Then the question is, can I get an engine to fit my machine? The answer is most probably yes, as engines are now available in a very wide range of configurations from single and twin cylinder air cooled units which can be obtained in horizontal or vertical crankshaft form through multi-cylinder water cooled units. Engines are available with drive from either or both ends of the crankshaft and with additional PTO’s for hydraulic pumps. Starting can be by rope, recoil, hand crank or battery. Power ratings can be from about 5hp onwards with very good torque characteristics.

As much machinery used on golf courses is imported from America (where fuel is cheap) the use of high horsepower petrol engines goes by unnoticed. In the UK, however, petrol is very expensive, particularly in relation to gas oil or ‘red’ diesel, so much so that a diesel engine can more than pay for itself in fuel saving in less than a year. If these savings can be made on a long life engine for one piece of equipment, imagine the scale of economy when a whole fleet of golf course equipment is considered; and as every course manager and greenkeeper will know, cost is of paramount importance. All courses have tractors and therefore diesel fuel will be readily obtainable. Its extended use will reduce the quantity of highly inflammable petrol that needs to be stored at any one time.

Now that diesel engines are made to be more readily started, many of the small units can be as easy to start on the recoil as a petrol engine. The multicylinder indirect injection engines have heater plugs and many or all of the features found on modern automotive diesel engines to ensure that they are trouble-free cold starters.

The diesel no longer need be regarded with suspicion, for it can be easily started, is reliable, economical and has a very long service life. There is a type and configuration for nearly every job on a golf course. As we have already seen, engines can be bought from small air cooled single cylinder versions to multiclyinder liquid cooled units with their own radiators. Now is the time of year to consider re-engining that expensive equipment with a long life, low fuel consumption diesel engine.

Engine efficiency means less pollution

by HUGH TILLEY

Fuel economy was the prime goal for engine development a few years ago but now the goal posts are in front of lower emissions and pollution control – reflecting demand by customer, user and the general public. In particular the golf playing public is expecting mowers to be seen (but only if essential), but not heard nor smell, (nor should they smoke or otherwise pollute the atmosphere). For the operator there are also health and safety hazards in noise and toxic and obnoxious emissions which have to be avoided.

Development is also taking place in engine management systems which offer considerable scope for improvement in engine efficiency, the main factor restricting their introduction appearing to be cost and acceptability.

There is a clamour for bio-degradable and synthetic oils though this ideal has yet to match the reality. There has been rationalisation in the number of makes of small engine used in turf machinery, perhaps as smaller makers fall behind in R & D and marketing, and today is the day of the lightweight, high speed, compact diesel engine, especially for the professional who values the greater economy and reliability they offer – so says one leading maker of such engines. Another manufacturer suggests that one gallon of diesel will do the work of three gallons of petrol, similarly he estimated the service life of a diesel to be twice or three times as long, perhaps 10,000 against 3-4 hours. This may be exaggerated as the latest petrol engines also have improved consumption and a longer service life. A number of American manufacturers have been a little tardy in adapting their machines to diesel because ‘gasoline’ is cheap (in America). In the UK, diesel has many advantages and prime reasons for specifying it include the ease, safety and convenience of storing. Considerations over whether to specify diesel or petrol must also look at annual running hours: some machines will never put in sufficient hours to justify the extra cost of a diesel engine. Significant advances have been made in petrol engines, and petrol is still the predominant fuel for pedestrian operated equipment, and because weight, simplicity and cost are usually important, most are air cooled. Much noise has been designed out by better balanced components and improved ignition chambers, and the trend is towards overhead valves which, while more complex and expensive, do result in better ignition, thus a cleaner, quieter burn and improved fuel efficiency.

Solid state or electronic ignition has made a dramatic improvement in both the reliability and performance of small petrol engines. Most people have also been converted to low octane unleaded fuel without real trouble. Many of these petrol engines now have automatic decompression systems which dramatically reduce the effort required to start them, this is particularly noticeable with recoil starters, but it also applies to key starting. Because the engine spins more readily so it is quicker to start making ‘first pull’ starts more of a reality. The saving in broken cords and frustration can be quite real too.

