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The next edition of Greenkeeper International should be with you by April 9

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Cover Musselburgh, acknowledged to be the world's oldest golf course – and now enjoying a facelift Picture by Brian Morgan

WIN £50 CASH IN OUR BUYER'S GUIDE COMPETITION: TURN TO PAGE 54

MARCH 1997

The new edition of Greenkeeper International should be with you by April 9.
Ten years? Seems like yesterday

At the risk of sounding a little like that Edmonds bloke, in Noel’s Telly Years, what were you doing a decade ago and what can you remember about 1987?

The reason I ask is that, as you no doubt know, this year is BIGGA’s 10th anniversary and it’s interesting to look back 10 years and recall what life was like when BIGGA was born.

In the interests of this column, I’ve undertaken some extensive research of a time when the names Major and Blair conjured up images of Barrah Fawcett and Lionel, the Berlin Wall was still in place, Nelson Mandela was still inside and Melinda Messenger was only 12... or should that be 16?

Well, back in 1987 Europe won the Ryder Cup at Muirfield Village, the first time ever in the United States. Nick Faldo hadn’t even won a Major at the beginning of the year but by the end of July was being acclaimed for his 18 straight pars and victory in The Open at the other Muirfield.

What else happened in golf? Larry Mize produced the chip of a lifetime to deny Greg Norman in the play-off for the Masters, while Wales got the better of Scotland in the World Cup of Golf (Neil Thomas made me put this in).

The year also saw the deaths of two legends of the game, Sir Henry Cotton and Bobby Locke, while high profile courses like East Sussex National, The Wisley, Loch Lomond, The Oxfordshire and Collingtree Park were mere twinkles in an architect’s eye.

Elsewhere in sport Coventry won the FA Cup; Rangers hadn’t started the run which now threatens Celtic’s nine in a row record; Martina Navratilova claimed her sixth consecutive Wimbledon single’s title; Ben Johnson won the World Championship 100 metres in a world record time; Mike Tyson became the youngest winner of the World Heavyweight title; Lester Pigott was sent to prison for tax evasion and Mike Gatting went nose to nose with Pakistani umpire Shakoor Rana.

Looking at these events it is perhaps surprising how some, at least, seem like only yesterday, and it does help to reinforce the fact that, when recalling the formation of BIGGA, we’re not uncovering ancient history.

The Association has made huge strides in a relatively short space of time. From virtually a standing start the Association now boasts almost 6,500 members; a progressive and wide ranging education programme the envy of many other industries; a trade show which has grown to be the largest indoor of its type in Europe and a successful magazine (I hope!).

Add to this the fact that the next two years should see BIGGA move to new custom-built offices and you have an Association which will continue to move forward and look after members’ needs for many more decades to come.

Those who helped to create this success have every reason to feel extremely proud.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

Since becoming Chairman my feet haven’t touched the ground. No sooner had I finished BTME 97 then I was off to Las Vegas for the GCSAA Conference and Show.

BIGGA had a stand at the show and it was an outstanding success with a great many membership enquiries. Interestingly, our Master Greenkeeper Award scheme appeared particularly popular with quite a number of superintendents.

It was a busy week with functions every day and I made presentations to Joe Baldy, President in ‘95 and Paul McGuiness, the incoming President.

I also had the privilege to sit beside Jaime Ortiz-Patino, the President of Valderrama Golf Club during the Gala Dinner and he chatted to me about preparations for the Ryder Cup in September. I also met both Robert Trent Jones Senior and Junior.

A speaker at the opening session was the astronaut Jim Lovell, whom Tom Hanks played in Apollo 13. He gave one of the best talks I’ve ever heard.

Another highlight of the Conference was the International Symposium. Neil Thomas and Per-Olof Ljung both spoke excellently about FEGGA and generated quite a bit of interest among the other nations represented.

It was good to meet up with Toro Student of the Year Fintan Brennan, who was at college in the States as part of his prize while Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Cedric Gough was part of our group and appeared to enjoy himself. We also met George Brown, from Turnberry, and our five American Master Greenkeepers who were at the Show.

