Mother Nature gets a helping hand from a crew of seven in preparing for this year’s Open Golf Championship. DAVID WHITE reports from Royal St George’s

Reaching the links at Sandwich Bay, home of the Royal St George’s Golf Club and arena for the 122nd Open Golf Championship, is rather like riding a Tardis time-warp machine.

Upon leaving London there’s a lovely beginning buzz as thirty or so miles of M2 motorway are gobbled up with rapidity, followed by further encouragement in taking the dual-carriageway which loops around Canterbury, for negotiating that ancient city no longer causes the hassle it once did.

So far, so good, but once free of those ‘Canterbury tails’ the traveller starts to slip in reverse in terms of modernity. En route to Royal St George’s he must negotiate the pretty but twisting and often inadequate A257, following this tiresome frustration with a mere dollop of Sandwich by-pass before plunging aeons back in time to negotiate the town’s quaint, mysterious and ridiculously narrow streets, a route infinitely more charming to pedestrians than motorists.

Taking the one-way system, the driver should force himself to ignore the few out-of-character

“There’s a new leader in mowing technology.”

SABO-Roberine professional grass cutting machinery
Distributed in the UK by: Claymore Grass Machinery • Tel: (0789) 490177 • Fax: (0789) 490170
"We've never ever seen the need to apply fertiliser on the fairway..."

21 semi's as he leaves the medieval town of Sandwich behind, for suddenly and surprisingly he will come upon an unimposing driveway leading to a comfortable and imposing clubhouse that once was an old Kentish farmhouse. He will have entered the time warp - a place that transports a body back to a style that has survived almost all onslaught of modernity, together with a golf course that is often called the St Andrews of the South, though personally I liken it more to Muirfield, for it shares the same quality of spaciousness and detachment.

Visiting the course in April, I found it difficult to picture this little corner of Kent invaded by hordes of cashmere-sweatered grotchles during Open week, for of all Royal St Georges' great characteristics, its greatest is its solitude. In all of its many guises it is a glorious place to golf - on a day when the sea mists swirl over the 'umps and 'ollows it is a place of mystery, when the sunlight shines and pirouettes on the waves across Pegwell Bay it is in a world of its own, isolated maybe, but the skylarks will sing their lungs out and the white cliffs of nearby Ramsgate will positively glow. As for the the wind, was there ever a links worthy of the name that didn't boast a blow - a links just isn't a links without a force seven charging in from the south west - though when storms roll in off the North Sea, Royal St George's can reduce giants to gibbering idiots and it is altogether too much for players of moderate skill.

'Mother Nature is quite wonderful', I observed, as the club's head greenkeeper, Derek Scarborough, drove me round the course in his trusty Cushman. 'Yes', he replied, 'though what you see today shouldn't be credited to her alone, for this is down to Nature and seven men - she gets a fair share of help from my crew'. Derek Scarborough has been at the club since 1966, leaving Woodhall Spa to become Ralph Davis's assistant and in 1976 taking over the headship when Davis retired. This Open Championship will be the club's thirteenth and Derek's third, though for three of his crew it will be their first. As Derek pointed out, 1981 was undoubtedly a huge challenge as none of them had been involved in an Open before, though the club is no stranger to the big event and has hosted Amateur Championships, Walker Cups and a European Amateur Team Championship, as well as jointly hosting, with Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club, the public schools 'old boy' spring bean-feast that is the Halford Hewitt.

Derek Scarborough appears the very epitome of calm, a man who seems content to let the madness of the world wash over him - I've never met a greenkeeper so laid back - as though he's preparing the course for a monthly medal. 'Of course', he said, 'preparing for The Open is still a challenge, but it hasn't got any harder, for you must understand that I attempt to keep the course in first class condition all the time'. Point taken, but hadn't certain things changed, I asked. Observing that the course had been relatively quiet prior to the '81 Open, Derek is of the opinion that now it seems everyone wants to play and this has obviously brought about some changes in the course maintenance programme. If pressed, he will admit that the Vertidrain is used a little more frequently, but more than anything he puts Royal St George's fine appearance and irresistible turf down to 'just routine maintenance and good greenkeeping practices. 'Yes', he says, 'the course is marvellous, all down to Nature and the crew' - he grins, but you feel it - I could sense it - he's very proud of his team.

