The BIGGA Silent Auction was given a boost with its first Masters Club donation, a Sisis Hydraulic Veemo tractor mounted scarifier

Have you heard?

Sisis has donated its Hydraulic Veemo tractor mounted scarifier to BIGGA's Silent Auction. "Sisis sees the Silent Auction as an interesting idea to spice up BTME and we shall be watching its promotion on BIGGA's Website with great interest," said Publicity Manager Lynn Hilton.

"Sisis' decision to take part in the Auction was welcomed by BIGGA's Executive Director Neil Thomas. "We are delighted to welcome Sisis on board and are sure that there will be much interest in the piece of equipment donated," said Neil.

The Veemo is a purpose designed scarifier, ideal for fairway use, featuring sharp, strong cutting blades for maximum thatch removal with minimum disturbance. The double-ended blades are reversible to increase their working life.

It works well on undulating ground as it has three independently mounted, fully floating heads which follow ground contours without scalping. Depth of cut is infinitely variable by means of a micro-adjuster on each unit. This patented feature is unique to SISIS machines.

Valued at £6,684 the Veemo is the first donation to The Masters Club.

Is your club thinking of purchasing a scarifier? Why not bid for one, and stand a chance of getting it for half the normal retail price? Make your bid by either:

- Phone: 01347 833800
- Fax: 01347 833801
- E-mail: reception@bigga.co.uk
- Post: BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York Y061 1UF
- or in person at BTME2000

Lot No. | Item description      | Item value |
--------|-----------------------|------------|
001     | Bernhard grinder A    | £6,000     |
002     | Bernhard grinder B    | £6,000     |
003     | Sisis Veemo scarifier | £6,684     |

How do I bid?

Well that's up to you, but you can choose from:

- by post
- by phone
- by fax
- by email
- in person at BTME 2000

Any other questions?

Just call Jenny Panton on 01347 833800 and she'll deal with all of your Silent Auction questions personally.

August 1999 Greenkeeper International 11
A Ryder Cup home from home

Anyone with tickets for September's Ryder Cup at The Country Club, Brookline Massachusetts, and who is still seeking accommodation might be interested in a four bedroom house mere three minutes from the course. The house has two double and two single rooms as well as a large base- ment if required and the owner is prepared to cook and ferry the tenants to and from the course if requested.

For further information contact Ailsa Wade Tel: 01577 865607 (after 4pm).

Kubota opens new showroom

A brand new machinery showroom, parts store and workshop facility dedicated to the supply and support of Kubota compact tractors, ride-on mowers and professional and domest- ic garden machinery was opened last month.

Located in Christchurch, the all- new Procare Kubota Centre is scheduled to be opened by Mr Massey Miyake, Managing Director of Kubota (UK) Ltd, accompanied by James and Julian Macklin, co-directors of CTP Procare.

The Procare Kubota Centre represents a joint investment by Kubota (UK) Ltd and CTP Procare. Kubota's appointed area dealer. It has been designed from the ground up to provide domestic and professional ride-on mowers.

"The new Procare Kubota Centre represents a major investment by Kubota and CTP Procare. "It is extremely well situated and dedicated 100 per cent to the demonstration and sale of Kubota products, supporting customers with genuine parts, first class service and individually-tailored financial packages. We look forward to welcoming past, present and future Kubota owners at the new Procare Kubota Centre and signing them up as members of the Kubota Owner's Club," commented Tom Barnes, Marketing Manager of Kubota (UK) Ltd.

Allister earns Perpetual Cup

John Lindsay (left), of John Lindsay Professional Sports turf, continued his support for Greenkeeper education by presenting his Perpetual Cup and Travel Award to Allister McEwen, of Spa Golf Club.

Keith is new lecturer at Merrist Wood College

Merrist Wood College has added Keith Harrison to its expanding team in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management. Keith, who took up his position at the beginning of June, will have special responsibility for developing and co-ordinating a programme of work-based assessment and training for employees in the Sports Turf, Greenkeeping and Grounds Maintenance sectors.

Keith comes to Merrist Wood from Brinsbury College in West Sussex, where he spent 14 years in a number of roles, including Head of Horticulture and latterly, as Head of Faculty. During his time at Brinsbury, Keith was involved with the development of work-based programmes, and other responsibilities.

Keith is ideally placed to forge further industry links for the College, through his extensive network of contacts, developed over the last 23 years. Returning to his specific interest of Sports Turf Management, Keith is enthusiastic about his new role.

"I am pleased to be joining Merrist Wood. The excellent facilities and the very positive outlook of my new colleagues will help to facilitate the bringing together of students, employers and the College, for the benefit of the industry as a whole," said Keith, a former Lancashire League cricket groundsman, Head Greenkeeper and Head Groundsman at an independent school.

