Deep aeration on an intensively used golf course is vital if the grasses which we require are to survive.

We purchased our first Verti-Drain back in 1983 and very quickly bought a second. Both these machines have been working on a continuous basis providing excellent results and utilising only a minimum of spare parts.

Comment From Walter Woods
St. Andrews Links Golf Course supervisor

Sorry to have to say this Tim but I think Richard has made more appearances in this year's Greenkeeper International than yourself so far. Keep trying though.

Finally I would like to appeal to all Section members to phone or write to me if they have any snippits they would like to see in this column.

Antony Bindley

Mid Anglia

In early March a course visit to Ashridge GC was arranged and was well attended with 25 members turning up. Jim Cassidy, the Course Manager, gave us a slide show of the course followed by a look around the workshop and staff facilities which, it must be said, were of an exceptional standard. Gerald Bruce, our Section Secretary, presented Jim with some wine to show appreciation for his time and effort. It was certainly an interesting time spent there and let's hope that the standards set by Ashridge GC, particularly the staff facilities provided, become the norm in the future.

Just a short reminder about our Spring Tournament on the 29th of this month. All entries should be in by now, by form and cheque only please.

This event, the Sectional qualifier for the Hayter Tournament, the regional final of which will be held on July 16 at Peterborough Milton GC. The Lodgesway football Tournament should be underway by now, would all players ensure their matches are played by the date shown, it helps Chas run things smoothly if this is done. Many thanks.

Paul Lockett

Bucks, Berks and Oxon Section

It's been a long hard winter and I'm glad that spring has arrived at last to wipe the cobwebs off the golf clubs. That's if I can remember where I dumped them. I expect the wife has sold them at the local car boot sale.

The first event of the season is at Southfield GC on April 30. This is also the Hayter Qualifier. I hope everybody has received their entry forms for this event along with the Rigby Taylor Knockout form and fixture card for the season. What about the launch of the newsletter for the Section? I'm sure everybody has an opinion to share on this new venture.

I hope this proves to be a successful way of keeping all you members informed of what's going on in our area.
Around the Green

Ager at the Drift GC and to Mark Bel- larmey, also of the Drift for his appoint- ment as Head Greenkeeper.

Upon speaking to Terry Huntley, providing numbers of larmy, also of the Drift for his appoint- ager at the Drift GC and to Mark Bel- larmey, also of the Drift for his appoint- ment as Head Greenkeeper or First Assistant and the day will be free and will contribute towards obtaining D32/33 Assessor Awards. Please support these events to ensure their continued existence.

David Gibbs - 01737 832 015 for any relevant information.

London Section

This month is the start of our golfing events and our tournament will be held at Mill Hill GC on Wednesday April 24 starting at 11am. This is the Hayler qualifier and a good turnout is expected.

Our summer tournament will be placed at Mill Hill GC in June and the date will be finalised soon. This is an alternative to the venue that was booked previously, because of problems with the advanced booking arrangement.

The Autumn Tournament will be held at the London and Hacfield GC in November.

This year we will be running on a trial basis a team inter club challenge which will be held at Dyram Park GC in the June/July period. This event is organised for local Course Managers and their club officials. The match will provide a team of four players to include, for example the Secret- tary, Chairman or Ladies Captain and the Course Manager. The tournament will be sponsored by Miracle Profes- sional and the main team prize will be one PA2 which will have some value for the club. Other prizes will be available and the cost for the day will be £52 per team. The golf will be fol- lowed by an interesting lunch and prize presentation. The main purpose of this event is to increase the harmony of local clubs and to improve the communication between all Course Managers and their club officials. If you are interested in this event then please contact Don Wilson on 0181 440 3561 ASAP.

We continue successfully in the process of organising our golf fixtures for 1997/8 and if anyone is interested in hosting an event would they please contact Don Wilson with the details.

Barry Moggridge

Kent

Firstly I would like to thank David Wood for filling in as scribe for the last two magazines.

Secondly by now you should all have your letters for Sene Valley, as we are sorting these out for the next few months. Please read it and take note about behaviour and dress. You all have a duty to uphold the standards of the Association.

