Leatherjacket numbers on increase

Leatherjacket numbers are at their highest for five years - and that means turf is at risk this spring unless greenkeepers act now. That warning comes from Dow AgroSciences' Andy Cawley, who says that the company's Pestwatch monitoring service shows a 30% rise in numbers compared with last year.

"That increase can be attributed to the relatively mild weather this winter, and fine turf could suffer significant damage this season if populations are left unchecked," said Andy.

"Leatherjackets attack grass roots just below the soil surface, which can reduce the plant's drought tolerance, and may cause it to die. The first signs of damage will be seen as straw-coloured patches of turf. With drier conditions later in the year, these become bare and are then invaded by weeds. Groundsmen should also look for birds feeding on turf for the crane fly larvae." Andy urges greenkeepers to consult their local adviser for further advice on leatherjacket control, and to look out for signs of leatherjacket activity.

Tim finds a top prize in the bunkers

After months of attempting to establish a day when three busy people were free, the top prize for the 1998 Great BIGGA Bunker Competition was presented to Tim Glover, of The Independent on Sunday, by Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director for Hayter, at Mill Ride Golf Club.

Tim was the member of the Open Championship media who was closest in his estimation of how many bunkers would be found during the course of the four days. In the end the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team raked 1140 bunkers - the second highest total since statistics began being kept - and Tim's estimate of 1160 was only 20 out. As a reward he received a Hayter Harrier lawn mower - recently voted the Machine of the Decade - worth £1700.

The presentation took place at Mill Ride Golf Club, Ascot, not far from Tim's home in Datchet, on the tee of the 15th hole where several months earlier Derek Lawrensen, a golf writing colleague of Tim's, won a £180,000 Lamborghini for a hole-in-one in the company of the England football squad.

While not quite in that class, Tim was more than delighted to win his prize.

Thanks go to Kim and Hayter for donating the prize for the fourth consecutive year and to Gordon Irvine, of Mill Ride, for his hospitality.