No one can accuse John Deere of standing still. Since 1995, we’ve added 8 quality machines to our line. Another strong statement about our commitment to your business. New this year are the Turf Gator and 220A Walk-Behind Greens Mower.

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Cover The London Golf Club - and the bunkers where even the rakes are regimented Picture by Scott MacCallum
A game of golf in the real world

Well it's here. The new golfing season has begun for everyone outside of the addicts whose breath freeze during their protestations to have you open an ice bound course.

For the golfer it's the best time of the year. He strides to the first tee in the latest Ashworth full of expectation and confidence, the words of David Leadbetter's latest video still ringing in his ears and the smell of freshly cut grass filling his nostrils. From then on, though, it's the same as every other year. Same involuntary lunge at the ball, same wicked slice, same old comments from his partners, same old course - bare fairways, builder's sand in the bunkers and slow greens.

Then The Masters comes on the telly. "Well, if we had greens like that we'd all hole putts"..."Look at those fairways, a perfect lie every time"..."All it needs is a little time and effort and we could have flower beds like those." When he gets back to the club and he's changing his shoes out of the back of his car the guy doing the same next to him agrees with every word he says. So does the guy in the next shower after the game. Even the steward agrees.

"The luckiest golfers in the world must be the Augusta National members. Imagine playing there every week..." Well, no as a matter of fact. It would probably be interesting for our club members to know that while he's playing in the winter foursomes or the spring medal the Augusta member is having to make do with a game of bridge or checkers in the majestic clubhouse because the shrine to golfing excellence outside the window is closed, even when the sun is splitting the sky. In fact, it's closed for a large chunk of the year irrespective of weather so every effort can be made to produce perfection for one week in April.

While our man snorts when he sees the accounts during the AGM, and in particular the amount spent on greenkeeping, it may interest him to know the equivalent figures at Augusta National would be enough to pay a handful of good old British fat cats for a couple of years each. Come to mention it the greenkeeping staff at Augusta would just about number enough to run a smallish British public utility.

It's all about making the most of the resources available and cutting cloth to suit. There is no denying that the staff at Augusta National make the most of the unlimited resources they enjoy, which is no mean feat in itself but just as impressive is the wonderful job done at clubs up and down this country where smaller budgets are made to stretch much further than is initially thought humanly possible and where course closure is the rare exception rather than an extended rule.

Wouldn't it be nice for a change if Britain's unsung greenkeeping heroes got the credit they deserved.

By Pat Murphy

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY

Bigga Chairman

Last month I returned to my homeland when I attended the Scottish Conference in Perth. It's always nice to see so many old friends across the border, and on this occasion, it was particularly enjoyable as it brought back some old memories. It also shows what a small world it is.

The evening before the conference we had a meeting with the Scottish Section Secretaries and it turned out that I was at school with the sister of Stephen Dixon, the East Section Secretary - St David's school in Dalkeith!

The Section Secretaries' meeting was excellent. It was great to see so many constructive suggestions and so much enthusiasm. I've been to a number of these meetings now and they are all informal but there is so much that is positive which comes out of them.

The Scottish Conference was opened by our first Chairman, Walter Woods, and I closed it which seemed fitting. Between us there were some brilliant speakers.

A couple of weeks later I was also at the Mere Conference in the Northern Region, again preceded by a positive secretaries' meeting. This was also an extremely fine conference with some interesting speakers.

Another highlight of the month was the Northern Section dinner dance at Bradford Golf Club which this year had a record attendance of over 100. This is my own Section and I attended with my wife and presented the prizes. It was nice also to welcome the Northern Regional Chairman Ian Holohan and his wife, Audrey, in attendance as well as Regional Administrator Bob Lupton with Sara. I was also delighted that Bill Lawson was able to come along.

It may be of interest to other Sections that Northern are about to start events aimed at the non-golfing members and we will have fishing and clay pigeon shooting on our calendar.

On the golf course spring has definitely sprung and no doubt like you all I've been hard at it hollow coring, top dressing and overseeding all the tees and greens at Shipley.

Can I wish you all rewarding and successful seasons.
If there is a BIGGA member in the country faster than Terry Colville, Deputy Course Manager of Mill Hill Golf Club in North London, he must be working under an assumed name having been better known as Speedy Gonzales or Road Runner.

Because Terry is happiest when he is racing along at 165 miles per hour, and he can even pull wheelies at around 140mphs.

Terry's skill on a motorbike is such that this season he is taking part in the Supersport Series racing at, among others Brands Hatch, Donnington and Mallory Park and he is being touted as a future champion.

The nickname "The Nutty Novice" is displayed on the sides of his bike and it is a clue to the fearless style adopted by the man who, during the week, is number two to Tony Dunstan, Deputy Course Manager of Mill Hill and current Chairman of the London Section.

His father was also a fine racer - Terry describes him as the equivalent of a club professional golfer - and Terry grew up on a bike for a period of three years but two wheels were very much in his blood and he was drawn back into the sport.

