to manufacturer, is the system expandable, how many expansion ports has it got, does it have cache memory, does it have a graphics extension card etc.

As you can see from the prices on the left, there are a wide range of computers available from a number of suppliers.

I have tried to give an idea of how computer technology has advanced in the past two years. Rereading this article and those produced in 1997 show that progress has been rapid in terms of hardware and software and that prices have tumbled. However, computers are not easy to handle, they need you to understand a special language and to have an ability to type. Voice recognition is already available on some systems and is being introduced into quality cars and aircraft. What the next two years may bring is any body's guess. If you know what the future holds then please let me know and we can both make our fortunes. For further advice on hardware, software and training please contact Ken Richardson at BIGGA HQ.
Thank you

Could you please express our sincere thanks to Toro for the generous prize both Paul (Shelley) and I received having won the runners-up places at the Toro Student of the Year Awards last year.

Steven Myers
Bridge of Cally, Perthshire

Training responsibilities

There is no doubt that over the past 25 years greenkeeping has made great strides in course management, environmental management and greenkeeper training, with the introduction of City & Guilds phase 1, 2 and 3, and the HND, HNC courses and now with the National Vocational Qualifications being pushed by The Government.

It was with great regret that I read the press release from the EGU in the January issue of Greenkeeper International. I am sure that some members of the golfing fraternity do not understand the present greenkeeper training that is offered at the various colleges around the country.

I know that there are one or two greenkeepers that have gained qualifications by working at their golf clubs but this does not mean that their education is lacking in any way, everyone is working towards a nationally recognised standard and all have to be assessed by work based assessors with the D32 and D33 qualifications, who in turn had to work for the qualification through the GTC or the colleges.

Long gone are the days of touching ones forelock on bended knee as members pass by. Golf clubs are demanding higher standards of their staff both inside and out and in return, the staff demand better training and conditions. I do not say that the present training is perfect, but everything must have a beginning, and the NVQ system has given our industry a very good start.

With any training six points should be worked towards:
1. Identify learning needs of your trainee;
2. Design training sessions for your trainee;
3. Teach training sessions;
4. Assessing trainees;
5. Evaluate training sessions you taught;
6. Evaluate and develop your own practice.

While all points are very important, points 5 and 6 are to me, key elements, by evaluating the training sessions you can improve the sessions and the information that you are imparting, then by evaluating your own skills and practice you can improve your teaching ability. In short from identifying learners needs through to evaluating your own practice it is possible to move full circle allowing training to progress.

I do not think that our industry needs another set of qualifications. The NVQ awards will progress and improve, as will the training and the trainees. We have a nationally recognised set of standards and we should all be working towards the same goal, and with the help of the GTC, City & Guilds, BIGGA and other affiliated bodies, we can make the present training programme work. It is every course manager's duty to improve his abilities and those of his staff by attending colleges and seminars throughout their careers and it is the Golf Club's duty to provide time and money for training of all its staff.

Ian Willett
Course Manager, Thorpeness Golf Club & Hotel Ltd
Winners v Losers

The following appears on the Mess Room Wall of Loch Lomond Golf Club. The sentiments are very similar to the Mountain and Valley people whom Frank Dick talked about during his magnificent Keynote Speech at BTME99.

Winners v Losers
When a winner makes a mistake he says, "I was wrong."
When a loser makes a mistake, he says, "It wasn't my fault."
A winner works harder than a loser and has more time;
A loser is always too busy to do what is necessary.
A winner goes through a problem;
A loser goes around it, and never gets past it.
A winner makes commitments
A loser makes promises.
A winner says, "I'm good, but not as good as I ought to be,"
A loser says, "I'm not as bad as a lot of people."
A winner listens;
A loser just waits his turn to talk.
A winner respects those who are superior to him and tries to learn something from them;
A loser resents those who are superior to him and tries to find a chink in their armour.
A winner feels responsible for more than his job;
A loser says, "I only work here."
A winner says, "There ought to be a better way to do it."
A loser says, "That's the way it's always been done here."

Turf Machinery Ltd

I would like to take this opportunity to inform readers of Greenkeeper International that Turf Machinery Ltd, Morrison House, 3A Monument Way, West Woking, Surrey, is in no way associated, or wish to be connected, with another company of the same name which is offering a similar service and targeting the same potential customers.

Gerald Brookes, Director, Turf Machinery Ltd

Help required?

I am writing to ask for some help in finding me a paid or unpaid position at a Golf Club in the UK. I have been fortunate enough to win a four week scholarship to the UK. Any help the Association could provide me would be most appreciated.

