Why, oh why, oh why?

There are occasions in the middle of the night when questions pop into my head and refuse to budge until I've given them due consideration. Granted, not all of them have a definitive answer, and some of them don't deserve an answer at all, but they are nonetheless, nagging away at me and preventing me from returning to the land of nod.

I've decided that the best thing to do is to open them up to you, the readership, so you can share my torment.

Unfortunately there is no prize, but if you do come up with an answer to any of them I'm sure you'll be viewed upon with increased respect by your friends and colleagues while you could set yourself up as an amateur physiologist.

Why does your putting always go when you're nailing your irons?

Why do all BIGGA members work at clubs where the club down the road has the better greens?

Why are there more Championship golf courses than have been Championships?

Why do so many people assume that other people's job are much easier than they actual are?

Why does someone always call up to enquire if you'd every considered a new conservatory just as the What Happens Next? round in Question of Sport is about to start?

Why do supermarkets have these stupid revolving doors which never work?

Why do people who scream up the outside lane of dual carriageways before turning left at the roundabout, always get away with it?

Why does someone put Sod's Law on the statute book?

Why did someone put someone off as in "To be fair, he's always been a bit of a donkey, to be fair."

Why does time always go faster when you're running late?

As I said I don't expect a stream on answers landing on my desk just the knowledge that you might well be wrestling with the same thoughts as I am now make me feel a little bit better.

Why in the Winter Olympics, do they give fancy names to things like Luge, Skeleton and Bob when we all know that they are just sledding?

If any of you have questions which cause you similar angst perhaps we should get together and start a Self Help Group.

Textron renew agreement with Gleneagles

Textron and their distributor, Scottish Grass Machinery, have signed a new four year agreement with The Gleneagles Hotel to provide a range of turf maintenance equipment to keep the internationally renowned courses in immaculate condition.

As a result of this new agreement, Textron/SGM will provide a full range of turf maintenance equipment, light utility vehicles and E-Z-GO golf cars for use on the three championship courses - the King's, the Queen's and the Jack Nicklaus-designed, PGA Centenary course.

Additional support for major tournaments also forms part of the package together with technical and operator training at Textron's Ipswich head office, SGM's Irwikerheeting premises or on-site at Gleneagles. Reciprocal arrangements will see the greens-keeping team at Gleneagles training and evaluating new products, including the Jacobsen E-Plex II, the all-electric ride-on greens mower.

"I am delighted with this new agreement between Textron, their distributor, Scottish Grass Machinery and ourselves. It provides our Golf Superintendent, Scott Fenwick and his team with a raft of top quality equipment to ensure that the golf courses will continue to remain in superb condition all year long," said Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estate Director at The Gleneagles Hotel.

"I am equally delighted that Textron and SGM will be actively supporting our greenskeeper training initiative, sponsoring a greenskeeper exchange with a golf club in the USA. Also they will be initiating a 'Greenkeeper of the Year' award open to all greenkeepers that are employed at Textron's exclusive partnership golf clubs in Scotland and continuing their support for GEGAS, The Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award Scheme, the international training scheme for young greenkeepers from around the globe."

Glynn Patrick, Textron's Sales Director added, "This prestigious contract involves a whole host of equipment from our Cushman, Jacobsen, Ransomes, and Ryan brands including greens mowers, fairway mowers, rotary mowers for semi-rough, aerators, top dresser and turf utility vehicles and the very latest Cashman Diablone, all electric, mid-range utility vehicle.

"It also reaffirms our long-held commitment to training and the subsequent raising of standards in this industry, not just here in the UK, but across the world. It's an ethos that Jimmy Kidd continues to espouse and one that we fully endorse," he added.

Annual Patrons' Lunch a huge success

The Scottish Region held its annual Patrons' Award Dinner in Stirling just before Christmas. A great day was had by all Patron Members and Award winners as well as Section representatives and guests.

The Scottish Region would like to thank all Patrons for everything they do for the Region because if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have our Scottish Conference, have superb prize tables at Section events or the numerous other ways they assist the Region and the Sections in Scotland.

The Patrons’ Scheme awards two winners from each Section with a trip to BTME for three days, including accommodation and travel, and a greenkeeping book.

The Patrons' Award winners from 2002 who have already benefitted from their prize were Alan Campbell and Ian Aritchson, East; Martin Carey and Colin Black, West; Wallace Mercer and Paul Tulloch, Ayrshire; Kenneth Kirknaird and Robert Hardie, North, and Gordon Mitchell and Stuart Cruickshank, Central.

The dinner was a huge success and the after dinner speaker, Ex Scottish referee, Brian McGinlay, went down a storm. The speakers who Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, tracks down just seem to get better and better each year.