The Show itself was enormous and, while not being knocked sideways by any one new product, it was interesting to see hand tools and some of the extensions which are unavailable in this country.

I also brought back some of the soft spikes for my Chairman of Green to try out. I do think they will be huge in this country soon. Not only do they protect the course but also the car park, walkways and the clubhouse.

Las Vegas is some place. The light shows in Freemont Street have to be seen to be believed while Caesar’s Palace Hotel has an amazing show every hour. We visited the Valley of Fire where the Star Wars film was made and also went to the Hoover Dam.

I also went to the infamous World Heavyweight fight with Lennox Lewis and Oliver McCall but we were seated so far back my wife saw more than I did watching it on television. It was the first world title fight I’ve been to and will probably be the last. I did have a drink with Jim Watt and Reg Gutteridge though.
Bill voted personality of the year by BTLIA

At the recent AGM of the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association the incoming Chairman, Gerry Wilkins, presented Bill Hawthorn with the Association's 'Personality of the Year' award for 1996. The annual award was established in 1995 and is made on the basis of members' nominations.

In congratulating him on being only the second recipient, the Chairman said that the honour recognised Bill Hawthorn's outstanding contribution to the turf irrigation industry over a period of more than 30 years and his work in developing the BTLIA since its formation in 1978.

Bill was part of the founding committee of the Association and served as its first Secretary/Treasurer during the early years. He is also a past Chairman and is currently a member of the committee. He was a major contributor to the Association's highly regarded "Guide", now in its fourth edition, which defines a code of ethics and minimum standards of system design and contract implementation to which members bind themselves. He also helped to establish the Diploma Course in Turf and Landscape Irrigation run jointly by Myerscough College and the Association.

Bill is Chairman of Waterman Sprinkler and Controls Ltd.

Turf grower has plans for the new millennium

Inturf has announced plans to produce Millennium Turf which will go on sale from 1 January 2000.

Millennium Turf will be mature cultivated turfgrass grown using ten different grasses and the main feature of this new turf is that it can be used in a multitude of situations.

While some of the species present in Millennium Turf will flourish, some may diminish in vigour, so all the time adapting to conditions in which the turf is placed.

Inturf plans to market Millennium Turf in the first instance for landscape and lawn applications but there will also be uses for sport and special projects.

The first batches of Millennium Turf will be sown during the autumn of 1997 to allow good time for all grasses to establish and to be ready for sale early in 2000. No artificial reinforcement will be used (ie free from plastic netting) and it will be available in conventional square yard, square metre rolls, Big Rolls for TIM machine laying and Lay 'n' Play Turf Tiles.

Millennium Turf will conform to the new TGA (Turfgrass Producers Association) Standards for turf and the company is registered for ISO 9002.

Greenkeeper turns taps on sneaky golfer

Hero of the month is Mike Osley, Course Superintendent at a municipal course in Tallahassee, Florida, who took action when the town Mayor consistently sneaked onto the course for a few practice shots before the official opening time despite being warned.

As reported in Michael McDonnell's Golf Diary in the Daily Mail, Mike switched on all the sprinklers and soaked Mayor, Ron Weaver. Mike was suspended for a week without pay but the locals were so incensed with the way he was treated that they raised money to make up for his lost wages.

The point got through to the Mayor who said, "I'm embarrassed that I broke the rules. I won't ever do it again."
Every club should have a professional like this!

The Hayter FM514 is a purpose-built 5-gang mower that's equal to the challenge of any course. Since no two golf courses are the same, the FM is designed to adapt. Unique 26" floating heads follow the ground contours closely for a superb finish.

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John Deere achieves certification to ISO standards

John Deere Ltd, the UK arm of the world's largest manufacturer of agricultural and amenity equipment, has achieved certification to ISO 9002:1994, the quality management system assessed by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance. Both the company's headquarters at Langar, Nottingham and the John Deere Training Centre at Bingham have received separate LROA certificates of approval.