Diesel engines are now available from about 5hp, and while they are more expensive than an equivalent petrol version they may now be very little heavier. Air cooled versions can be expected to be noisier that an equivalent liquid cooled version, but the deeper note of the diesel may be more acceptable than the more penetrating tone of an air cooled petrol engine.

The latest generation of diesels, particularly for ride-ons etc., are likely to be compact multicylinder water cooled designs, and these...
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Correct approach to chemical usage: sensitive and sensible

Careful chemical selection and weed control programme planning will do much to answer the growing public and legislative pressures related to herbicide use in sensitive areas, according to Mark DeAth of weed control specialists Nomix-Chipman.

Speaking on the options for environmentally-friendly weed control at a specialist water quality seminar in London, Mr DeAth advised local authority and amenity managers to examine their options in detail. With the choice being between residual and non-residual herbicides, there are four primary strategies available to specifiers today, he said.

The ultimate in environmental acceptability is to use non-residuals only. The obvious downside is higher cost in that at least two applications will be needed each season to give an acceptable level of weed control. However it also poses the least risk of water contamination.

"Another option is to alternate between residuals and non-residuals, using a residual in a single application one season followed by a non-residual which may require several applications. In this way, it may be possible to save money by going for a cheaper oil if none of your engines requires a high performance oil, but the saving is so small that the wisdom of this must be questionable — and if you upgrade to a new diesel mower or tractor you may be left with a drum of oil which you should not use in it. Most of these refine- ments (in engine and oil) came by evolution rather than by revolution, and it is only when you consider today's technology against the engine in your ten year old mower that you realise the strides technology has made — nor is there reason to believe that the next decade will not bring further advances. (As a point of interest, my mower is 33 years old!)"

Joe Gillett — always proud of his 'calling'

It is with regret that we now inform fellow BIGGA members of the death of Joe Gillett, the much respected head greenkeeper of St Annes Old Links Golf Club from 1953 until 1981.

Joe, as all who knew him will surely recollect, was a great character and a skillful golfer who played with great enthusiasm, especially remembered as a worthy winner of the Ransomes Trophy at Wallasey in 1971.

Joe came from a family of greenkeepers and began his illustrious career in 1931 at the Fairhaven Golf Club. He was always proud of his calling and it gave him great pleasure to see his chosen profession grow from strength to strength.

We are all proud to have known him and on behalf of all his many friends and members in BIGGA, I send our deepest sympathy to his wife, Barbara, and to his family.

OBITUARY

Geoff Whittle

Greenkeeper International June 1992

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**Price cuts  Testing times**

To my knowledge, most head greenkeepers prepare annual budgets for their respective Clubs and, once approved, work within accepted limits. To do this effectively one must have up-to-date prices and I am thus bound to ask ‘why is it so difficult to get these from stockists?’

Writing in late April, I have received just one 1992 price list, and this came through the pages of Greenkeeper International. When requesting lists the excuse offered is often that they are still ‘at the printers’ or ‘one will be sent’ (still waiting!) and I am prompted to ask: why are they not printed at the same time as brochures, which are always in abundant supply?

Do stockists resist sending them for fear of price comparisons, or are they just saying to themselves ‘greenkeepers need the products anyway, so why bother?’

I would like to think this letter will bring me some price lists, and would urge suppliers to send brochures only when they can be backed up with prices.

**SAM MORRISON** Head Greenkeeper, Royal Aberdeen GC, Scotland

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I am writing to you to raise the subject of dyslexia. Over the last couple of years we have been in the process of getting help for our son, aged ten. Well, what has this to do with greenkeeping people you may ask? I shall try to explain.

We came to realise that our son was having learning difficulties, particularly in reading, writing, and spelling. He has functional dyslexia.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Letters to the editor are always welcome. They should be signed and carry the writer’s address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity, libel and good taste. Please send letters to: The Editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firle Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

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Nowadays, often selling at a premium. One resort course I know on
these, being offered to the golfer - allowing him a shot to the
pre-eminence. Had Nicklaus' tee shot drifted into a
the site, a lake can be considered to
one of the keys to all this will be
and the necessity of the situation. This makes for
play a good recovery shot to take advan-
pled with the possibility that the
of container wastage at the
to provide something more stimulat-
the usual chestnuts came to the
problems relating to water shortages and
draining purposes; as part of the
strategy of the golf course design
a lake can be considered to
and for storage purposes for an irriga-
tion system. Ideally, though, the
be considered to be useful for some of the
programming issues that have to be taken into
account when designing a golf course.

