

# SilverKnight Products



Launched a year ago I thought it would be a good time to remind you all of the value of the SilverKnight packages available to the membership.

**SilverKnight Rescue is a fantastic value car breakdown and assistance package. The following benefits are all covered for only £49.50.**

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**For further information call 0800 068 1893 and quote your BIGGA membership number.**

## NVQ's

We have had feedback which suggests that many of you believe that you cannot join the Association unless you have an NVQ Level 2. This is not the case. Those who haven't yet attained NVQ Level 2 or equivalent are still able to join the Association as Unqualified Members. Their membership card carries the wording "Member" rather than "Greenkeeper Member". The benefits are as those for Greenkeeper members except a member will not be allowed to vote or take up office at Section, Region or National level.

## Time to Renew

If you are one of the many members who renew their membership in December then your new renewal pack should be arriving with you shortly. If you have not received it by the end of November then please call Membership Services for a replacement



## Message of the Month Winner

Each month the person who has written the best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, which is found on the BIGGA website [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk), receives an FM desktop scan radio.

Our congratulations go to November's winner, Jon Wiggett from Rhonegreen AG in Switzerland whose message was posted on the 6th September under the 'Talking Shop' section.

### NOVEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA Clock/calculator/calendar and alarm. Our congratulations go to Stuart Grace of West Kent Golf Club.

### BIGGA welcomes...

#### SCOTTISH REGION

Stewart Angus, North  
George Hamilton, West  
Douglas Lambie, North  
Kenneth Quinn, West  
James Wilson, West  
Michael Wood, North

Clinton Jackson, BB&O  
Lee Murfin, Midland  
Brian Rice, East Midland  
Dylan Stokes, Midland

#### SOUTH EAST REGION

Liam Arnold, London  
Andy Bleach, Surrey  
Robert Brady, Essex  
Dean Bull, London  
Sam Burton, Kent  
Ben Chamberlain, East Anglia  
Ben Freeman, East Anglia  
Ian Garfield, Kent  
Eric Greenaway, Kent  
Michael Hill, Surrey  
Reginald Holmes, Kent  
Paul Kitchen, Kent  
William Lacey, Kent  
Mark McAvoey, Essex  
Neil Miller, Surrey  
David Miller, Surrey

#### Peter Oliver, Surrey Peter Sparks, Kent Sean Walford, Essex Michael Wigston, Kent

#### SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Jason Broom, South Coast  
Stephen Challis, South Coast  
Mark Clissett, South Wales  
Martin Cooper, South Wales  
Mark Emberley, South Wales  
Simon Hooton, Devon & Cornwall  
Jack Kirby, Devon Cornwall  
Michael Lake, South Coast  
Samuel Lindsay, South West  
Adam Matthews, South West  
John Sterry, South Wales

#### INTERNATIONAL MEMBER

Michael McCarron, Norway

#### STUDENT MEMBERS

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James Henderson, East Scotland  
John Taylor, North West  
Alexander Walker, East Scotland  
Andrew Whyman, South West

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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Quentin Allardice, Central Scotland  
Richard Cowpe, North West  
Lee Evans, Midland  
Malcolm Peake, BB&O  
Andrew Smith, North West  
Tony Tonick, South Wales  
William White, BB&O

## DIGITAL CAMERA WINNER

Our congratulations go to Neil Faubel of East Herts Golf Club who has won the digital camera draw for introducing two new members to the Association in September.

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS:

Please be ready to quote your membership number when calling.

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Silver Knight Repair ..... 0800 068 1893

BIGGA Merchandise & Library ..... 01347 833800

Education and Training Advice ..... 01347 833800

Membership Queries ..... 01347 833800

BIGGA Website ..... [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

# Course Feature

## Traditional Values

Scott MacCallum travels to Temple Golf Club to meet two men with outstanding records in the crusade to preserve traditional golf.



**In recent months the Temple Golf Club doormat has become the resting place for a growing number of letters of commendation on the excellent condition of the course.**

Not surprising you might think for one of the country's increasingly better known and best run clubs but all the more pleasing for Course Manager, Martin Gunn, as the letters are focussing on the quality of the greens and fine grasses, and not merely praising the club's renowned ecological work.

