• We provide high performance polyethylene liners to fully waterproof your proposed reservoir, lake, pond or similar

• For your assurance, our site installation works, which are undertaken nationally, are covered by warranties

• If required, we can supply fabricated liner panels for your own installation

• Our lining systems are used in the refurbishment of existing water features which leak

• We advise on all preparatory and finishing earthworks required

GEOSYNTHETIC TECHNOLOGY LIMITED

Nags Corner, Wiston Road, Nayland, Colchester, Essex CO6 4LT

Tel: 01206 262676  Fax: 01206 262998
Rain Bird crack code

The new DC-200 central control for Rain Bird’s Golf Division is designed to deliver flexibility and water savings for golf courses with decoder-based irrigation systems. A wall-mounted unit, DC-200 combines the reliability of two-wire technology with the proven in-field communication of buried field decoders. It is compatible with Rain Bird FD-210 and FD-610 decoders which can operate from one to six valves without the use of a field satellite.

In addition it can store five separate irrigation programmes, plus one test schedule, while the Water Budget button helps save water by increasing or decreasing the watering times of all decoders in a schedule.

For further information Tel: 00 1800 9842255

Millennium status for Doggy bins

Glasdon Retriever Dog Waste Bins have been granted Millennium Product status by the Design Council. The bins are purpose-designed dog foul containers with a secure metal chute ensuring hygienic operation, a pivot action for fast and effective emptying and a completely removable door.

For further information Tel: 01253 600400

New products from Rigby Taylor

Amino-sorb is the latest addition to the Mascot Specialties range from Rigby Taylor. It is an amino acid based supplement that gives turf maximum protection and recovery from stress. The two products Amino-Sorb R (root acting) and Amino-Sorb F (folic acting) are ideally applied as a programme through the year to enhance recovery from stress, increase photosynthesis and chlorophyll content as well as enhancing germination and increasing root growth or stressed turf.

With another product launch, Rigby Taylor has also introduced Integrate Soil Conditioner to the UK market.

Applied to the turf as a conventional high volume spray the polymers in Integrate unwind and move down through the soil profile, penetrating layers and solid soil structures. The “fines” that are clogging the pore spaces are then solubilised by Integrate which draws together the clay and organic soil particles into soil aggregates with the same and the silt.

Following a programme of treatments the turf manager will see the results in reduced soil compaction and lower bulk density.

Integrate is a product manufactured by Milliken Chemical, the supplier of Blazon Spray pattern indicator. It is totally non phytotoxic and has no potential for “burn”. It is supplied in 10 litre packs and costs between £75 and £150 per hectare.

For further information Tel: 01245 222750.

Iseki launch new mid-size tractor

Iseki has launched a new addition to its tractor range with the introduction of the TR63. The TR63 is a mid-sized tractor offering power and versatility for a range of turf care and agricultural applications.

Powered by a new 66hp Iseki designed Perkins, direct injection 4-cylinder diesel engine, it gives a cleaner ‘burn’ and low exhaust and noise emissions.

The bonnet with quick lift-off side panels gives easy access for routine maintenance. Synchromesh transmission provides 25 forward and 25 reverse speeds with a maximum road speed of 24 mph (40 km/h).

To keep the TR 63 moving the tractor has push button electro-hydraulically engaged 4-wheel drive and simultaneous locking of front and rear differentials. The hydraulic lift capacity is 2100kg making it capable of handling most mounted or trailed equipment with ease. Optional lift arms are also available to boost the capacity to a hefty 3400kg.

The Iseki TR 63 is ideally suited to be fitted with the Ransomes Hydraulic 5/7 using a specially designed adaptor kit. Textron can now offer one-stop shopping for a high output mowing combination.

For further information Tel: 01473 270000

Safer surfaces pave the way at KSM

KSM Ltd has launched a selection of eco-friendly rubber slabs which are soft on steel and other rubber commonly used as spikes in golf shoes. The slabs are available in three standard sizes and three colours - charcoal, terracotta and emerald. They can easily be laid on concrete, hardcore, sand or wood using cement, epoxy resin or other bonding agents.

For further information Tel: 01376 515164.
Velvet Bent: Not the answer

I would like to take issue with the article in the April issue of Greenkeeper International in which we were told that velvet bent is the 'in' grass. In my view it makes extravagant claims and displays little knowledge of greenkeeping.