A veritable army of greenkeepers at Wentwood Hills

Jim McKenzie, Director of Golf at Celtic Manor, was so determined to ensure the new Robert Trent Jones I designed Wentwood Hills course was in pristine condition for its first professional tournament, the PGA Mastercard Tour event, that he used 46 greenkeepers every day.

The staff worked for three hours from 4.30am. Fairways, greens and even fringes were strip cut every morning and eight men raked the bunkers.

"We used this as a dry run for The Welsh Open being staged here next year and have learned a lot. The kind comments were a tribute to the hard work of our staff," said Jim.

The course, which is hope is host the 2009 Ryder Cup, had been opened the previous month with a special match between local hero Ian Woosnam and this year's Ryder Cup Captain, Mark James.

Jim is pictured with MasterCard winner Lee James.
Dear Neil,

I greatly appreciate your writing to me about my husband. It has been extremely comforting for me and my family to receive so many wonderful letters. I am grateful for your sympathy and perhaps you could convey our thanks to all your members. Willie was always proud of his association with BIGGA.

Lady Whitelaw, Penrith, Cumbria

Velvet comments ‘unfortunate’

Jim Arthur’s comments on the properties of velvet bents (June 1999) are generalisations and unfortunate in their tone. The April article from IGER’s forward thinking Danny Thomogood was specifically discussing how far the species has developed since the poor-performing pioneering variety Kingstown.

To say that Avalon is “only an improved strain” of Kingstown is to dismiss all plant breeding successes in creating better turf grasses - of any species - in recent years. Unfortunately, long gone are the days when courses only dealt with a select membership. The golfing boom has led to a huge increase in the pressures put on the course itself. In reaction to this, all courses are now benefiting from the modern, much improved varieties made available through today’s breeding programmes.

Avalon offers significant improvements over previous velvet bents in disease resistance, wear tolerance and establishment. Regarding Jim’s specific reference to Poa annua competitive ness, Avalon will out-compete Poa as its high shoot density makes it very difficult for weed species to establish. It may well be that velvet bents are ‘not the answer’ for every course in the UK, but our advice - backed up by the experience of European and UK greenkeepers - is to try Avalon on one or two greens first and assess its performance.

Simon Taylor
Director, British Seed Houses

Is there anybody out there?

As a greenkeeper of more than ten years standing I feel compelled to write to highlight some of the reasons why more and more greenkeepers are leaving this country to work abroad.

I have worked hard to get to the level of Head Greenkeeper, spending a lot of time and money to pass exams to do so. Having been advised to go for a Head Greenkeeper job at a club that was subsequently found to be in financial difficulties I was made redundant after just eight months.

But I was determined to stay in the profession and applied for a post in the Republic of Ireland which cost me over £300... for a 20 minute interview.

Since then I have applied for more than ten posts advertised in Greenkeeper International and have had just one reply. A young lad I had training under me in my last job has also applied for lots of jobs and every application letter he wrote has been ignored.

Is this any way to treat hard working professionals. No wonder so many are leaving to work abroad and I am seriously considering leaving the profession.

Stuart Lusty, Gloucester

May I express through your columns my gratitude for the Association’s invitation to Honorary Membership, for the Chairman’s kind visit with his wife and myself to my home in Woodstock and for the beautifully framed Certificate of Honorary Membership which he presented to me. My wife wants me to say how much she appreciated and is enjoying the bouquet of flowers which Mrs Marion Child gave her.

It was a particular pleasure to receive this distinction from your Chairman, Gordon Child, whose friendship I have valued for many years and whose work on behalf of the greenkeeping profession I have admired for even longer. I feel confident in a bright future for the Association when I consider how far the Executive and Board have brought the profession in the relatively short time since the ‘T’ was put in ‘BIGGA’; but if they still have any mountains to climb, I am sure that we shall only find them at the top.

Fred Hawtree

What service!

I - or rather my wife for me - placed an order for some Stylo rain gear on a Monday. It arrived the following Saturday and everything fits like it should. I am very happy with the quality and nothing less than amazed at the service. Thanks very much and keep up the good work.

Craig Smith, Golfclub Glashofen-Neuss, Germany

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August 1999 Greenkeeper International 13
Strength, creative thinking and teamwork

When William Webb Ellis first picked up the ball and ran with it at Rugby School all those years ago, the game of rugby was created.

The game now relies on a careful blend of strength, creative thinking and teamwork, played on an international stage and followed by millions of informed individuals.

Textron apply the same formula to their business and have created a world ranking Turf Care and Specialty Product group, which comprises the product muscle of Ransomes, Jacobsen, Cushman, Ryan, E-Z-GO and Iseki.

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For more information on products please phone 0500 026208.
Bruce Stanley takes a look at the past, present and future development of electrically-powered machines within the turf maintenance industry

The application of electric motive power for turf maintenance has not travelled too far over the past 70 years.

