rightness of providing rate-payers with golf a reasonable prices, green fees being a maximum £6.85 at weekends, with concessions for the unemployed mid-week. Even at these modest levels Thamesdown's golf makes a substantial contribution to the borough's income. Perhaps as a result, councillors are positive about the facility and willing to reinvest.

Thamesdown has invested £800,000 in golf in the last two years, the major projects being at Highworth and the extensions and improvements at Broome Manor. They also plan a further £250,000 for a substantial expansion of the Clubhouse. The authority's interest in golf stems from 1976 when the original 18 holes were laid out, the range coming in '82 and the additional 9 holes a year later.

Neither men claim that these courses are the country's best and are well aware of the problems, many of which stem from past work carried out while working to a budget, resulting in obvious deficiencies. Kelvin is acutely aware that the courses are over-used, adding that compaction required a lot more work to be carried out.

Soil at Broome Manor is predominantly clay, allowing the formation of several ponds and streams, and adding significantly to interest. While there is only limited underdrainage there have been few problems in recent dry years, though one specific area of more sandy soil is heir to compaction as it slumps in the wet. However, the complex has its own Verti-drain.

The golf side works autonomously within the parks department and they have their own machinery, which is relatively modern and well maintained by their own fitter. Tractors are usually second-hand after Parks and Highways have finished with them, as they do no road mileage, nor is their duty onerous. Mainstays of the mower fleet are two trailed gangs for rough and fairways, changing duty being a matter of altering the height rollers. Rough is kept short to minimise searching for lost balls. For greens and tees they have a fleet of GreenKings and Tri-Kings at Broome Manor, whilst at Highworth, where the nine hole only opened this April, pedestrian mowers are used. Both sites have irrigation on all greens, but this is used fairly frugally, with water abstracted from the mains.

However, they are meeting popular demand with an annual 60,000 rounds at each of Broome Manor's two courses and an anticipated 40,000 at Highworth. Nor will Tom allow that the standard of play is sub-standard, for they have several county players and one junior national player (Gary Harris).

The atmosphere is one of relaxed, informal friendliness, though there are disciplines, with perhaps the biggest problem being slow play. A ranger is employed to keep matches moving, though no-one admits to being slow — they always have an excuse — was Tom's comment.

Tom's view on the expansion of golf courses was entirely consistent. He considers there should be more 'village' courses of nine holes, based (perhaps) in a redundant farm building and run by a village sports club. Such facilities, he suggests, could be set up for around £120,000 and would give the maximum amount of pleasure to the maximum amount of people.

Furthermore, obtaining planning permission would be easier.

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As the acceptance of – and demand for – benefits provided by the automatic watering of extensive sports turf playing surfaces gathers momentum, it is evident that the sourcing and conservation of viable water supplies are fast becoming major issues.

This is especially relevant to golf where, in addition to the numbers of new courses being constructed every year, more and more existing Clubs, faced by increases in traffic, are investing in automatic watering systems to help greenkeepers overcome maintenance problems created by wear and tear – and equally important, present courses on a par to those seen during televised tournaments.

In the south, the vast growth of residential development plus a natural, winter rainfall – the storage facility, if designed to match the needs of an automatic watering system, could provide sufficient water to last through the bulk of most long, dry summers. Examples of this far-sighted approach are already beginning to take shape. In Devon, the design for a new 27 hole golf course at Dartmouth, currently under construction, includes a lake capable of storing 1.5 million gallons of water.

Despite the fact that full circle sprinklers use 50% more water than the more conventional pro-circle heads, the capacity of the lake is such that in the unlikely event of the bores holes drying up, the automatic watering system would be able to continue to operate daily for up to six weeks before supplies were exhausted.

In real terms, the lake, full of ‘winter water’ for use in say late March or early April onwards, would only require topping-up through the summer. If the watering programme was carried out over six months, the use of ‘peak season water’ could be reduced by up to 50% – a substantial saving.

In contrast, the specification for the nine-hole pay and play Thorney Farm golf course, being developed close to Heathrow Airport, includes the construction of a five million gallon lake.

From what Richard Skehan, director of the company developing what was to be the largest privately owned golf course in the south of England, said, the £1 million lake would provide enough water to service the system without replenishment for up to three months. As might be expected, the lake is not being created just to make the course look attractive – it will also serve as a reservoir for a pop-up system for greens, tees and approaches. The lake, capable of holding 1.25 million gallons, will be fed by two natural springs and possibly a stream containing treated water which runs from the nearby sewage treatment plant.