Previous Open Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>John Henry Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Harry Vardon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Jack White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Harry Vardon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Walter Hagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Walter Hagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Gene Sarazen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Henry Cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Roy Whitcombe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Bobby Locke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Bill Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Sandy Lyle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE MEN AND THEIR MACHINES:
1. Ransomes five-gang fairways unit
2. Ransomes GT
3. Ransomes Auto-Certes
4. Ransomes 180
5. Cushmans, c/w spikers/slitters/top dressers.
6. Vertidrain
7. Ford tractors
8. Massey Ferguson tractors
9. Kubota tractor
10. Trojan Rough-Cut
11. set x 5 Gangmowers
12. set Verti-cut units (Greens)
13. set Verti-cut units (Fairways)

Looking at the course it is easy to see why he is optimism personified, for he tells me that there are no problems, no diseases, and there’s plenty of fescue sprouting. The weather (my visit was in April) had been kind, the course was ‘looking great’ and now they were hoping for kind weather during Open week. ‘And if it rains continuously?’ I ask. ‘Well, the organisation of the course for The Open under R&A appointed agronomist David Stansfield, along with the club committee and The Championship committee, is programmed to the nth degree, so nothing is left to chance. Being on sandy soil the course drains well - and I honestly don’t envisage any problems in that respect, though we need good weather if only to keep the spectators happy’.

The programme leading up to The Open is one of ‘business as usual’ - with top dressing for the greens done with a mix of the club’s own making, using sandy soil taken from fields adjacent to the course, a source sufficient to last well into the next century. Green cutting, normally done with triplexes, moves gradually toward pedestrian Ransomes Auto-Certes as the Open gets nearer, the better to obtain the finish, desired speeds and consistency required. This cutting routine with the Auto-Certes begins at first twice weekly in May, progressing to three, four, five and finally seven days a week as ‘the big one’ looms close. Blade settings begin at 3/16” and are very gradually lowered to a minimum of 1/8” - ‘we cannot go lower’, he told me, ‘for the green undulations just would not permit it’. Verticutting takes place twice weekly, greens are watered ‘when necessary’ and only ‘just enough’ is applied to keep them healthy - say five minutes each evening, dependent upon God’s own contribution.

‘We’ve never overseeded the greens’, Derek declared, ‘we don’t need to, though of course we repair divots on tees and fairways using a proper selected mix. What’s more, we’ve never ever seen the need to apply fertiliser on the fairways’.

In truth, the main cause for concern comes not from golfers but from those terrible twins, wind and erosion - and it was erosion that prompted the Royal St George’s committee to instruct Brian Pierson a year or so ago to undertake the complete restoration and revetting of some 75 bunkers - representing about three quarters of the total bunker population. If solitude is one of Royal St George’s outstanding characteristics, its bunkers are another – not flat and purposeless like the seashore, but greedy, jeering obstructions that have as great a psychological effect as any I’ve ever experienced. It’s as though they lie around, challenging and defiant, waiting to put the player completely off his stroke. Pierson’s have done a wizard job.

Another contractor had recently vacated the links, having achieved what Derek described as ‘a good kill’ - in a single day of labour wiping out the irritation of daisies and clover on all the treated fairways. The staff meantime had applied Supertox to the greens and this also had achieved the desired effect – weed free putting surfaces.

Those putting surfaces are Royal St George’s third outstanding characteristic, for many a match has been lost on its teasing and mischievous greens when the player’s talent elsewhere has been beyond reproach. Most are big, all are undulating, each has hidden fall and slope to catch the unwary - all are infuriatingly cunning... and a drying wind can make them skin slick.

Come the hour the team - comprising Tony Adamo, Chris Marsh, Robin Holloway, Graham Royden, Neil Metcalf and Dennis French - will be on tenterhooks. The course will close for seven days to permit a last roundelay of fine-tuning and the greens will feel the mower blades nip over them at least twice a day. Sandwich’s solitude will evaporate, but at a time when too many championship courses have compromised their integrity, were the ghost of Dr Laidlaw Purves to return he’d find the old girl he created much the same as when he left her, deceptive, mean, magnificent - and a terrific test of golf... which should cause Derek Scarborough’s men to feel rather pleased with themselves.
GRASS

There will of course be many who read this article who are expert at grass identification – an essential facet of advanced greenkeeping education. Nevertheless, I never cease to be amazed at the very poor level of skill in the identification of grasses in mown turf, and not just by new entrants to the profession.

