addiction

said, "I knew I was fortunate to find someone like Malcolm who was willing to take a few hits for me. I needed individuals support from some senior individuals within the club and that's what I got from Malcolm and Keith".

Gunn knew such backing was necessary because he was well aware it would not be easy to return Temple to its former glory. The only way was to kill off poa annua, a weak, shallow-rooted grass prone to disease, and, in turn, promote the return of native bents and fescues. This would have to be done by first starving the turf of water and fertiliser and then implementing an aeration policy designed to relieve compaction and promote root growth.

Neither is very difficult to achieve but both processes can cause short-term anxiety among members, particularly among those who fail to realise that the indigenous grasses will not return overnight. The greens, in fact, will look even worse before they start to look better, which is why it is vital that a club talks to its members about what it is trying to do.

"I can't offer other clubs a simple solution, but what I would do is stress that communication is vital if they are to come through unscarred. Communication is king," Gunn said. "You will never be able to appease the vocal minority, but what you can do is work on the silent majority. They are much more likely to be receptive if they know what you are doing and why you are doing it."

For a while at least this determination to involve members was not enough to dispel all doubts. However, little by little, as the condition of the course began to improve and - of equal importance - as Gunn's natural maintenance techniques encouraged the return of indigenous species, the critics were silenced.

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The article also fails to mention that many of the recently built courses are on land once used for agriculture (or anywhere else the developer feels he can squeeze in a few holes) and not on the impoverished free draining soils of years gone by.

The problems faced by Course Managers on these sites have absolutely nothing to do with the situation at Temple. However, you can bet your life that members from these clubs read the article and drew their own conclusions. And the Course Manager will have to deal with the consequences. Again irresponsible.

The missing fact of significance in the article.

Put simply, the journalist was trying to cover a huge subject, with years of history and research, and a massive diversity of opinions and situations and compare this with the success of Martin Gunn and Temple. The comments within the article about overfeeding and over watering were appropriate and useful (these were relevant to the situation at Temple and could be verified). The comments about the prime time of British golf courses, and the deteriorating state of British courses were dangerous.

At what point do we as an Association tire of these uninformed opinions that are being published in the public domain, and start to fight back? How many Course Managers and greenkeepers have to suffer the consequences of this ignorance before our voice is raised?
East

Sorry there was no article last month but with moving to my new job, moving house, and my son being in hospital since before Christmas, I just didn’t have the time to put an article together. But here we are this month.

I would like to thank everyone who has called to wish myself and my family all the best as we wait for my son to go to Birmingham to have a liver transplant. He is now needing this as his liver is starting to give up and the operation will give him a better standard of life.

We were down at the Birmingham Children’s Hospital the week after BTME for a week of tests and now he is on the liver transplant priority list, so all we can do now is sit and wait. Hopefully by the time you read this he will have had his transplant and be on the road to recovery. It has been a very hard time over the last few months but knowing people out there are thinking of us makes it a lot easier, so thanks to you all for your calls and thoughts.

Ok down to business; the new season is here and the first major of the season is only a few weeks away. The Spring Tournament at the West Course North Berwick is on April 26 and we are looking forward to welcoming the BIGGA Championship in October, so get your entry form back for the BIGGA Championship in October, so get your entry form back as soon as possible to Swanston Head Greenkeeper, Richard Mullen and his girlfriend Clare, on their engagement earlier this year. That reminds me, where’s the ‘phone number of the kilt hire shop?"

Well that’s all for this month, hope to see you all at North Berwick at the end of the month. If anyone wants to drop me a line with any questions or views, please let me know. Or even better, drop me a line to Peter Boyd, for all his hard work in setting up the night and to Nairn Brown and John Corbrick. Thank you Stuart for supplying the above report, your efforts in helping to make this an enjoyable night are greatly appreciated by the participants and Committee alike.