Can I also point out that A. capillaris is the old specific name for A. tenuis browntop (the new name was substituted in 1918 ref. Beard). A. canina is indeed a lover of (very) wet soils. It was rejected many years ago, before New Zealand and Oregon browntops formed a reliable seed source for a better grass. If you think this is an opinion and not a fact, let me quote Professor Vargas (not unknown to some of your readers) on the subject, relating to Kingstown velvet bent, of which Avalon is only an improved strain.

'Velvet bent (Kingstown) lacks the disease resistance and competitive ability necessary to make it a desirable turf grass species. It is even more susceptible to disease than Penncross; is not very tolerant of high temperatures and has a tendency to lie flat in summer time thus making an undesirable putting surface. It simply will not compete with Poa annua, which eventually will take over'.

Advice to feed velvet bent more and especially to LIME(!) greens will be regarded by all greenkeepers as very dubious.

In short velvet bent is emphatically not the answer. A. canina has been tried and found wanting for at least 63 years. A comparison could be made with Penncross which was considered to be the answer to all our prayers, more than a decade ago. It certainly is not now, nor indeed its successors.

J.H. Arthur,
Budleigh, Salterton

Welsh Open at Celtic Manor

Celtic Manor, in Newport, South Wales is to host the Welsh Open for at least three years from next year, as the first step towards its new 7,450 yard Wentwood Hills course becoming a contender to host the 2009 Ryder Cup.

The new course was opened by Wales' new First Minister Alun Michaels following an exhibition match between Ian Woosnam and this year's Ryder Cup Captain Mark James.

Director of Golf at the Resort is Jim McKenzie who was recently promoted to the post having previously been Course Manager.

Re-election for Howard Swan

Howard Swan has been re-elected as President of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects for the forthcoming year with Jeremy Pern as Vice President.

"I look forward to a second year as President and, with our Committee, the progress that we shall be striving to make to advance the profession and the Institute throughout Europe and elsewhere in the year to come," said Howard.

The most important issue facing the Institute in the year ahead is the possibility of a merger with the European Society and the French Architects' Group and the debate will continue towards a coming together in the Millennium.

New features for Pattisson's aluminium hole cup

H. Pattisson & Co, which has recently become a distributor for the Standard Golf range, has launched a new aluminium hole cup.

Sporting a new and improved design the new hole cup is a copy of the polymer bogy hole cup, with anti mud features, while the new and improved hole club is available is available in plain and white lined.

For further information Tel: 01494 79 46 46.

Another example of perfect spacing
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.

Our goal is to make it easy for you to do business with us and offer you the best and most comprehensive range of products on the market. Good for the industry, good for business and good for you.

For more information on products please phone 0500 026208.
As a life-time student of Homo Sapiens or even that aberrant strain, H. Viridis, or 'Greens', I am always fascinated by reading between the lines of articles or speeches and to identify the obvious breaches of the first law of logic, ie correct observation must be followed by correct deduction. When it is not, problems remain unsolved; vast sums of money are spent (or advised to be spent) quite ineffectively because the true cause has not been properly identified.

We are informed that rainwater is acid, so golf greens will naturally become more acidic. Quite apart from the fact that we would need to live in monsoon conditions for much of the year for there to be significant acidification, no account is taken of the fact that today's bought-in top dressings are mostly on the alkaline side (the best around pH 6.8) so very little top dressing would soon neutralise any acidification by rain.

In passing, the whole argument is academic because "the ideal pH is the one you have" - so don't try to waste time and money altering it - certainly never, ever lime fine turf; the result is not just lush grass and earthworms but Take-All Patch for which only time is a cure. Similarly with irrigation, quite unsustainable claims are made and an enormous pseudo-science has arisen to complicate an essentially simple operation.

I have been wrongly accused of saying that pop-ups have ruined more greens than any other single factor. It is the misuse of pop-ups which is the true problem - and the fact that they make it so easy to over-water at the turn of a dial.

The temptation is greater because too many of today's golfers equate quality simply on the basis of colour - "if it isn't green it must be dead". In truth "beautifully lush" is a contradiction in terms and anyone who prefers the viridian green so often seen on televised golf to the terre verte of natural courses (which are rarely uniformly green save when over watered, by rain as well as pop-ups) needs counselling.

All we are aiming at in irrigation is simplicity itself. We need water merely to keep the grass alive, not to make it green, not to make it grow and certainly never to make greens soft and holding.

Through the platform of the Learning Experience Jim Arthur talks about the need to be sensible when it comes to watering...

