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Education
Around the Green
Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund
Launched by Viscount Whitelaw at BTME 1992, the Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, contact BIGGA on 03473 581.

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COVER PICTURE:
Muirfield, venue for last year’s Open Tournament and gearing up like everyone else for a busy spring
"Last year I applied ROOTS to newly seeded areas and parts of the course that were under stress. There was also some disease damage due to climatic conditions. Three to four weeks after applying ROOTS there was a noticeable difference in turf density and colour. Also the core samples we took showed twice the root mass as the untreated areas. There was a definite speed up in establishment and recovery.

This year I plan to use ROOTS throughout the whole maintenance programme."

Jim Poole
Course Manager
Stratford on Avon
Warks
Continuing its policy of regionalisation, the STRI has announced the hiring of Peter Winter as regional advisory agronomist in the south west of England. Peter is well known in the region, having worked for Fisons plc Horticulture Division for some 20 years, responsible for both sales and technical advice in the turf, amenity and commercial grower markets. Peter previously worked with the STRI back in the early 1970s.

Jeremy Howarth has also rejoined the STRI as an advisory agronomist, this after a 12 year break in industry where he gained considerable experience in marketing, promotion and PR. In addition to marketing and promoting the Institute, he will also be visiting customers, offering advice on the correct management of golf courses, sports grounds and amenity facilities.

Supreme Mowing Ltd have appointed Paul Wakefield as sales engineer, an eminently suitable post as Paul has been with the company since leaving school. He has worked in just about every department and his speciality has developed on the grinding machine business. Paul's first task began in early February when he visited customers within the Pacific Rim - Japan, Thailand and Malaysia - countries offering considerable scope for Supreme Mowing's expanding activities.

It's just as well that Roy Kates, chairman of BIGGA, arrived at BTME by car as he left with a surprise gift of a 25kg bag of Barenbrug grass seed. The grass seed mixture, including Barenbrug's high quality Barcrown, Bargreen and Bardot, was presented to Roy by Anthony Compson, managing director and Michel Mulder, marketing director of Barenbrug.

If Roy decides against turning his home lawn into a luxurious practice green, Wexham Park Golf Club is bound to stake a claim.

Horseman Harvey Smith is to appear in court in March, charged with assault, following an alleged incident at Baildon Golf Club in which two greenkeepers were taken to Bradford Royal Infirmary, one nursing a black eye and a colleague needing five stitches in a head wound. Smith, whose house borders the course, has been involved in a long running dispute over horses damaging the course and churning up fairways. Greenkeeper International understands that staff were laying paths to keep horses off the greens when the alleged incident took place.

Winner of the Farmura 'See Your Spray' Blazon competition, Norman Fenwick, course manager of Sandfoot Springs Golf Course, is pictured being presented with his ticket to the GCSAA Show in Los Angeles by Jonathan Harmer, managing director of Farmura Environmental Products.

Falling under the editorial label of 'it was bound to happen, sooner or later', the Lancashire College of Agriculture and Horticulture has officially changed its name and title to Myerscough College, for donkey's years the monicker by which it had been affectionately known by greenkeepers. Though the name has changed, the college wish it to be known that Myerscough College remains a GTC approved centre for greenkeeper training.

On the evening of 4 February shortly after staff finished for the day, the four year old purpose built facility which housed most of Sunningdale's maintenance equipment was discovered burning fiercely, resulting in a near wipe-out of the club's machinery and equipment. Sunningdale's course manager, Lawson Bingham, told Greenkeeper International that major losses thus far include four tractors, a JCB, eight triplexes, five Cushman/derivatives, a GA 30, a Vertidrain, a Toro outfield spiker and every rotary mower and strimmer in the place! Came the reckoning, losses were so great that Lawson declared he was hard pushed to find a shovel for each staff member to help with the clear-up. The cause is still under investigation, though a forensic expert believes that an electrical short on a tractor will likely prove the culprit.

