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A potential cast of thousands

In last year's June magazine we had a special report on the drought being experienced at the time and examined water conservation and what was being done by the irrigation companies to ensure that maximum use was made of the little water that was available to us.

Since then it has barely stopped raining and, outside of the south east, water levels are now back to where they should be.

While not expecting Greenkeeper International to be credited with another dramatic major success, this year's June magazine is taking an extended look at the earthworm problem. With the increasing likelihood of bans being imposed on the existing deterrents, earthworms could become the major headache for greenkeepers over the next few years.

The spur for this in-depth Greenkeeper International Investigation came from a meeting with Nick Park, Vice Chairman of the R&A's Advisory Panel and Chairman of its Research and Advisory Working Party, which has already directed substantial sums of money into researching the earthworm situation.

Nick, whose interview also appears in this issue, has singled out earthworms as an area which could have a catastrophic effect on the game of golf in this country. "I have a horror that we could at some point head back to the sort of mayhem we saw in the 1920s when fairways became muddy footpaths for much of the year," said Nick, adding that as a consequence it could shut golf down for a substantial portion of the year.

With that in mind in this magazine Dr Stephen Baker gives an update on the work the STRI is doing into the problem while three of the big chemical companies, Rigby Taylor, Rhone-Poulenc and Scotts, have reported on what they plan to do to combat the problem, when at any given moment they know their best weaponry might just be taken away from them.

The R&A Advisory Panel, which incidentally includes Walter Woods and George Brown, must be applauded as it does a power of, often unheralded, work all for the good of the game.

With that in mind, please take a few minutes to assist the Panel by filling in the tear-off freepost card which appears in this magazine. By doing so you will be assisting in the formulation of a database which will give an invaluable insight into which problems cause you, the people who have to face them on a daily basis, the most grief. As a consequence the panel will be able to identify the areas which are in most need of research funding.

Only through research will solutions be found for some of the more common golf course problems and, although usually long term, the benefits are potentially significant.

Obviously the more people who fill in the card, which you can be assured protects the identity of the individual sender totally, the more accurate this database will be.

It is a great chance to assist the R&A and do some good for the industry.

Editor:
Scott MacCallum
The new generation of STIHL clearing saws take another giant step in proving the ongoing superiority of Stihl design and engineering.

A new and completely unrivalled range offering exactly the power you need for your specific applications. Each model sets new standards for its class with vibration levels 60 per cent lower* than comparable old models. New STIHL deluxe harness design reduces fatigue by greatly improving comfort and completely freeing the chest area of straps that impair breathing and restrict movement.

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August 3-5, 1998.

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THE NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

BIGGA IN ASSOCIATION WITH SCOTT’S

Contact Sarah on 01347 838581 for more details
What's in a name?

With building work on the new BIGGA Headquarters and Training facility now past the half way mark, thoughts turn to the task of finding a suitable name for the new building.

With the Well of Inspiration running out after one lonely suggestion - Thomas Towers! - it was decided to throw the job over to the members.

A superb prize of B&B accommodation and entry to all seminars of the Learning Experienced in association with Ransomes at both the National Education Conference and BTME as well as a ticket to the banquet will be available to the person who comes up with the most appropriate name for the new building or, if there is one name which has proved overwhelmingly popular and is the one selected by the Board of Management, a draw will be made from all the winning selections.

To give you some information to go on:-

- The new Headquarters and Training Facility is sited 50 yards from the current offices at Aldwark Manor Hotel and Golf Club.
- The Association's long standing President, Viscount Whitelaw, retires in the year the new building opens.
- While a proportion of the funding for the building came from an R&A grant, a significant amount was raised by members through the "Buy a Brick" raffle and a fund raising drive through the golf clubs.
- For anagram purposes the initial letters of Christian names of the current board of management are - G, G, P, J, I, R, G, R.
- For anagram purposes the initial letters of Christian names of the past Chairmen are - W, J, I, G, R, I, J, B, D, P.
- For a anagram purposes the initial letter of Christian names of the staff members are - N, D, J, J, C, K, S, S, R, J, T, A, P.
- Can I apologise for the lack of vowels!

While we all enjoy a good laugh, suggestions which you could actually see being used on a new building, of which we are all very proud, would be preferable.

Entries should be sent to the current BIGGA Headquarters at Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Ane, nr York Y061 1UF by Monday July 5, or via your Section Secretary or Regional Administrator.

