WHO WILL BE THE TORO/PGA EUROPEAN TOUR STUDENT GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR?

One of these young greenkeepers will win an eight weeks expenses paid trip to America. Two of them will join the PGA European Tour greenkeeping team and help prepare a course for a major event. The others can take comfort from the fact that they are the best student greenkeepers in their region.

All seven greenkeepers are already winners. Each has been picked to represent their region in the 1994 Toro-PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper Awards after an extensive round of interviews.

The overall winner will receive the Toro Scholarship which includes a six-week residential turf management study course at the University of Massachusetts in the USA in January/February 1995. There will also be visits to the Toro company’s corporate headquarters in Minneapolis and the Toro Irrigation Division in California. And, if the schedules allow, time to visit the GCSAA’s show in San Francisco. All expenses will be paid for by the sponsors.

The two runners-up will join the PGA European Tour greenkeeping team at two venues just prior to a major PGA event and will also be invited to attend the PGA European Tour’s Greenkeeping Conference which is held every two years. The selected students will become working members of the PGA European Tour advance party, responsible for overseeing preparation prior to and during the tournaments. All expenses will be paid for by the sponsors.

We will announce the winner next issue, but which one would you vote for?


Vincent Lee
Ken Moore
Stephen Pellatt
Byron Thomas

Margeir Vilhjalmsson

Byron Thomas is the first assistant at Mor-lais Castle Golf Club near Merthyr Tydfil. After finishing school in July 1990, he started at Pencoed following September and went to Morlais Castle for work experience as an apprentice. He has now trained there for three years and even took over from the head greenkeeper, Peter Lewis, when he was injured “in the line of duty”.

At Pencoed Byron has completed phase I and II of the City and Guilds greenkeeping and sports turf management.

MARGEIR VILHJALMSSON representing Scotland
Age: 22. College: Elmwood
Although Margeir is representing Scotland, as you can probably tell from the name, he is not Scottish. He comes from Iceland and took out a bank loan to go to Elmwood to learn about greenkeeping.

At the moment Margeir is working at Glenegles on their Excellence in Golf Award Scheme. He has also had some work experience at Carnoustie. A keen golfer, he was the junior champion at Sudurnesja GC in 1987 and 1989 but now he plays off 12. “Greenkeeping has been a pleasure with golf playing in recent years,” he admits. As well as being a champion in Iceland, he also rose to the position of deputy head greenkeeper before coming to Britain to study. Margeir completed his national certificate in greenkeeping with ease and is undertaking the HNC in golf course management by distance learning. He should complete this next year.

STEPHEN PELLATT representing South-West England
Age: 30. College: Sparsholt
After leaving school Stephen served a four-year coppersmith’s apprenticeship followed by another year “on my tools”. Stephen, who is now married with two children, then became involved with turf while working as an assistant groundsman on a naval base. He worked there for two years, maintaining the grounds and the sports pitches.

“After a financially motivated spell in the building industry,” he continues, “I joined Lee-on-Solent golf club as an assistant.” Two years ago he was promoted to assistant head greenkeeper.

“I now have a career which provides me with enormous job and personal satisfaction. I aim to continue my education and broaden my experience on the way to becoming a successful head greenkeeper.”

He has completed phase I of City and Guilds, is taking phase II and plans to take phase III afterwards.

BYRON THOMAS representing Wales
Age: 20. College: Pencoed

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Caddy reflects on boss's shot

Kim Macfie, Hayter's sales and marketing manager, shows how it's done

The winning Northern team

Tony Bourke, Hayter's managing director, presents Maurice Clarks with the Hayter Cup
Maurice Clarke celebrated his victory in the Hayter Challenge Tournament final by scraping off his goatee beard. But his success at picturesque Pannal was anything but a close shave.

The 31-year-old 14-handicapper was one of three golfers who shot a nett 67 in the morning of this 27-hole competition. But the others couldn’t keep up the pace in the afternoon and Maurice, the first assistant at Corrstown GC, near Dublin Airport, won by more than a whisker. A 20ft chip-in on the 5th followed by another birdie on the 7th gave him a gross score of 39 and a nett score of 32 in afternoon.

One of his co-leaders in the morning was his 61-year-old father, Tommy, the head greenkeeper at Corrstown, who was playing just in front of Maurice. “I had the added incentive that I wanted to beat the old man,” said Maurice.

Tommy, a 12-handicap player, started the afternoon in superb fashion – with a birdie. “But I got so excited I went to pieces,” he said jokingly.