Stephen Heskett, Federal Golf Club Australia, 59 "Melrose Mews," Medley Street, Chifley, A.C.T. Australia, 2606. shesket@atrax.net.au

With regard to the Sandy McDivot article 'Sand Green Destruction' which was published in January this year, and the comments in last month's letters page, Sandy has read all of your comments, and will be giving his reply in next month's magazine.

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Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

East
The new Chairman of the East Section is Stuart Greenwood, Course Manager of North Berwick Golf Club, Stuart has been the Vice Chairman for the last two years and now takes over as Chairman from Jimmy Nelson.

Stuart has got some very good ideas for the future which he has already put into place, so all the best to you Stuart as Chairman of the section.

The Vice Chairman is Tom Murray, Course Manager Ratho Park Golf Club, not as previously printed in the January magazine that Tom Murray was the Chairman, but he will be Chairman in two year's time. So apologies to Stuart for any inconvenience caused by this last article.


We are all only a few weeks from the new season, so hopefully we will receive some good weather! Since my last article in this prestigious magazine, I have attended the BTME at Harrogate in January, which seems to improve year by year, which can only be attributed to everyone at BIGGA HOUSE. Well done everyone for making this an immensely enjoyable show and conference. It was good to see an even bigger and better show will be on offer for the Millennium. It was good to meet old friends and make new ones in what is one of the most important weeks of the year. Well done to Peter Boyd for organising the Scottish trip - the hotel was excellent!

Affiliation with BIGGA is always an advantage, but has Craig Pennycook taken it too far? With a tattoo of the logo on his body - or is this a new uniform requirement? Picture to follow later, once I have had it developed.

At our last committee meeting the final touches were put to our fixture card for 1999 - full details of outings, visits, social events etc, will be with you in the next few weeks. We have a visit to the Scottish Top Dressing and Kelpie Plant in Dalkeith on 17 March. Hope we have a good turnout as we know that this will be an interesting day out.

We played the West Section in an eleven-a-side football match at the beginning of January on the astro turf at Almondvale Stadium. Livingston. Thanks very much to Willie Blair, Stadium Manager, for all the organisation of the pitch. A good game was had by all but unfortunately we were beaten 1-1. Even the goalkeeper, Brian Hillen, got in on the act by scoring a penalty near the end of the match. Because not all of our players turned up we had to borrow two players from the West Section, and guess who scored our only goal? Yes, you've guessed it, one of the West Section lads. Thanks boys, at least somebody could score!

We hope for a better performance in the return match in Glasgow, when we will hopefully have a much stronger team. For the last few minutes a thrashing that was inflicted upon us. Well, we can dream! If any other sections wish to challenge, then give me a call. Sorry, there's not a lot this month to write about. If you are a member of an affiliated club, and anybody has anything that would be of interest for the magazine, please get in touch (01620 842037 - home) or (0141 453 7165 - work).

Chris Yeaman.

PS. Late News - People on the move.
Andrew Forrest, my Deputy Course Manager at Swanston Golf Club is leaving to take up a position in the new course from the University of Edinburgh. Sandy Cadenelli and Rich Hurley over from the USA and meeting Linda and Nancy again who accompanied them.

The Keynote Speaker was one of the best so far and although Showaddywaddy were not one of my all time great bands I thought they went down brilliant and everybody seemed to be having a hull, I didn't realise what a mover our Chairman is!

I am glad that I purchased the new BIGGA golf championship at Garden Park in early as entries closed at the end of January, so the only way to be there now is by playing in the Spring outing and winning your way there. The remaining 36 places are up for grabs at Section outings, the best scratch and nett score at Inverness in May will win a place. So be there. There may be a number of players who wish to get in as people that have entered might win a place through their Section (like me).

I Macleod.

Ayrshire
Well that's Harrogate past for another year. It just seems to be getting bigger and busier every year. It was good to see so many faces from our Section and the remaining 56 places are up for grabs at the BTME. Contact Derek Wilson on 01294 276177.

We are trying to trace any SIGGA or BIGGA trophies. If you have any or know of their whereabouts please let Derek Wilson know on 01294 276177. Any new entries, let me know 01503 685278.

See you next month.
Iain Barr.

West of Scotland
Firstly on behalf of the Committee I would like to thank Stuart Taylor for his efforts in writing the Section news for the past few years. "Well done Stuart you have earned a rest!" said Charlie Goodall. Stuart will be busy too! After all this is the month of May and June time. More details to follow, so why not start a staff kitty now to enjoy a greenkeeper social evening supporting our Section?