A BIGGA thank you!

Over 60 golf clubs have so far responded positively to the letter sent by BIGGA President, Viscount Whitelaw, asking for a contribution towards the building of BIGGA's new Headquarters and Training Facility.

The Association would like to thank the following golf clubs for their donations.

Clubs who donate £250 or more will each receive a plaque in recognition of their generosity, while each golf club which makes a donation will appear on a Roll of Honour within the new building.

Banchory GC
Beeconsfield GC
Bedale GC
Birchwood GC
Bishop's Stortford GC
Blackmoor GC
Bromborough GC
Cardigan GC
Chesterfield GC
Chorlton-Cum-Hardy GC
Clitheroe GC
Conwy GC
Gooden Beach GC
Coventry Hearnsal GC
Crompton & Royton GC
Dore & Totley GC
Dunfermline GC
Goodwood GC
Habberley GC
Hagger Castle GC
Halifax GC
Ham Manor GC
Hamstead GC
Haywards Heath GC
Hindhead GC
Kilmarnock Barassie GC
Kirkby Muxloe GC
Little Aston GC
Longniddry GC
Manchester GC
Moor Hall GC
Nairn GC

Huxley's new Greenstar, the only British manufactured ride-on Greens mower, is setting record sales for the Hampshire based company.

Recent orders include those from Burnley Council, Southampton City Council, Wakefield Council, Ascot Authority, Newbury Racecourse, Newbury and Crookham GC, Winter Hill GC (John Lewis), Torphin Hill GC, Goodwood GC, Langley Park GC, Vale of Leven GC, Painswick GC, Ashton and Lees GC, Asheywood GC, Cookridge Hall GC, Andover GC and Southwick Park Naval Recreation Centre.

"We took a lot of trouble to get the specification right for British conditions by asking British Greenkeepers what they wanted. Standard features include permanent all wheel drive, exceptionally quiet operation, 11 knife cutting reels, steering mowing units with quick detach facility and optional groomers, turf combs and rear roller brushes," said Director Paul Huxley.

"We made sure that the price was very competitive. It's pleasing to find that a lot of customers prefer to 'Buy British' provided they are getting good value for money."
New recruits at BIGGA

The two newest members of the BIGGA Headquarters Staff are Cheryl Broomhead and Sarah Sternberg. Cheryl, who joins the Sales and Marketing team, would certainly give Mel C of the Spice Girls a run for her money when it comes to all things sporty.

She has represented North Yorkshire at netball and now plays both league tennis and badminton. When she's not doing that she's into aerobics and swimming and she takes every opportunity she can to enjoy the outdoor life.

"I must confess, however, that the one and only time I've played golf I managed to hit a car," revealed Cheryl (30).

Cheryl, who lives in York joins the BIGGA family with experience of both advertising sales and exhibition organising, having worked on the Peterborough Evening Telegraph for the former and a Hampstead based exhibition organiser for the latter.

Since leaving college, though, she has packed a lot into her life having been a Thomson's holiday rep working in Spain, Greece and the Canary Islands as well as managing an Arts and Crafts Gallery.

Her desire to see the world has also taken her to Australia and Hong Kong during which time, despite being afraid of heights, she experienced the thrill of a bungee jump from a bridge.

Who says that romance is dead?

Everyone who knows BIGGA Chairman Gordon Child, must be aware of the fact that there can be few greater enthusiasts for the greening profession than him.

However, even Gordon can become a little carried away. Let his long suffering wife Marion take up the story.

"A couple of nights ago, after a hard day at work, my husband took me out to a romantic place for a candle lit dinner.

"I had just begun my starter when Gordon suddenly said, and I quote, "What do you know about dry patch? With fork poised, I froze, and I didn't know whether to laugh or cry," explained Marion.

"I told him what I knew, which isn't a great deal, but I'm not entirely ignorant of such matters - and anyway it makes a change from poa annua or fusarium."

"I have taken the incident as a compliment and I think that maybe my 'retired' husband looks more like a greener than him."

"I'm really looking forward to working for BIGGA. From what I've seen so far it's a growing Association and the job really attracted me," said Cheryl.

Sarah (24) is the new Secretary/Administrator and arrives at the Association after a spell working for Yorkshire Television in Leeds.

