A stylish alternative to jacket and trousers. The Course Wear Drill Suit is loose fitting, hard wearing poly cotton in spruce. Smock style top with draw-cord pants mean smartness and comfort.

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undertaken, mostly on the putting green, it has been exemplary, with the Kubota engine always starting first time and a superb cut. The club is replacing some elderly machines.

In particular Darren is pleased with the brush groomer system which can be used both for setting the grass up and for cleaning the front roller.

Verti-cutting is carried out by the club’s triple. Operating is extremely easy, and while the machine has two operator presence levers – or dead man’s handles, one for cylinder, one for drive, both can be held in by one hand when required.

Obviously without extensive use a sharpening/back lapping routine has yet to be established, but no problems are envisaged.

Normal servicing is carried out by the club, and is seen as simple and quick.

Toro Greensmaster CR1000 at The Oxfordshire
Course Manager David Gower has the luxury of ten machines, originally bought as tees were also hand mown. Four were bought with groomers primarily for greens use and now three are in daily use with the remainder in reserve – and one set up for collars. Again verti-cutting is carried out with a ride-on triple, but the reserve machines are used after top dressing or coring.

The club has its own mechanic and sharpening system, nevertheless the emphasis with the greens mowers is to ensure that they are adjusted ‘right’ to minimise the amount of sharpening and back lapping needed. David said that their mechanic is ‘very very good’ at sharpening, but he would not detail his ‘tricks of the trade,’ and although there are spare mowers he can get four mowers sharpened in the afternoon after the tea break without trouble.

The club used the thinnest available bottom blades for the championship played on the course this spring, however it is now using slightly thicker blades and not cutting as low. David expects to use two or three blades a year, but then the machines are

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Used exclusively on the greens. All mowers are carefully checked each day before they go out to ensure that they are set right and sharp.

Groomers are normally used once or twice a week, however seldom on the perimeter cuts, which are omitted rather than just taking the groomer out just for these couple of turns.

Another important routine prior to cutting is to check the area, to remove twigs, ball markers, loose studs and etc.

David said the reliability of the Toros has been fantastic and although he admitted to being a 'Jacobsen man' – and still thinks that they have a better groomer; he expects to replace Toro with Toro when the need arises.

In overall appraisal he said "there's no doubt they are a superb mower."

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When 600 heads are better than just one

A total of 180 British greenkeepers made up a total of 600 greenkeepers who took part in John Deere's first ever European Feedback event, held over two weeks in June at Bruchsal GC in Germany.

Following five successful events in the USA, this was the first opportunity for European greenkeepers, from Scandinavia to Spain, to give their opinions on the company's latest golf and turf products, and to see the European Parts Distribution Centre at Bruchsal, one of 22 worldwide parts depots.

A total of 34 machines, from a prototype 26in walk-behind tees and greens mower to a new 70hp tractor equipped with a gang mower, were scrutinised, driven and commented on by the greenkeepers.

Graham Williams, commercial and consumer equipment division manager for John Deere Limited in the UK & Ireland, who brought the British greenkeepers to Feedback '97, said: “The participation of greenkeepers and turf professionals on a worldwide basis is vital to take the company forward and enable us to produce the right machines for all our customers.

“We depend on these meetings, on pre-production demonstrations and on thousands of test hours on golf courses around the world, to frame our product development and improvement programmes. There is no substitute for this kind of information, and we never introduce a product without it.”

For example, the John Deere 1200A bunker and field rake was simply a concept machine only two years ago. Introduced to the market in 1995, it is now widely accepted as an invaluable tool because of design suggestions originally made by American golf course superintendents at a previous Feedback event.

The European meeting was hosted by Chuck Greif, Manager of Market Development for Golf & Turf Products Worldwide. He said: “This year we're getting the views of around 1,300 greenkeepers worldwide through Feedback – that represents nearly five percent of the world's golf courses. It's the little things seen through all those different pairs of eyes that will benefit our company immensely.

“We have found over the last five years that greenkeepers and superintendents all have the same concerns, and face the same challenges. These include environmental responsibility, noise reduction, safety, parts and service support and serviceability.

“The basic design of any...
Colin Wilson, of Linlithgow GC, has celebrated 25 years at the club. He was presented with an inscribed barometer from the club during Linlithgow's Open Day. Pictured, back, from left: Iain Harrison, Vice Captain; David Roy, Course Manager; Lee Fraser, Alex Fleming and Derek Smith, Professional. Kneeling are Ian Campbell, Club Captain and Colin Wilson.

machine works worldwide. What we do with the Feedback meetings is say, here we are, tell us how you use our machines, and what you want them to do in the future. As a result we can fine tune the equipment so it does the right job.

"The greenkeeper is an artist, and he’s an individual. He has to be able to set up the golf course to meet his needs and the needs of the members, and how he does that differs from one man to the next.

"That means we’ll be going back to the factory with a pretty healthy list of comments — but that’s exactly why we’re here."

David Walden, Nene Valley, Peterborough, and ’95 Premier Greenkeeper of the Year said, “If we come and do this, we can get the machines right from the start — it’s an excellent idea.”

Colin Wilson, of Linlithgow GC, has celebrated 25 years at the club. He was presented with an inscribed barometer from the club during Linlithgow's Open Day. Pictured, back, from left: Iain Harrison, Vice Captain; David Roy, Course Manager; Lee Fraser, Alex Fleming and Derek Smith, Professional. Kneeling are Ian Campbell, Club Captain and Colin Wilson.

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER Profile

Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club. Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star...

Name: Wyndham Potter
Club: East Devon GC
Position: First Assistant
Age: 63

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
28 years.

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
None.

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
Cutting greens.

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Divotting.

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you ended up doing?
I was a gardener for 14 years before becoming a greenkeeper.

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
Ken Loxton, who was my Head Greenkeeper for 18 years.

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Pay more.

8. What are your hobbies?
Gardening, fishing and golf.

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
Golfing days out and the magazine.

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
Enjoying my retirement.

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The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) are continually reviewing the approved levels, but it must be stated that until the GTC review is completed only the green coded colleges are approved to train greenkeepers beyond craft level.

The introduction of vocational qualifications into industries, has caused the colleges to re-think their training policies and the GTC will be issuing guidelines for the golf greenkeeping industry as to which colleges employers and their staff should be supporting.

Anyone with a query regarding greenkeeper training should contact the Greenkeepers Training Committee at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF, telephone 01347 838640.
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