Talking costs, the provision of a reservoir can also reduce the price of water being piped onto the course. ‘Winter water’ is a far cheaper buy in volume than peak season water – if it is available both in time and quantity. Safeguarding water supplies is one thing, managing its usage is just as important. In this context it is obviously of equal importance to realise that the automatic watering system can play a key role in water conservation.

It will do so, providing it is properly designed, correctly installed, operated thoughtfully and serviced regularly.

The greenkeeping team can contribute much to achieve consistency of operation by learning as much as they can about the system. Sensibly, one member of the green staff should be given the responsibility of keeping a daily eye on the equipment and carrying out relatively minor adjustments or repairs. This will entail some training – often provided by the irrigation contractor who installed the system. As knowledge and experience is gained, these skills can be put to good use: saving time, (awaiting an outside engineer to arrive and solve what is often a simple fault) frayed tempers and the possible loss of thousands of gallons of precious water should a sprinkler malfunction or pipe joint fail.

Talking of maintenance, Clubs should also consider the importance of budgeting for at least one major inspection and service each year. This is best achieved by arranging a contract with the company responsible for installing the system originally, or where contact has been lost, by asking the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association to provide the name of a suitable alternative.

Footnote: Clubs should be aware that a licence to abstract water – be it from the mains, a river flowing through the course, a natural spring or by sinking boreholes is a mandatory requirement. Club secretaries should consult their nearest National River Authority office for details.

The author, Cedric Johns, is an ex-Fleet Street columnist, a PR and advertising consultant, and editor of the irrigation newsletter ‘Pipelines.’

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Wise up to winter water

a waste disposal dump, tells me, fairway watering has been specified in addition to planning for pop-ups around greens and tees. In this instance, the lake – initially filled with ‘winter water’ – will be capable of supplying enough water to service the system without replenishment for up to three or a half months!

On the Solent coast, the Barton-on-Sea Golf Club – founded in 1898 – have embarked upon an imaginative, phased re-development of their existing 18 hole course which, when completed, will consist of 27 holes plus an ornamental lake featuring an island green.

As might be expected, the lake is not being created just to make the course look attractive – it will also serve as a reservoir for a pop-up system for greens, tees and approaches. The lake, capable of holding 1.25 million gallons, will be fed by two natural springs and possibly a stream containing treated water which runs from the nearby sewage treatment plant. Top-up supplies – mains water – will be piped into a break-tank and held, prior to being pumped into the lake.

Tony Gadd, course manager at Barton says that the treated water supply will most probably be used as an emergency source although tests may well prove its viability for everyday use on the course.

So much is it going to cost members who, having an existing automatic system, appreciate the importance of the need to become relatively self-sufficient in terms of water supplies?

Surprisingly little. The provision of a reservoir – such as a large pond or lake – would, I’m told, be no more than £10-£15,000, depending on location, soil structure and ease of construction. When I asked about disposal of the resultant spoil, he replied to the effect that this could be used to build a feature somewhere else on the course – or as he succinctly put it; “sell it!”

Talking of costs, the provision of a reservoir can also reduce the price of water being piped onto the course. ‘Winter water’ is a far cheaper buy in volume than peak season water – if it is available both in time and quantity.

Safeguarding water supplies is one thing, managing its usage is just as important. In this context it is obviously of equal importance to realise that the automatic watering system can play a key role in water conservation.

Footnote: Clubs should be aware that a licence to abstract water – be it from the mains, a river flowing through the course, a natural spring or by sinking boreholes is a mandatory requirement. Club secretaries should consult their nearest National River Authority office for details.

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Courses designed for everyone

The day when your editor can sit through a day of lectures, aimed at members of that much maligned and supposedly misunderstood group 'The Golf Club Committee' – and come out smiling – has finally dawned. At such a seminar, given recently by the National Golf Clubs' Advisory Committee, it gave me much pleasure not only to listen to three speakers, but to listen to those who listened. Each an expert in his own sphere: Keith Wright spoke on "The EGU/Club Partnership", our own David Golding on "The Need for Greenkeeper Training" and John Crowther on "The Responsibilities of a Golf Club Member when elected to a Committee".