It is up to the architects of these new courses to
prescription of Nicklaus' putter. In
is a result of this that the
er (which are insufficient for treating 18 golf greens,
an agronomist look at them, but his
his putting stroke. One of the
considered to be useful for some of the
programming issues that have to be taken into
account when designing a golf course.

The Coaches of Great Britain-Golf

In July of this year my husband, Eric Palmer, will have served 50 years as a greenkeeper - 41 of those
as a head greenkeeper.

In his career he has worked on just three courses, Sitwell Park in Rotherham, Abbeydale in Sheffield, and his present Club - Hickleton near Barnsley.

His dedication to his work cannot be surpassed and he is and always has been a credit to his profession. He has seen so many changes over the years and I feel justly proud of him - indeed I have learned quite a
lot myself.

Eric has been nominated by his
Club - Hickleton near Barnsley.
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lot myself.
BOOKINGS are now being taken for the BIGGA Management Courses – fast becoming recognised as the best events of their kind throughout the entire industry.

And thanks to the continued financial support of Kubota UK and the Greenkeepers Training Committee, the in-house courses will once again be held at Aldwark Manor. In stylish surroundings delegates will be able to gain valuable knowledge, pick up new ideas and exchange views with their counterparts on other courses and some of greenkeeping's top names.

For six weeks commencing in mid-October, Aldwark Manor – home of BIGGA HQ – will be buzzing with all that's happening to make tomorrow's greenkeeper better equipped than ever before.

This is the fourth year of the courses. Delegates who have attended in the past will be aware of the need, therefore, to book early. It's a rolling programme, so book early. It's a rolling programme, so book early. It's a rolling programme, so book early.

Attendance at each week's course qualifies delegates for eight Credits to go towards the Master Greenkeepers Certificate. Delegates who have attended in the past will be buzzing with all that's happening to make tomorrow's greenkeeper better equipped than ever before.

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BIG ROLL KEEPS TURNIN'

There is a perversity in big business that belies good sense in that it feeds and flourishes on bad news, with the world of fine turf certainly no exception. One company rubs its hands with glee as another reports falling dividends or losses, a contrariness difficult to understand when one appreciates that almost any bad news in a given industry may have a knock-on negative effect. Taking this a stage further, I still wonder how many companies talked themselves into recession by taking too much notice of the doom and gloom fed to them in the 'heavies'?

What is even more surprising is that bad news moves faster than good, gathering rumour upon rumour as another reports falling dividends or losses, a side effect of the natural suspicion that was just possible, though in doing so they would be stripping bare by unprincipled crooks. Time will tell if the formula is right now, but there can be no denying that the will to succeed at Lawn Tech is alive and well.

The process they picked up irretrievable debts to the tune of £80,000. In particular, one single company (owing the major part of that £80,000) went into liquidation only to start up in business again the following week! In a sentence, Chris opined that this practice was obscene and should be illegal. Rightly and visibly angered, he further suggested that his anger is not just a personal thing, for he knows of other companies where the same thing has happened, rather a frustration for the injustice of a system which allows the miscreants to pull a 'fast one' and then re-form the same company under a different name on the same premises, using the same assets and employing the same people. To anyone looking at company law dictates that this is not an illegal practice, there is a total impotence to get back at them - or for that matter, to get even!