In March the Gentleman's Dinner was held at Walton Heath on a very cold wet day and our Section was well represented. On a well presented course the winner was good. Most embarrassingly the winner was yours truly with 40 pts off 8 handicap. My Captain, Keivan Dougall won the guest prize with 39pts off 9 handicap. Other prizes were with Craig Arthur and Mike Smith. Well done lads.

I would like to thank Walton Heath for a wonderful day and George, Ray, Ian, Don, Rob, Mike and Mike for inspiring me to the win via those £5 notes. Cheers lads.

If anyone has any news or com- ments please contact me on 0860 260 240 or 01732 465363.

Huw Morgan

South West and South Wales: Devon and Cornwall Section

In the past our February meetings have been renowned for their inclement weather conditions - just ask any of those who had a visit six years ago to Newquay.

This year members were treated to a glorious Cornish day with just a slight nip in the air our Section was well supported with eight people at Newquay GC on Wednesday February 21.

During the morning our golfing competitors faced the Avoncrop challenge with our non-golfing members having their usual guided tour of the excellently presented links course by Head Greenkeeper Paul Bullen. We were delighted to have the company of our afternoon speaker David Ward on the walk. David was recovering from being a passenger of our advance driver's short journey to Newquay.

After an excellent lunch John Pafrey of Avoncrop presented the Avoncrop trophy for the morning's bogey golf competition. Results: 1. Tim Ellis, Mullion, 63; 2. Gordon Tamlyn, Mullion, 64 (on back nine); 3. Tony James, Tehidy, 64.

The evening's highlight was our daily educational talk was presented by David Ward, Course Manager at Royal Portcullis on his preparations for the Walker Cup. David's talk was most interesting as he covered revetting work carried out on bunkers, tee construction, width and height of fairways including semi rough, rough, green speed for the tournament and the problem of disease just before the event. Many thanks, Dave, for your excellent talk.

The Section's thanks and gratitude are extended to Newquay GC and Secret- tary Mr Binney for allowing our Sec- tion use of their facilities. Also our thanks to Paul and John Bullen and the entire Newquay team for their great and to Mr Boyle and the cater- ing/bar team who looked after us so well.

Don't forget May 1 is Westurf Day. The Day when you could win £200 worth of travel vouchers just for attending!

Winning should be in the minds of all greenkeepers in our Region as this local tourcarse show is put on for you.

Kevin Green

South West

Stinchcombe Hill GC was the venue for the first golfing fixture of the year together with an afternoon talk, and was well supported with approximately 35 people in attendance. The weather made for an enjoyable event with the handicap range of 80-0. A cheque for £1000 was presented to the RAC as a donation towards the latest turf care products on show. You can't afford to miss Westurf '96 I look forward to meeting you at Westurf 96.

Richard Whyman

Westurf 1996

In March the Gentleman's Dinner was held at Stinchcombe Hill Golf Club which was well supported with eight people from being a passenger of our advance driver's short journey to Newquay. Our Section was well supported with approxi- mately 35 people in attendance. The weather made for an enjoyable event with the handicap range of 80-0. A cheque for £1000 was presented to the RAC as a donation towards the latest turf care products on show. You can't afford to miss Westurf '96 I look forward to meeting you at Westurf 96.

Richard Whyman

South Coast Section

February's winter lecture was held at Aldershot Golf Club for the second year running. The weather was very bad, and the reports from the radio to stay indoors, we had quite a good turnout.

Ed Hayler, the Course Manager from Brockenhurst Manor gave us a presentation on Communications. Ed started off by telling us about the Club Policy Document. He then went on to talk about Communications between the golf course staff, the committee and the members. He then told us about the seminar that he and his committee will be attending.

Judging by the questions after the presentation it was felt that lessons had been learnt. It was satisfying that Communications were working at Brockenhurst and that this can be fol- lowed by other clubs.

The South Coast Section is looking for speakers for the forthcoming Autumn/Winter meetings and if any- one would like to give a presentation on their course or any other greenkeeper topic please let me, or any other committee member know.