Yet accuracy in this aspect of greenkeeping training and practice is equally vital to both sound advice and sound management. This inability to pick out even half a dozen of the commonest grasses in mown turf is by no means confined to practical greenkeepers. Advisers, who should know better, the profession.

I have in my possession a report from an agronomist purporting to show that on the course he was advising, the greens are some of the best annual meadow grass greens I have ever seen – and those were greens which had been managed on sensible lines for a score of years and which would be trained to identify common grass species growing in mown turf is by no means confined to practical greenkeepers. Nevertheless, I never cease to be amazed at the very poor level of skill in the identification of grasses in mown turf, and not just by new entrants to the profession.

In this, the first of a two-part feature, straight-talking agronomist JIM ARTHUR gets back to basics.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS ...

If you are over 30 you can probably remember when a bunker rake, in a bunker, was something of a rarity, even on our most prestigious courses. Nowadays we are approaching the point when a golfer expects to find a rake in every bunker on every course. But there are rakes and rakes. Heavy steel (usually rusty), aluminium (often with broken teeth), even lumps of wood with a row of nails! Certainly few traditional rakes give members cause for pride in their club. Ours are different and very much better. Gleaming white 'RIGIDEX' heads which will never break. Even whiter tubular P.V.C. shafts for instant visibility and inherent flexibility. Topped with a comfortable one-handled grip. Guaranteed to improve any club's image. In accordance with R&A recommendations we no longer fit spikes as standard but they are available at modest extra cost.

Write on club notepaper for a FREE sample rake. Dept. 1 G4

BOB ANDREWS LTD
1 BILTON IND. EST., LOVELACE ROAD, BRACKNELL, BERKS RG12 8YT.
Phone 0344 862111 or FAX 0344 861345

£8.50+VAT 14" HEAD
£8 + VAT 21" HEAD £3.50 + VAT

In this article, the author discusses the importance of grass identification in greenkeeping. He highlights the need for accuracy in this aspect of the profession, as it is crucial for both sound advice and sound management. The author shares his experiences of being amazed at the poor level of skill in identifying grasses in mown turf, not just by new entrants but also by experienced greenkeepers. He emphasizes the importance of teaching grass identification as part of an educational course, and suggests that it is essential for greenkeepers to develop this skill to ensure the best possible turf quality on the course.
only to be able to assess the progress or otherwise of a line of management or to identify and treat problems (or otherwise), which the dominance of a particular species indicates. These three are the bents (Agrostis spp), fine fescues (Festuca rubra) and the meadow grasses (Poa spp). It is a quirk of botanical fate that the last two, the first so much our ideal grass and the last containing that enemy of greenkeeping, Poa annua, are botanically closely related.

There is of course no substitute for field training by a really knowledgeable grass man. It is, I suppose, the same with bird watching. For someone like myself who has been bird watching for 65 years - (and what a suspect hobby it was pre-war and how sophisticated it has all become, with all the twitchers 'artillery' and communication systems) - a glimpse of a bird will tell me at once either it is - or more important still, suggest that it is something out of the ordinary. There is much in common with bird and grass watching. The first glimpse is equivalent to the first impression - the 'jizz' of the bird. Colour (so variable with the season), texture, reflected light, turf density, upright or spreading growth - all help to group the turf under dominant species.

Some grasses never blend easily with others in a multi-species sward. Fine fescues especially tend to grow in distinct zones, whereas Agrostis generally but not invariably mixes well with annual meadow grass (Poa annua). In passing, look carefully at the margins of such zones. If they are clearly defined, this indicates active growth outwards and so management is favouring that grass. If the margins are indeterminate, with other species 'probing' into the zone, then that grass is suffering and present treatment is not favouring it.