The SISIS Tankard, awarded annually to the Spars Holt College student achieving the highest grades whilst attending, on block release, Level II Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management, has this year been won by Adrian Johnson. Thirty year old Adrian, attending Spars Holt on a continuation course in Greenkeeping Phase III, Supervisory Studies, is head greenkeeper at Broadstone Park GC., a public nine hole facility situated south of Guildford. The course was built on a land infill site and opened in March 1989.

Pictured, from left, Adrian Johnson, Russell Jordan (Sisis) and Bob Young (Spars Holt College).

Mike Taylor, who until recently was head of the Horticultural Division, has been appointed to the post of deputy principal at Elmwood College. The college has a roll of 350 full time and around 2000 part time students, following courses in Horticulture and Greenkeeping, Engineering, Agriculture, Food Studies and Business & General Studies. Elmwood College Horticultural Division remains at the forefront of developments in greenkeeping education and training.

Greenkeeping staff from the three neighbouring golf courses Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill have taken part in the 'Toro West Suffolk Greenkeepers Challenge Trophy' sponsored by Atterton and Ellis. Newmarket take first honours with A&Es sales manager, Roger Denson, presenting the trophy to Arnold Mynott. This was a Stapleford competition over a period of six months with the final scores reading: Newmarket 369 points, Bury 332 points, Haverhill 327 points.

This is the first of what is intended to be an annual Toro Golf Challenge, played between local greenkeepers or BIGGA members on a home and away basis, with perhaps one match played each month during the summer. Toro are keen for other local greenkeepers to join this 'challenge' and are seeking to recruit an additional three club teams.
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I was on special assignment. I'd had the whisper from my 'grass' and come up with a place and a date - Long Ashton Golf Club, Wednesday 28th April.

Something big was going down but I was not sure how big. The word was that Ma Rion and her boys had organised something special. All the local 'dealers' were in on the act and some of the big 'gangs' from up country were in for their share of the 'cut'.

I didn't know what to expect so I went prepared for anything. It was my big chance to catch all these 'operators' in one go so I packed my shooter, jumped in my jalopy and headed out for Westurf.

They were sure of their security and as I swung in off the road a guy in uniform smiled and waved me through. I parked up and went to take a look around.

I was amazed, everyone was there and thousands of punters were checking out the merchandise. Some of the hardware on show was unbelievable. I kept my ear to the ground and one gang boasting about how it had cut down some 'best grass' and another said he had a 'bandit' that did the 'best topping' job around. One dealer was openly offering 'ransom' deals while the main talk among the punters was about our 'dealers' and how it was the best 'grass' they'd ever had.

I glanced through the window of HQ and my blood froze. There was no missing that profile and that curl of smoke, it was Ma Rion herself and something big was happening. I could see the infamous Red Coats from up north, I knew it was my one chance to bag them all at once.

One of the Red Coats came out of HQ and the uniforms huddled round to protect him. Without a second thought, I made my move. I burst through the door my gun at the ready. Ma Rion didn't flinch, she looked me straight in the eye and said did I know anything about the 'Silver Key'. This threw me completely off guard and at that moment I felt an almighty thump on the back of my head and I passed out.

When I regained consciousness my head was spinning and I had a lump on my skull the size of a golf ball. This wasn't surprising as it was a golf ball that had hit me. Men in weird hats and funny shoes were bending over me and asking if I was alright and didn't I hear them shout 'Fore'?

As my head cleared I asked them what the date was? - March 25th - Thank God! For one minute I thought I had missed Westurf.

Catch the Action. Westurf - Long Ashton Golf Club - April 28th - be there!

Campaigner for every greenkeeper in the land

The life of Norman Exley is best understood not by what he achieved for himself, considerable though this was, but by what he achieved for his fellow man. Listening to him at the BTME just days before his death, it was clear that the widespread euphoria celebrated that week was something he identified with as being in part of his making, albeit in the most modest of ways, for no man strove harder or worked more diligently than he to improve the greenkeeper's image, awareness or need for professionalism.

In a quiet moment he said, "I always knew we would get there in the end, and this week has proved my point beyond doubt - our profession has arrived!" His pride positively radiated.