Our thanks go to the HQ for arranging the Keynote Speaker. It was very informative and interesting for all the audience.

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Unfortunately Charlie Goodall was not able to attend this year, the most ever I am sure. It was a pity to lose him we would like to wish him all the best for the future. The section would also like to wish him all the best in his new position. We would also like to wish him all the best in his new position. We would also like to wish him all the best for the future. The section would also like to wish him all the best in his new position. We would also like to wish him all the best in his new position. We would also like to wish him all the best in his new position.

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See you next month.
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unable to attend Harrogate this year, instead recovering from surgery. Our congratulations go to you Charlie and we wish you a speedy recovery.

I was reliably informed by Cecil George that the BTME exhibition was an excellent event with some great company. It was requested that I mention that Bob Moffat and his wife were in attendance at the show and I believe that Cecil may even have had a drink or two with Bob! I was informed also that there was a problem with Harry Daimler's legs, while attempting to vacate the coach! Something to do with lack of blood flow possibly after remaining seated for several hours! Who knows? Anyway, this is an event that every greenkeeper should attend if only once, a truly memorable experience, where greenkeepers can meet up with old faces and forge new relationships with people sharing a mutual interest in the Grand Profession.

Other news now, a challenge match, between Head greenkeepers and Convenors, has been organised and will take place at Cawdor G.C. on Wednesday 31 March, entry forms will be in the post soon. The Spring outing is to be held at Borthwell Castle G.C. on Thursday 29 April, tee off at 11:30am, entry forms will be sent out shortly, so be sure and return the entry slips as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. We'll keep fingers crossed for some fine weather on the day.

Central

North East

Another BTME gone and another year passed, time seems to pass so quickly these days. (Perhaps it's my age).

Anyway the show was once again great, and I hope those of you who managed to get there enjoyed it. This year it was bigger than ever, and I believe we reached record numbers. One of the stands that created a lot of interest was the Sylo, with a good selection of work and leisure wear. This workwear is good quality and reasonably priced and well worth looking at. I would like to see more golf clubs supplying their staff with good quality workwear, with a name tag on their overalls, so that members recognise the people looking after our course. Once again I must mention our HQ staff who did a great job, producing an exhibition second to none. By the time you read these notes you should have arrived at Tynside Golf Club.

Without doubt, the new Verti-Drain Mustang is the fastest, most effective aerator on the market today. Whilst it still features the unique patented 'heave' action, there are many new improvements, including single point arm adjustment, a stronger tine support system and fewer working parts.
all have received your fixture lists for the year, and an application form for the seminar at Mere Golf & Country Club. The seminar should be of interest to all of you, and possibly your Chairman of greens, so please support the section and attend the seminar on 23 March.

The annual match against North Wales is on Thursday 8 April and I require a team of 16 to win the GEM Shield, and bring it back to where it belongs. Any members interested please contact me as soon as possible. The Spring Tournament will be played at Fairhaven Golf Club on Tuesday 20 April. Please send your applications plus a cheque for £15 to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Liverpool, L4 9RB. Tel 0151 284 4416. No applications will be accepted after Tuesday 13 April.

One member on the move is John Turner who is moving from Keswick G.C. to Bramall Park G.C. John tells me that Keswick G.C. was closed a record number of days last year, due to the amount of rain we had. Hopefully he will be able to mow his fairways this year with a tractor with wheels instead of floats. We wish him and his family good luck. That's it for now. If any member has not received a fixture list please contact me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross.

Sheffield
On 3 December we held our winter lecture at Rotherham Golf Club. Our thanks go to Mr David Truby, from Scotts Fertilisers, who gave a lecture on fertilisers, which was enjoyed by everyone present.

On 3 February we held our winter lecture at Sitwell Park Golf Club, who I would like to thank for letting us use their facilities while Rotherham was

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Tel: 01428 661222. Fax: 01428 661218.

March 1999 Greenkeeper International
being painted. We had a very good turnout for the lectures.

The first lecture was given by David Stansfield, from PSD Agronomy who gave a very interesting lecture on Earthworms and their control. Our thanks go to David.

Our second lecture was given by Mr Frank Newberry, from Greenkeeper Training, who gave a very interesting lecture on "motivation". Frank's lecture was very rewarding experience. Try asking your clubs. You might be surprised and remember, don't get it if you don't ask.