The games night at Claremont Bowling Club, February 24, went ahead as arranged, which was a disappointing turnout with only 20 in attendance. For the events of the evening play were as follows: Winners Ronnie Bunting, Kinneil GC, and John Corbrick, Nairn Brown. Runners up: Cecil George, retired and Denis Tweeddel, Bonnymuir GC. Special thanks to John Scott Smr for all his hard work in setting up the night and to Nairn Brown and John Deere for raffle prizes, very much appreciated by the Committee and the members in attendance. Lastly thanks also to Hugh Somerville and Claremont BC Committee for use of their facilities.

On the 100 Club now; I was disappointed at the poor response from the members in attendance. The games night at Claremont Bowling Club, February 24, went ahead as arranged, which was a disappointing turnout with only 20 in attendance. For the events of the evening play were as follows: Winners Ronnie Bunting, Kinneil GC, and John Corbrick, Nairn Brown. Runners up: Cecil George, retired and Denis Tweeddel, Bonnymuir GC. Special thanks to John Scott Smr for all his hard work in setting up the night and to Nairn Brown and John Deere for raffle prizes, very much appreciated by the Committee and the members in attendance. Lastly thanks also to Hugh Somerville and Claremont BC Committee for use of their facilities.

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ward to your visit to Kelburn. As promised although not yet finalised the 2001 outings are being sched-uled for Broughshane Bay in the spring and Prestwick St Cuthberts in the Autumn all going to plan. That’s all for this month, any news call me on 01503 683278.

Iain Barr

Central

New members are still coming in thick and fast and this month we extend a warm welcome to Robert Meekle, Crail GC; Gary McCandless, Balfron Golf Society; Christian Johnson, Duke’s Course; Scott McKnight, Stirling GC; Stuart Robertson, Glenegles; Peter Stewart and John Cunnington both from St Andrews Links. Paul Murphy and his staff from Downfield Golf Club has also transferred to the Section but at the moment I don’t have all their names so I’ll give you them next month.

The lucky winner of the March draw for “Club 2000” is A. (Sandy) Armit, with ticket number 007 and a cheque for £50 is on its way to him. It appears I have upset a lot of members (so what’s new) by saying that I will put their names in the magazine to remind them that they still have not returned their allocation of tickets for the draw, despite numerous requests for them to do so, well starting next month they will appear, as I don’t know if they have been sold or not.

Andy O’Hara is organising a football match against the West Section for next month and has already held trial matches to select the strongest team possible as the West Section take their football very seri-ously. I’m not permitted to say too much about Andy’s team selections or the team he supports, as this also upsets some members, not Andy, as he now has a fan club which covers the length and breadth of the country.

I have conceded one thing to Andy and that is if he scores the winning goal in the match he can write the next column for the mag-

azine. Will that keep you happy ML?

At the beginning of March a two day computer training course was held in Perth by Ken Richardson from HQ and I can recommend this course to anyone wishing to learn about computing, so if anyone is interested, please get in touch with me and I will arrange it with Ken for later in the year. Six members are required for each course. John Crawford

North East

Tyneside Golf Club again played host for our winter lecture. Our thanks to Ged Cumliffe and Gary Waters on their presentation on behalf of Biotial. Not a bad turnout with 25 greenkeepers who all seemed to enjoy the talk. It was nice to see people travelling from afar as Swardhall and Warwick and Wearsire, just goes to show you we must be doing something right! Many thanks to Terry Charlton of Turf Care for bringing Biotial to the Section.

Congratulations to John Hood, for-merly of Swardhall, on his new appointment at Lindon Hall. Hope everything goes well for him.

As three members have resigned for different reasons, we have vacancies on the committee should anyone be interested please get in touch or we will see you at Bamburgh on the 13 April. Ken Rutherford and Ronnie Read have offered help on the com-petition days so that’s a help at least. Jimmy Richardson

North Wales

I’ve just heard that this winter is the sunniest since records began, I don’t know where that was because here at Oesighwir we’ve got webbed feet! Ah well statistics, lies damned lies. Talking of statistics, considering the amount of greenkeepers in North Wales only myself and my deputy attended the recent first aid course run at the college. Remember it is law to have qualified first aiders at work so remind your secretary, committees, etc.