This debt left the company strapped for cash going into winter - an obvious leaner time in the turf industry - and their position was rapidly worsening. They were left with three alternatives. Perhaps the simplest was insolventy but the consequences for these were too miserable to contemplate. The next was to struggle through, which was just possible, though in doing so they would be putting others at risk if they failed and therefore of hurting creditors even more by going down in a much bigger way. The final option was to enter a Corporate Voluntary Arrangement (CVA), a system whereby a deal is made with creditors to pay what is derisively called a 'dividend' - a part payment of the debt, though substantially bigger than any resulting from insolvency - with an assurance that since the creditors were effectively helping the ailing company to stay in business, they would obviously be the first to benefit when the corner turned and the company became self supporting. The CVA method can only be entertained when a company has taken a long, hard look at itself and brought in economies to become altogether leaner and meaner. The company is now run by Chris Bradshaw and Richard Pickance, the finance director originally put in by investors to act as their 'policeman' and now a shareholder. Chris pointed out that the recession had hit their business hard but late, coming very gently. After reducing prices and making some controllable service, they have done quite well, not by any reduction in material, labour or running costs, but simply from gross profit, in order to remain competitive.

They will now concentrate predominantly on golf, cricket, bowling and the like - and will look with an eagle eye at total ability to pay. Chris admits they were often so eager to get business that they were reluctant to press overly hard for payment. 'It seems silly now', he says 'and we'll not make the same mistakes again'.

Other economies include trading down on costly company vehicles - Chris has changed from a 4WD Nissan to a much more practical pick-up, which can be used by anyone and is a veritable workhorse for carrying machinery - and slimming down on staff by utilising well trained self-employed landcapers to augment the permanent turf laying team of six. An air of complete optimism prevails where just six weeks ago there was despondency.

Summarising, their future looks decidedly brighter and the feeling is that the recession is easing. Perhaps, Chris suggests, this is in part due to the country feeling more settled about the political future, quite irrespective of the colour of government. On. the business front their phones are rung by government and a veritable gaggle off to the United States, where they have taken a storming market lead.

New, innovative companies often need more than a modicum of good luck to set them safely on their way; and certainly they can do without being stripped bare by unprincipled crooks. They will tell if the formula is right now, but there can be no denying that the will to succeed at Lawn Tech is alive and well.
There is little doubt that Westurf is here to stay, growing both in quality and stature with each passing year. As a meeting place for greenkeepers and green chairmen in the South West and South Wales the excellent site at Long Ashton Golf Club knows no equal, and as a shop window for greenkeeping products and services it is undoubtedly reaching the parts that other shows cannot reach!

It is hard to put a finger on its success, but if there is one word that sums up Westurf '92 to a tee that word must be enthusiasm. This was evident in the enthusiasm generating from the hard working trio comprising Gordon Child, Ivor Scoones and Hugh Parry, who worked like Trojans to ensure that not a single thing was left to chance, and to a team of willing helpers who were as well drilled as any army - parking cars, directing traffic and making visitors feel very welcome indeed, despite a chilling wind which kept everyone on their toes.

The trade were equally enthusiastic in voting the event worthwhile and this was borne out by increased participation, with 66 exhibitors taking up 92 stands and including many first time attendees. Informed gossip around the stands was of an upturn in business and traders general optimism indicated that perhaps the worst of the dreaded recession is coming to an end.

Quite apart from well supported trade stands, demonstrations of new and established turf care machinery were seen to be very busy indeed, kept buoyant by a constant stream of enquiries and helped by an exhibition of tempting equipment presented in colourful fashion.

As is to be expected, the importance of education was highlighted by the representation of Cannington, Sparsholt and Pencoed Colleges from the South West and South Wales region, along with the Welsh college of Mold and backed up for the first time by the welcome appearance of an STRI stand, manned enthusiastically by Tim Colclough, the 'man on the spot' for those in the West.

Both BIGGA and IOG stands were kept busy with a constant stream of members dropping by, and it is good to see the friendship between the two Associations still thriving in this region — indeed Ted Cavell of the IOG was most helpful in adding support to the worthy efforts of Gordon Child — many thanks, Ted.

With over one thousand visitors through the gates by mid-day, Gordon can feel justly proud of Westurf and, glutton for punishment that he is, he is looking forward to repeating the whole exercise on April 28th 1993, even though organising this event is no lightweight task.

Richard Hornor, Better Methods Europe

Old comrades meet up again

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Andy Hardy of Gem Products

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