Capability Brown, the famous landscape gardener, left his mark on some of the greatest gardens in the UK. Part of his style was to create large vistas that drew the eye to a distant point and in a way this is exactly what the golf course fairway does. It concentrates the golfer's sight on his ultimate goal - the green. In doing so they should test his control of the ball and judgment as to where best to place it for the next shot. They also link the landscaping and add an aesthetic quality to the overall scenery and are an important element of courses that appear on television. Maintaining them has changed over the last two decades, especially the rough. In the past a wayward shot might finish up in impenetrable grass or scrub. This often meant golfers spent considerable time searching for their ball. In those days there were fewer golfers and probably less pressure to speed up the play. The density and extent of the semi and deep rough is generally determined by each club's course management programme.

Roland Taylor examines the world of the fairway mower

Fairways

The objective is to create a uniformity of grass cover. Mowing frequency will depend on growth and prevailing weather conditions and height of cut should be such that the ball sits well on the turf. With such large areas to maintain there are going to be considerable variances in the ground contours, so care has to be taken to avoid scalping. The first fairway mowers were single trailed units pulled by a horse. With the introduction of three and
five gang mowers the animal power was replaced with petrol or diesel power. Many courses still use this system today or variations of it. Trailed gang mowers rely for their cylinder drive from wheel traction and as such consistency of reel speed can vary due to ground conditions. With the advent of hydraulic systems, manufacturers found the solution to this problem by fitting motors to each cutting, thus producing a uniform reel speed regardless of the terrain. There was also another advantage by fitting hydraulic rams on the carrier each unit could be lifted independently - a feature which makes transporting between sizes and getting through narrow entrances easy. There are still plenty of gang mowers trailed or power driven available for clubs that prefer this method of moving their fairways.

Time does not stand still and the next phase of development saw the introduction of self-powered fairway mowers - the point we are at today. Golf suddenly took off as a sport for all and golf courses suddenly sprung up virtually everywhere, so the demand for specialist equipment quickly grew.

The advent of the fairway mower heralded a change in manufacturers interests in golf course machinery as up until then there had been only a few companies directly involved. Speed and efficiency were the key factors and in addition operator comfort became important and words such as fatigue began to appear.

Over the last few years the competitive element has made manufacturers
look long and hard at their designs so
there are now plenty of machines to
choose from with a host of benefits
that are aimed to make the job effi-
cient, cost effective and easy.
Regardless of whose name is on the
label the modern fairway mower nor-
mally has a diesel engine, hydraulic
transmission and drives plus power
steering. Generally cutting configura-
tions are similar and made up of three
or five units. Ergonomics have played
an important part and features such
as all round visibility, fully adjustable
seat and driving column are common.
The cutting units are fully floating,
ground hugging with usually a choice
of 5, 7 or 11-bladed reels.
Other types of options offered
depending on the make include grass
catchers and interchangeable units for
scarring, verticutting and brushing.
Electronics are now becoming a kev
feature especially in diagnosing a fault
in the engine or hydraulic system and
these can save a lot of down time try-
ing to locate the source of the problem
On the question of maintenance the

Large range of Quality
Finishing mowers.
Flail Mowers and Fertiliser
Spreaders,

GAMBETTI BARRE UK
Sales Tel:01361 883418 Fax:01361 882052
or Bill Oliver Tel / Fax: 0116 2864514

Tungston Carbide
tipped Verti-cut blades
and Quality Turf Irons
from WOODBAY

Large range of Quality
Finishing mowers.
Flail Mowers and Fertiliser
Spreaders.

See or full range of Sprayer and
Amenity Products at

Large range of Quality
Finishing mowers.
Flail Mowers and Fertiliser
Spreaders.

www.gambetti.co.uk

GAMBETTI BARRE UK
Sales Tel:01361 883418 Fax:01361 882052
or Bill Oliver Tel / Fax: 0116 2864514

Tungston Carbide
tipped Verti-cut blades
and Quality Turf Irons
from WOODBAY

Large range of Quality
Finishing mowers.
Flail Mowers and Fertiliser
Spreaders.