Those who welcomed the introduction of the E-Plex battery-powered greens mower in 1994 may be surprised to learn that the name on the side of that machine is the same as that found on the world's first mains electric lawn mower, built and patented by Ransomes in 1926.

Produced in 14in, 16in and 20in versions, the Bowlic, as it was known, proved popular both for cutting bowling greens and domestic lawns. The major drawbacks, as with hand-held power tools later on, were the working restrictions imposed by the length of the lead and the ready availability of a suitable electric supply point, plus the constant danger of inadvertently snipping the cord in two.

Thirty or so years later, Ransomes, and others, attempted to overcome all three problems with the introduction of a battery-powered pedestrian lawn mower.

Although Ransomes continued manufacture of 14in and 16in machines until 1970, the mower never became a world beater due to the fairly basic lead-acid battery technology of the time. Arriving straight from the motor industry, the battery had to be large and heavy to hold sufficient power to cover a reasonable area of grass. If the sward became too long or thick, battery life was dramatically reduced.

Another problem was the need for frequent battery maintenance and recharging, tasks all too often neglected by the average homeowner, especially over the winter months. The
On a charge

result? Costly expense on a replacement battery much sooner than the mower's salesman had forecast.

However, it is a different story when batteries are used throughout the year to provide motive power for commercial or professional operations. In such conditions, it is in the economic interest of the owner, manager or operator to make sure that the power source is properly maintained and regularly re-charged.

Demand for a battery capable of delivering and maintaining its rated output over a continuous, extended operating period led to the development of the 'deep cycle' battery which has thicker plates than the normal 'starting' battery found in road vehicles and tractors.

In the case of the deep cycle battery, both discharging and recharging take place over extended periods while the alternative starting battery is designed to deliver a high current over a short period, vital when cranking a petrol or diesel engine.

The major design characteristic of the deep cycle battery is its ability to discharge up to 80% of its stored power over a very high number of cycles. The final number will depend on its rated capacity and the operating conditions, temperature and maintenance schedule, but should not be less than 450 cycles for a six volt battery.

The first electric vehicles used on golf courses appeared in the USA in the early 1960s. Derived from industrial work trucks, these golf carts or 'buggies' rapidly achieved great popularity, transporting golfers quickly, conveniently and quietly between holes.

This last point was very important on the many new courses being constructed as part of residential and resort developments, close to private houses, hotels and holiday homes.

The status of the buggy was soon confirmed by the installation of purpose-designed cart tracks adjacent to fairways on many of the new courses built in the USA from the 1960s onwards. As a result, 80% of the courses "over there" now have electric golf carts, with North America taking the lion's share of a total annual world market put at 150,000-plus vehicles.

In the UK it is a totally different story, with electric carts currently available on less than 10% of courses. The reasons include a lack of suitable and dedicated track ways on which the buggies can run and an apparent ingrained resistance to the use of battery motive power. And it's been a similar tale when it comes to grass-cutting machinery.

The world's first ride-on electric greens mower made its debut at the GCSSA show in Dallas in early 1994.

Coming from the same stable as Cushman, the Ransomes E-Plex made use of Cushman's long experience in the manufacture of industrial electric work vehicles. In fact, the E-Plex's electrical technology and major components - batteries, drive motors and switch gear - were all derived originally from the Cushman development programme. Ransomes concentrated on the cutting units, operating platform and novel features such as the swing-out centre unit, facilitated by the absence of any hydraulic pipes.

The silent, pollution-free operation of the E-Plex proved an immediate attraction in the USA, particularly on courses within residential and holiday complexes. Sales were led initially by the E-Plex's environmental features, but users quickly discovered a further benefit in dramatically reduced maintenance requirements and running costs compared with an equivalent petrol or diesel-engined machine.

Annual savings of 50 per cent are not uncommon, with one public authority in the UK recording total maintenance and running costs of just over £1,000 in three years, making the E-Plex one of the most economical machines in its fleet. This machine has also proved the doubters wrong by cutting 19 greens on a hilly course without faltering, always returning safely to the shed for overnight recharging.

The technology used by Ransomes and Cushman in the original E-Plex and E-Plex II greens mowers has since appeared in the Jacobsen Greens King Electric, launched in 1997.

Any machine which works on or close to golf greens or tees at any time of the day needs to be as quiet as possible. So the next logical development following the electric greens mower was the self-propelled bunker rake, answered by Jacobsen in 1998 with the Sand Scorpion, which uses the same battery pack and wheel drive motors as its greens mower.

At the 1999 GCSSA show in Orlando, Ransomes unveiled a prototype electric walk-behind greens mower equipped with a single 12-volt battery, bringing back memories of...
the original battery-powered mower first produced by the firm back in the 1950s. Today's battery pack is somewhat smaller.