At the college we had the annual golf seminar which once again was excellent, but again statistically where were you? A lot of thought goes into this event as well as a lot of effort, I would like to thank all the trade for their support yet again, the WGU whose President chaired the event and Graham Wright for putting the day together, also a lot of praise must go to the caterers for an absolutely fan-tastic buffet. Don’t get me wrong there was a good turnout, however it could have been better. I’m going to sound a trumpet for my own club here and say all the greengrass attended along with the Secretary, a member of the greens committee and our Greens Chairman, Jim Wen, delivered a paper to the seminar. I must confess the dedication shown by my club. All that I am trying to say is if we can do it I am sure others can - just ask them I’m off my soap box now.

Steve Jones, of Pwllelli Golf Club, informed me of a Health and Safety course he attended in Anglesey which he said was superb and covered all aspects of health and safety law. If any of you out there are interested in taking this course he attended in Angelsey which he said was superb and covered all aspects of health and safety law. If any of you out there are interested in taking this course please contact Barry (Macam) Walker on 0589 832004 or myself on the number below, please note that spikes must be worn.

The annual golf match against the North East Section is pencilled in for later date. We are awaiting confirmation from the WGU for their tour-

neam. Events to look forward to this year start with the spring tour-nement on April 11 at Rameside, this is a magnificent venue and well worth a visit, if you would like to play there are still a few places left, the cost is £10 to include you meal; to book contact Barry (Macam) Walker on 0589 832004 or myself on the number below, please note that spikes must be worn.

The end of February and still the rain persists, most courses appear to have spent the first two months of the year more often closed than open. Speaking to a couple of North-West members in mid February, they were sure that the courses were open and yet the winter programme of work is way behind. Where have all the old fashioned winters gone? At least when the ground is frozen you can get machinery onto the course. Anyways the daylight hours are getting longer which is a good sign that possibly better weather is to come. The programme of events for the Section are complete and by now you should have received your fixture list. The first event is the Mere seminar, and with only 16 days to go from me writ-
West V North Wales; Hazel Grove GC; Thursday, April 20. Spring Tournament; Bury GC; Wednesday, May 3. Summer Tournament; West Derby GC; Wednesday, June 28. Regional Final; Fishwick Hall GC; Thursday, 28 June. Roses Match; Longridge GC; Wednesday, August 16. Autumn Tournament; Denton GC; Thursday, September 7. Cumbria Cup; Penrith GC; Wednesday, September 13. Stewards Match; Stand GC; Monday, October 2. Presidents Cup; Wimslow GC; Thursday, November 30.

Finally congratulations to Alan Jackson on his retirement. Alan has been a greenkeeper at Prestbury Golf Club for 25 years and officially retired on the February 25.

Alan was off work for the last ten months, after major surgery, and the golf club paid his wages right up to 9RB, enclosing a cheque for £15. Entries will be on a first come first in basis, so book early to avoid disappointment. For the Roses Match if you want a hand in beating the old enemy then let me know of your availability so a winning team can be picked.

We welcome this month as new members:- David Griffin, Waterton Park GC; James Hewitson, Scarcliffe GC; Gareth Butler, Knaresborough GC; Jamie Hainsworth & Nigel Holmes on Golf Course Design, Construction and Environmental Issues - International Golf Design Practice and Associates.

Many thanks to Mark James for his attendance and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring and arranged the event. Thanks also to Bingley St Ives GC for their hospitality and catering. The Spring Meeting will be held at Bradley Hall GC on Tuesday, April 11. This event is kindly being sponsored by Whitmoss and Sportsworld and by Rite feed as stated in March's newsletter. I apologise to both companies for this error on my part. Sorry.