Norman came to greenkeeping as a mature student after studying at Askham Bryan College, settling comfortably into work that he found totally rewarding, for the past ten years a cornerstone member of the staff at his beloved Northwood Golf Club. From his home base at Northwood he mastered the Association's affairs for his fellow greenkeepers, at first managing the old EIGGA London section, along with Martin Peters, and eventually taking on the major administrative role for the BIGGA South East Region, cajoling, coaxing, organising and rousing as only he knew how.

Always optimistic, often against the odds prevalent in the hierarchy of golf club management, Norman could best be described as having the zeal of an evangelist when fighting his corner, for his corner was also that of his fellow man, his resolve never wavering for a moment - he was a campaigner for every greenkeeper in the land, and he was winning the battle.

An avid golfer, Norman demonstrated his love for the game not only by playing, but by advancing the game as an organiser of such wonderful events in the greenkeeping calendar as the Walton Heath Gentleman's Golf Tournament and Dinner and, his lasting memorial amongst so many, the 1992 BIGGA National Tournament at Littlestone.

Norman Exley's influence and contribution within the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association will not be forgotten, his example an encouragement for others to stride forward with real purpose and genuine pride.

The sincere condolences of all BIGGA's members are extended to Linda at this sad time.

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Break in very lives

Beware the burglar, the damage he causes is not always just to property!

Intruders broke into our equipment store overnight recently, smashing the radiator on a tractor, spraying tins of marker paint on the walls and discharging a fire extinguisher. Upon entering the shed I discovered that the chemical cabinet had also been ripped open and without delay summoned the police. They arrived and did what they had to do before asking us to assess any loss.

The shed was in such a mess that we had to start at one side and work our way around. Only after 45 minutes did we reach the cabinet, discovering that a number of Phostoxin tablets were missing.

I informed the police immediately, having left instruction that the shed was OOB, as we had discovered two tablets on the floor, exuding toxic fumes as they reacted with the radiator leakage.

An hour later three of my staff were taken ill and an ambulance was summoned. The Fire Service was also contacted and three appliances attended. Some 45 minutes later I also was overcome by sickness.

For a while we were all on the critical list, needing oxygen overnight and some put on heart rate... but there is no charge that
damage... but there is no charge that
we can bring against them for what happened to us.

Gordon Mitchell
Head Greenkeeper, Westwood
Golf Club, Leek, Staffordshire

On behalf of the Northern region may I thank those members who gave freely of their time at BTME, acting as stewards and working on our regional stand. Everyone did an excellent job, behaved most courteously and appeared smartly turned-out - indeed, they were a credit to our Association.

To those not familiar with the BTME, the first people encountered by visitors as they enter the exhibition are the BIGGA stewards, our front-line ambassadors. I see it as vitally important that they present themselves well for the good of the Association. The whole event was a great success and I hope everyone enjoyed it. Well done lads! May I have your names for next year please?

Bob Lupton
Northern Regional Administrator,
Shipley, W Yorkshire

May I use the columns of Greenkeeper International to thank the many kind people, too numerous to mention or respond to individually, who contacted me following my husband Norman's untimely death on 6 February?

The huge numbers of letters, cards and floral tributes that were sent gave true indication of Norman's popularity, especially within BIGGA, and I was deeply moved that so many people were thinking of him - and me - at this time. I am sincerely grateful.

Linda Exley
Northwood Golf Club,
Northwood, Middlesbrough

I read with interest the letter from the president of Boldmere Golf Club concerning the condition of public golf courses in the Birmingham area and the sorry tale he told. I must point out that
whether or not the courses are maintained by a private contractor, the standards of grounds maintenance are determined by the Council through its specification and the subsequent management of the contract by the client. The limiting factor is generally financial. As I am aghast at how much a round of golf on Birmingham municipal courses costs and whether a reasonable price increase to pay for an increase in the standard of maintenance is called for.