A suggestion for a meeting is a Quiz Night when members can bring along guests. If there are any other items which you would like to play please let me have your suggestions.

A final reminder for Westurf 1996 on May 1. Westurf has been revamped to attract a larger attendance and this is the ideal time to encourage your Greens Committee members to attend this exhibition.

This year a new public address sys- tem is being installed, the stands are being re-designed and the north exten- sion area will now be in the mid- dle so that everything is more accessible. Also a free draw is being held for all attending members and the winners will be announced.

The South West and South Wales Region is funded mainly by the proceeds of Westurf and this is how we are able to send our committee members to the coach fare to BTME and the Regional Seminars. Without this fund- ing these events may not take place.

Please, gentlemen, make a big effort to attend this year and, as stated previously, if there is a problem with transport please ring me on 01392 283262.

Ken Lodge
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But times change, new technology evolves and following our tradition of innovation, Supaturf now offers a new concept and choice, incorporating the latest technology with methylene urea - Supaturf Intafaze.

This new fertiliser complements our more traditional products such as the industry standard SS/D and represents a different means of achieving controlled growth. The wider choice now available from Supaturf provides probably the most comprehensive range of turf care fertilisers available....AND RIGHT UP TO DATE

MU fertilisers as such are not new, but unlike other fertilisers, Intafaze is produced in an average 2mm compacted granular form. This is a major product benefit as the fertiliser will dissolve very quickly after contact with the soil and watering in, eliminating the chance of product being removed during mowing or on golfers' or players' shoes. The 2mm, (average) sized, compacted granules are also the best size to ensure an even distribution when spreading. The recommended application rate of 25gm per sq. m., or roughly half a bag per green, means less product per application and less applications per season.

Supaturf Intafaze, a frontier technology fertiliser with unique product benefits.

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<td>14 - 6 - 15 + 2MgO</td>
<td>5% MU Compacted Granular 1-3mm - Summer &amp; Autumn</td>
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STRI TRIALS SHOW THE BENEFIT OF THE INTAFAZE FORMULATION

Preliminary results from a 3 year trial at STRI comparing the Intafaze formulation with a traditional and an IBDU fertiliser show outstanding results in both summer and winter trials. Ask for Information Sheet 11071 for details.
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Most traditional NPK fertilisers deliver the required nitrogen in an immediately available and leachable form. There is a surge in plant growth as it takes up the nutrient but this supply once consumed needs replacing by another application.

Unlike traditionally formulated fertilisers, Intafaze holds its nitrogen in two forms, being the traditional ammonium sulphate for fast release and methylene urea for a slower phased release, providing all the benefits of a traditional fertiliser but with the extra feature of extended feed. Some of the nitrogen applied as MU will take up to 3 - 6 months to release after application.

MU is a chain of urea molecules linked together by methyl groups. These chains can be manufactured in different lengths which due to their structure break down at different rates when in contact with the bacteria in the soil. Intafaze contains chains of 2, 3 and 4 urea molecules long and as the time taken to break down the chain is linked to the length of the chain the effect is a phased release of the nitrogen. This is the major benefit that MU offers - one application replaces several applications of traditional fertiliser. The nitrogen in Intafaze will continue to be released for up to 10 weeks and over, with the longer chains lasting 3 - 6 months. You simply apply it and leave it, the technology and soil bacteria will do the work and exceptional and consistent results will be apparent throughout the period. Supaturf Intafaze offers a formulation to suit all needs. Spring, summer and autumn grades are available, all suitable for fine turf, fairway and outfield applications.

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Fax 02 411 4678
Raymond Hunt is charged with creating US Open like conditions for the Alamo English Open in June. Scott MacCallum found out how he is going about it.

Hosting a European Tour event on your course is a pressurised situation for any greenkeeper. The exposure a top tournament gets, with the world’s best players competing before large galleries with television cameras recording every move, can make a course’s reputation and the subsequent financial benefits it can bring are massive. Alternatively if it doesn’t go well...

Raymond Hunt, Course Manager for the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel and Country Club, knows all about the pressures as he goes about preparations for his fourth English Open Championship.