Other confirmed events are as follows:- President's Day; Wednesday, 21 June, at Hollins Hall H&CC; Roses Match; Wednesday, August 16 at Longridge GC; Invitation Day; Wednesday September 6 at Cookridge Hall G&CC; Autumn Tournament; October 18 at Hornsea GC; Winter Golf, Wednesday December 6 at Huddersfield GC.

Entries for the golf events are to be sent to myself and must be received along with the FULL amount of £17.50 no later than 7 days before the event. Entries will be on a first come first in basis, so book early to avoid disappointment. For the Roses Match if you want a hand in beating the old enemy then let me know of your availability so a winning team can be picked.

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booked it is important to inform the Secretary if you find that you are unable to attend. However, on a brighter note those who attended the day were well catered for and received an excellent tour of the premises and were also rewarded with a free gift. 

Once again our thanks go to Andy and Toro-Lely. 

By the time you read this article you should be in possession of your spring entry form, which is also the qualifier for this years Scotts/Charterhouse National Championship. If you have not received a form, please notify me as soon as possible and I will gladly send you one. Please remember that late entries will not be accepted. 

Antony Bindley 

Mid Anglia 

Our first Section talk of the winter took place in late February, at South Beds GC. Mark Hunt, of Headland Amenity, gave an excellent presentation on “Understanding Fertilisers” and with so many different types now available on the market, I’m sure the people who attended were clearer on which types to use and when. Our thanks go to Mark and the 25 or so members who turned up and gave their support. 

Our first golf fixture of the year is to be held at Northants County GC on April 20. This will be the usual qualifying event for the National Tournament and the final format for the golf will be decided nearer the time. Entries by the usual form to Richard Saunders in good time please, should you wish to participate. 

Paul Lockett 

West of England 

All the entry forms have now been sent out along with all the information regarding tournament. If you have not received your copy please do not hesitate getting in touch. 

I will be able to report more news on the tournaments in future reports and if any of you are still unsure about playing in any of our tournaments please get your applications in early as they do tend to fill up very quickly. 

Regarding information about this report, I will again ask for your input and news that will be of interest to the members. 

My contact telephone numbers are as follows: Home 01562 861434 or Mobile 0370 956238 

Jonathan Wood 

Berks, Bucks and Oxon 

First of all I would like to echo the committee and indeed the members’ thanks to Tony French for the time he spent working hard to help make the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Section what it is today. 

Tony is leaving the Lambourne Club for pastures new and we wish him all the best in his new venture. 

It seems only a short time ago we were preparing for the last competition of the season and yet the start of another season is almost upon us, the winters seem to be getting shorter every year! 

Golf Days have been finalised for the forthcoming season and are as follows: Spring Fixture, Wokefield Park, Monday, April 17. Summer Fixture, Richings Park, Thursday, August 3. Autumn Fixture, East Berkshire, Monday, October 2. Turkey Trot, Frilford Heath, Wednesday, November 15. 

The Rigby Taylor Knockout is in the process of being arranged. 

Could all members be reminded that membership should be renewed when due and any changes of address forwarded to the Head Office. 

It has been agreed at committee that a fee of £20 will be charged for all Golf Days and we hope that a good turn out for these events will continue in the coming season. 

Congratulations to Kevin Tilly who has been appointed as the new Head Greenkeeper at Bishopswood GC. Kevin worked with me at Newbury and Crookham Golf Club and I am sure he will do very well in his new position. 

Once again I ask for feedback for this monthly report - tell us what is going on in your Section and in turn it will be relayed to the rest of the members. 

Wishing you a good start to the season and look forward to seeing you at this years events. 

Ross Wilson 

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Avoncrop Trophy and a place at this year's Scotts/Charterhouse National meetings and one for our non-golfing members and three bottles of port, two for our golfing members.

Thursday, February 24. With heavy rain forecast for the day we arrived at Trevose Golf Club to a very pleasant morning which was a relief to the fifty members competing for the course in excellent condition.