The annual North Wales v North West match is to be at North Wales GC Llandudno on 8 April. We require 16 players for this to enable us to keep the shield for another 12 months (sorry Bert). Please contact Gary Edwards on 01492 593646. The spring meeting is to be held at Llanymynd on 28 April which will also be the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship qualifier to be held at Carden Park in October. Forms will be sent to everyone and must be returned by 12 April. Our secretary, Gary, is in negotiations with a variety of clubs to hold our golf days. Some are completely new to our circuit, watch this space.

We have purchase a new computer for the section, which will make the running of the section easier and more efficient.

On the 10 March we are holding an afternoon seminar in the college on water management and the rudders of water behaviour in the soil. I know that this might be too late in the magazine, however, all of you should have received notification in the post. If not, please let me know. Again, anyone out there who wants to put on a day, half day or evening presentation, please let me know.

Our thanks go to David.

Finally, back to the BTME. The Welsh College raffled a tiger (the cuddly toy type) at Harrogate. The raffle was a great success and raised £146 for the Hope House Hospice in Oswestry. Nice one Graham. See you.

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

Just like to say sorry for not getting the News Letter out for January, but I was laid low with that new flu. I would like to say thank you to all the greenkeepers and groundsmen for turning up for the Turfcare Quiz Night in December. The greenkeepers were beaten again. The groundsmen did not even bother bringing the trophy in. That's confidence for you. I would also like to thank Terry

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

North Wales

It's the 2nd of February and the sun's shining. I was beginning to forget what it looked like. My members were starting to think we'd put in some permanent water features, the pro even enquired whether he could hire our dinghies. Still, these things are sent to try us.

BTME, excellent! I hope all of you that went on the coach enjoyed your day. I was there for three days, took in the seminars, sampled the local hospitality and generally soaked up the atmosphere. My club send me and my deputy on alternate years and even have it written into our contract and consider it excellent value, which it is. All of my staff attended the AGM and said it was a very rewarding experience. Try asking your clubs. You might be surprised and remember, don't get it if you don't ask.

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Charlton, of Turfcare, for putting the free bus on to Harrogate and buying everybody a pint. Very much appreciated.

Short News Letter this month as I have not had any news. If you have anything at all to tell us, give me a ring or next month I will be forced to tell you about our bunker reshaping at Brancepeth G.C.

Kevin (Scoop) Heslop

East Midlands

This year's BTME again proved to be a highly enjoyable event. From visiting Trade stands, attending seminars, meeting old friends and listening to Showaddywaddy, all helped to make this a great week for everybody who attended. However as a Section we would still like to see more of our members supporting this fantastic event. At the AGM, Paddy McCarron was elected to the Association as a Life Member. Paddy has served the Association at Section, Region and National level with great professionalism, and he is still involved with the Association through his work in the Midland's Region Greenkeepers' Support Line; and I am sure all members will agree that he fully deserves this honour.

This year’s golf fixture list is now complete, and all members should receive their entry forms, four or five weeks before the date of each tournament. If you do not receive a form please contact me and I will gladly post a copy to you. When returning your entry form please ensure that the correct payment is made and it is returned before the closing date, which is usually two weeks prior to the competition.


Finally if any member is interested in a visit to Aldwark in mid-April, which will include an overnight stay in a local hotel, and either a game of golf or a lecture, could you please let me know as soon as possible. This will require sufficient numbers before anything can be finalised. So it is hoped that as many members as possible will support the event, to help make it successful.

Antony Bindley

Midland

I hope the majority of you were able to get to the BTME and experience what a great event this really is. Every year it just gets better and great credit must be given to the staff at BIGGA and everyone who is involved in the exhibition for making it the most prestigious week for greenkeepers in the year and something to look forward to year after year.

There has been some movement in the Section which I will now report on. Andrew Smith has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Shirley Golf Club and John Ganley has taken over from Andrew at North Warwickshire. Good luck to you both in your new positions.

If there are any of you that are interested in doing the NVQ Level 3 and cannot give the time during the day, the Warwickshire College at Morton Morrel are looking to run an evening class, depending on the interest shown. So if you are interested, please contact the college or Andrew Smith on 01676 530114. Finally I would like to introduce you to some new members of the Section - Dean Waldron, Sean Smith, Duncan Underhill and Lee Hitchman.

Jonathan Wood

Mid Anglia

A visit has been arranged to the new course at Brocket Hall on 30 March. All are welcome to attend; we'll be meeting at the Greenkeeper's compound at 1.00 pm.

The entry fee for our three golf tournaments (Spring, Summer and Autumn) has remained at £20.00 for the last four years. Due to increased costs, however, this will rise to £23.00 from April 1999.