Chris Yeaman
St Andrews Links sign up with Toro

St Andrews Links has chosen Toro greens and tees mowers to maintain its six historic courses at the world’s most famous golf complex.

Toro irrigation products have been in use at St Andrews since 1998, with each course now using the fully automated Toro SitePro Central Control System.

Now St Andrews Links Trust has strengthened its relationship with Toro by entering into a five-year preferred supplier agreement for a range of greens and tees mowers.

Links Superintendent Gordon Moir heads a team of 51 staff who maintain Europe’s largest golfing site and the home of golf.

“We put the Toro mowers through an exhaustive evaluation programme alongside other manufacturers during the spring and summer of 2001. The feedback from a large majority of the greens staff was that Toro tees and greens mowers were the best overall, for equality of cut and ease of operation.”

During the early part of this year, St Andrews has taken delivery of 20 Greensmaster 1000 and 14 Greensmaster 3200-D ride-on machines and three Reelmaster 3100-D Sidewinder.

As part of the deal, St Andrews Links Trust will receive comprehensive back-up, service and parts supplied by Toro local dealer George Henderson, plus full training for its operators and maintenance staff.

“The greens staff are really looking forward to the arrival of the new mowers and I am confident that working closely with Toro will bring success for both parties,” added Gordon.

Training aids supplied

BIGGA and the STRI have joined forces to further the cause of greenkeepers.

Nigel Weller, winner of the Vitax prize draw conducted at BTME, dearly wanted to spend his BIGGA voucher on the NVQ level 2 theory notes, which are available on CD at £90. As Head Greenkeeper of North Downs Golf Club in Surrey, and a D.32-33 assessor, he has already taken one member of his staff, Paul Varley through the course, and has two more assistant greenkeepers ready to start.

“A new lad joined us last week, which gives us a staff of six, who are all relatively young,” he says. “Our policy is to wait a year, see how they do, and then start training them. I’ve got one lad, Ian Cardy who was due to begin last September but has been in hospital. He will start the course this year. My other lad, Stuart White, is due to sit in September.

Unfortunately, BIGGA do not produce the disc, but Ken Richardson, the Association’s Education and Training Manager has agreed to buy it from the STRI and give it to Nigel as part of his winnings.

“Anything to encourage Greenkeeper Education and Training”, he says. “We’ve got to make it as easy for people as we can.”

As Nigel and his deputy, Phillip Waterman hold NVQ 3, success for Ian and Stuart will be a further step in the club’s progress towards a fully qualified staff.

Awards success for Irrigation Control Ltd

If awards give an indication of a company’s success then Irrigation Control Limited of Winsford must be the most successful irrigation contracting company in the world just now. Not only did they receive the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Associations Certificate of Merit award (formally The Contractor of the Year Award) at this year’s BTME at Harrogate, but they went on to be awarded the Rain Bird International Contractor of the Year award at the GCSAA Orlando USA earlier this month.

“Obviously this is a great start to the year for us but it hasn’t been an instant success. We’ve won several awards over the last few years including a specialist sub contractor award from BALF for work we undertook for J Mallinson (Ormskirk) Limited, a Government backed award for an innovative customer care program that we developed and previous BTUA Certificate of Merit success,” said Phil Beakley, Managing Director of Irrigation Control.
Communications Director for Wardle

Wardle Consultant Engineers Ltd has expanded its management team with the appointment of Stephen Baker as a director of the company. Steve, 42, joins the team as Communications Director and brings with him over 20 years of marketing experience.

"As we continue to expand I knew there would come a point when we would need to really address some of the fundamentals in this industry and that requires a fresh marketing approach," said Giles Wardle, Managing Director.

"Our client list has tended to reflect the premium end of the market in the UK and abroad, with clients such as The Gleneagles Hotel, Carnoustie Links, The Turnberry Hotel, Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club and Cherokee Plantation Links, South Carolina. This has always given the industry two major misconceptions about Wardle; firstly, that only the top clubs can 'afford' to work with consultants and secondly that irrigation consultancy represents an additional cost. We aim to inform the industry at large that most clients of ours actually save money by using us because we ensure true competition between bidding contractors who are all tendering for the same design and specification, drafted by us to meet the unique needs of the site and the client consulting Engineers Ltd," said Giles.

Ocmis joins the Mansell team

Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club, the 27 hole golfing complex owned by former Formula 1 World Champion, Nigel Mansell, is to undergo a complete irrigation refit during the first half of 2002. Ocmis Irrigation (UK) Ltd have designed and will install the new greens and twin row fairway irrigation system for the 18 hole championship course and 9 hole acorns course.