Experience is the best teacher in such matters - you will quickly get to recognise the distinctive greyish or yellow green colour of fine fescue in winter. (Of course, when greens are growing fast, whether fertilised or not, and a uniform green, this masks any colour variations.)

Bents, especially creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera), turn almost purple after frost and because they have ribbed leaves which do not reflect the light, always look dull. Closer examination will confirm the species within reasonable limits of accuracy. Cross sections of leaves (illustrated) show what to look for. The bents (Agrostis) with very close parallel ribs on upper leaf surfaces are quite distinctively different, even to the naked eye, from the fibrous needle leaves of fine fescues and especially the soft, stubby, sappy leaves of our old enemy annual meadow grass. Indeed all the Poa species show the same twin parallel mid-rib, (created by two lines of motor cells which open and close the leaf blade in response to wet or dry weather, to produce the effect of a double, parallel mid-rib as illustrated. Note that all the Poa family have leaf-tips shaped like the bow of a boat, and if flattened out, the point splits to give two tips (as illustrated).

One of the problems of grass identification is that the same species can have very varied forms, none more so than Poa annua. These forms range from the coarse open growth of the short lived (10 week life cycle) invasive type, colonising any bare ground, to the biennial fine leaved form which characterises old established, over-fed and over-watered greens - in extreme cases forming 'pads', to the detriment of putting surfaces but in its best form responding to frequent mowing and verticutting to produce tolerable, indeed sometimes excellent, putting surfaces in the growing season.

Two other Poa's are found but are not important in golf greenkeeping. Rough stalked meadow grass, (Poa trivialis), is a surface growing (stoloniferous) perennial which is useless in turf. Smooth stalked meadow grass (Poa pratensis) has masses of chizomes and is sometimes advised for tees and fairways. Its main disadvantage is that it dies out under close mowing. Its characteristic blue green leaves (with marked boat-shaped tips and double mid rib) are unmistakable - giving it its US name of Kentucky blue-grass. It is not in my view as important as some would have us believe. Equally, the Agrostis species can be very variable. The characteristic surface running stems of creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera) are not often seen on greens, but more commonly on less frequently or closely mown surrounds. They contrast, not just with browntop (Agrostis tenuis) but with the Penncross family (A. palustris) (which is not to be confused with our creeping bent, though often so described on the other side of the Atlantic). This grass is totally unsatisfactory for any area where there is a long, drawn-out, cold, wet winter, as it becomes dormant, sickly, pale and weak under these conditions. For those areas where there is no winter (and no dormancy therefore) or where there is no winter golf, as courses are under feet of snow, it is ideal, being a rapid establisher and with proper management, money and man power it can produce superb surfaces, whether this be in Mediterranean zones, Asia, NZ North Island, or of course certain areas of the United States, but by no means all of them. Under more temperate climates it produces thatch second to none and after dormancy it is so weakened that it soon becomes invaded and eventually replaced by annual meadow grass, even with the skilled management and high budgets which enable it to survive longer.

Next we will deal with the useless or weed grasses, always remembering that what is a rubbishy weed to a greenkeeper can be a productive crop plant to a farmer.
TRACTORS FROM 28–67HP
Articulated or rigid, equal size wheels, reversible, high horsepower-to-weight ratio

For all your golf course tasks

From greens maintenance to fairway cutting. Phone now for a demonstration on your course:

0757 210007 (Evening: 0522 530115)
BARLBY ROAD, SELBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

The Name Behind Britain’s Top-Rated Turf

When it comes to quality, we don’t mess around.
Take, for example, our soils. We use the best soils in the country for growing turf. Selected to grow turf that’s strong and easy to lay, with no wastage. Selected for free-drainage of rain and irrigation water. And then there’s the grass seed. We choose only the top-rated varieties of grass from the STRI Merit Lists - to give you not only the best instant effect, but the best long term results, too. And with a range of different grades, you can choose the most suitable for your purpose.

Guaranteed delivery time.
With a guaranteed delivery time for single-drop loads, you won’t be paying your men to stand around doing nothing. And if there’s no fork-lift on site, don’t worry... our mechanical off-loading facilities will ease the burden.