At Bradley Park Golf Course in Huddersfield the specification for grounds maintenance (contract won by the in-house direct works organisation) is designed to produce high standards of maintenance and has achieved this through the endeavours of the contractor and the co-operative but watchful eye of the Council's client officers. This specification is achieved on a green fee of approximately £8 a round.

However, it will also interest your readers to note that the course has been closed to date (11 December) for some six weeks. The relatively new course, built on a clay sub-soil, has experienced saturated top soil conditions because of the record rainfall in October and November and even those areas of the course with extensive drainage systems have been unplayable. What is remarkable is that two miles down the road a 100 year old course have been unplayable. What is remarkable is that two miles down the road a 100 year old course has been open throughout with most areas in good condition - firm underfoot with few areas which could be considered unplayable. The main reason for this amazing contrast is the effect of thatch on the fairways, in this case preventing the downward movement of water to the soil to such an extent that, despite the record rainfall, test holes reveal a bone dry soil underneath the 3' thatch layer. This all bodes ill for the summer when drought conditions will soon be prevalent because of the lack of moisture in the soil - but what a boon for winter golf!

When extended course closure results in a loss in revenue of many thousands of pounds, I find myself wondering whether the thatch we see as a villain and spend so much time eradicating is in fact a friend of the fairway and not a foe as widely believed. Perhaps a case for thatch management rather than control?

**JOHN S FLETCHER**

Operations Manager,
Kirklees Metropolitan Council,
Huddersfield

May I respond to John Turner's letter in the December issue, by saying that many municipal greenkeeping staff strive under very difficult circumstances to achieve the same high standards of presentation and quality as those found on many private courses. The tone of Mr Turner's letter tars all concerned with the same brush, yet there are good and bad courses, both public and private.

CCT, however, seems to be the latestSpanner in the public golf works. For many years municipal golf received a bad press due to the main to the lack of interest paid by some local authorities in the game of golf itself. With the realisation that there was a valuable income to be gained and a demand to be met, many have attempted to put their house in order.

Situations that have arisen, as appears in Mr Turner's case, are a direct result of the process that many authorities have taken under CCT. The area that Mr Turner is concerned with is the grounds maintenance/course maintenance operation, whether put out to tender as an individual service or undertaken as an entire golf course management operation by a private company. The key to successful operation under this system lies in the course maintenance specification.

In my experience, because the specification is written without skilled input from experienced greenkeepers and course managers, it is often outdated and inappropriate. Poorly written, it can provide an unscrupulous contractor with many loop-holes by which vital areas of maintenance may be overlooked.

As a final point here, the Local Authority invariably make the mistake of opting for the cheapest bid when buying course maintenance as a direct service, or awarding the contract to the lowest bidder when the entire management package of a golf site is put out to tender. In this case may I suggest that Mr Turner digs a bit deeper, for there are courses of action he can take. He should be hounding the Local Authority concerned and going through the bureaucratic nightmare - the whole process - from town clerk's pen to assistant greenkeeper's office. This specification is written without a COSHH assessment is well without a knowledge of the dangers that lurk therein, anyone without a COSHH assessment is literally playing with fire.

Sanity alone suggests that before approaching such dangerous substances, which when mixed turn into highly corrosive Hydrofluoric acid, the handler should at very least wear industrial gloves, for should the product come into contact with bare flesh, amputation is the only solution - too horrible to contemplate.

Congratulations on a very well presented magazine. Continue to keep education to the fore.

**PAUL GOPSEY**

Head Greenkeeper, Barnehurst Golf Club, Kent

**DAVID STEPHENSON**

Company Secretary,
D&E Turf Maintenance Ltd.
Shildon, Co. Durham

The temptation to ferret around in such vehicles is considerable, yet without a knowledge of the dangers that lurk therein, anyone without a COSHH assessment is literally playing with fire.

Sanity alone suggests that before approaching such dangerous substances, which when melted turn into highly corrosive Hydrofluoric acid, the handler should at very least wear industrial gloves, for should the product come into contact with bare flesh, amputation is the only solution - too horrible to contemplate.

Congratulations on a very well presented magazine. Continue to keep education to the fore.
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