The other morning leader, Steve Milne, a 21-year-old assistant at Exeter Golf Club, didn’t go to pieces but still finished two shots adrift of Maurice with a nett 34 off a 24 handicap. Like Maurice, Steve had someone in his family to thank for his success: his 29-year-old brother is a pro. “He set me on the right track,” says Steve, who has been playing for two years and has had about eight lessons.
Several other golfers went round the 6659-yard par 72 course in sixtysomething in the morning. Paul Godwin and Mike O'Neill shot nett 68s, and Kevin Peace came in with a nett 69. But, after a quick lunch, this tiring course took its toll and they all slipped back in the afternoon.

Those who came good second time around the first nine were Graeme MacDonald, who added a nett 33.5 to a nett 72, John Moorhouse who added a 33 to a 72, Joe Bedford who added a 33.5 to a 79 and Alan Baxter who recorded a 32 after a morning 73.

However, the Hayter Challenge Tournament, now in its second year, is about more than individual scores. The pride of the regions is at stake. And once again the Northern team have something to gloat about.

"The sun shone again for the righteous," said regional administrator Bob Lupton who picked up the team trophy and a cheque. The winning team comprised: Tony Mears, Ian Hutton, Gary Potter, Alan Baxter, John Waite, David Spurden, Chris Powley, Chris Fiddell and John Jones. The runners-up again were the Midlands team, led by Roger Willars, the only playing captain in the competition. He says he stepped in to save the team's honour when a qualifier cried off and the reserves were unavailable.

They don't know what they missed. Even those greenkeepers who didn't win a prize said they had enjoyed the day, the course and Pannal's hospitality. Most said they enjoyed it so much that they are going to try harder next year to make it through their section and region qualifying rounds to get to the final. Roger Willars has already booked his accommodation!

Verdict on the course

The winner, Maurice Clarke, spoke for everyone when he said: "The course was excellent and the greens were in great condition. The course is not too difficult, but you can get in trouble if you don't keep the ball straight". Head greenkeeper Kevin Wroe, who took over recently from Alan Gamble, and his team did a superb job with the presentation of the course.

Results

Overall winner: Maurice Clarke (Eire), 99
Regional team prize: 1, Northern, 885; 2, Midlands, 906
Category 1 (0-9 handicap): 1, John Moorhouse (Midland), 105; 2, Graeme MacDonald (Midland), 105.5; 3, Paul Godwin (SW/SW), 105.5.
Category 2 (10-18): 1, Maurice Clarke (Eire), 99; 2, Alan Baxter (Northern); 3, Tommy Clarke (Eire), 106.
Category 3 (19-28): 1, Steve Milne (SW/SW), 101; 2, Chris Powley (Northern), 109; 3, Alex Robertson (Scotland), 111.5.
Over 55s: Tommy Clarke (Eire), 106.
Under 21: Steve Milne (SW/SW), 101
Best Gross: Ron Christie (SE), 112
Nearest the pin: David Behan (Eire), 5ft 11in
Longest drive: Ron Christie (SE)
How to extend the battery life of your electric mower

I have read your article on the new Ransomes E-Plex triple greens mower in the September issue with interest mainly because it is powered electrically. Although this is a very obvious statement, I am a sales engineer for a very well known lawn mower grinding machine manufacturer, and we, as a company, vigorously promote the single blade grinding method of sharpening cylinders, or as it is more commonly known ‘relief angle grinding’.

With the launch of the Ransomes E-Plex machine, we feel it would be an opportunity to tell prospective buyers of the mower about some very distinct advantages of ‘relief angle grinding’ as this will give much longer battery life on the E-Plex mower and as a result will extend the life of the batteries and obtain more ‘charges’ than 350 as stated in the article. Allow me to explain in a little more detail the advantages of this method of grinding cylinders with a relief angle.

1. There is less friction between cylinder and bottom blade.
2. Longer blade life – both reels and bedknives can last up to 2-3 times longer.
3. Motors, gears, transmissions and all other moving parts last longer due to less friction.
4. Adjustments, reels to bedknives (or vice-versa), due to less wear, are less frequent.
5. Dry summers and the lack of moisture in the grass to lubricate the cutting action leads to rapid wear of the blades. Relief grinding of the cutting cylinder is the cure to this and other associated overheating problems.
6. The cleaner cutting action means that mowing can take place in very wet conditions without tearing, ribbing or skiddimg of heavily set (tight) mowing machines.