Big or small roll.
As you can see in the photo above, you can have Tillers Turf in either big or small rolls. To give you even greater flexibility, we offer a laying service too. Which means that if your staff are flat out with other jobs you can rely on us to deliver the turf, off-load it, and lay it to a high standard of workmanship. Of course, you may want to lay the big roll yourself, in which case we can loan you a suitable machine free. For a prompt quote, or to find out where our distributors are nationwide, give us a call on 0652 650555. We will also send you a copy of our brochure. And to see for yourself why Tillers is the name behind Britain’s top-rated turf we can send you a sample next day, as well.

TILLERS
Tillers Turf Company Ltd., Castlethorpe, Brigg, South Humberside DN20 9LG.
Telephone: 0652 650355. Fax: 0652 650664.
Keep in touch

MICHAEL BIRD examines communications on the golf course

“Okay Steve, tell me why you wouldn’t recommend Citizens Band radio for on-course communications?”

Silence, while Steve Garrett composes an appropriate answer: “Let’s put it like this,” he begins. “If I say that CB radio is the equivalent of a crazy golf course and Private Mobile Radio is the equivalent of St Andrews, then I think your readers will understand that there is a world of difference between what can only be described as amateur and professional wireless communications systems.” Mr Garrett ought to know. As sales manager for Cotswold Telecommunications Ltd. he is responsible for advising on and supplying two-way radio systems, cellular radio telephones and radiopaging systems to customers throughout southern England. The company secured the British Standards Institute’s BS 5750 part 2 accreditation more than a year ago and is the largest privately-owned provider of mobile communications services in the region with additional sales and service centres at Newton Abbot and Truro.

“Don’t think I’m out to knock CB radio,” continues Mr Garrett. “As a public access system, it has an accepted role to play as a low cost means for people on the move or on their own to keep in touch. However, if you want a private conversation with one or more of your staff without worrying about a complete stranger listening or butting in, then CB is not the answer. It has to be Private Mobile Radio, normally known as PMR.”

Why Private? Because each system is allocated a specific operating frequency by the Department of Trade and Industry enabling private communication between all equipment tuned to the same frequency. To prevent others ‘tuning in’, all equipment has to be pre-set by the supplier to the frequency given by the DTI to each licence holder for use on the assigned channel, with other users within a prescribed area – usually up to 40 miles radius – being ‘locked out’, preventing access to your designated frequency.

There are four principal frequency bands available to PMR users, each offering a different transmitting characteristic to suit the location, topography and density of buildings and other obstructions. The bands are VHF low, mid and high, and UHF, each with their own range of frequencies one of which is allocated to the user by the DTI. A preferred frequency band can be indicated on the licence application although if a specific channel is required, the reason must be given.

In London, because of the high demand for PMR during the late 1970s and early 1980s, no new frequencies have been allocated for more than five years, new users having to wait until someone else gives up an existing frequency. Although the UHF band is geographically restricted, it is ideal in built-up areas due to its ability to penetrate steel and concrete better than VHF signals. On the other hand, radio waves produced on VHF low band hug the contours giving good coverage in hilly areas while VHF high band is able to travel long distances in a straight line, producing a high quality signal on open terrain.

These variations in signal characteristics make a thorough site survey the fundamental starting point for anyone considering installing a mobile radio communications system. Mr
Let ALS take the bother out of the job!

For Selective Weed Control on Fairways and Sports Fields

A large number of golf courses and schools regularly use our contract services and are pleased with the results.

Why? Because:

- We start early and finish early, with minimum disruption to play.
- Our operators understand the game and how to behave properly on a course.
- We know pesticides and what will give the best result for your situation.
- We are cost effective and can supply and apply for little more than you will pay for the pesticides from the usual trade outlets.
- We save all the bother imposed by legislation, COSHH assessments, operator spraying records and health monitoring, pesticide storage and records, disposal of used pesticide containers, operators' certificates of competence, sprayer calibration to name but a few!
- We carry out the job accurately and professionally with purpose built equipment leaving your staff free to get on with their routine jobs.

Contact ALS for a quotation for your spraying requirements without obligation or for references from other golf courses or schools we spray.