He made his mark when he went to an open day at the Goodwood circuit and on his own road bike was lapping at speeds comparable with those on specially prepared racing bikes.

A former grand prix racer Rob Orme took Terry under his wing and he honed his skills at the racing school at Mallory Park, near Leicester.

"Rob told me I should be racing and helped me in getting sponsorships particularly from Bridgestone who supply me with tyres," explained the 25 year-old Nutty Novice.

Terry has already ploughed about £10,000 of his own money into preparing for the season and it will take about another £6,000 to complete the 14 race programme... and that's if nothing goes wrong and he writes off a bike.

"That's a major disadvantage as many racers have teams behind them and they don't have to worry about money," revealed Terry.

He does have sponsorships and in addition to Bridgestone thanks Jamie Bennett, of Grass Roots Trading Company, who among the generous support is paying his entry fees; Rock Oil, who supply his oil, and local dealer Judd's Motorcycles.

In a sport when a new helmet, one each time one is even slightly damaged, costs £440 all help is greatly appreciated.

"I believe that Terry has great potential and I'm delighted to be able to help him," explained Jamie.

Like many motorbike racers Terry is no stranger to his local casualty unit and his latest visit saw him off work for five weeks with two broken ankles and damaged ligaments, not forgetting a dislocated shoulder.

"I've also broken fingers, fractured the top of my foot and had all sorts of sprains," said Terry, whose first race in his series was on March 23.

Greenkeeper International will keep you up to date with his progress.

Some excellent golf clubs are hosting Sectional Qualifiers while the venues for the Regional Qualifiers form a group of clubs which it would be hard to better:

- South West and South Wales
- Burnham and Berrow GC, June 11.
- South East - Ham Manor GC, June 27.
- Northern - Matfen Hall GC, July 9.
- Scottish - Loch Green GC, Troon, May 27.
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Westurf gets dressed up to the nines for '97

At Long Ashton GC on April 30, Westurf will open its gates for the ninth time giving the west country greenkeepers and groundsmen an early season taste of the likely front runners in the turf care market place.

Westurf is a fine example of the making of a Region. It brings together all who represent the voice of our Industry, where they can talk, try and test any machine or product in its own environment. On show will be all the old tried and tested, along with the new and brand new launches seen for the first time.

The region are proud of its exhibition here in the west. It not only brings to you the customer, the best that's on offer in the way of equipment but also presents the opportunity of an educational experience. Among the exhibitors will be all the Region's training colleges, the STRU, IOG and BIGGA all willing to answer your questions.

Westurf is certainly worth a visit, not just for greenkeepers and groundsmen but for managers and committee personnel as well. All will find a warm welcome.

Parking and entry are free. There are demonstration areas for both fine turf and outfield. Hot and cold refreshments all day, not forgetting the chance to win a free holiday voucher.

The Regional Board and BIGGA staff look forward to meeting visitors. For further information please ring 01803 844056.

Bowcom will launch two new products for greenkeepers at Westurf '97. Plifix is a revolutionary indicator which clearly identifies walkways or ground repairs with out interfering with the greenkeeper's normal work or mowing while the Bowcom One-handle Bowspray was developed on request from greenkeepers who wanted flexibility while using aerosol markers.

Exhibitors: Amenity Land Services • Amenity Technology • Attenion & Ellis • Avancrop Amenity Products • Baleys of Norfolk • Barenbrug • Bennett Engineering • Better Methods • Europe • BIGGA • Bioseod Prodictics • Bourne Amenity • Bowcom Ltd • Boyd Golf Course Accessories • Britannic Garden Furniture Ltd • British Seed Houses • Cannington College • Celtic Mowers • Complete Weed Control • Course Care • DSM Turf Equipment • Encore Leisure Ltd • Farmura Ltd • GWilliam Kellands • Gem Professional • H. Pattison & Co • Hartpury College • Headland Amenity Products • Huxley's Grass Machinery • IOG • K Two Group • Levington Horticulture • Lindum Seeded Turf • Logic Irrigation Ltd • Lubrication Engineers • Maxicrop International • Medland Sanders & Tirose • Miracle Professional • Niximon Chipman • Occins Irrigation • PJ Jegg • Penrode College • Penticton UK Ltd • Pro-Sed Equipment • RB Bird • Ramsomes • Rhone Poulenc • Rigby Taylor • Rocol Site Safety Systems • Roffey Ltd • Ruffords Top Dressing Supplies • Scotts UK Ltd • Shelton Trucking Systems • Sisis Equipment • Sovereign Turf • Spansho Experienced College • STRI • Supaturf Products Ltd • Susan Plant Services • Ted Hopkins • Tildesley Ltd • TH White • Tonick Watering • Turf Irrigation Services • Vixta Ltd.

Profits up

Deere and Company has reported record first quarter worldwide net income of $176.7 million or $0.69 per share for the quarter ended January 31, an increase of 10 per cent in earnings per share compared with the first quarter of 1996.

As winner of the last year's Blazon "Jet Setter" campaign, former Formula One World Motor Racing Champion Nigel Mansell, together with his greenkeeper Jeff Mills, took delivery of a new Hardi sprayer for Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club in Devon.