If that were not enough to keep him on his toes it was announced at the pre-tournament press conference that he will be expected to provide “US Open-like conditions” so 15 of the European Tour’s top stars, led by Colin Montgomerie, can get some practice in before flying out for the US Open the very next week.

“We’ve had three English Opens already and they’ve all gone very well and obviously it’s got to grow and go on from there otherwise it’ll become stale. It’s a challenge to see what sort of test you can provide for the players.”

The US Openification was first mentioned to Raymond and his team by the Tour about six months ago.

“The idea was to give players better preparation for the US Open and also to make it more tough and more interesting,” explained Raymond, from the modern magnificence of the Hotel which over looks the spectacular par-3 18th.

The extent of the problem it sets can be seen when you consider that the US Open is invariably contested in temperatures which exceed 100 degrees, and that just 11 weeks before the Alamo English Open – it was the Murphy’s English Open until this season – the thermometer was barely stirring and certainly in no fear of developing vertigo. Raymond also has to keep the course open for members and important corporate golf both of which form the bread and butter business for the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel and Country Club.

“Coming out of winter our growth is particularly backward and we are badly affected by wildlife – Canada Geese on the front nine and deer on the back nine where the course forms part of a deer park,” said Raymond, as, right on cue, a group of deer posed for pictures on the side of...
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the 14th fairway.

"Having said that I'm fairly happy with where we are now because on average you are going to get some good weather in May and knowing the course, and how it is going to react, we should achieve what we want," explained Raymond, who is employing a special cover on his 5th green to attempt to inject some warmth and speed growth.

Although that means only six to eight weeks of really intensive work on it Raymond knows that being in June things won't be burnt up as they might be later in the summer and the course will be really fresh.

So what does “US Open style” actually mean for Forest of Arden?

"We have to promote growth to get where we need to be for early June. So at the end of the day the main difference is going to be cutting.

"We will have a collar two width of a pedestrian machine, then a fringe which, although we haven't talked about a definite height yet, I think we'll be looking at around about two and a half to three and a half inches. This could be as close as a yard off the green."

The rest of the course will also have thicker rough.

"I don't see that as a problem because the rough here grows well and is quite consistent which is what the Tour wants – you don't want poa annua at the bottom and the ball nestling down in it. In general I think the rough will come up to scratch. The difficulty we will have is around the greens, getting the sort of consistency and the sort of rough we want when you have traffic moving over it all the time and we don't enjoy US Open weather. We can only do what we can do if we've got weather on our side."

Course Manager Raymond Hunt and, above, activity at his club, the Forest of Arden
'Intrepid' is a new cost-effective selective weedkiller that can be applied throughout the growing season. It's powerful three-way mixture will control many broad-leaved weeds in turf. And unlike some turf herbicides, repeat applications are possible should new weeds germinate or deep-rooted weeds regrow during the season.

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'Intrepid' contains dicamba, dichlorprop and MCPA. 'Intrepid' is a trade mark of Miracle Garden Care Ltd. READ THE LABEL BEFORE YOU BUY: USE PESTICIDES SAFELY.
If the pressure leading up to the event is bad Raymond feels that the pressure through the week itself is even more intense.

"I have 22 staff (Raymond pulls in other experienced greenkeepers from courses in the Marriott group) out there all of whom have machinery and something can always go wrong. So not much time to relax through the week itself.

"I'm in complete contact with the Tournament Director through the week through radio and I'd see him two or three times through the day generally to discuss how things are going."

Some of the things which can crop up are quite bizarre including last year a complaint that the hole was misshaped.

"This was two thirds of the way through the day. That was a new one for me. I got a call over the radio and had to go down to the 7th green. I spoke with the rules official, stopped play and had a look at it and although it didn't appear out of shape to satisfy the players we reshaped it with a hole setter."

The unpredictability of the British weather also plays a part. "On the Saturday of last year's event we had a heck of a lot of heavy rain and it became a fairly pressurised situation. You've got to get your staff all over the course with squeegees and act quickly. The TV is on, the players don't want to wait, you've got to get through the crowds and all the time it's pelting down."