"I'm particularly delighted because when articles are written on Temple there is rarely any recognition for the work we've done on the course, as the emphasis is virtually always on our environment work," said Martin.

And he's right. Thanks to the sterling work carried out by the management team, Temple has been known primarily as an example of what good environmental practice can achieve - the club won the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in 1999 - and the fact that the golf course has come on by leaps and bounds over the last 13 years is sometimes overlooked.

But by using traditional British greenkeeping methods Martin and his team are in the process of returning Temple to a haven for people looking to play traditional British golf. However, while you would think that this would have been a vision shared by the vast majority, in fact it has not been easy to 1. get to, and 2. maintain the standards achieved.

While Malcolm is no longer an official of the golf club he still takes more than an active interest in the golf course and his work and support over the majority of the last 13 years has certainly helped Martin.

"I was Chairman of Green for six years and then the club appointed me Course Consultant for another five, to ensure that the policy document we had put in place wasn't changed. Above all, I was there to police it," explained Malcolm.

Martin, who became Course Manager around the time the work began, is quick to credit his colleague for ensuring the continuity required to achieve while both are also keen to credit the four Chairmen of Green who have followed on from Malcolm.

"The Club is soundly managed and carefully selects those members nominated to hold important positions within the club.

"Without continuity the chances of achieving anything are virtually nil, because change management is so painful in terms of policy and resources."

Malcolm also added his praise to his successors in the post of Chairman of Green.

"Each of them has been excellent and none of them has tried to rock



Martin Gunn and Malcolm Peake

the boat, supporting and carrying on the work of the policy document," he added.

So what was the catalyst for moving the club forward from where it was in 1990 to where it is now?

"In 1990 this was like a pseudo American course, lush, soft and ideal for what a friend of mine calls golf by numbers," recalled Malcolm, adding that it was his firmly held belief that it was the introduction of an irrigation system, and its subsequent overuse, in the 70s which led to the change in the course's playing characteristics.

A student of the game and keen to return the course, previously known as Temple Links, to what architect Willie Park Jnr had intended it to be, Malcolm and Martin worked on how to achieve this aim.

"We wanted to give people what we wanted based on what we'd learned from talking with people within the industry; from going back through the history of the club and from studying pictures of how the course once looked. The Temple Board and the President, Nicky Oppenheimer, whose family owned the course supported this strategy."

At Martin's suggestion an agronomist was brought in and the club was fortunate to forge a long standing friendship with Jeff Perris, who has been agronomist to the club ever since. In addition they sought advice from BIGGA, English Nature, the Forestry Commission and highly regarded architect Donald Steel, some of which came free and some they gladly paid for.

"One of the best pieces of advice Jeff gave us, and he also gave at an Open Forum, was that the medicine we were taking wasn't going to be pleasant and that things could deteriorate before they got better.

"That was a very, very strong message and it was soundbites like that which helped us win the battles... although we know we will never win the war," said Martin.

Malcolm added that he had inadvertently contributed to some of the difficulties by thinking there would be a time limit to the work.

"I said to everyone that we'd turn the course around in five years. It sounds like a hell of a long time to the average golfer but in fact it took a lot longer than that."

A more realistic time span was ten years and there were many headaches and heartaches along the way, often

caused by droughts and frost ridden springs.

"This isn't a club, although well resourced, that can throw money at projects and it has very sensible views on how much money to put into projects and what the cost benefits will be. However, there are variables like weather, pests and diseases which slow you up," said Martin.

After about five years the silent majority in the club were becoming a little more vocal in their support of what was being done. There followed an article four years ago written in The Daily Telegraph by Colin Callander praising the course and the work that has been done to earn it a place on the "A" List of British golf clubs, highly regarded by the golfing establishment. Since then it has become a port of call for nearly 200 golf clubs, colleges, scientists and universities keen to see what it is like and learn how it has been achieved.

So what has happened since turning the course around from a lush "American-lite" affair to a traditional British course?

Well, surprisingly there are still people who try, however well meaning, to knock Temple off course.

"This year is a classic example. Like everyone we had a very cold dry spell early in the year, but we are also a north facing course so are very slow to warm up. Pretty much every course in the area was away before us and there was a group of members who were very unhappy and made their views known," said Martin.