Each in his own way proved highly entertaining and, of greater importance, each had a message to put across. That they succeeded in winning 100% approval from the audience would be almost too good to be true, but the overriding message I received, in both eavesdropping and in discussion with green chairmen and secretaries, was of how those greenkeepers who had attended BIGGA management courses returned as changed men. Words hitherto taboo in committee-speak, like employee training; job progress; course excellence and college education, were no longer whispered. I even heard, and dare repeat it, 'greenkeeping management autonomy'!

I can read your mind, and anticipate your quizzical 'what's all this got to do with me?' The answer is simple. The courses, in my opinion, are meant just for you. Tell your Club secretary I said so and show him this column.

Good jobs for first full-time students

The value of a full-time education course for potential greenkeepers has been amply demonstrated by news of four young men who attended the first such course ever held in Britain, all of whom have been appointed to good positions.

It was four years ago that a three year B Tech National Diploma in Turf Science and Sportsground Management started at The Lancashire College of Agriculture and Horticulture, near Preston, under the direction of John Hacker. Seven young men from around the country started the course, part of their first year being spent in college and 20 weeks – one term – at a variety of placements where they gained practical experience. The All-England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon, Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club, Cardiff Arms Park, Guernsey Golf Club and Grimsby Leisure Centre were amongst the organisations that took the budding greenkeepers.

The second year was spent solely at the college, whilst in the third most students went to golf courses for 32 weeks – in Florida. Now comes news that Chris Harvey, one of the students on that path-finding course run by John Hacker (now running his own consultancy), has been appointed course manager at Isle of Purbeck GC in Dorset, where he is in charge of the 27 hole complex. Chris, who had previously worked as groundsman for Portsmouth FC, incidentally married an American girl whilst in the US last year.

Another, John Huntington from York, has recently been first assistant at Farnham GC and on June 11th took over as deputy head greenkeeper of the Kings Course at Doncraig.

Graham Wallace, a third group member, is deputy head greenkeeper on the Monarch Course at Glenaesles, whilst Geoff Allison, from Peterlee, is an assistant on the new Wisley Course due to open in August.

It is good to learn that their hard work is paying off and equally gratifying that similar courses have been running successfully at The Lancashire College each year thereafter.

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**NORTHERN IRELAND**

This was my first visit to Northern Ireland and my thanks to Peter Powell of Iseki for transporting and hosting me. It really is a beautiful part of the world. Portstewart GC, now with an additional nine holes of distinguished linksland added to the original fabulous 18, was the venue for the Iseki Northern Ireland regional qualifying event, under the expert management of club professionals and the Finns. The wind was at gale force but golfers are hardy in these parts and without exception all those participating enjoyed the day and the excellent hospitality and catering. Results were: First class: 1st Patrick Devine, Carrickfergus GC; 2nd Sidney Arrowsmith, Royal Portrush GC; 3rd Godfrey Derry, Dungannon GC. Second class: 1st Alec Lafferty, Royal Portrush GC; 2nd Ray McMaith, Royal Portrush GC; 3rd Tony Bradshaw, Malone GC. Third class: 1st Eric O’Niel, Portstewart GC; 2nd Paul McSain, Royal Belfast GC; 3rd Joe Millar. Knock GC. We look forward to welcoming them at Hillside on September 12th. This was a successful first event in this part of the world and I am sure the Northern Ireland round will go from strength to strength.

**SOUTHERN IRELAND**

The course at Forrest Little, for the Iseki regional qualifier under the expert management of Owen O’Connor (pictured), was in sparkling condition and an excellent day’s golf ensued. The warmth of welcome at the club is something special – nothing is too much trouble and the catering throughout the day was excellent. BIGGA is now developing close relationships with greenkeeper members and non-members alike ‘across the water’ and in this connection the Iseki tournament makes a great contribution. My thanks to all concerned for a truly Irish welcome. Results were: First class: 1st Frank Donlon, Malahide GC; 2nd Paul Fitzgerald, Beech Park GC; 3rd Gerry Byrne, Westmanstown GC. Second class: 1st Edward Donlon, Rush GC; 2nd Frank Larkin, Castle GC; 3rd Owen O’Connor, Forrest Little GC. Third class: 1st Sean Murnane, Blackstock GC; 2nd Joe Walsh, Beavertown GC; 3rd Chris Nolan, Forrest Little GC. We shall look forward to meeting them all at Hillside on September 12th.