A big thanks to Avoncrop for sponsoring the day, also to John Palfrey and Martin Townsend, our starters. After a superb lunch John Palfrey, representing the day's sponsors, Avoncrop, presented the Avoncrop Amenity Prize to John Dixon, who works at Royal Porthcawl GC, and his wife, Jennifer, on the birth of their second child - who knows they might have green fingers too!

Richard Hatcher

South Wales

On February 9 our evening lecture at Pencoed College was changed from guest speaker Peter Johnson to Jack Wheeler and Dave Nichols, part of the H20 Group Waterman 2000. Jack gave us an insight into the types of sprinklers, use and their positioning. Also, which was most interesting, the different types of pipes, sizes and the flow of water through them. For what was a short notice, on behalf of the Section I would like to thank Jack and Dave for their informative but very interesting evening which was yet again very well attended, keep it up!

I'll bring you up to date with the Annual Quiz on the fifth of this month with the IOG, also our lecture on March 8th, this month's WESTURF at Westpoint next month.

A date for your diary - May 3 our golf tournaments begin at Southerndown GC so when you receive your flyer fill it in and be set to win.

Last but not least, congratulations to Ian Dixon, who works at Royal Porthcawl GC, and his wife, Jennifer, on the birth of their second child and to Lance Evans, also from the Royal Porthcawl and fiancee Liz on the birth of their first child - who knows they might have green fingers too!

Richard Hatcher

South West

The Winter Tournament sponsored by Lawson Products, was held on February 23 at Painswick GC.

At 4,780 yards, it is not the longest of courses, but it is by no means the easiest. The course is set high on the Cotswolds, with some stunning views across the surrounding countryside. It is also located on common land, which creates some unusual hazards and obstacles in itself.

As we were about to send our drivers off the second tee, a lady riding a horse pulled up alongside us, appeared lost, then cracked her whip and shot off straight up the middle of the fairway with huge turfs flying everywhere. She never even bothered to replace her divot! The third hole was also quite amusing with walkers and families rambling over the fairways with their unleashed dogs grabbing our balls and running off with them!

Despite all of this, some excellent scores were achieved on greens that were true and fast. Usually on common land the greenkeeper is restricted in their input of fertilisers, water, pesticides, etc to the absolute bare minimum; maybe this explains why the greens were so good.

Our new handicap officer, John Keenaghan, was also on hand at Painswick, and he was cutting people off before they had even teed off. This I'm sure will result in more fairer and more level playing conditions for all.

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South West

The Winter Tournament sponsored by Lawson Products, was held on February 23 at Painswick GC.

At 4,780 yards, it is not the longest of courses, but it is by no means the easiest. The course is set high on the Cotswolds, with some stunning views across the surrounding countryside. It is also located on common land, which creates some unusual hazards and obstacles in itself.

As we were about to send our drivers off the second tee, a lady riding a horse pulled up alongside us, appeared lost, then cracked her whip and shot off straight up the middle of the fairway with huge turfs flying everywhere. She never even bothered to replace her divot! The third hole was also quite amusing with walkers and families rambling over the fairways with their unleashed dogs grabbing our balls and running off with them!

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A one day First Aid course at The Southern Ambulance College, Chippenham, on Wednesday, October 11. My telephone number is 01249 78332.

I am still receiving different views on how we can increase numbers attending Section events, and these will be passed on to the Committee. As I stated in last month’s article, I am stepping down from this position at the next AGM in November, so please contact me if you would be interested in taking over. This position will look excellent on your CV and will seriously enhance your career (well that’s what my predecessor told me!).

Head Greenkeeper, Dean Roberts, and his staff are also congratulated for allowing us courtesy of the course, and also the clubhouse catering staff for the meal afterwards (although I’m still wondering what ever happened to the pudding!). I’ve arranged a number of training courses that you may be interested in, and give particularly generous prizes.

The next event is just a couple of days away, and this is the Spring Tournament at Clevedon Golf Club. I am still receiving different views on how we can increase numbers attending Section events, and these will be passed on to the Committee.