Certification to ISO 9002 demonstrates that both sites operate formal procedures which lead to improved quality, not only of the products sold, but also in John Deere's relations with its customers, dealers and suppliers.

"While ISO 9002 certification is an important criterion in customers' purchasing decisions, especially in bids for government and institutional sales, our main purpose in wanting to achieve certification is that it forms part of our overall plan to continuously improve our services to meet or exceed our customers changing needs," said Alec McKeel, Managing Director of John Deere in the UK and Ireland.

Dealers are recognised with bubbly at BTME

At BTME Jacobsen acknowledged the sales and service achievements of a number of their dealers.

The following dealers were awarded with plaques and bottles of champagne by Peter Bell, General Manager, Jacobsen E-Z-GO UK.

Steve George, BS Mowers, received their award for Outstanding Parts Performance in 1996 Steve Williment, Scats, received their award for Outstanding After Sales Service Care in 1996 Steve Pullman, Sharrocks received their award for Outstanding Sales in 1996 Ian Bridges, Jacobsen Business Manager, accepted the award on behalf of GreenCare who were given an award for top dealer in 1996. Mick Shaw, Abbey Mowers, received their award for Outstanding Sales Performance in 1996.

At the presentation ceremony, Peter Bell commented, "I am pleased to present a number of dealers with these awards and I feel it not only shows the high calibre of our dealers but also their commitment to providing their customers with not only a range of excellent machinery but also with first class after sales service and support. Customer Care is of paramount importance to us."

Night working keeps rabbits under control

A Home Counties-based company is making a name for itself in the field of conservation and the control of wildlife. MG Wildlife, 15 years old and based in Hayes, Middlesex, specialises in work on golf courses, council parks and open land.

"As these areas tend to be populated during daylight hours the company works at night using its own silenced all-terrain vehicle adapted for night work and silenced rifles to control animals such as rabbits and foxes."

"We expect to be able to cover a radius of 50 miles in a single three to four hours session during which they can go round the golf course three times and a by-products of our work is an ability to survey the ground and monitor nocturnal wildlife including badgers, which are protected by law, and deer," said company Director, Max Gizi.

"Grey squirrels are also a problem and we use feeder hoppers to poison the boisterous males who tend to be the ones which cause most of the problems by gnawing bark."

Special emphasis is placed on the conservation aspect of MG Wildlife's work as it wishes to maintain a natural balance of wildlife which means it is necessary to thin a particular species.

The company is fully licensed and insured to undertake conservation and control duties both day and night. For further information Tel: 01895 824395.

You could be playing in America

With the golfing season now virtually upon us the annual Hayter Challenge gets under way in earnest. This year there is a huge incentive to spend a few extra hours pounding balls on the practice range or honing your skills on the putting green as there are places on offer to represent the Rest of the World team to play against the Americas in the Hayter International Cup to be played in the USA next year.

The player with a handicap of 12 or better, who represents and resides in each of the home countries and who performs best in this year's Hayter Challenge Final, will be selected for the Rest of the World team in the second Hayter international match, to be held at the Cherokee Town and Country Club, Atlanta, Georgia, in October 1998.

A rare opportunity indeed, particularly as the team will have the chance to avenge the narrow defeat inflicted on the Rest of the World by the Americas at West Lancashire Golf Club last year.

As ever 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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Outstanding performance applauded in dealer award

Four dealers have picked up special awards from Toro in the firm's annual dealer awards scheme. Top award for "Best Dealer Overall" went to AT Oliver & Sons Limited of Kings Langley in Hertfordshire. The award is made in recognition of outstanding performance in all aspects of customer sales and after sales.

Three other dealers in the national network also receiving awards were A M Russell Limited of Edinburgh, and County Mowers Limited, Leeds, for 'Outstanding After sales', and Ian Kerry (Machinery) Limited of Godalming in Surrey, whose John Colebrook won the 'Best Dealer Salesman of the Year' award.

The picture shows Toro Turf Products general manager Peter Mansfield (right) presenting the 'Best Dealer' award to AT Oliver & Sons' sales manager John Cockburn (seated) and salesman Tony Martin.