So greenkeepers, if you are seriously contemplating purchasing one of the above machines or any other make and wish to keep your costs down even further, consider the above method of grinding.

Peter Barrow
Southern UK sales engineer
Eric Hunter Grinders Ltd, Portsmouth

Teenager with taste

I have recently come into possession of some old issues of your magazine. This is a fantastic publication and I just cannot put it down. Can I subscribe or is there anyway for me to purchase it regularly?

I will be 17 in February and I want to become a greenkeeper.

Alan O'Connor
Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Eire

A great time

To the executive director,

Just a short letter to thank you and the BIGGA team for running the Open support team and the National Tournament so well. It was a great two weeks for me, which would not have been possible without the hard work that went into setting up these events and running them so professionally.

John Wells
Course manager, Brocket Hall Golf Club, Welwyn, Hertfordshire

Greenkeeper is bound for Portugal

Callander Golf Club’s W Myles has won a golfing holiday for two to Portugal in the Ocmis Irrigation survey prize draw. Ian Semple of Old Fold Manor GC won the second prize of two tickets to the Toyota World Match Play Championship. Twenty other head greenkeepers who completed the Ocmis survey will receive bottles of Somerset Royal Brandy.

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YOU SAY

Send your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York Y06 2NF or fax them on 0347 838984

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Since the first SISIS top dresser was launched in the 1950s the name SISIS has spread throughout the UK and around the world.

Tractor mounted, independently powered or hand operated we have the right machine for every requirement, each offering a wide range of application rates, precise setting and hopper capacities up to 1.8 cu.m.

For full details of the SISIS range of top dressers write to:

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"All SISIS machines are designed, patented and manufactured in Gr. Britain"
Effective drainage is an essential requirement for all playing surfaces. An inability for water to keep moving either sideways or downwards can swiftly reduce superb turf to a mudbath, causing a series of knock-on effects which can be extremely costly to rectify.

Poor turf drainage not only limits water percolation, it also hinders the passage of air and warmth through the soil to the roots, restricting strong and healthy plant growth.

Prevention, as in so many other cases, is always better than the cure. However, the ability to carry out and maintain effective drainage is within the reach and means of most clubs. This can be achieved either by employing a professional sports turf drainage contractor or by using their own equipment, hired in or purchased for the job.

In many situations, it will pay to have one's major drainage works carried out using purpose-built drainage machinery equipped with laser guided leveling equipment to ensure that the pipe gradients are correct within both flat and undulating ground.

This requirement is not so demanding beneath turf which has a consistent slope in one direction or another, the aim being to drain to the lowest possible level, keeping water on the move using the lie of the land.

Whatever one's circumstances, there will always be occasions when additional drainage is needed or there is a need for rectification, maintenance or improvements to existing installations. For these jobs, greenkeepers can call on a growing range of equipment suitable for use by the "do-it-yourselfer".

Shelton Trenching Systems claims to be Europe's leading specialist manufacturer of sports turf drainage equipment, producing a series of high quality, effective products over the past decade.

The company's Supertrencher Mk Va is designed for high daily workrates cutting pipe trenches from 25mm to 135mm (1in to 5.3in) wide. Features include a longer conveyor than previous models allowing the use of larger trailers to remove the soil. Chain driven, the conveyor has a chevron belt, the speed of which can be adjusted hydraulically.

Other enhancements include the lowering and enlarging of the soil exit port and the fitting of a stainless steel deflector plate. Together they are said to provide greatly improved soil flow for faster working.

Options on the trencher are laser levelling and a mini gravel hopper to allow simultaneous backfilling. Designed for tractors of 75 to 90hp/ the Supertrencher Mk Va costs £9,350. It can be specified with segmented cutters with quick-change tungsten carbide tipped cutter heads.

For those preferring a trenchless system, Shelton's gravel band drainage machines can instal two 20mm (0.78in) bands of material 400mm (15.75in) apart in one
pass at depths down to 250mm (10in).
Rather than utilise gravel or sand, Shelton recommends 3mm Lytag because of its excellent hydraulic conductivity.
Presser wheels minimise surface heave allowing the turf to be returned immediately to play while the introduction of stainless steel channel openers has enabled the use of tractors of 50hp-plus, with four wheel drive advised in wet conditions.
Available on hire at £185 per day (minimum three days) or for outright purchase from £7,895, Shelton Gravel Band Drainers come in three models, one of which permits the fitting of self-loading equipment on the tractor's three-point linkage.
The company has also introduced recently a range of turf drainage equipment suitable for use with compact tractors.
Perthshire farmer, Jimmy Gilchrist, has been producing the Daisy D Drainer since the early 1980s. Comprising a simple, single leg trenchless unit, it is suitable for mounting on tractors of 75hp-plus, depending on ground conditions and drainage depth.
Versions suitable for laying 80mm or 100mm pipe down to a maximum depth of 914mm (3ft) are available and the hopper has a shutter to regulate depth of backfill.