The 11th Fairway

# Course Feature

"We are using some alternative methods and the members felt that these obviously hadn't been paying dividends and that we should be using more conventional chemicals, fertilisers and water. But it wouldn't have made any difference because the temperature was too low.

"It is all about perception and people perceive an awful lot about greenkeeping and particularly the greenkeeping at Temple. In fact we held a Forum called Myths and Legends at the club and tried to dispel the incorrect perceptions that some members hold.

"For example I bumped into one guy recently who asked me where I played my golf. I told him and he said 'I know all about Temple. That's the first all organic golf course since the war, isn't it?'"

Martin is realistic enough to know that these things don't go away and that the job involves constant fire fighting, while Malcolm added that he knew why these particular issues arose.

"It was a mistake talking quite so much about ecological and holistic management because people were thinking we were going down a very green route. In fact we were going down a traditional greenkeeping - Jim Arthur - route," he said.

"There was once a note in the Suggestion Box that this is a golf course not a wildlife park. We'd never said that, but the way we were managing the golf course was taking it back to pre 1970s with meadow, managed woodland, reinstating hedgerows etc. This to me framed the golf course and made it much more stimulating to play but perhaps we over emphasised it and gave the wrong impression," admitted Malcolm, who joked that there were occasions when he and Martin had to walk back to back so they could see the knives flying.

But Martin, a man of strong views, is of the opinion that he doesn't feel that problems begin and end with the golfer and feels that greenkeepers are often not strong enough to deliver the job they've been employed to do.

"It is pointless to bury our heads in the sand and say it is the management of the golf club or the media which is at fault. It is a lot of things and we are part of it. We must recognise that, as in most businesses, there are a number of ways of doing a job but only one way which is suitable."

But does he have any sympathy for the greenkeeper who retains the status quo because he has a mortgage to pay and needs continuity of employment?

"Very few of us don't have those needs but out of the 250 people who have come to see Temple some greenkeepers will have been given the opportunity to initiate change management strategies but won't take it.

"But do I have any sympathy? If there is someone who finds himself in a Course Manager's position when he is really a Head Greenkeeper, then no.



Composting clippings

Do I have sympathy for someone who is doing a Course Manager's job but who has been employed as a Head Greenkeeper, then yes, absolutely."

Malcolm agrees with these sentiments.

"I would say that if members just allowed greenkeepers to get on with it, and not bog them down with politics and monthly meetings they would generally have a golf course in better health. He could then be judged by his own results."

At this point Martin chips in.

"That's fine if the evaluation is made by someone other than the employer and is independent."

In that Martin meant the agronomists report which he feels could be made much more of.

"People have an annual agronomy check and not a lot else. What we do with Jeff is treat him as our independent auditor and he checks what we have achieved and whether it is cost effective. He also assesses whether we have sufficient resources to do the job. In many ways it's a little like the OFSTED inspection which schools go through."

Malcolm agrees that this is the way to go.

"When I started as Chairman of Green I would never miss the agronomist's visit. For a start I'd be learning a lot, but as the club's representative I'm paying for it and should be involved. What you are paying for is an audit," said Malcolm, who has started work on a follow up book to his very successful Confessions of a Chairman of Green, under the working title of The Best Course for Golf, which is R&A supported and will be published by the STRI.

"It is obviously going to be slanted towards traditional British greenkeeping and no-one whom I've contacted has mentioned money and are all keen to do their bit for the good of the game.

"If courses don't follow best management practices we could be in danger of losing the character of all our priceless national heritage courses - heathland, links and downland and this would change forever the way we play traditional British golf."

It's a salutary thought.



Divot mix

# CHANGING TIMES

**TORO** Count on it.

Agronomist Bruce Jamieson, who runs his own consultancy, is well known in the greenkeeping industry. In this month's feature, he looks back over three decades at how greenkeepers have learned to embrace and adapt to constant change that has propelled them into a position in which... "Today's Head Greenkeeper is better educated in grass maintenance and golf course management than even the advisors of the 70s".

*Continue  
to learn*

I can almost hear the groans: "Not another old die-hard"... "When I started in the industry"... "Save us!" But times have changed and greenkeeping has come a long way. In the early 1970s most Head Greenkeepers had not even heard of utility vehicles with multi-attachments, while mechanisation arrived with the first ride-on greens triplexes, sold in the late 60s.