**EAST MIDLANDS**

The Spring Tournament at Saddleworth GC was attended and enjoyed by 40 greenkeepers on May 15th. The day started with weather best suited to winning areas. Despite the inclement weather some good scores were returned. The best score was 74 from Paul Sewell, with the handicap 1-7: 1st Derek Roy, Nairn Dunbar, 79-5=74. 2nd Eoin Radigan, Royal Dornoch, 80-6=76 (BHJ). Handicap 8-14: 1st Gordon Leslie, Duff House Royal, 82-11-1=72. 2nd Kenny Anderson, Newmacher, 86-14-72. Handicap 15-28: 1st Stuart Donald, Newmacher, 90-23=67. 2nd David Sinclair, Royal Aberdeen, 94-16-78.

Trevor Mackay of Royal Dornoch was best apprentice with a nett 71 off 8 whilst John Taylor of Forres won the Vets with a fine nett 78 off 5. Steven Frost of Royal Aberdeen succeeded again in the division for members without official handicaps by turning in a 92-26=66, duly being allotted a 20 handicap! John Robertson retained the Trade Shield whilst Ian Carson used local knowledge (and his hole cutter!) to win nearest-the-pin at the 4th.

Howard Evans addressed members prior to prizegiving with an informative talk on the benefits of a pension plan. The committee’s thanks to Howard for making the long journey to help us. We hope he enjoyed this part of the world.

Members should note that our August outing at Peterhead has been brought forward one week to Thursday Sept. 5th, thus avoiding a clash with the Celtic League. The lottery will also be drawn on that day. There is little truth in the rumour that Peterhead has snow in mid-September and I hope as many members as attended Nairn will make the journey.

At this time the section has 130 members, though it is disappointing to note that around 20 have not yet re-joined.

**GORDON MOIR**

May 16th saw the start of the East Midlands golfing programme with a bonny day of golf at Kibworth GC, a grand course delightfully prepared. As is often the case with these events the play was quite outstanding, the food delicious and the company just perfect. Thanks to all concerned.

The best score was 74 from Paul Sewell, with the best nett being a staggering 61 from Craig Watt. Other scores were: (0-9) R Barker 75-4=71. P.Sewell 74-2=72. M Emery 88-8=90. (10-18) C Hare 81-14=67. S Fretter 86-18=74. S Goode 82-12=70. (19-28) C Watt 84-23=61. M Binley 82-24=68. M Billings 93-22=71. Trade and Associates: I Toon 89-9=71. P.Fell 83-10=73. J Bars 91-18=73. Well done all you winners and remember if you did not win something this time there is still the Autumn meeting at Rushcliffe GC on September 19th.

May I make my continuous appeal for news or gossip for this column, no matter how insignificant. Please call me on 0664 61642.

**GORDON MITCHELL**

**DEVON and CORNWALL**

Third year unlucky was how the weatherman caught us at Westurf ’91, though such inclement stuff doesn’t stop the Devon and Cornwall members from attending in force and enjoying themselves! The whiskers are reaching roaring pitch as the good word gets around about this excellent show and our thanks to all who make it thus, especially Gordon and Marion Child.

Our Iseki qualifiers tested their skills against the Tredegar Park course...
NORTHERN

Not a great deal happening around our section at the moment, which gives me a chance to mention education.

I recently attended a regional board meeting, where we were informed that each Club in the region had been sent a letter regarding greenkeeper education, outlining what is available to BIGGA members. Our administrator has asked me to ask you to find out your Club's views and opinions about education. I'm off to Canada on holiday - tough life isn't it? I hope it rains steadily for the next two weeks, purely for the sake of your golf course - naturally!

PHILIP SWAIN

AYRSHIRE

Our Spring Meeting was held at Irving Bogside on May 20th, where an excellent day's golf was enjoyed, though by a disappointingly small turn-out. Could this possibly be due to the very difficult greenkeeping conditions 'enjoyed' in our area over the past few weeks? What we lacked in quantity was replaced by quality, both in standard of play and the Bogside course, ably presented by head greenkeeper Derek Wilson, who did wonders when one considers the vagaries of recent weather. Results were: Scratch: Gary Briden, Turnberry, 1st Class: D Gray, Kyle and Carrick. A Patterson, Powfoot, G Brown, Turnberry, 2nd Class: C Taylor, Powfoot. R Bruce, Stewarts. G Heron, Turnberry. New member: J Johnstone, Turnberry. Trade: D Duffy, Steven. Our thanks to sponsors, Munro's Horticulture and Keith Morgan of Usk, (Jacobsen Dealers) together with contributions to the prize table from Munro's, Keith Morgan, ISIVS and Avoncrop. Without their help our section would not be thriving as well as it is.

