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Eagle Promotions 544 45
Elliott Miles 634 55
Eric Hunter 73 70
Even Products 600 65
Evergreen UK 535 65
Fairfield Turf 536 65
Pheasants 635 65
Pine 640 65
Green Roots 470 42
Green Realism 560 67, 69
Greenwood 312 65
Hart 56 60
Henderson 637 17
Hewlett 638 60
ILS Irrigation 639 48
Inch Turf Finance 639 48
Ink 71 75
IOG 659 6, 25
John Deere Coats 665 75
Kanegi 544 70
LGB Group 659 19
Ley UK 61 28, 29
Lindsay Seeds Turf 30 28
Lymington 167 20
Mafford 167 20
MFL Contracts 307 54
Mansebrothers 133 76
OCM Associates 232 75
Ohyama 301 40, 43
Johnson Seeds 551 40, 43
Pittodrie Turf 169 70
Prestige Sport 576 63
Quinn 495 71
Richard Campey 496 71
Rhine Powers 76 50, 79
Rufford Soil Technology 65 35
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August 1999
Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by September 6, 1999

Regulars

News
Pages 8, 9, 10, 12

13 Letters

15 The Learning Experience
On a Charge. Bruce Stanley looks at the advance of the battery mower

18 Education
BIGGA Education & Training Manager, Ken Richardson looks at the educational opportunities available to members, and also gives details of the BIGGA Essay Competition

19 Membership Update

49-53 Around the Green

68 Sandy McDivot
First Tee Nerves

90 Features Listing
Helping you track down some of Greenkeeper International’s previous articles

90 As I see it...
BIGGA’s Chairman, Gordon Child reports on his visits to Scotland, BIGGA’s Golf Day, Fred Hawtree’s presentation and still has time to read some old magazines

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August 1999 Greenkeeper International 3
Well done John and the team

John Philip was described as "a greenkeeper out of control" by David Duval. He was accused of fertilising the rough by several experienced pros and, if some rumours are to be believed, is a close relation of the Marquis de Sade.

In fact all John had done - in conjunction with his own Links Management Committee and the R&A - was to bring a fine old links back into tip top condition and provide a challenge few of the professionals had ever faced before. The fairways were a little tighter than was perhaps comfortable and sure the rough was...well rough, but the Angus area has been particularly wet and grass tends to grow in these types of conditions.

The players had launched their media offensive against the course well before the week started. The winning total was by all accounts going to be around 300. Well, 29 players broke 300 and the winning total, matched by three players, was the equivalent of two 72 and two 73s. Not too outrageous.

But isn't the score irrelevant? Isn't the idea to identify the Champion? The man who mastered the conditions the best? What score did O'Meara shoot to win at Birkdale last year? I'm blown if I can remember, and frankly it doesn't matter. Jean van de Velde played the best golf for 71 holes and would have been a deserving champion. Paul Lawrie was superb in the play-off and as a result is a deserving champion - someone who won The Open not just the beneficiary of someone's sad stumble.

So why the criticism?

You don't hear cyclists in the Tour de France, which was running at the same time as The Open, complaining to the organisers that a particular climb was too steep. They get on with it. Skiers tackling the fearsome Hannenkamm mountain in the annual downhill race take pride in completing the course. They don't look at their times and say we only averaged 55mph and not 65mph, as we usually do, so the spectators are being short changed.

Even Formula One drivers, who one might forgive for prima donnaish tendencies, usually blame the set up of their cars rather than the layout of the track for disappointing times.

Professional golfers get many advantages not open to club golfers. In The Open they have ball spotters on every hole. They get free drops, line of sight rulings, they get someone to carry their bag, cars to pick them up from their hotels...the list goes on, yet still they moan.

John Philip and his team did a tremendous job at Carnoustie and the set-up of the course showed real imagination. Sure it was tight, but it was not unplayable, and in the end it produced an Open which will be remembered for many years to come.

Coupled with the fine new hotel it surely has guaranteed Carnoustie a permanent place back on The Open rota...even if the very thought will cause some nightmares.

Editor: Scott MacCallum