Announcing
The Lawn Company

Turf Professionals who have dreamed of owning their own business had a look into the future with the launch of The Lawn Company at BTME. The new enterprise, conceived as a van based franchise aims to bring a professional approach to domestic lawn maintenance.

The brain child of Mike Seaton, who has 20 year's experience caring for amenity turf first as a Groundsman and latterly as founder and Managing Director of Weed Free, The Lawn Company will control weeds and moss, aerate, scarify and top dress, in an integrated programme which will leave the home owner nothing to do but cut the grass.

"Since I started Weed Free, the domestic market has changed beyond all recognition," says Mike.

"The demand for stylish, labour saving areas which are both aesthetically pleasing and able to double as an outside room has been created by a flash of TV programmes growing the use of modern, low maintenance gardens.

Amid the mountain of paving, decking and gravel, the lack of advice and specialist lawn care services is noticeable by its absence. The Lawn Company is perfectly equipped and positioned to fill this need," says Mike.

"As every turf manager knows, grass care is a science, not something that is practised on a weekly basis, but one that requires new thinking to cater for the new markets created by the consumer and the weather."

In terms of the franchise model, Mike believes that The Lawn Company offers commercial opportunities, especially for people already operating within the amenity turf industry.

A comprehensive training course, on-going support package including an interactive link connecting all Franchisees directly to Head Office, and The Lawn Company Operations Manual - a translation of 20 years turf care experience into accessible advice and straightforward know-how are all part of the package that is offered.

Mike says the opportunity exists for existing operators in the industry to develop their own businesses starting small and growing if demand is there.

"We are way behind America, where one out of five households hire lawn and landscape services, spending 14 billion dollars on maintenance alone."

The key to success, says Mike, is to develop the best team possible, and focus on quality. Small is beautiful and there is a strong focus on training and support from the business model. The Lawn Company offers a complete franchise package, including training and support of its franchisees, which is geared towards helping franchisees achieve their goals.

"The Lawn Company is about providing peace of mind for our customers, and an exciting opportunity for those who are looking to start their own business in the turf care industry."

Sharpe's + Mommersteeg = Advanta

Amenity grass seed breeder Advanta Seeds UK, took the chance to announce that they had completed a year of corporate restructuring, combining the operations of the two well-known seed suppliers, Mommersteeg and Sharpe's International, under the one new company name. Sharpe's was previously owned by Booker Seeds, while Mommersteeg International was a part of the Dutch based Royal Van de Heve group. The latter merged with Zeneca in January 1998 to form Advanta Seeds.

For the past two years, Mommersteeg and Sharpe's have been operating autonomously under the Advanta banner, but since 1 Jan 2000, the two separate companies ceased to exist.

Advanta is the fifth largest seed business in the world - breeding and maintaining the full range of amenity and agricultural crops, through 35 operating companies in 20 countries.

Swiss award

Steven Tierney, a British greenkeeper based in Switzerland, has won a prestigious Environmental Steward Award with the GCSAA - the first time a European based greenkeeper has won such an award.

Incorporated into the GCSAA, who is Course Manager at Golf Park Nuolen, Wan gen, one of Switzerland's 70 golf courses, only to become the competition after he discovered that the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition was only open to English golf clubs. "My golf club is only four years old but as Switzerland is not in the EC our own regulations are extremely tight. For example every six weeks our water is tested by the Government and they have the power to close us down if we are not up to scratch," explained Steven travel's to New Orleans later this month to receive his award.

BTME DIARY OF THE WEEK – NEIL MANN

Saturday January 15

An early start this year meeting with Steve and Monica Montague at Aldwick Manor. They've just flown in from the USA and it's a real pleasure to show them around BIGGA HOUSE. Bill is one of BIGGA's greatest supporters and flies the flag for greenkeeper education as well as the environment.

Sunday January 16

I reflect that I am driving to Harrogate for the first time this year and how time has flown through the halls. We are delighted to welcome Andrew Sunovar, Peter Bell and David Withers from Textron to the Dinner and the company's support of the Learning Experience programme, now in its fifth year, is instrumental to the success of the BTME week. Their backing of greenkeeper education stretches back over many, many years and we have much to thank the company for as a Golden Key supporter in terms of the educational and training provisions available to BIGGA members as we enter the new century.

A moderately late night as the week stretches ahead and stamina is all important.

Tuesday January 18

Delegates are up early and reasonably fit for another day of Conference and workshops. Meanwhile the pace is quickening down at the exhibition halls. This year we are in Hall Q for the first time and with the expansion of the show we anticipate logistical problems. Jenny is doing well however and there are no major issues to concentrate the mind. Why do the great majority of companies decide to arrive at around the same time when there is a two day spread? I don't expect that will change.

In the afternoon there is a short Board of Management meeting with Gordon completing his two year stint and Elliott Small being elected as Chairman with Clive Osgood from Walton Heath as his Vice Chairman. The exhibitors' reception is being held down by Hall Q and everything seems in place. For me the day ends at the seventh Hayter Dinner in the George Hotel. This seems part of the BTME tradition now with Barbara Garten as the gracious hostess and Kim Maclie, as always, humorously in charge of the evening. Back in the Majestic the Past Chairman are in evidence by their red blazers and much food for thought emerges from their annual dinner.