952 641949

AMENITY LAND SERVICES, LONG LANE, WELLINGTON, TELFORD, TF6 6HA

In order, simply send a cheque for £70.44 (inc. VAT) to the sole UK distributor:

Nabishi UK, Nabishi Building, 3/5 Cremyll Road, Reading RG1 8NQ
Tel: 0734 568181 Fax: 0734 567166

The Sender is here from Nabishi

A Compact Programmable 5 Watt Transceiver

Programmed by keypad or IBM-compatible PC to give you a host of features including

- Paging
- Scanning
- DTMF (connect to telephone system)
- Battery save function
- Unit comes comes with or without keypad

Designed to fit your pocket
Garrett points out that no-one wants to do the job properly should attempt to do it themselves. "There is plenty of cheap equipment advertised, but once purchased, you could very well find yourself on your own," he says. "Although it is possible to apply for a licence and be up and running within a few days, users can find that they have selected the wrong equipment, the wrong frequency or even the wrong licence for their specific requirements."

There are two basic types of licence appropriate to golf course applications, both costing from £20 a year. The first is 'local area', permitting wireless communications within a 3km (1.9 mile) radius of a permanent base station transmitting at a maximum five watts power. This system can be used to link a base station with staff and management over a greater course, a local area licence may be appropriate to golf course applications, both costing from £120 a year. The first is 'local area', particularly when leaving the course to transmit at a maximum five watts power.

A fixed base station with a permanent location is carried out within the confines of the course, with mobiles and hand portables carried by staff. If all the work is carried out within the confines of the course, a local area licence may be appropriate for all one's needs, depending on the findings of the site survey.

If, however, there is a need to keep in touch with staff and management over a greater area, particularly when leaving the course to collect parts or to maintain other leisure facilities in the locality, then a 'wide area' licence is likely to be more suitable. This licence normally allows a maximum transmission signal strength of 25 watts from a permanent location, with coverage averaging about a mile per watt of output, depending on the lie of the land and any obstructions such as buildings.

The basic wide area service operates on a dual frequency basis, enabling the base station radio to talk to mobiles on one frequency and receive calls on another. It does not allow for direct mobile to mobile contact. For this, one needs to apply for a 'talk-through' facility, using the base station as a relay to enable one mobile or hand portable to connect directly to another. Here, aerial type, location and direction are vital for the optimum operation of the system. "A fixed base station with a permanently installed aerial or close to the highest point on the course will produce a consistently better signal on undulating terrain than two hand portables with built-in aerials," points out Mr Garrett. "For that reason, where a site survey highlights variable signal strength, we would advise routing all communications via the base station using a talk-through facility."

"A further option is to use a 'connection' service via one of the community repeaters which have been installed by communications companies nationwide and available on a monthly air time rental of around £10 to £15 per mobile radio set, inclusive of the licence fee but not the equipment."

Cotswold Telecommunications, for example, has community repeaters located on masts on most of the highest hills from Worcestershire down to Cornwall. Consisting of an aerial and transceiver (combined transmitter and receiver), it enables subscribers to communicate with other mobile radios on the same frequency over the complete area covered by the community repeater's aerial - typically a 30 to 40 mile radius. With a base trigger station in the office linked to an aerial pointing at the community repeater, all mobile and hand portable radios on the course should be able to communicate with each other, subject to the terrain, at considerably lower cost than attempting to overcome the problem using all one's own equipment. Indeed, there need be no capital outlay at all, as rental options are normally available for the full range of mobile telecommunications equipment available, irrespective of the licence type or system selected.

A further option which provides nationwide mobile radio coverage, yet is suitable also for those in cities where new frequency allocations are restricted, is National Band Three. Using a network of land lines and hilltop aerials, this service is used principally by distribution and haulage companies throughout Britain paying a monthly subscription per mobile set, with no call charges. National Band Three is available also with just regional or local coverage at lower cost and this could be appropriate for a club within the M25 area where new PMR frequency allocations are restricted.

If two-way voice contact is not essential, then the most economical form of communication is the pager. Comprising a simple one-way system, it uses a similar national network of landlines and relay base stations to that used by National Band Three. The basic pager uses a 'bleep' signal to alert the carrier that he or she should make contact with base. On more sophisticated systems, a message can be displayed on the pager's screen while the most advanced offer one-way voice communication. The disadvantage with most pagers is that communication can be from the base only, eliminating the opportunity for a conversation between two handsers.