Back in the early 70s the committee of a nine-hole golf course employing two greenstaff delightedly showed their Head Greenkeeper a new triplex greensmower and explained that, using this time-saving machine, the greens could be cut in an hour – which would leave enough time for him to then be able to cut the rest of the course!

Having this new machine would also mean that when his assistant retired they would not need a replacement greenkeeper. At which stage, the Head Greenkeeper suggested that the

committee buy two machines as he had decided to retire also!

Cutting machines have evolved, with wheel-driven cutting units being first replaced by belt drives and then by hydraulically-driven units. Where previously greensmowers had only one type of bottom blade, today different types are available for tournaments and normal maintenance.

The power units themselves are now lighter and more reliable, and petrol has given way to diesel, with alternative power sources continually being sourced. Electric power units have been around for several years but battery technology is quite old and until new lighter and more powerful batteries are developed their use on golf courses will remain limited.

Greens aeration in the early to mid-70s consisted of two-yearly hollow-core operations with machines that were cumbersome and slow. Cores had to be brushed up, and then removed by hand, and top dressing was applied using wheelbarrows and shovels. The whole operation could take five to six men at least a week, providing the weather held.

Slit-tine aeration was implemented at least three times a year using the same machine, but fitted with chisel tines. Top dressing would be applied during the spring and autumn, and possibly five to six weeks prior to a big tournament. Again several men would be involved with each operation.

Cutting heights have come down significantly over the years through improved machinery

Picture courtesy of Practical Greenkeeping by Jim Arthur



Hollow coring today can be implemented, cleaned up and top-dressed by three men within five hours of starting. Similarly, aeration programmes today are intensive with verti-draining, hollow and slit tining to various depths being implemented regularly throughout the year. Improved machinery and implementing tasks faster has, however, resulted in reduced staffing levels.

Many previously used chemicals, such as Maysan (Mercurial Chloride) Fungicide and Sydane (Chlordane) used in the early 70s to mid-80s have been removed from the market because, although effective, they were also extremely toxic and damaging to the environment.

Since the introduction of the Pesticide Legislation (1986) all new chemicals must go through detailed and stringent testing before the Pesticide Safety Directorate will give approval for use. The introduction of this Act therefore made it mandatory for course managers and head greenkeepers to record accurate chemical usage, together with obtaining appropriate certificates such as, PA1, PA2 and PA6 to be able to apply the chemicals safely.

# CHANGING TIMES

Thirty years ago Head Greenkeepers learned by experience as, prior to the introduction of City and Guilds in the early 70s, college courses were rare. Today qualifications have improved significantly. They include The National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), The Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) 1, 2, 3, and 4, The National Certificate (NC), The Higher National Certificate (HNC), The Higher National Diploma (HND), Master Science (MSc) to name a few. This makes the Course Manager and Head Greenkeeper of today well-educated and highly trained.

People such as Jim Arthur, Walter Woods, Bill Lawson, Nick Bissett, Martyn Jones, and many others, have been instrumental in driving education forward, making the average Head Greenkeeper of today better educated in grass maintenance and golf course management than even the advisors of the 70s.

Companies such as Toro have also provided valued student programmes such as the MAST Programme (Minnesota Agricultural Student Training) in Golf Course Maintenance, enabling students to spend 18-20 months working on an American golf course during which time five months is taken up attending courses at the university. Toro of course also



corer machine

sponsors the annual Student Awards Scheme with BIGGA.

Impact of The Health and Safety (1974) Act on all UK industries was not fully recognised until the mid-80s. New Safety Legislation (1992) covered The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, The Manual Handling Operations Regulations, The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulation, The Personal Protective Equipment at Work (PPE) Regulations, The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations and The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

These six sets of regulations are wide-ranging and generally apply to all places of work, including golf courses.

The main change was to write one piece of legislation and apply it to all places of work, rather than as previously giving each individual workplace its own legislation – ie, Factories Act, Construction Regulations, etc. The main change within this approach was to identify the person responsible and make them answerable in a court of law. For example, The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (RIDDOR), and The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

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...and whilst none of this may have concerned Mrs Jones here too much, today's customers tend to be slightly more discerning.