The Blazon 1997 'Spray Watch' campaign offers greenkeepers the opportunity of winning for their club a Hardi AMK 400 litre Tractor Mounted Boom Sprayer, fully equipped.

The video library is on offer

A free library of 30 operator training videos for turf maintenance equipment is being offered by Toro to all colleges and other establishments running training and education courses for golf greenkeepers. The videos, each 20 to 30 minutes long, give students a complete overview of the safe operation and routine maintenance of Toro machines, including how to make adjustments to set up equipment to get the best performance out of it.

Anyone interested in getting the library should contact David Cole at Toro Commercial Products. Telephone 01480 476971.

New post at Rhône-Poulenc

Rhône-Poulenc Amenity has appointed John Hall to the new post of Contractor and Utilities Customer Manager. This post enables Rhône Poulenc Amenity to gain closer contacts with the Spray Contractor and Utility Customers. John will be able to advise on technical, product stewardship and business issues as well as providing relevant training. This close contact with the key players in the industry will be to the mutual benefit of both parties.

After working for a contract organisation doing a wide variety of Amenity and Agricultural Field Trials in Scotland, John joined Rhône-Poulenc's field trials team.

New partners

Tarrant has appointed two new overseas distributors. Jean Heybroek BV, Houthen, Holland, will import and distribute Terravent's soil aerators and decompactors in Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg while Sports Turf Services of Churchistong is importing and distributing Terravent's products in New Zealand.

THE FACTS: NOT THE HYPE

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Leatherjacket damage a real risk to turf this spring – report

DowElanco's Pestwatch service has detected a rise in leatherjacket populations across the country this spring. Attributed to poor weather conditions this time last year, the rise means that populations are currently exceeding the traditional threshold for treatment in rough grassland.

"This indicates that there will be a particular threat to fine turf this year," says Talei Herbert of DowElanco's Specialty business.

"The high quality of grass required to make up cricket or football pitches and golf fairways and greens could really suffer visually from this level of leatherjacket attack."

Leatherjackets feed on grass stems just below the soil surface taking out tillers and even the plant's central shoot. The pest will leave bare patches of soil in its wake if large populations are left unchecked.

In the Midlands and North West, average pest numbers are exceeding the threshold for treatment in grassland. And in the South and South East, soil sampling is recording average populations of 2 million larvae/ha – the highest level of activity found in this part of the UK for more than five years.

"Last year, despite the existence of high pest populations, only a small percentage of grass in the UK was treated to prevent damage," explained Miss Herbert.

"This is mainly because bad weather during the spring of '96 slowed pest activity down. Low temperatures force the larvae to remain further below the soil surface, making damage much more difficult to recognise."

According to Miss Herbert, higher populations of adults survived to lay eggs last autumn. This was compounded by the fact that weather conditions over the autumn favoured successful adult flight and egg laying. A warm, dry period was followed a few weeks later by moist conditions which, in turn, suited larval development and survival.

"This spring there is a real risk of turf damage," warns Miss Herbert. "Areas at risk should be treated with Lorsban T at a rate of 1.5 litres/ha. This will arrest damage and help to reduce the risk of damage for the following season."

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As part of a plan to highlight the many wonderful events held throughout the Sections it is hoped to print photographs taken at Section events.

First in is this offering from the East Section in Scotland. Chris Yeaman from Swanston Golf Club is the one in the funny hat.

Please feel free to send any contributions to The Editor, BIGGA Headquarters, Aldwark Manor, Alne, York YO6 2NF.
Architects’ specifications to bring more washed turf

An article by Dr Jim Beard extolling the virtues of washed turf has taken Stephen Fell, Managing Director of Lindum Seeded Turf right round the world, and resulted in a major new investment for the company.

The concept of turf washed completely of any soil particles by pressurised hydraulic means prior to transplanting is not new. Ben Warren patented the system as early as 1970, but it was not until the USGA specifications advising a high sand root zone for golf greens came into force, that golf course architects began to specify turf prepared in this way.

The danger with conventional turf is that the finer soil attached to the sward is responsible for a layer developing between the turf and the root zone which retains excess water. With properly washed turf there is no conflict between soils, water flows freely into the prepared root zone and rapid root development within a free draining environment is the result.

StrathAyr, an Australian company seeing the way things were going, bought the patent on Ben Warren’s system in the 1980s, and introduced it to the US in the early 1990s. It was to Bill Casimaty head of StrathAyr, that Stephen Fell wrote after reading Dr Beard’s article. He was directed first to Austria, then the US, to see the process in action, before finally arriving in Australia, where StrathAyr, had completed the re-turfing of Melbourne Cricket Ground with BAYR Root Washed Turf. After six months of investigation Stephen Fell was finally convinced that totally soil free turf was the only logical material to use on sand based construction, and the StrathAyr process was the only system with the means to achieve this 100%. “If the turf is only partially washed the benefits are completely lost,” he said. “We felt the whole concept was so right that we could convince people of the long-term benefits.”