While acting as secretary to the Group Controller of Commercial Affairs she regularly bumped into familiar faces including Nick Berry, of Heartbeat fame, and those two legends of afternoon television Richard Whiteley and Carol Vorderman.

Sarah, who lives in Ripon, boasts an honours degree in Modern Languages (French and Spanish) from Manchester Metropolitan University and she added to that by completing a secretarial course at Park Lane College in Leeds.

As part of her degree she spent five months studying in Murcia, in Spain, and a further five months in Dijon in the Burgundy region of France. While in Spain she acted as an au-pair in Marbella.

She is a regular in the gym while her interest in both playing and watching tennis takes her to Wimbledon at the end of this month where she is hoping to catch a glimpse of either Tim Henman or Pat Rafter.

"I am thoroughly looking forward to working at Aldwark Manor," said Sarah.

Hayter International Cup

BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child, will have the tricky task of moulding the most international group of players ever to come together under the same banner in any sportin history when he captains the Rest of the World team which competes in the second Hayter International Cup match, to be held at Cherokee Town & Country Club in Atlanta, Georgia, in October.

Sounds a little over the top? Well you can't get more international than 12 different players representing 12 different countries from as far afield as Finland and Australia. So you might find Gordon attempting to enlist the services of Kofi Hansen, Secretary General of the United Nations, to act as Vice Captain!

Gordon will be attempting to win back the trophy which the Americas clinched in a closely fought inaugural match at West Lancs Golf Club, Liverpool, in 1996.

The countries represented are, in alphabetical order:-

Australia, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Wales.

Rest of the World Team.

Non-Playing Captain - Gordon Child, England

Australia - Peter Frewin

England - Andy Sheehan, Bentley GC, Essex

Finland - Jorma Eriksson

France - Remy Dorbeus

Germany - Andreas Kauler

Ireland - Nick Webber, Portstewart GC, Co Antrim

Norway - Atle Revheim

Scotland - Derek Wilson, Irvine Bogside GC

Spain - Eugenio Rezola

Sweden - Martin Sternberg

Switzerland - Pierre Ambrosin

Wales - Russell Lewis, Northop, Country Club, Flintshire

The Hayter International Cup will be played in the week beginning October 11, 1996. The Americas team to defend the cup will be announced shortly.
Carnoustie links up with Toro for the 1999 Open

Toro and Carnoustie Golf Links have signed a three-year working partnership deal that includes the supply of Toro turf maintenance equipment and on-site support for the 1999 Open.

The preferred-supplier agreement will see Carnoustie taking delivery of a wide range of Toro turf care machinery for maintaining all three golf courses at the renowned Scottish "institution", which is owned by Angus Council and run by the Links Management Committee. Carnoustie Golf Links' Superintendent John Philp, said, "I chose Toro based on my past experience. I know the products and am particularly keen on the greens and fairways mowers. They give a superb quality of cut, are very reliable, well engineered and hard to beat.

The courses are supplied by Edinburgh Toro dealers A M Russell.

Under the agreement, John Philp's ever-expanding new Toro fleet will include seven GR3200-D utility mower, two GM3000-D fairway mowers, a GM3000-D for cutting semi-roughs and five of the new GR1600 pedestrian mowers for tees and greens collars. There are also six GR500 pedestrian greens mowers on order for The Open. In addition he is purchasing three Workman utility vehicles - two provided with top dressing units and one with the hydroject 4000 water-injection aerator with on-board tank, which he says is an important aeration tool, not just on the greens and tees but on the high parts of fairways which are prone to drying out.

TGA appoint new Chief Executive

The Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) has appointed David Clarke as its new Chief Executive.

David is a chartered management accountant who has served as a Finance Director and Company Secretary in the agricultural sector for over 30 years. His strong organisational and professional skills will enable the Association to move forward into the millennium and further develop benefits for Members.

At the Association's last All Members' Meeting Mr Clarke reported an exciting year ahead for the TGA. Forthcoming events, continued input from the Association's Members and Turfgrass users is clearly underlining the value of the TGA and its quality standards.

The Association's Mission Statement, which in part states "the sharing of knowledge for the benefit of the customer" is continuing to bring growers much closer together for the regular exchange of information and ideas to achieve its goal of constantly improving standards in production and business practices.

The recent wet weather will not give a picture of complacency for the TGA - the next All Members' Meeting on July 8 will have a speaker from the Environment Agency to discuss water Management and how water users can benefit from forward planning and good management practices.