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There are a few simple rules which are so logical as to defy contradiction. The first law is to start late and finish early. April is a winter month and if one falls for the temptation to water in an early spring spell - the usual false spring - then sure enough the weather will deteriorate as we saw in this and many other springs. Cold wet greens take far longer to warm up when the weather improves than cold dry ones, so growth is delayed. Equally at the other end, it is sound practice to stop all irrigation after the end of August, whatever September brings.

The aim is to go into winter with dry greens and a weeks watering in early September absolutely guarantees the next weeks are torrential, just as cleaning one's car invites rain. Early May is not too late in most years, and only optimists go on watering after the end of August.

If you really feel that greens are being over-stressed in a very early spring, then water (sparingly) in the day, not at night when the effects of late frosts and irrigation can be very unhappy.

So much for timing - what about quantity. A huge industry has arisen,
It never rains...

All we are aiming at in irrigation is simplicity itself. We need water merely to keep the grass alive, not to make it green, not to make it grow and certainly never to make greens soft and holding.

based on computer science and nit-picking measurements, calculating the short-fall and reckoning precipitation rates to mini-seconds duration. Many greens on the same course have different irrigation requirements, linked to exposed versus sheltered sites, the permeability of the root zone and related drainage.

Experienced course managers know these different requirements (and less experienced ones can learn) - and set the controls accordingly. However, "scientific" systems may be, there is no better way of checking than going out and seeing for oneself. How many course managers actually check that five minutes on the dial equate to five minutes actual delivery.

No one suggests spending all night with a stop watch. When I was helping with the presentation for Open Championships, I used to go out, alone or with the head man, at night randomly picking say four greens.

We both got considerable surprises at times - with old control systems failing to deliver or to stop! Look especially for the green which is starting to shine, or conversely one which looks too wet - but all set at the same control time.

Look also for missed areas indicating multifunction heads, remembering that each head waters the far side of the green, so a dry area relates to the head opposite.

I well remember going round a neglected Irish Championship links, where the pro was in charge, pointing out to him at a distance of 100 or more yards which heads were blocked. He didn't last long and the appointment of an experienced links man revolutionised not just the irrigation system but the presentation of the whole course.

Frankly - and do not dismiss my views as those of an old fogey - I have little time for such precision, even if it is really achieved in practice. What we are aiming at is the effect of a good shower once a night every night in drought, not a thunderstorm every three to six days. In practice a good guide is about 4-6 mm per night.

It is all linked to this mismatch between control by one head coming partly exhausted at the end of a dry spell, and cost mains water 'before wasting money on a reservoir. It always pays "to ask the expert" but do see he is truly independent and not a camouflage representative of an irrigation company - who, however competent, is liable to offer biased advice.

Finally we come to water quality. In this country there are few causes for concern - all that water needs to be is wet. In some mining areas there may be toxicity problems - but a quick test for toxic and saline contamination is not expensive. In the states, it is often a different story.

Using water derived from what they call "sodic soils", one sees PH figures greater than 9, high salinity and nice little surprises such as high aluminium and copper. Desalinisation plants are essential - but luckily we do not have this problem here. I never cease to stress that greenkeeping is simply common-sense and

If fairways do go brown in a long summer drought, does it really matter, when a few days rain will soon turn them green again?

The cost of constructing such features is very considerable, quite apart from sitting them.

Maintaining them is not cheap either. Do not be tempted into making them a feature of the course, as when they are partly exhausted at the end of a dry summer they have all the appeal of an African watering hole at the end of the dry season.

My advice is to thoroughly investigate and cost "rains water" before wasting money on a reservoir. It always pays to ask the expert" but do see he is truly independent and not a camouflage representative of an irrigation company - who, however competent, is liable to offer biased advice.

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Over 100 new members joined BIGGA in April. Tracey Maddison, Membership Services Officer, welcomes them on behalf of the Association and highlights a money saving membership benefit...

Do you pay your own subscription fees?

Yes.

Then, would you like some money back?

Yes, but how?

If you pay for your own subscriptions, then you can apply to the tax office for a refund of 23% of the subscription amount. For example on a Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper fee of £73 that’s almost £17! And a potential saving of £11.50 for an Assistant Greenkeeper.

Really! What’s the reason?

Well, because BIGGA is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a legitimate professional body, and membership fees to such bodies are eligible for tax relief.

I haven’t got the time to complete lots of complicated forms ... 

You don’t have to! All you have to do is to inform your local tax office that you are paying your own fees and, to make life even easier, BIGGA has a simple form that you can complete and send to your local tax office. So go on and do it now, after all the money is yours!

Start saving yourself money, telephone 01347 833800 and BIGGA will send you a form today.