  
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Toro Sidewinder

The job description relating to the Head Greenkeeper of the 70s was not concerned with maintaining detailed records, implementing health and safety issues, planning budgets, working within the Employment Law, COSHH, RIDDOR, or dealing with committees, colleges, members and green-fee players. Rather it was simply to maintain a golf course. Today knowledge of the above and where and how to access further information when required is an essential part of the job.

Cutting heights have always been a contentious point with committees, owners and golfers who demand faster greens for longer periods of the year. In the early 70s it was commonplace to cut the greens at 3/16 of an inch (4.69 mm) every other day. Daily mowing was reserved for tournament presentation and double cutting reserved for particularly important events. A lowered cutting height of 1/8 on an inch (3.125 mm) would only be sustained for the event and then was raised to allow the greens to recover.

Now greens are cut daily with mowing heights maintained at 3.5 to 4mm throughout summer.

In the 70s Verti-cutting was implemented once every eight to 10 weeks during the growing season and now some greens are Verti-cut once a week.

Deep scarifying, implemented during the spring and autumn, practically dropped out of use. But now, interestingly, it has again become fashionable, particularly since the phrase 'linear aeration' was coined.

Similarly, applications of a fine grain charcoal following spring and autumn hollow coring in order to 'sweeten' the ground was implemented on many of Scotland's West Coast courses during the early 70s and this is also likely to return as it can assist in reducing Black Layer and is relatively inexpensive.

The first verti-drain machines were introduced in the early 80s, and these deep aeration machines breathed life back into many old, heavily-compacted greens which otherwise would have been dug up and replaced. The first machines were extremely slow, with operating speeds of 400 metres per hour. But gradually over the years these machines have been redesigned and improved with slightly higher operating speeds.

Recently 'Drill and Fill' machines have been developed to remove old rootzone material with 20-35 mm drill bits to depths of 30cm and then fill the holes with kiln-dried sand, improving surface and subsurface drainage.

Aeration machines are available which use pulses of water at high pressure for work during the summer months, and subsurface injection machines have been developed to inject insecticide in to the ground to the same depth at which grubs are found, which reduces chemical requirements.

Considering the vast changes that have already occurred, you can bet that changing times for the next 30 years should prove to be just as, if not more, exciting and challenging.



Bill Lawson. Made a huge contribution to greenkeeper education



Golf Environment  
Competition

# IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Andrew Wood of STRI's Ecology Unit assesses The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2003

The anxious wait is over for the Nation's greenest Greenkeepers as its time to announce the winners of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition 2003. The competition has undergone a slight revamp this year largely due to the introduction of two new sponsors, Scotts and Syngenta along with the competition's patron the R&A. The additional financial support that these two companies have provided has enabled an increased level of feedback to entrants and the introduction of some new prizes.

As ever the standard was high and all entrants this year are worthy of reward for the commitment they are showing in terms of ecological management. Yet even with the introduction of new prizes the format of the competition ultimately dictates that there are more disappointed clubs than successful ones.

What is interesting, however, is to see how clubs react to this disappointment. In the past there have been clubs who, after not winning at the first attempt, have taken their bats home and never entered the competition again. However, other clubs such as Kenwick Park, St Andrews Links Trust and Thorpeness Hotel have taken the knocks, assessed where they can improve, made improvements and re-entered year after year. These clubs are well aware that success in this competition, just as in ecological management is rarely gained instantly and that perseverance is the key.

It is therefore fitting that all three of these clubs have been rewarded with success this year with Kenwick Park taking the Overall Winners title.