The Spring qualifier next month will be a thirty-six hole medal event, with the overall winner and best gross score going forward to the newly formatted National Tournament. Details of this have been sent to all members via the magazine.

The Lodgeway four ball tournament, which goes ahead again this year, will be drawn at the Spring Tournament to be held at Aldwickbury Golf Club next month.
Keeping in touch with news and comment from the Sections

on 28 April. Finally, I would like to welcome our new members from Mentor Golf Club, John Frampton, Bill Lewis, Jon Underwood, Harry Odone, Leigh Welford, Danny James. Paul Lockett.

Bucks, Berks & Oxon

At last the golfing season is upon us, time to dust all the cobwebs of idle days aside and give them a good airing. It always amazes me how many handy souls continue to trash it round during the bleak winter months regardless of the weather. My own guideline for getting the clubs out is our Turfcat, safe but true! If I can cut rough in short-sleeves without getting goose bumps then it must be warm enough to play golf.

Simple system, no need to refer to teletext, works every time, except that is when we hold a greenkeepers golf day because it always rains! Getting down to more business, the first committee meeting of the year was held at the Springs Golf Club on 3 February. This proved a lively affair with some good healthy discussions taken and augurs well for the forthcoming season. Thanks to Ross and Robert for their contribution in what was their first meeting. The main topic discussed was the forthcoming golf fixtures. The venues are as follows: Spring Beaconfield G.C., Summer - Donnington Grove G.C., Autumn - The Springs G.C., Winter - Lambourne G.C.

Confirmation of the above venues, along with fixed dates will be sent out with the first entry forms at the end of March.

Please make sure that all membership forms are in order. The new list comes direct from H.Q., so any lapsed membership will result in you being taken off the list. It did happen a couple of times last year so please take care.

With regards to payment for golf days, if you wish to play in any event then you must pay before the date, otherwise you won't be allowed to taste the high life returning for lunch.

Bull with his new official title of Head Greenkeeper. Congratulations is in order for Tony Devlin, Guy, Mark and Roger for setting up the club's website. The next golfing event on the calendar is the Westurf which will be held at Wells G.C., on Wednesday 24 March. The qualifiers will be set from this Section. The qualifiers will be selected from a tournament later in the year, probably the Summer Tournament. Also coming us is the Westurf Exhibition being held at Westpoint - Exeter on Tuesday, April 17th. Richard Whyman.

South West

January's meeting with Richard Dix from the Welsh Golf Union was more than that they all arrived at their destination it was a bit of a nightmare to organise. However, everyone seemed to be on the coach and end up with a bed. More than 60 golfers found all their locations on the correct coach and with the correct suitcase. How about that!

The South West & South Wales Region is indebted to Amenity Technology for sponsoring the coaches to Harrogate and also for the excellent food and entertainment provided for all arrived on the Wednesday evening. Everyone had a wonderful time.

Thanks also are due to Rigby Taylor who part sponsored the greenkeepers over from the Channel Islands. For many of them it was their first visit to the mainland and they thought BTME was just wonderful. It was great to have them with us, says Paula Humphries.

Over 100 greenkeepers including eight from the Channel Islands attended BTME this year. With six pick-ups, two coaches and three hotel destinations it was a bit of a nightmare to organise. However, South West

The "Cram" of the South West programme was the BTME which made the annual pilgrimage to the Mecca of Harrogate for the 1999 BTME. This superbly organised event produced a mind boggling amount of information to digest including the very latest theories and technological advances that will give you the perfect greens.

There was also a mind boggling amount of fine foods and beverages consumed which helped members keep their minds focused on all of the knowledge being passed around. Yet again, all the speakers at the seminars were superbly entertaining and were greatly appreciated. Paula Humphries is given many thanks for all of her hard work in organising the South West Region's trip to Harrogate. A great week was clearly had by all those who attended.

Meanwhile, the rest of us who weren't allowed to taste the high life of Harrogate, carried on trudging through the wind and rain in a desperate bid to get the course into a playable state. Alas the rain won again with the month of January being one of the wettest on record. However, it appears that spring has now arrived and the time has come to put away the darts board and start greasing up the mowers ready for another grass cutting frenzy.

The next golfing event on the calendar is the Westurf Golf Championship with the best net and gross score going through. Westurf is now just around the corner. With the show moving to Westpoint at Exeter this must be a show you can't afford to miss, so let's see what the biggest attraction for the day and support the Region so the region can support you.

Remember that Westurf is now at Westpoint, Exeter on Tuesday, April 17th. Richard Whyman.