Diploma course is a first for architecture

The British Institute of Golf Course Architects broke new ground at the beginning of January when 12 students commenced their professional Diploma in Golf Course Architecture at Merrist Wood, Surrey.

The nine week course at the College, supplemented by project work and practical work will see the 12 students work throughout the year towards graduation in December.

It is the first time in the world, it is believed that a specialist course in golf course architecture has been organised and the BIGCA Diploma will be the first formal accreditation in the profession.

Martin Hawtree, President, BIGCA, said, "I am delighted that, after five years of our own student programme, we have, with Merrist Wood, put on the Diploma course. In this way the Institute is able to ensure professional education for those wishing to join the field and continue to ensure that proper and correct standards are met".

Elmwood graduation

Elmwood College, in Cupar, held a graduation ceremony for students who achieved awards of the Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma of the Scottish Vocational Education Council.

Photo taken at the recent College Awards Ceremony shows, from left:
Carol Borthwick, Head of Greenkeeping Section, Elmwood College; Fintan Brennan, Student of the Year and winner of the Barenbrug & Toro/PGA Greenkeeping Awards; Graeme Taylor with the Gleneagles Trophy for Golf Course Management; Graeme Simmers OBE, Chairman of the Scottish Sports Council and Principal Guest; Robert Kane, BIGGA Award for 1st Year Golf Greenkeepers; John Myles, BIGGA Award for 2nd Year Golf Greenkeeper and Steven Ewing, winner of the St. Andrews Links Trust Award.
Making machinery last

Anyone underestimating the importance of having sound, reliable machinery need only ask themselves how they would manage if a vital piece of equipment failed or performed below expectations on the day of a major club tournament. No matter how quickly your workshop or local dealer is able to sort out the problem, any delay is likely to affect the whole maintenance programme on the course, with difficult questions to be answered at the end of the day.

In an ideal world, every machine would start first time, operate at the required setting and maintain peak performance throughout its working life. In the real world, any machine can only deliver the goods if it is properly used, regularly maintained and treated with care and respect.

Apart from the tangible benefits that will result from having equipment perform as near as possible to its initial design specification, one can also look forward to extracting a longer working life and a higher value for the investment when the time eventually comes for change.

The first step for anyone wanting their machinery to remain in peak condition for as long as possible is to ensure that those responsible for using and looking after the machine receive proper training and instruction. This should normally be carried out by the supplying dealer and can take place at the course or as part of an organised session at the dealer’s premises. In some cases, the manufacturer will also be involved.

A thorough understanding of the machine is essential if one is to extract maximum benefit from it. User and bystander safety is also vital, so do not allow anyone involved with the equipment’s operation or care to skip a training session. And if you feel unhappy or are unsure about any part of the instruction, ask the person responsible to go over the points again.

The dealer should also be willing to provide training at a later date for new members of staff or to refamiliarise operators with a machine which is used infrequently. This latter point is also particularly important when specialist equipment is hired-in for short periods.

Any concerns over the level or standard of instruction received should be reported initially to the supplier’s sales representative. If that course of action is not possible, then contact the dealer’s sales manager or managing director. As a last resort, speak directly to the manufacturer or distributor of the machine. It is in their interest to ensure that the product is performing to its maximum potential and they will want to hear about any shortfall in user training or instruction.

Regular, planned servicing and maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer’s schedule is something which should happen as a matter of course. Full information will normally be provided within the machine’s instruction book and this can be supplemented with guidance from the dealer. Ensure that the people responsible for using and looking after the machine have access to the appropriate manuals. They are of little use locked away in a cupboard or drawer.

Many end-users are surprised at the amount by which machinery maintenance standards can be raised simply by ensuring that storage and servicing areas are kept tidy and the machine is regularly washed down. Not only will a clean machine be easier to look after but it will maintain its value.

Whatever their sport, players deserve a surface that can absorb all they dish out and bounce back for the next fixture. From rugby pitches to golf courses, Johnsons’ grass playing surfaces can cope with the best of British sport – and the worst of British weather.

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