(BIGGA regrets that the Association is unable to trace membership payments prior to 1996)
This month, Ken Richardson, BIGGA’s Education & Training Manager, takes a look at the need for continual training, and outlines some of the training courses on offer.

Are you fully trained? Are you competent to do all of the tasks set by your management? If you can answer yes to one or both of these questions then either:

a. You did not understand the question; or
b. You think that you know more than you do.

In the rapidly changing, cost conscious, quality led business environment in which golf greenkeepers work, success and in some cases survival can be achieved only if the need for training, development and continuous learning are seen as essential.

BIGGA can help greenkeepers with their development through its Regional and BIGGA HOUSE Training Courses. These courses are designed to meet the needs of greenkeepers wanting to improve not only their supervisory and management skills but also their knowledge of computing, health and safety, turf science and golf course design.

Courses planned for 1999/2000 are:

BIGGA HOUSE

Managing People Module 1
11-15 October 1999
This course introduces a range of interpersonal skills needed in supervisory management and includes:


Managing People Module 2
18-22 October 1999
This course builds on the knowledge gained in Module 1 and includes:


Managing Operations and Resources
25-29 October 1999
This course looks at financial planning, project management and the effective use of resources. It includes:

- basic financial management - estimating costs - budget forecasts - cash flow forecasts - managed delegated budgets - production and maintenance of financial records. Project management - objectives and specifications - estimating time - milestone plans - critical path analysis - network diagrams and Gantt charts - project reviews and evaluation. Planning and control of resources - maintaining services and operations - improving customer service. The use of computers in greenkeeping management - spreadsheets and project management.

Managing Information
1-5 November 1999
This course looks at methods of communicating information to others and includes:

- writing memos and letters - writing reports, storage and retrieval of information - electronic communication. Managing meetings - agendas and minutes - oral communication - audio visual aids - delivering presentation - coping with questions. The use of computers in communication.

Managing Golf Course Development
8-12 November 1999
This course is aimed mainly at those delegates who have completed Weeks 1 to 4 and looks at: Health and Safety Update - Developing Working Relationships - Soil and Plant Analysis - Defining Seed and Turf Quality - Computers in greenkeeping management.

The cost of each course including four nights' accommodation, meals and all tuition is as follows:

- BIGGA Members £525 + VAT (£616.88)
- Non Member £625 + VAT (£734.38)

All delegates will receive a certificate of attendance which can be used as part of an NVQ portfolio of evidence.

Further details and a booking form are included in the leaflet, distributed with this magazine.

The BIGGA 1999/2000 Regional Courses are being finalised and full details will be enclosed with the July copy of this magazine. Planned courses include:

- Budgeting and Finance
- Project Management
- Health and Safety
- Soil Science
- Golf Course Design
- Essential Management Skills
- Computing for Greenkeepers

Thanks to the contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund the cost of Regional Courses is kept very low thanks to a massive subsidy. Make sure of your place by booking early.
The difference is Flowtronex

Whether you want to keep your green green or your pitch perfect, Flowtronex makes the difference.

Flowtronex variable speed pump sets are the heart of any irrigation system, boosting flow and pressure wherever it is needed to make the most of your landscape.

Integrating the latest in variable speed technology with superior design, engineering and construction, Flowtronex brings you energy savings of up to 50% and reduced maintenance costs.

And when you order a Flowtronex pump set you can have every confidence that it has been designed to meet your specific requirements - from bowling greens to championship courses.

With a pump set from Flowtronex you can see the difference.

Great golf is built on Topsport

At Tarmac we take sport and leisure extremely seriously. Created to satisfy the most exacting professional requirements, Topsport is a tried and tested range of specialist products for use in the construction and maintenance of a vast array of sports and leisure surfaces, and has been used by some of the UK’s premier sporting venues.

Used extensively by golf courses throughout the UK, including Royal Birkdale, our impressive range of rootzones (up to USGA Standard), topdressings, bunker sands, pathway materials and drainage aggregates ensure maximum performance all year round.

Topsport products can be supplied nationwide and are matched by first-rate technical and sales support from Tarmac Quarry Products, the UK’s largest aggregate producer.

Not only determined to meet, but to exceed customer expectations, our aim is to ensure that whatever your particular needs, Topsport has the proven experience, quality and expertise to help you achieve perfect results.

For further details on any of the Topsport range of products telephone 01298 213740

Tarmac Quarry Products Limited, Moorcroft, Lismore Road, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 9AP.
What has BIGGA got to shout about?

Find out in next month’s magazine