Wednesday January 19

One of Gordon's last duties is to cut the ribbon at 9am at the entrance to Hall A. Meanwhile the new entrance at Hall Q opened on Monday. Why can't we be in two places at once.

How many will realise there is a new entrance? Our fears proved groundless and a great response helped by the proximity of the Majest Hotel. The halls are very busy and our audience is evenly distributed through halls A, B, C and Q. Mike made a note for next year to tighten up access in the show area.

A large audience gathers for the keynote Speaker session. I have the privilege, a real privilege, of spending some time
New degree from BIGCA

The British Institute of Golf Course Architects used the show to announce the formation of a degree course in golf course architecture to be established at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, in conjunction with the University and its specialist college, Edinburgh College of Art, as well as Merrist Wood and Elmwood Colleges.

The course, which will take the form of a two-centre field study programme, will be expanded to take in a two-centre field study programme, which will be conducted not only in Surrey, where the Institute is based, but also in Fife, so that diploma students can experience, at first hand and in practical terms the historic links courses of that part of Great Britain.

In February 2000, there will be a total of 31 students at Merrist Wood, from 14 different countries.

Blizzard hits Harrogate

Allen Blizzard couldn't believe his luck when he visited the BIGGA Career's Clinic, run by Brin Bendon and Frank Newberry, during BTME 2000. Having gone in for advice on the presentation of his CV Allen left with a conditional place at Ohio State University. In the ultimate case of being in the right place at the right time Allen, whose ambition had always been to attend that particular university, found himself chatting to Master Greenkeeper Bill Montague who had popped in to see how a CV differed from the American Resumé. Bill, who is from Ohio, revealed that he lectured at the University and tracked down Michael O'Neil, who was also attending the show and who stated it is to clear all European applications for Ohio State. Michael checked out Allen's CV and told him that if he passed his Cannington College course a place was his! As he is progressing well at Cannington and passing all his exams to date he is as good as there. Now that's service! The Careers' Clinic was a great success with Brin and Frank handling 120 cases over the course of the two days.

BTME - BEING THERE MEANS EVERYTHING

talking with Simon Weston. A fellow Welshman, he talk of rugby and many other things Welsh. He is an impressive man in so many ways. His talk receives rapt attention from a large audience and not a few tears along the way. It ends with a standing ovation. Simon surely sets a supreme example of how to cope with adversity and to get the very best out of life.

Quickly to the Majestic to set up the presentations at the Chairman's Luncheon to our Golden and Silver Key company supporters. A special pleasure to meet Joe Vargas. The Chairman makes a rapid visit to the Chairman's reception for VIP guests and then to the banquet. Guests are arriving in hordes and some of their 'gear' is drawing attention. Upstairs the bar area is a hive of activity and noise. The announcement of dinner is ignored not once but many times with claims that the announcements were not heard above the din. Dining eventually commences some 20 minutes late. However, we start catching up and at 10.10pm I am able to introduce the Chairman to say a few words and then the moment has come and the Bootleg Beatles take to the stage. Simultaneously our intrepid members take to the dance floor. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails. The numbers are excellent pouring into the halls and another busy day is in prospect. At 6.30pm it's the Bootleg Beatles to entertain and a buoyant atmosphere prevails.

The years roll on but BTME remains very special. It is unsurpassed as a gathering for greenkeepers from all over the world. It is now a truly international show anticipated eagerly by companies and members alike. There is a unique atmosphere and already we look forward to 2001. I would urge members to be strong in their determination to be there for they will most certainly be better for the experience and feel very much a part of the great community of greenkeepers.

Friday January 21

It's Friday morning and you know the feeling well. The pace in the halls is sedate yet this is a good day to visit for those who want easy access to the stands and to get their business done. They won't get trampled in the rush but at least they will be able to talk with those whom they are seeking. The seminars end on a strong note with Dr Joe Vargas. The Chairman makes a grand draw with proceeds going to the Imperial Cancer Fund. Farewells on all sides for another year. I thank my exhausted staff who have done a fantastic job.

Everyone's a winner

The prize winners in the BIGGA Charity Raffle to raise money for the Imperial Cancer Research Campaign were:

- A Holiday Break at Garden Park G&CC - Neil Moyley
- Epami Software - David Marnoch
- Education Pack 2001 - Philip Bennett
- Majestic Holiday weekend - lain Macleod
- St George Hotel Break - Roger Eede
- Vauxhall Car Hire - Dougal Duguid
- Crown Hotel Weekend - Andy Smith
- 2000 Open Tickets - Richard Barker
- Two Banquet Tickets for BTME 2001 - Andy Campbell
- Tzoid Driver - S. Yates
- Snooker Cue - Ernie Walker
- Champagne - Terry Hamel and Steve Hasell.

The winner of the £500 Holiday voucher for introducing new members to the Association was Mark Smith, Head Greenkeeper at Drayton Park Golf Club.

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