PHIL COPSEY

EAST ANGLIA

Channels GC saw our first medal round for many a year and disaster was the word that springs to mind. Must have been a force ten blowing and it was really excellent. Members who do not attend are really missing out. I realise some Clubs do not support their staff on education, but PLEASE take the trouble to ask their opinions regarding the letter mentioned. Then let me know.

Finally, there are still a few places left for the Roses Match and the Autumn Tournament.

BOB LUPTON

SURREY

My first apologise to you for the lack of Surrey section news in the last issue. I missed the copy deadline date. So far no one has contacted me regarding the two trips mentioned in previous issues of Greenkeeper International. What is the matter with you? Again I say - if you wish to visit Jacobsen's factory in July or Rolawn's turf farm in October you can still do so, but... you MUST contact me (0285 651998) as soon as possible. One thing - don't leave it until the night before an event - give me a week's notice otherwise I cannot guarantee a place.

PAUL WORSTER

SOUTH WALES

Our annual competition for the Jacobsen Cup and Browns Shield was held on May 15th, the day being glorious, which in this job is a bonus when playing, but not when working.

The competition was well attended with 24 players contesting for glory and a mere handful falling by the wayside. The results were: 1st (Jacobsen Cup and Tankard) Dennis Jones - nett 69 on course 69. A gross 61 was sufficient for Graham Cox to take the Browns Shield and Tankard and a nett 69 won Anthony Miller the Waycott Cup and Tankard.

A raffle was held to swell funds and Dennis Jones was again a winner, this time a shirt donated by SISIS. Anthony Jones won a bottle of scotch donated by Munro's and Les Hallatt won a bottle of sherry donated by Avoncrop. Our thanks to sponsors, Munro's Horticulture and Keith Morgan of Usk, (Jacobsen Dealers) together with contributions to the prize table from Munro's, Keith Morgan, ISIVS and Avoncrop. Without their help our section would not be thriving as well as it is.

Thanks are due to Glamorgan GC for their unfailing courtesy to us and to Michael Williams and his crew for the splendid course preparation.

PAUL WORSTER

SOUTH WEST

Bob Gates (pictures) got sick on his leg pull. It seems that being chairman of the section counts for nothing when mischief is in the air. Indeed, he told me only yesterday that if one more greenkeeper offers a tongue in cheek congratulation, Bob has never seen your course looking so good only for Bob to have to grudgingly admit that he retired last Christmas, then we may be one member short for some considerable time.

Seriously, the course at Westonbirt, considering the awful spring weather, was looking very tidy and playing well. Our thanks to the bursar of Westonbirt School for allowing us the use of the course for our annual John Ireland Greensomes on May 2nd. This event, which combines greenkeepers playing with amateur partners, has proved very popular over the years since its inauguration in 1976. This year was no different with thanks to P J Flegg and Devon Garden Machinery for sponsoring the event and if this should happen again; please feel free to telephone (0285 651998) or write to the course to express your interest.

The nett results were: 1st R Greaves and T Reaves (Bristol and Clifton) 60, 2nd D Dobie and M Coburn (Marlborough) 61. 3rd T Roberts and C Middleton (Lilleybrook) 62. 4th P Baynton and J Scones (Long Ashton) 65. 5th I McFarlane and J Cooper (Saltford) 65. Best front nine: D Eves and W Smith (Painswick) 37. Best back nine: C Tozer and D Rendell (Bridport) 34.

Robert and Jean Waterman in reserve. Well done, and the best of luck for the next round.

PHIL COPSEY

KENT

Our Spring Tournament and iseki qualifying round was played on May 14th at Sittingbourne GC, our qualifying representatives at Ham Manor will be: 0-1 category Ian Rawlings, Alan Sheppard, George Brown and Steven Suely, with David Goodhew in reserve. 10-18 category: Jason Bean, Peter Briscoe, Michael Love and John Millen, with Malcolm Arthur in reserve. I'm off to Canada on holiday - tough life isn't it? I hope it rains steadily for the next two weeks, purely for the sake of your golf course - naturally!

PHIL BALDOCK

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