If Raymond appears well in control and gives off the air of a man who will cope with every conceivable eventuality it perhaps comes from living through a Baptism of Fire when he first arrived at Forest of Arden just a few months before the course's first
We had a heck of a lot of heavy rain and it became a fairly pressurised situation. You’ve got to get your staff all over the course with squeegees and act quickly.

Marriott Forest of Arden Golf and Country Club Machinery Inventory

6 Lloyd's Paladins
5 Toro GM3s with Grooming, Verticut, Vibra spike units and 11 blade competition cylinders
5 Toro 216s
2 Toro 5300Ds with Verti-cut units
1 Toro 4500D
1 Toro 455D Groundsmaster
1 Toro Workman with attachments including Hardi Sprayer, Top dresser
1 Lloyds Leda Gang mower
1 Massey Ferguson 240 Front Loader
1 Massey Ferguson 240 Tractor with Trailer
1 Kubota B7100 Compact with Trailer
1 Fiat Tractor with Trailer
4 E-Z-Go Trucks
2 Cushman Trucksters with Attachments including Sitters, Brushes, Top Dressers and Sprayers
1 Tractor Mounted SISIS Slitter
1 Vezi-Drain
1 Howard Rotovator
1 Tractor Mounted Fertiliser Spreader
5 Scotts Fertiliser Spreaders
1 Wessex Leaf Sweeper
1 Wessex Grader, Rake
5 Flymos
5 Strimmers
4 Waterpumps
2 Leaf Blowers
1 Chain Saw
1 Ryan Overseeder
1 Ryan Turfcutter
1 Turf Iron
1 Mole Plough
1 Core Master

then we've built on it.

"Everybody enjoys the buzz leading up to the tournament the week itself and then the Sunday afterwards.

Michael O'Dyer, General Manager at Forest of Arden, is also in no doubt as to the quality of his Course Manager. "He is a perfectionist and it shows," is his ringing endorsement.

Raymond began is greenkeeping career at Bidston on the Wirral before joined Bill Lawson at Heswall GC.

"I spent six years with Bill, four years as his Deputy, and I learned everything from Bill. If you can't learn anything from that guy you can't learn anything at all. All my greenkeeping and man management skills can from him and he also directed me in the route I should be taking."

He then went to Royal Porthcawl adding good links and championship experience before joining Goodwood and the Country Club Hotel group as it was then. Since '93 and his arrival at Forest of Arden he has helped improve the course to the extend that Colin Montgomerie, whose input into course design has been acquired as part a contract Europe's number one has signed with the Marriott Group, was quoted as saying, "The aim is to make this the best course there is on the European Tour."

It's a challenge that will be met with relish by Raymond and his excellent team.

Is your golf course a fish farm?

Your water hazards may already contain fish worth more than salmon.

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IF I WASN'T A GREENKEEPER I WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN:

"A seaman"

Oliver English, Dundalk GC
Hugh Tilley takes a look at brush cutters and hedge trimmers.

There are always many areas around a golf course which need trimming but cannot be mown with conventional mowers. The standard machines for tidying up such areas is a strimmer or brushcutter, however these are not ideal for bunker edges and many greenkeepers have tried alternatives to edging shears such as motorised edgers and reciprocating cutters.

The conventional power edger has the disadvantage of not being sufficiently light or manoeuvrable for bunker work, especially as the edge is seldom flat or level. Other major problems are that sand destroys cutting edges rapidly and there is a requirement for a neat tidy finish.

For mowing banks the usual tool is the hover, or air cushion mower, while for hedge trimming there are a range of machines from tractor mounted units to electric hand power tools, but the more usual option is a two stroke engineed hedgetrimmer as this gives versatility and flexibility. As these are used only once or twice a year and usually only for short lengths of hedge around the clubhouse, where wear isn't a problem but neglect may be. For anyone with greater length, especially of boundary hedge, the simple and cost effective answer seems to be to hire a contractor.