The amalgamation got a definite yes vote and it was generally felt that this will strengthen and entice more people to join the Northern Ireland Region of BIGGA. This swells the numbers to over 80. This year’s committee is aiming to double this figure, so if you’re not a member please join and see the benefits for yourself. Education was high on the list with a series of golf events thrown in for get together and socialising. Hopefully a full agenda will have landed on your doormat before these notes reach you, giving you full details on what’s planned.

The new committee remains somewhat unchanged from the old South-East section, but the line up is as follows: Chairman - Graham Wylie, Vice Chairman - Jonathan McCabe, Secretary - Ken Henderson, Handicap Secretary - Eamon Crawford.

I retained my position and gained a helpful assistant in the shape of Charles Edgar, from Castlerock GC. Hopefully between the two of us we can cover most of the province and keep you up to date as to what’s happening.

This time last year a blocked drain on the course flooded most of the first fairway and such was the depth of water we needed a small boat to unblock the drain and as I sit writing these notes, the rain for the third day this week thunders on the shed roof - better get those oars polished!

Well, as I’m sure most of you are aware, two have become one. No, I’m not referring to a Spice Girl record, but the very successful merging of the North and South-East Sections of BIGGA. An EGM was held at Greenmount on February 16, on a dreary winter’s night and it was amazing to see so many people turn out and show a good interest.

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Overleaf, Derek Farrington’s review of The Gentleman’s Evening at Waltam Heath.
Above: Reg Hutchinson, (right) Captain at Waltam Heath GC presents Mark Harvey of Epsom GC with the Shulockie Putter. Captain is over because his reply was very entertaining. Next followed a presentation by the Chairman of the South East Region, Raymond Day, to two stalwarts of this event. Dave Wall, Rigby Taylor, has been measuring short holes at this event for 16 years and Allan Stow, Vitax, starting the event for just as long. Both are retiring and each received a memento of the occasion presented to them with grateful thanks for services rendered. With dinner and speeches over it was time for Reg to present the prizes, the winners being: 0 - 9 Handicap and the Shulockie Putter, Mark Harvey, Epsom GC. 10 - 18, Ray Clark, Channels GC. 19 - 28, Malcolm Smith, Regiment Way. Good scores for Walton Heath that is!

Above: Dave Wall, of Rigby Taylor, and Allan Stow, of Vitax, have been linked to this event for over 16 years. As they announced their retirements, both were presented with a memento of the day.

Below: Firstly let me apologise to all those greenkeepers who sent off applications for the Annual Gentlemen’s Evening and were unable to be on the start list as the event was a very early sell-out. Invitations were sent out on 1 February 1 and by the 8th all available places had gone. Walton Heath do in fact ask us to keep numbers to 100. Don’t tell them but we actually teed off with 108! Talking of which, the intervals between each four-ball was reduced from eight minutes to seven and our Starters, Dennis Smith, of Rigby Taylor, and Allan Stow, of Vitax, did a great job getting everyone off on time. The weather was marvellous, warm and dry with no wind to speak of and really should have prevented the five and a bit hour rounds that the back of the field had to contend with, but it did lead to some very good scoring. Good scores for Walton Heath that is!

What a magnificent golf course and in such superb condition that Clive Osgood and his team really did deserve all the praise that was heaped on them at the end of the day. I’m sure that I say it every year, but the reception that we get from Walton Heath is incredible, nothing is too much trouble, be it on the golf course or in the Club House. The evening meal was superb and served with very generous portions of wine! We were joined by the Captain of Walton Heath, Reg Hutchison and Chairman of Green, John Jessop, together with lots of trade members who were unable to play as spaces were limited, but whose generosity helped provide such wonderful prizes. Sponsors of this event are listed below.

Here’s what some of our HUMATE + BIO-SYSTEM customers have to say:

“Last summer was the hottest, driest summer I can recall, yet I was able to maintain a tight, lush turf with a 3-4” root system while many courses in the area were losing grass.”