See or full range of Sprayer and
Amenity Products at

www.gambetti.co.uk

CONQUEROR MK II

The Allett Conqueror combines impressive work rate,
total stability on banks and the ability
to cut long grass cleanly, even in
wet conditions
- Hydrostatic transmission
- Wide wheel base and ATv type
rear tyres gives great traction and
stability
- 16HP twin cylinder engine
- 7" diameter, heavy duty
cutting cylinders

AZTEC

The Allett Aztec is a superb pedestrian
cylinder mower ideal for maintaining
golf greens. A range of fully floating
hydraulic attachments are available
in both 20" and 24" widths
- 6 or 10 bladed cylinders with or without Groomer
- Scarifier, Verticut or Brush units available
- Changed in seconds, no tools required
- In-built back-lapping facility

Allett Mowers Limited
Baden Powell Road, Kirkton Industrial Estate
Arbroath, Scotland DD11 3LS
Tel: 01241 873841 Fax 01241 877419
Email: sales@allett.co.uk www.allett.co.uk
things to look out for are accessibility
to all components especially the reel
tein. If you are considering buying
alternative reels it is important at the
demonstration to ask the operator to
change these over. You can then judge
how easy it is and the time it takes.
This is also a good time to ask about
the availability of replacement parts.

The rough
The semi rough defines the point
where the fairway merges with the
rough and its width will vary between
courses. The cutting height needs to
be no more than about 60mm and
should be carried out regularly with
the gang type mowers so there is a
clear indication where the deep rough
begins.

When it comes to heavy rough
the type of mower used will differ from
course to course. As the vegetation is
going to be left relatively long (about
10cm) the machine has to be able to
cope and a rotary or flail could be the
best answer. How many times and at
what intervals will largely depend on
the plant life. In the case of heather
to promote formation of young growth
and to stop it becoming leggy it will
require mowing in the autumn.

On courses where wild flora is being
sown and encouraged then the man-
agement programme is different
depending on how long it has been
established. In the first year it needs
to be cut and collected regularly at
height of 5cm and 7cm throughout
the growing period. In the second year
and following seasons the first flush of
spring growth should be mown and
the cuttings removed. Continue until
late May when the mowing should
cease to allow the flowers to bloom.
When flowering declines towards the
end of the summer mow and collect
again. Further cuts can be carried out
until October.

For flower management a rotary or
flail with collecting facilities is a must,
otherwise the clearing operation is
extremely labour intensive. This type
of machine is not only useful for this
job but it can be used also for collec-
ting leaves. There are a number
available and the main thing to look
out for when having these demon-
strated is their ability to collect in wet
conditions. Otherwise in the present
climate you are going to be faced with
either not being able to cut, or con-
tinually having to unblock the
machine.

Where the rough is made up pre-
dominately of grasses then the rotary
is an alternative to gang mowers.
There is a variety of cutting widths to
choose from either as tractor-mount-
ed or shelf contained units. During the
last decade we have seen the intro-
duction of wide trailed rotary mowers
made up of cutting units which are
independent of each other, so they are
able to follow the ground contours
closely. Again they are worth checking
out if the terrain is difficult with scal-
ping often occurring.

Another alternative is to let areas
naturally develop, but these will
require some controlled management.
If they do need thinning out or some
cutting, then the new spate of ride-on
brush cutters are suited because they
can deal with relatively heavy brush
wood and saplings.

The fact that the fairways and adjoin-
ning rough account for the biggest areas
to maintain means the equipment has
to be fast and cost effective. What is
suitable for one course is not necessar-
ily the right answer for another. With
mowing areas of this size there are a
host of variables to take into account,
so before changing from one method
to another carefully analyse all the pros
and cons - then look at as many
machines as possible before deciding.