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Royal Inverdivot GC... by Tony Husband

The greens look a bit fluffy 'til I get the prime Peter.

It should reach about here.

It's stopped! ...you're right they are fluffy.

The Italian job for Peter

Peter Bradburn, former Courses Supervisor of The London Golf Club, Kent, has been appointed Assistant Superintendent of The Arzaga Hotel and Country Club, Italy.

Peter will be joining Sylvain Duval, Golf Courses Superintendent and formerly of Hanbury Manor, to aid the development of the project in preparation for the Jack Nicklaus II and Gary Player courses, which are set in the magnificent hills surrounding Lake Garda. The Nicklaus course is scheduled to open in July this year and the first nine holes of The Player Course in Spring 1999.

Steve Jones, Golf Courses Superintendent of The London Golf Club said, "It is sad to lose Peter after five years at the Club, but we wish him well with this marvellous challenge."

Peter, a former Diploma Graduate of Myerscough College, previously worked in turf research and agronomy in New Zealand. He has also worked as a Contract Manager in Grounds Maintenance in the UK and as a Groundsman at The All England Lawn Tennis Club.

The Ritefeed Classic, 1998

Please note the following official statement from the Association with regard to the Ritefeed Classic 1998.

With effect from May 5 1998, BIGGA is no longer associated with the Ritefeed Classic 1998.
Dear Sir,
I reply to Sandy McDivot’s article “Field of Experience” Greenkeeper International - May 1998 which I read with interest - twice.
Before addressing the issues raised I would like to be up front and open about my own identity and assure you that I have no hidden agendas, just a desire to challenge and give balance to the content of the article.
I have been employed in the turf grass industry for some 25 years, have received education both in the UK and USA, worked with a number of consultants at the various golf courses where I was employed and since February this year have formed my own independent consultancy service - I also do not believe I fall into any of the four categories as described in the article.

Firstly, there are some points raised in the piece with which I wholeheartedly agree. Education is better now than ever before and there are some good and some not so good consultants currently working in our industry. I suppose it would also be fair to add that there are a good many clubs out there who have yet to really embrace and encourage training and development for their staff who are, therefore, not accessing the education and also some Head Greenkeepers who feel that training and development no longer applies to them as they have been there, done that and got the certificate.

However, I would think there are few industries which have experienced so many changes both in terms of new products and work practices over the last decade which means the learning never really stops - something which the Chairman also referred to in his article - May issue.

May I also be bold enough to suggest that there are some good and not so good Head Greenkeepers out there who could really benefit from working with an experienced consultant and, given the right pairing, might even welcome the opportunity.

Just by changing the focus and being positive and optimistic rather than suspicious and somewhat defensive we can also change the perception of the role of the consultant from agitator to partner for, I believe, it is only through open and honest partnerships that progress can be made. There is little or nothing for anyone to gain from an “us and them” scenario and I do not believe that any consultant would wish to work in such an atmosphere.

I make no excuses for the fact that, as a consultant, I question and challenge work methods, look over machinery and equipment, review staff training and request copies of budgets, records and reports in order to gain a better understanding of each organisation I work with. In return, I will offer independent advice, guidance, support, suggestions and recommendations which will all be given without prejudice and within a no blame framework - for it is all too easy to point the finger and neither party should fall into this trap.

A well chosen consultant will increase confidence and motivation just by reinforcing what is already known and by offering guidance and support through times of change and development if, or when, this is required to achieve higher standards and better quality for this would be the only reason to suggest change.

There will, undoubtedly, be the occasions when the not so good consultant gets it wrong and Sandy McDivot gave examples of this.

However, is this reason enough to alienate an outside influence and risking a missed opportunity for the times when the consultant gets it right?

All clubs should spend time in researching and selecting the right consultant for their course and have some way of measuring the impact of that consultant on the goals which have been set. However, I do not agree with the suggestion that the best consultant is one who will not question the Head Greenkeeper’s actions, as this assumes that, in all instances, there is no room for change, progress or improvement - this shows no respect for the integrity or intellect of either parties.

As an individual I believe I have much to offer today’s progressive Head Greenkeepers, both in terms of knowledge and experience, but also support and I have yet to work with any fellow professionals where this has been rejected.

Perhaps, therefore, the challenge is to try to establish a network of tried, tested and trusted consultants who really can offer a service to the industry.

Ken Barber
On Course Consultants

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