Yet, as in the motor industry, it is the number, size and capacity of the currently-available batteries which is limiting the development of electric power within golf course maintenance.

It is one thing turning the wheels, but it is quite another to drive cylinders, groomers, verti-cut units and other attachments and never quite knowing how long the batteries will last before the machine comes to a halt. To avoid this, both Ransomes' and Jacobsen's electric mowers have circuitry which automatically cuts out drive to the cylinders when the batteries fall to a 30% charge level, leaving sufficient power to return to the sheds.

The introduction of the deep cycle battery helped extend working life greatly, but it is still a lead-acid battery. Although its capabilities have improved significantly over the past 20 years, such batteries remain bulky and weighty in comparison with a petrol or diesel tank.

There has been talk of battery-powered fairway mowers, but battery technology is not yet sufficiently advanced to provide enough power to mow all the fairways, and travel between them, and provide a mower which is not too heavy or cumbersome.

The alternative is likely to be a hybrid combining an internal combustion engine and battery power, switching from one to the other depending on the proximity of golfers or buildings.

As for turf maintenance vehicles, the diversity of their tasks makes it virtually impossible to estimate how long the batteries will last before they need recharging. The same goes for other machines for which electric power would be acceptable, simply because of the unpredictability of the load. It is therefore unlikely that lead-acid batteries will be used on their own to power on-course vehicles other than personnel transporters, greens mowers and bunker rakes.

But what of the future? There is growing excitement over the development by American company Metallic Power, of zinc/air fuel cells as an alternative to lead-acid batteries.

Fuelled by zinc pellets which combine with oxygen to produce electricity, the system is said to have three times the energy efficiency of a petrol engine. There are no emissions, the fuel source is totally recycled and recharging takes only five minutes. In tests, zinc/air fuel cells have delivered four to seven times more energy per pound weight than traditional lead-acid batteries.

Leading companies within the turf industry, including Textron, are now working closely with Metallic Power to maximise the performance and efficiency of this new power source in practical applications. As the saying goes - watch this space!
BIGGA Education & Training Manager, Ken Richardson looks at the educational opportunities available to members, and also gives details of the BIGGA Essay Competition.

**BIGGA House Supervisory Management Courses and Regional Training Courses**

The deadline for applications to attend the BIGGA HOUSE and/or Regional Supervisory Management Courses is fast approaching. With a total of 33 courses, covering 14 different subjects in 17 locations, these courses have something for everyone.

Thanks to contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund we keep costs to a minimum with prices from £30 for a two day residential course. Two day Essential Supervisory Management Courses, covering the same subject matter as the BIGGA course are regularly advertised at £750. These prices do not include accommodation or food.

The message is simple. Use these courses or lose them. The BIGGA HOUSE Supervisory Management Courses are recognised for their high quality and value. All five weekly courses will be held in the new BIGGA HQ offering vastly improved training facilities, which, coupled with the improved facilities at Aldwark Manor, offer even better value for money. Place the Industry’s views before Government, associated industries and the general public.

**The BIGGA Essay Competition**

I am sure that the winning essay from the 1913 Greenkeepers Essay Competition must have given many ideas for the 1999 BIGGA Essay Competition. Remember that your entry should reach BIGGA HOUSE by 29 October so you do not have much time left to plan and write your 2000 word entry. Full rules are available from BIGGA HOUSE.

**Pesticide Safety**

The British Agrochemicals Association (BAA), the trade association for companies engaged in the production, formulation and manufacture of pesticide products aims to:

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The BAA also produces a wide range of publications, including leaflets on sprayer cleaning, How to avoid spray drift, hand protection, disposal, training, protective clothing etc, the BAA Amenity Handbook and COSHH Assessments to name but a few. All of the publications, mentioned, are available free of charge from: British Agrochemicals Association, 4 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2RP.
Did you know...

If you find yourself off work because you have had an accident, as a full greenkeeping member your membership automatically covers you under a personal accident insurance policy?

I know at least one of our members who does! I had a call recently from a member who had broken his arm, he had an accident out of work and was consequently signed off, he wasn’t sure if he could still claim because the accident happened in his own leisure time, so he rang me at headquarters, I was pleased to be able to tell him he was covered and gave him the claims line telephone number, although he did have a spot of trouble writing the number down, he broke his writing arm!

I certainly don’t want to tempt fate, but if you do find yourself in a position similar to our member above, even if the accident happens on holiday, you are covered! Maximum cover is £7,500 and there is also a weekly payment of £35 payable (after the first week, for the first 12 weeks of benefit) and then £45 per week thereafter for up to two years if the member is partially or temporarily disabled as a result of an accident.

The claims procedure is this:

In the event of an accident likely to give rise to a claim you should immediately notify Lambert Fenchurch UK Group Limited on 0161 237 3377.

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