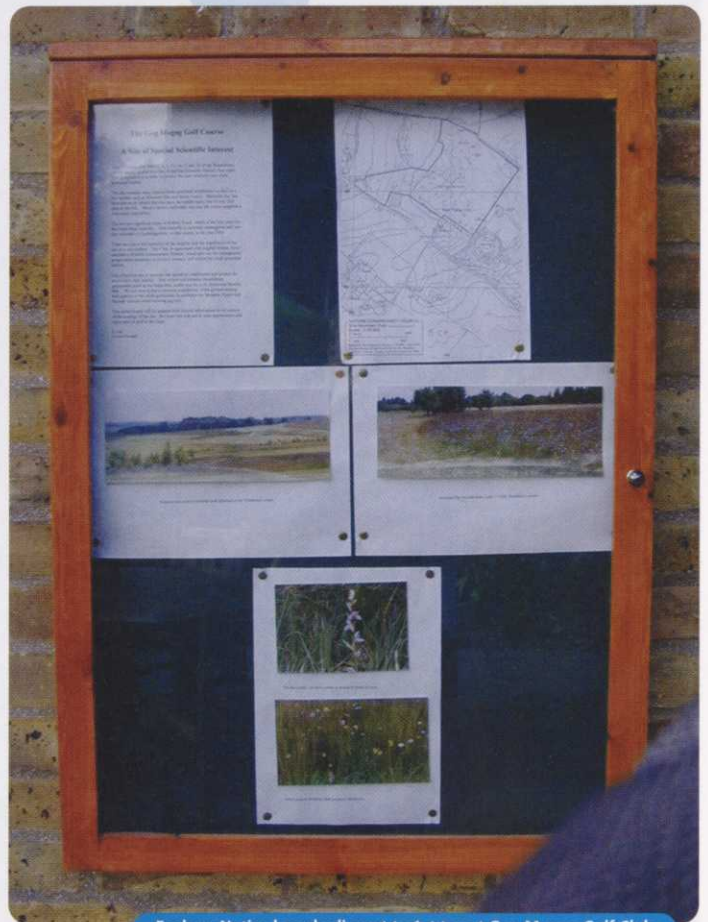
The Ecology Team at STRI studied all this year's entries and made a shortlist of 16. Those clubs which didn't make the second round were given advice on how to put together a stronger entry in future years. The next task was then to carry out site visits to the selected clubs with a view to choosing the prize winners.

## SCOTLAND

The best new entrant in Scotland was Brighouse Bay Golf Club in Kirkcudbright. This Club is privately owned and functions largely as a facility for the Gillespie Leisure Holiday Park complex. The Club's main nature conservation projects thus far have been the improvement of rough grasslands through the annual cutting and removal of vegetation and the creation of a number of ponds and reed beds. These water bodies have a great conservational value, they enhance the character of the course and the reed bed areas clean up waste water from the holiday park before it is re-used for irrigation on the course. Solid waste management and energy efficiency are exemplary at the Club and this has been a major factor in the holiday park gaining a number of environmental tourism awards including the David Bellamy (Gold Award).



Establishment of a reed bed filtration system that cleans up waste water from a holiday park before it is re-used at Brighouse Bay Golf Club. This is also an excellent conservation initiative

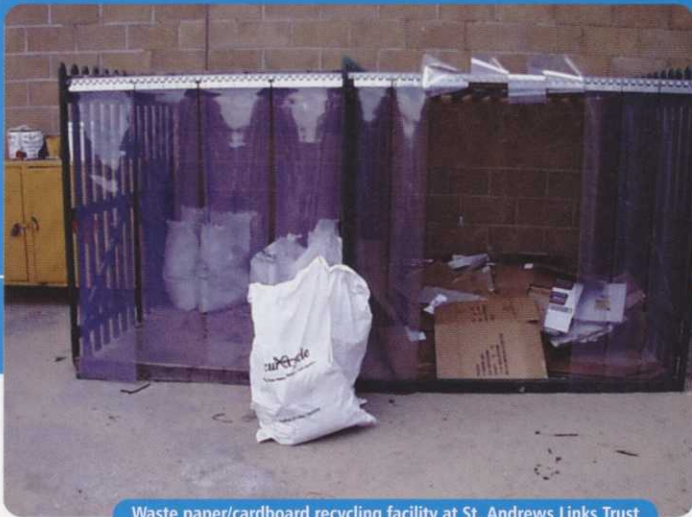


Ecology Notice board adjacent to 1st tee at Gog Magog Golf Club

Although St. Andrews Links Trust encompasses 99 holes, the diversity of habitats on the five courses is limited. That said, a comprehensive Ecological Management Plan is being developed to ensure that everything possible is done to conserve the links which act as a stable habitat for locally important, nationally scarce and declining species such as swift, whitethroat, song thrush, yellow hammer, linnets, bullfinch and grey partridge. In just a few years under the guidance of Links Superintendent, Gordon Moir, the Trust has become major contender in this competition. All of the Trust's employees now appear to be pulling strongly in the same direction both on and off the course. In terms of waste management, all organic waste is composted and programmes are in place for the re-cycling of bottles, cans, paper, waste oil and printer cartridges.