Using Rain Bird Eagle Series electric valve in head sprinklers on the greens and fairway areas and the Rain Bird Nimbus II map based PC control system, both with Freedom radio remote control and Freedom-pad remote control (based on a handheld Compag iPaq).

The heart of the system comprises a variable speed pumping station, which will deliver over 22000 gallons of water per hour through 25 kilometres of medium density polyethylene pipeline, which ranges from 315mm to 50mm in size. A majority of the pipe installation will be undertaken by one of a number of large vibratory moleplough machines owned and operated by Ocmis, minimising disruption and scarring.

ETC has recently moved its location to Tilstone Fearnall in Cheshire to facilitate a further expansion programme. The new location includes a modern workshop and extensive storage facilities for the wide variety of reconditioned and new grass maintenance machines supplied by ETC.

"The improved facilities will mean better levels of stocking of a wide range of second hand equipment," said Managing Director, Andy Smith.

He added that ETC is now in its seventh year and has grown steadily year on year.

Matt swaps pucks and whistles for balls and pins

Matt Folka, a golf enthusiast with an added passion for ice hockey, has become Mere Golf & Country Club’s newest greenkeeper.

Canadian, Matt was a professional International Ice Hockey referee and has continued his passion for the sport in this country where he is a professional referee for the Ice Hockey Superleague.

Matt will use his 12 years experience in greenkeeping to help maintain Mere Golf & Country Club and will report to Mere’s Course Manager, Paul Hyde, and Course Superintendent, Stuart Boyce.

Previously, Matt spent seven years as a fire fighter with Maple Ridge fire department before taking up a greenkeeping position at the prestigious Swan-e-set Bay Golf Club in Vancouver.

He then moved to England 1996 and worked at Huyton and Prescott Golf Course in Merseyside until he was appointed by Mere Golf & Country Club in Cheshire. Continuing his career development, Matt is currently studying for a NVQ Level II qualification in amenities sports turf.
Svenningsens TurfCare-Scandinavia, of Kastrup, Denmark and Lindkoping, Sweden, has won the Textron Distributor of the Year Award for 2001.

Managing Director Niels Svenningsen and Golf Sales Manager, Niels Brems, accepted the silver trophy and commemorative plaque from Glynn Patrick, Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products’ Sales Director, and former Olympic silver medallist, Roger Black, at an evening awards ceremony held at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate at BTME. Textron dealers from the UK, Eire and Europe attended the ceremony; continental European distributors, Svenningsens have demonstrated exceptional performance across all areas of their business and tremendous commitment to the Textron franchise. They thoroughly deserve the title of Textron Distributor of the Year,” said Peter Bell, Marketing Director.

Niels Svenningsen returned to the podium to receive a special award for Outstanding Service to the Grounds Maintenance Industry recognising his company’s 340 years of service in the industry sector followed soon after by Keith Sutton, from Burrows (GM) Ltd of Preston, Lancs, who collected a similar award as his company celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2001.

Fishwick Hall Golf Club lives up to its name

Fishwick Hall Golf Club, on the River Ribble lived up to its name recently when the greens were more likely to see fish than birdies. Course Manager of the Preston club Paul Eddleston, had no complaints when he put up the Course Closed sign as the course disappeared under feet of water bringing back many memories for many who had suffered in a similar fashion last year.

With the depth and breadth of equipment, manufacturers, seminars and ancillary products available for viewing and discussion the experience cannot be beaten, and it’s all under one roof!

A student’s perspective of Harrogate

For many students this is the first real chance they have to meet and chat with industry professionals, whether they be greenkeepers, Course Managers, agronomists or sales representatives. It also proves to be an ideal and neutral ground for meeting Course Managers wishing to interview or chat to students about their particular golf course, the possibility of work placements with them and allows all to gain a deeper insight before taking the, what seems at the time, big step.

Students are also encouraged to pick up literature, brochures and flyers that can be used to reinforce future assignments and projects.

This year the hospitality of the

South West Region, the size and scope of the exhibition, in fact the whole experience, generated some excellent comments from students such as:

“Thoroughly enjoyable and a great atmosphere,” Martin Slater, First Year HND student, while Alan Pyne, a HNC student, said “I am amazed at how large the industry actually is.”

From further afield Jose Manual Barbancho Ruiz, a HNC student from Madrid, said, “I found Harrogate 2002 was a very good opportunity for me to understand the trends of the turf industry and I had the chance to meet very experienced professionals,” while James Hallett, a HNC student from South Africa said, “Overall, a great experience and very educational. It was a good trip.”

Of course, comments about the night life around Harrogate remain a memory that is best left unprinted, although amazingly, all managed to make breakfast every morning!