'As a trencher, the machine is compact, self-contained and highly manoeuvrable'
Available within the Daisy D contract drainage service or for purchase at £2,600, the Daisy D Drainer can be equipped with laser levelling if required.
One multi-purpose machine which is proving its cost-effectiveness on a range of jobs for landscapers, contractors, groundstaff and others is the Skidster, fitted with either a petrol or diesel engine.
Comprising a base skid-steered power unit with a rear stand-on operating platform, the machine can be equipped with a host of attachments for work on hard and turf surfaces.
For drainage works, the machine can be had with a chain trencher, front hoe excavator and bucket loader, each designed to give the Skidster the abilities of a single, specialised unit.
As a trencher, the machine is compact, self-contained and highly manoeuvrable capable of digging a 914mm (3ft) deep trench at 100mm or 150mm (4in or 6in) widths. A crumbier attachment is available and there is also the option of full crawler rubber tracks to minimise disturbance of soft surfaces.
Equipped with a bucket, the machine offers a maximum 2m (6.5ft) lift height. Offered with a variety of tyre options to suit the surface, Skidster prices start from less than £7,000.

Bigger drainage works demand bigger machines and Foster has a range of heavy-duty diggers suitable for most tractors from 35hp upwards.
The company's D2 and D2P diggers connect direct to the three-point linkage and have twin ram 180deg slewing. Because of its offset facility, the Foster D3 model is attached to the tractor using a load-bearing sub-frame.
Major difference between the D2 and D2P is the use of an independent hydraulic system on the latter. Both machines have a maximum reach of 4.37m (14ft 4in), digging depth of 3m (9ft 10in) and tear out force of 2.9 tonnes (6,350lb).
The D3's arm can be offset to any position along its frame enabling work close to walls and fences. Sideways reach is a massive 5.18m (17ft).
Offered with a choice of ditching, trenching and drainage buckets, the latter with ejector, Foster diggers cost from £3,500.
Summer madness hits St Enodoc

Picturesque St Enodoc Golf Club in Cornwall has been hit by a spell of summer madness. One night 10 flags, six tee markers and six boards screwed to stone tee boxes disappeared. The vandals had made the holes about 18in in diameter by gouging them out with their hands. Later, a close examination of the gang mowers revealed no set on (and they'd never heard of this).

The equipment at the course was mainly farming implements of which the 6-ton Russian tractor was their favourite. It was used to cut the fairways and semi-rough — well, almost everything. One problem was that the course was built on a swamp and the tractor kept sinking and making large holes. The answer? Fill the holes with sand and create another bunker!

They had tried to update their inventory with an electric Flymo — but it had to be returned when they couldn't find a long enough cable in East Germany to go around the course. Parts would take 3-4 weeks to arrive from the west. In the event that something arrived the same day, the staff would break it or insist it didn't fit!

One day the owner decided he wanted the fairways top-dressed. Stuart didn't know this until the top-dresser arrived — a farm manure spreader that discharged out of the rear by a conveyor belt with two bars with flailing rods on them. So going up hill it discharged at a rate of 1 ton per square metre and nothing. Stuart and Elaine were assured by the greenkeepers that this was normal practice. Only when Stuart insisted that they all get a shovel and rake to smooth out the 2ft hills did they all remember they had doctor's appointments.

The arrival of a Jacobsen Turf Cat was similar to Unification Day. Suddenly everyone wanted to cut the semi-rough.

The Easteners are very easy going, so it wasn't a complete surprise to Stuart when the day before a big skins game featuring Bernard Langer and David Gilford that one greenkeeper had a day off for shopping plus a visit to the hairdresser's.

The mechanic had spent most of his time working on Russian tractors, which required nothing more than a huge hammer and a 42mm spanner, so when Stuart asked him to adjust the bit of play in the groomers he did just that — he welded the groomers to the frame of the mower, in the down position. Just the job for rototilling the greens, which brings us to verti-cutting.

"They would normally rototill the greens because they were set so low and always finishing with twice around the green (as mowing) and once around the foregreen while decapitating any sprinklers in their path," recalls Elaine.