On arriving at the Duke's Course, St. Andrews, the course was as impressive as last year but there were a number of areas of concern regarding a major change in direction as to how the ecological management of the course is to be managed, with the aim of redirecting maintenance to increase sward density and create more visually appealing surfaces.





Waste paper/cardboard recycling facility at St. Andrews Links Trust

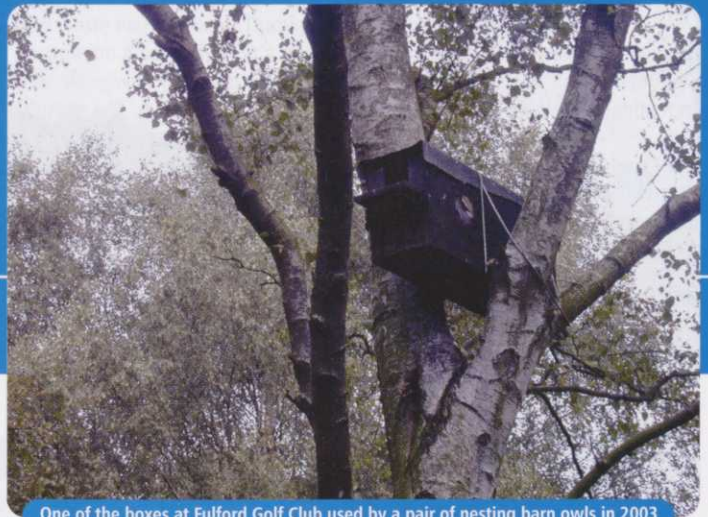
The main focus for nature conservation at the Loch Lomond Golf Club continues to be the programme of woodland enhancement. Prior to course construction the woodlands were ecologically poor yet through the employment of two fully qualified woodland officers their quality is improving rapidly. In addition to enhancing existing grassland rough through an annual cutting and removal programme, the Club constantly review opportunities to expand areas of rough. The Club are progressing with the initiation of a formal composting system. Grass clippings, formerly stockpiled on course, are now collected using trailers that tow behind the John Deere triple mowers. The clippings are brought back to a composting area which is about to be extended. The Club also has a state of the art Waste 2 Water system that allows water to be recycled within its impressive wash down facility.

#### NORTHERN ENGLAND

Marriot Worsley Park Hotel And Country Club was one of three new entrants visited in the Northern England region. The Club is a great example of how relatively young golf clubs can be managed ecologically. Some 40,000 whips, planted during course construction four years ago have thrived and thinning is now a priority in addition to other ecological management such as Rhododendron clearance from mature woodlands and pond re-instatement. With such a large ecological work schedule it is important that the Club prioritises correctly and it has sought expert advice from sources such as the English Nature/EGU/STRI free ecological advice service and the assessors of the Green Globe Environmental Awards Scheme. The Club is one of the first in the Country to gain this award. The Marriot group which owns the club has excellent environmental credentials which promote the virtues of sustainability and therefore this Club is outstanding in terms of recycling and energy saving.

Separating Fulford and York Golf Clubs was the most difficult decision in this year's competition. Their close proximity to each other meant that both supported very similar habitats and the Ecological management at both clubs is driven by extremely enthusiastic Chairmen of Green. In addition both clubs share their greatest ecological management problem. Until recently they were in danger of losing their original lowland heath character, due largely to tree invasion. Today on both courses programmes of woodland enhancement are in full swing with large scale Silver Birch removal a priority. This has produced many benefits in addition to ecological ones. Greenkeepers have found that the turf quality has improved dramatically where felling has increased light and air movement around tees, fairways and greens. The golfer too appreciates the increased aesthetic appeal of the course and the heightened sense of anticipation created by rides which have been cut through the woodland. While both clubs have created habitats specifically with fauna in mind, Fulford leads the way with the erection of over one hundred bird boxes which range in size to suit different species. These have had a great deal of success but the crown jewel is the use of two owl boxes by a pair of nesting Barn Owls. It is testament to the positive link between golf and wildlife that this rare species (only 3,200 pairs nationwide) is successfully breeding at Fulford.

