracks along the bank through which the water seeps away. Puddle ducks, with their big feet, keep the shore wet and compress tiny bits of mud into the cracks, cementing all the holes."

Staff and members at the exclusive club have put forward Jemima's name for the August Employee of the month award.

"She'll probably be the first duck in history to win a recognition award from a Plc but we don't see why not. She's down on the payroll for a sack of premium quality corn each month and has worked hard on several important areas including ecology, conservation, economy and good member relations - even if it did take a little gentle persuasion to convince her that a ball which landed near the shore once was not, in fact, an egg."

Jemima's prize for her efforts is a beautifully framed certificate by the lake and her own nesting box on the small island, well away from the danger of troublesome foxes.

● Pictured: John Millen with the ducks which saved the day.



■ GTC Chairman Bob McLaren presents NVQ assessor certificates to the Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers from the North Wales golf clubs who have all successfully achieved the D32/D33 assessor units.

The presentation took place at the Welsh College of Horticulture in Mold.

The GTC has recently become a registered centre to offer National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications and all enquiries should be directed to the GTC Education Unit based at Aldwark Manor, York Tel: 01347 838640.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Otterbine/Barebo Inc., the aeration and water quality management product specialist, has announced that Rainbird Europe has been awarded the Otterbine distributorship for France and North Africa. "We're very proud to welcome Rainbird Europe to our distribution team. It an excellent company which enjoys a fine reputation," said Charlie Barebo, President of Otterbine.

■ Eamonn Wall & Co has appointed John Nicholson as Associate Consultant based in Durham. He is a keen ecologist with specialised knowledge of tree pests and diseases and is currently writing a book about trees on golf courses. He has undertaken studies in golf ball damage and its effect on tree health resulting in a knowledge of which species of tree are resilient to damage.

■ Nigel Tyler has been appointed Technical Sales Representative to the Amenity Division of County Crops Ltd. He was previously employed by Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd. He will cover the Midlands area.

■ Geoff Whalley has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at the shortly to open Moberley GC.

■ Ian Greenfield, Head Greenkeeper at Goodwood GC, has retired after 28 year's service.

■ Applications are now being accepted for Pennsylvania State University's two year Turfgrass Management Technical Programme for the class beginning September '96. The application fee is \$35 and the deadline for applications is December 31, '95. Application forms can be obtained by calling United States 001 814 865 8301 or by writing to: Turfgrass Management Technical Program, The Pennsylvania State University, 306 Ag, Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802-2601.

Michael is Britain's most wanted man

By Andrew Vaughan

This year's drought had many repercussions for most golf courses, not least the size of their water bills. As the privatised water suppliers in England and Wales now address the many years of under-investment in infrastructure the cost of water will undoubtedly rise with forecasts of three and four fold increases in the next few years. (Scotland soon to follow?)

"Pay as you use" is perhaps the tip of the iceberg, as it is not unreasonable to expect the most heavy water users to pay a premium for the quantities required, and golf courses must figure amongst them.

The solution to the problem is undoubtedly under your feet. Surveys in Scotland have shown that private ground water sources supply 13 million litres per day for a variety of uses, including chemical and manufacturing industry, foodstuffs, agriculture, as well as domestic consumption. In 1978/79 ground water provided 78 million litres per day (of a total supplied of 2800 million litres per day) – a drop in the ocean.

After complying with the various planning requirements, the next problem is how to find the water. Large numbers of dry bore holes indicate that it is not as easy as simply drilling a deep enough hole. Several golf courses have overcome this by calling on the services of a water diviner, Michael Cranfield of Dollar, Cen-



Michael Cranfield: Dowser

tral Scotland Tel: 01259 742744.

Mr. Cranfield, 72, has been dowsing since the age of 13 when he learned he had the knack from a naval commander experimenting on his parents' lawn in Sussex. Over many years he honed his skill by practising on various farms he visited while selling animal feed for Quaker Oats, and on retirement, took up water divining as a recreational occupation.

Due to advancing years, he prefers to pre-survey the particular site using a map on his dining room table. He then sweeps over the map with a crystal pendulum ("but a rusty nail would do"), which when passing over a likely site swings round and round.

After finding as many "hot-spots" as possible, he then checks the site using the well known

hazel dowsing rod, and has found the map surveys surprisingly accurate. The many years of experience also allow him to judge the depth and flow-rate of water present.

Any sceptic cannot be left unimpressed by his strike rate of 98.5% for over 450 clients. However, perhaps his most important skill is that he pinpoints exactly where the borehole is to be located, which could involve hitting a two foot wide target, 300 feet down.

Farmers make up 70% of his work load (often dairy farms that require regular and vast quantities), and to date only 12 golf courses have called on his unusual services. Undoubtedly this situation will change when clubs realise the potential rising cost of water usage, and the relatively quick payback period for installing your own bore-hole and pump. In some instances, the capital cost has been paid back after just three years.

Mr. Cranfield does not expect to be travelling the length and breadth of the country for many more years, but hopes that his dining room table will continue his amazing success rate well into his 80s, that is if the water companies don't outlaw him first!

■ Andrew Vaughan is a golf course woodland design and management consultant with Eamonn Wall and Co based at 15 West Burnside, Dollar, Clackmannanshire, FK14 7DE, Tel: (01259) 743212.



Art editor gets mower out of The Open

Keith Jones, Art Editor of Golf Monthly magazine, winner of the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition at The Open in St Andrews earlier in the year, was presented with his prize at Saltex '95 by Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter.

The competition was run in the Media Centre at The Open and asked journalists to predict how many bunkers the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team would rake during the course of the Championship. The final figure was 700 with one more coming in the play-off and Keith predicted 684 thus depriving Andy Farrell, Chief Reporter of Golf Weekly magazine, who had won each of the first three daily prizes with his uncannily accurate predictions only to be wildly wide of the mark on the Sunday. The final daily winner was Mike Kern of the Philadelphia Daily News.

Keith won a Hayter Harrier lawnmower valued at £600. He is pictured, left, receiving his prize kindly donated by Hayter from Kim Macfie as BIGGA Chairman Barry Heaney looks on.

Swedish study trip

A group of 18 Swedish Head Greenkeepers is visiting Scotland this month to investigate the art of greenkeeping in the Home of Golf.

The group, gathered from the Swedish Greenkeepers Association will be visiting Fife and taking in the Alfred Dunhill Cup as well as visiting links courses in the area and studying how the education of greenkeepers is undertaken at Elmwood College in Cupar.

One stop shop gears up for autumn

Wokingham-based Grass Roots is gearing up for a busy autumn as it caters for the needs of the greenkeeper. The one-stop shop for everything from turfcare consumables, machinery sales and service to furnishings and maintenance means the greenkeeper doesn't have to spend time shopping around for individual suppliers.

The company guarantees a definite time of arrival for any order and a daily 2.5% retrospective discount with be offered until the order is confirmed. The office is open to quote and take orders from 7am to 9pm six days a week and they can be contacted on Tel: 01734 771185 Fax: 01734 785116.