Most clubs carry "spare" small engine machines, this usually reflects past experience of unreliability. Many people look on these machines as they look on a Kleenex - use it and throw it away. One or two seasons is not unusual as the lifespan of either a brushcutter or air cushion mower, but there are differences between models and the engine fitted as well as the use and abuse they get. Greenkeepers generally look after their kit considerably better than local authorities and contractors.

When it comes to air cushion mowers the JLO motor is almost exclusively used as experience suggests that it lasts longer and provides greater power for its weight.

The main differences between strimmer, brushcutter and clearing saw are the head, and of necessity, the size of the motor. There is some interchangeability between heads except on the smallest and cheapest models. Most greenkeepers use the trimmer head mainly with motors of between 30-45cc capacity. Under powering is an expensive economy, but large machines are tiring to use and control.

The strimmer or string trimmer uses monofilament line to cut vegetation, however, there are other types of head which use nylon or similar dense plastic blades, these should have similar attributes of

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A cut above... or below

not being destroyed when they contact stone, concrete or steel. Neither should trimmers be as devastating should they come in contact with the trunks of trees, or tree guards, however, this "friendliness" is something of a myth and caution is needed when close to obstructions – in other words a loosening of the throttle finger is still required. Most machines have alternative heads and blades available to allow them to cut heavier vegetation. A steel blade is more efficient for cutting grass, making the machine in effect a rotary mower, but to get height accuracy and safety it may need a special guard plus skid or dome fitted under the centre of the blade. Such skids may have height adjustment. For cutting small trees and dense undergrowth or grass the clearing saw comes with greater engine power and an ability to operate slasher and saw type blades.

The dust hazard around bunkers and often elsewhere on a golf course is a very real one, and this probably accounts for the early demise of most of these small power tools – it does not do a lot of good for the operator either! There is often acceptance that these and hover mowers do not last more than a season or two, thus there are many attractions to using a different form of cutter, one which does not rely on a fast impact with the grass to cut it. This applies particularly to bunker edges as, of necessity, these require the trimmer to operate virtually in the vertical position – try this with a brushcutter and you get grass, debris and dust thrown everywhere.

The manoeuvrability of the hover or air cushion mower makes them virtually the only tool for steep banks, however, standing on the bank is often not easy or even possible – although shoes with spikes or studs help. A common practice is to tie a rope to the handle and dangle the machine down the bank while standing at the top – a somewhat dubious practice in terms of safety.

Hedgetrimmers while normally seen as single purpose tools are also available as attachments for the knapsack type of brushcutter, and this may be more cost effective when there is relatively little hedge to trim.

Recently, long reach hedgetrimmers have become available and these are a real saver when it comes to trimming very high hedges. Hedge trimming does not require a great deal of power, which is just as well as having to manhandle a machine with a heavy power unit would soon tire the operator.

The Dixon & Holliday knapsack brushcutter and hover hood at Cranleigh School in Surrey

Grounds manager Peter Woodhead saw the D & H knapsack brushcutter/hedgetrimmer advertised and considered that it looked right. The 700 pupil public school has a 9 hole course as well as considerable lengths of high Leylandii hedge. Safety was the prime consideration in purchase, with the hoverhood attachment enabling gardens supervisor and greenkeeper John Pope to cut his greens and tee banks with greater control and less fatigue. Previously the school had used the hover mower on a length of rope method, a practice which Peter commented did not stand up to...
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A relatively slowly rotating blade which cuts against a star shaped fixed blade so giving a better cut while reducing the danger of debris, sand and bunker edge being ejected. The design of the blades is such that there is little danger of cutting into the actual edge. Course Manager Paul Bishop first saw the machine at Windsor and then had it demonstrated on several of his bunkers by Handy Garden Machinery of Swindon last autumn. He was satisfied that it would do the job, just cutting grass without damaging the edges and thus the club bought it. He admitted that as yet it has not had a full season's use but to-date it has worked well, cutting only grass, and he sees no reason to regret the purchase. He commented that "it does a very nice job". However the club is retaining its Allen Reciprocator.

For bank mowing the club uses Flymo air cushion mowers and an Allen, however, Paul specified all as "professional" with JLO engines which he considers the only one suitable for intensive professional use and likely to last two or three seasons. Having some commonality between all