As a rule the greenkeepers were rewarded with a party given by the course owner or with presents of beer and plenty of it. Stuart, a teetotaller, therefore was not the most popular man in Germany when he banned alcohol from the course.

"This man turned out to be our worst nightmare!"

Most of the German greenkeepers are really farmers by profession, so Stuart and Elaine were delighted when their boss told them they were to get a new man with three years' experience. Their smiles turned to laughter when they found out his name was Herr Shiverdick. Their laughter turned to horror soon after he arrived. "This man turned out to be our worst nightmare," said Elaine. "Within two or three days the 6-ton tractor was in one of the streams complete with gang mowers and driver. This was after he had severed a high-pressure stand-pipe, which produced a 100m fountain. Every day there was some kind of catastrophe, but it was good for the others. It made them look competent!"

The mechanic did his fair share of wrecking, too. In the shed was a reel grinder, two years old and never used as no one had any idea what it was. Stuart removed the polythene and taught the mechanic how to use it, giving detailed instruction and demonstrations about what could go wrong. The mechanic appeared to have got the idea, so Stuart left him to it. An hour later Stuart returned expecting to see at least one finished. He was a little surprised to see all seven fairways reeled — with a 5mm convex shape to them!

In Germany they like to apply quartz sand as top-dressing, and a lot of it. Stuart decided he would mix soil and sand, which they did by throwing sand and soil in a small cement mixer, mixing it, then tipping it out and throwing it through a fine mesh screen with a shovel. What went through was used, what didn't was scrapped. "When you require 40 or 50 tons this procedure could take about six months," said Stuart. "Germany has not heard of power screens."

Stuart and Elaine have now left that club — "We both felt we had to leave for the sake of our own sanity," said Elaine. "But we hope we have left quite a bit of knowledge and know-how there. At least we know they'll be cutting the grass, not running over it at 35mph."

She adds: "It was a lot of fun and we met some very nice people. The staff are all now competent greenkeepers. It was a joy to work with them and we learnt a lot about life behind The Wall."

NEW FACES

The new head greenkeeper at Brickendon Grange Golf and Country Club, a picturesque parkland course near Herford, is Trevor Booth. 32. Previously he was head greenkeeper at Oakridge, Nuneaton. He replaces Mike Reece who has gone to King's Norton in Birmingham.

Bob Lawton, 39, has moved from South Shields GC, where he was head greenkeeper, to take over as course manager atBillingham GC, Cleveland. Harry Lees has gone to Ramsdale Hall.

GOLFCourse Guide
Described by Rees Jones to championship standards, the Oxfordshire Golf Course is the second Nitto Kogyo course in the UK (the first being Turnberry) and the first they have built outside Japan.

The architect's design philosophy is quoted as "to create an environment for the game of golf that is challenging, fair and aesthetically pleasing," while Nitto Albion plc, the UK operator, gives its objective as "to meet the cultural and business needs of Britain and Japan and form a bridge between the Japanese and British people and corporations."

Opened on July 4 1993 at an estimated cost of £22 million, the Oxfordshire is a 7187 yard par 72 course with sufficient options to tax golfers at all levels and an exceptionally well appointed clubhouse. Membership is by debenture, with a seven day debenture costing £26,000.

However these statistics are only part of the impressive credentials of the course.

Built on 250 acres of gently sloping ex-farmland just outside Thame and overlooking the Thame valley, the course is officially described as a modern American style parkland course. Course manager Martin Jones suggests that "inland links" is perhaps more accurate and gives a better indication of the design which is extensively landscaped.

Contours give additional interest, both visually and to play, and also ensures that all (rain) water is rapidly shed to drains. Martin is very proud of this, stating categorically: "we don't have puddles - if I saw a puddle during construction it was a cock-up - and notifiable." Of course there has been some minor settlement since, but he added, "rectification has been quick and simple."

The basic layout is two loops of 9 running out from the clubhouse, and a driving range. Part of the brief was that the Oxfordshire should have championship potential - and this justified using the highest specifications.

I suspect that the requirements of spectators and media were also fully considered during the planning because there are some very exceptional vantage points and such detailed thinking and foresight appears to be a hallmark of this course architect.

The clubhouse, nearly 40,000 square feet of it, is positioned on the high ground with a commanding view of the course. Its design claims to be based on traditional 19th century English architecture but with a luxury interior built to suit individual guest and corporate hospitality. I have to admit to being overawed by it.