“Within 2½ weeks I had 3” roots with the microbes and 8” roots where I used HUMATE Ag and the microbes together.”

“The root mass was 2-3 times that of the non-treated greens and the length was from 11-14”.”

“Two inches of thatch were reduced to less than ½” in less than 2 months.”

Robert Ryder, the professional from Ashburnham Golf Club in South Wales, replied to the Toast to Guests and proceeded to entertain all present with golfing stories and some very good impressions of well known personalities. The problem now will be to find after dinner speakers as good as Robert! We could of course use Reg Hutchison after his year as Captain is over because his reply was very entertaining. Next followed a presentation by the Chairman of the South East Region, Raymond Day, to two stalwarts of this event. Dave Wall, Rigby Taylor, has been measuring short holes at this event for 16 years and Allan Stow, Vitax, starting the event for just as long. Both are retiring and each received a memento of the occasion presented to them with grateful thanks for services rendered.

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The opportunity to build a golf course at an altitude of 1900 metres (well over 6000 feet) comes but once in most people’s lifetime so naturally I was very pleased to be asked to supervise the extension of the golf course at Arosa, a small skiing resort not far from Davos, high up in the eastern Alps in Switzerland.

The original nine holes were designed as long ago as 1941 by Donald Harradine, an English golf professional who, pre-war, became Golf Course architect in Switzerland. However, the golf course was not built then but opened in 1946. Fifty three years later Donald Harradine’s son, Golf Course Architect Peter Harradine, re-designed a complete new layout to extend the Golf Course to 18 holes.

Co-incidentally, Jim Arthur, advised on maintenance at Arosa during his regular visits to many of Donald Harradine’s courses in the late 1940’s. It goes without saying that this site produced many unusual problems – not least being the rarified atmosphere at this altitude. This was a particular problem to me, as it was not possible to use vehicles on this mountainous terrain if damage was to be avoided, and it took me some three weeks to become acclimatised.

Walking as opposed to riding has, of course, one major advantage familiar to all greenkeepers, namely that you see far more on your feet than on wheels, and so can avert problems by timely detection.

A major problem in these mountains is, naturally, the weather. Even in summer (June until September) you can expect at least one day of snow in every month. However, during this construction, rain, rather than snow, was our major problem. We had suffered 237 mm in August and 270 mm in September! We had only four to five months for construction so such heavy rain was a considerable hindrance and, over and above this, snow started in earnest in the first week of October.

Fortunately, we were blessed by having more than 40 cm depth of good top-soil over most of the site and there were no big boulders to move. We “used the land we were given,” retaining the natural contours as much as possible, with virtually the only earthmoving on green and tee sites.

Ponds were also constructed, both for ecological reasons and attractiveness and, indeed, throughout the whole construction we had to be extremely conscious of conservation restraints.

For earth movement we used smaller machines, such as the Cat 215 and the Akkermann II 14, but one machine which we found to be especially useful on such steep slopes was the Mezi Muck. This was nicknamed the spider because it works on four independently operated legs, rather than tracks, giving it great stability.

In addition to conservation, restraints we had to cope with cows which graze the Golf Course in Summer. Greens and tees have to be protected by electric fencing when the Golf Course is in play, but luckily during construction the cows were moved elsewhere!

Greens, tees, fairways and surrounds were seeded with a higher percentage of highland bent (agrostis castellana), which is much tougher than the so-called creeping bents which were judged not to be satisfactory under these testing conditions. Construction was to full perched water table standards, with particular attention to intercept drains on the perimiter of greens to intercept both surface flow from surrounding steep slopes and also sub-surface lateral drainage, as well as a conventional herringbone system.

This attractive course, set in spectacular Alpine scenery, with a wonderful flora and wild life, may have a very short season, as well as high rainfall and snow, but it dries remarkably quickly and one can play (and work!) only three days after the snow thaws.

My view is that the future trend of architectural work will be in renovation, re-modelling and extending existing golf courses rather than in building new ones.