And what about cellular telephones? Steve Garrett reckons that he can dissuade anyone working in a fixed location from investing in a mobile telephone for routine or even emergency communications with fellow members of staff. "A mobile radio system can be installed and operated for a known monthly figure, with no call charges," he points out, "If you're always going to be talking to the same people, a mobile telephone will usually prove a far more costly alternative."

A final word of advice concerns after-sales service. "Don't assume that the equipment you choose is going to prove totally trouble-free," he comments. "Dust, water, vibration and knocks can upset even the best-protected electronic circuitry. Mobile radios also need retuning from time to time. Buy from a reputable company able to provide the level of service that you would expect from any other supplier of golf course equipment. There is no mandatory requirement for suppliers of communications equipment to be members of any industry association or governing body, so beware of shady operators who may not be around tomorrow."
Why must we flounder with inconsistent advice?

Master Greenkeeper KERRAN DALY joins the Poa debate and questions Jim Arthur on ways to kill worms

It was great to see such well argued and thought provoking articles by Arne van Amerongen and Tony Howarth in the May issue. My first reaction was to note that the subject matter was basically the everlasting debate about Poa annua, fescue and bent. All this indicates to me that after twenty years of political in-fighting between rigid dogma and liberal experimentation by agronomists, we are no further forward toward any consensus on even the basic ground rules, such as grass species and subsequent management.

I am sure we all agree that pure fescue greens liked keen by sea breezes are the only true golf greens. On established greens anywhere, management by Arthurian principles is the best way to try and emulate them. New constructions on inland sites are, however, a case apart. The specification of the seed mix and in many cases the planning of the aftercare is generally in the hands of agronomists.

Some stick dogmatically to saving fescue where it is surrounded by Poa annua. The new sward, subject to heavy play and minimalist policies can only result in a weak turf ripe for invasion. Others sow creeping bents with scant regard for whether the resources to manage such a grass (including the ability to limit winter play) are in existence or not. Whatever has been tried, it seems there has been very little success in producing Poa annua free greens. Those that have owe it more to a cut-it-out-and-patch-it policy than anything agronomic.

The new sward, subject to heavy play and minimalist policies can only result in a weak turf ripe for invasion. Others sow creeping bents with scant regard for whether the resources to manage such a grass (including the ability to limit winter play) are in existence or not. Whatever has been tried, it seems there has been very little success in producing Poa annua free greens. Those that have owe it more to a cut-it-out-and-patch-it policy than anything agronomic. To do any action that cannot be justified as economically sound will ultimately lose the greenkeeper and the course as a financial machine. The question is not how much can they pay but how much can they get their hands on to manage production of their greens.

There is also the manufacture and disposal of waste products from such nasties to consider. Though our own chemical companies are no doubt the 'fitters', there are many less scrupulous manufacturers, dealers and applicators in the field, and many are not aware of the dangers associated with these substances. There is no need to keep experimenting. We are in the hands of a conscientious effort to control the pest in turf, and the likelihood is that most of the chemicals will prove useless. If any greenkeeper has been one of those who has been given a task to control the pest in turf, then it is very important that the greenkeeper is fully aware of the situation, the dangers and the responsibilities associated with the task. The greenkeeper is the only one who is responsible for the outcome, and the greenkeeper must be aware of the dangers associated with these chemicals.

The greenkeeper must ensure that all chemicals are in a safe and secure place where they cannot be accessed by unauthorized people. The greenkeeper must ensure that all chemicals are only used as a last resort and that the greenkeeper is aware of the dangers associated with these chemicals. The greenkeeper must ensure that the use of chemicals is only authorized by a qualified person, and that the greenkeeper is aware of the dangers associated with these chemicals.

I have nothing but admiration for Jim Arthur and publicly thank him for all the times he has sparked my brain and brought a smile to my lips. However, my loyalty lies with my staff, my members and my little piece of England, the stewardship of which I am all the more grateful for – as any Scot down here should be.