Wilmslow Golf Club supports a large number of habitats with a high conservation value. Each year our judges note how the programme of grassland improvement is eliminating rank grasses such as Yorkshire Fog from



One of the boxes at Fulford Golf Club used by a pair of nesting barn owls in 2003

the sward and encouraging finer grasses which require less management, aid ball retrieval and have a greater species diversity. For areas out of play Course Manager, Steve Oultram, has purchased a hay bailer so that when the rough receives its annual cut he can easily remove the vegetation from site, thus lowering the nutrient level of the soil.

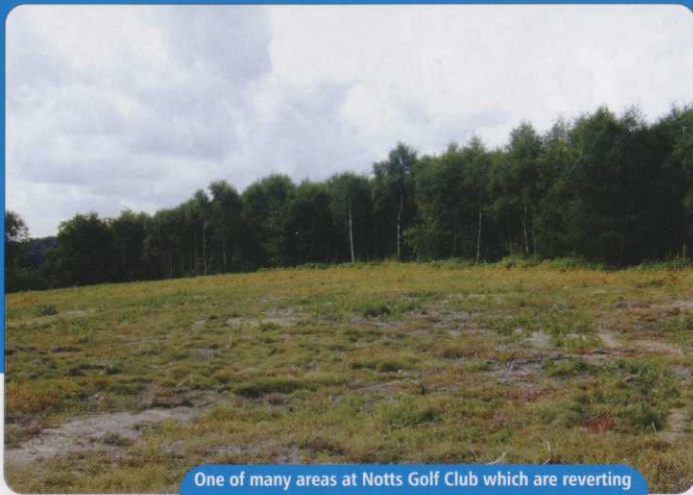
#### SOUTH EAST ENGLAND

Beaconsfield Golf Club has excellent management programmes in place to enhance the quality of woodland, grassland roughs and water bodies throughout the course. Communication throughout the Club is excellent. Indeed on the day of the visit Bill Paterson, the Head Greenkeeper was creating a photographic display for the Club's Open Evening. This is a well attended annual event which educates members in the principles behind the Club's turfgrass and ecological management objectives. Bill also writes ecology based articles for the Club notice board and promotes golf's green credentials to the local public by taking the local walking group on guided walks of the course.

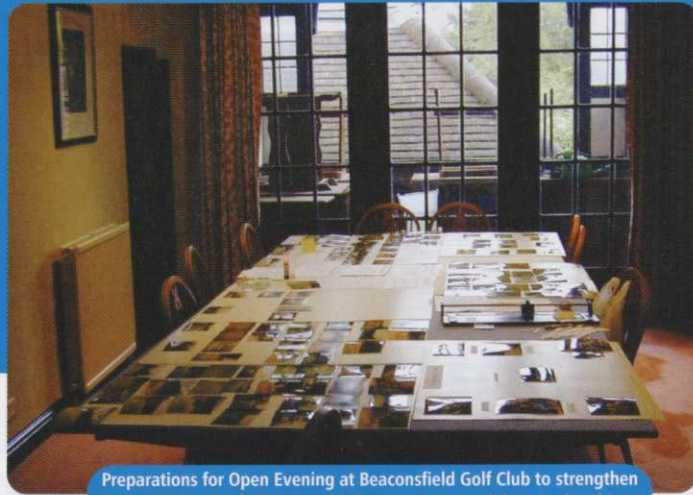
Wildlife recording by keen ecologist Ray Hardinge continues to be the backbone of ecology management at Thorpeness Hotel and Golf Club. When his lists are compiled the location of species is taken into account when Course Manager, Ian Willett, plans the management of the course. Such is the conservation value of this course in terms of bird life alone that the hotel has launched bird watching weekends as a new business venture. The course continually suffers from rabbit damage despite control through shooting, yet this problem is reduced by the filling of scrape holes with organic chicken manure. The strong odour deters the rabbits from areas where the manure is applied.

The year 2002/2003 has seen the introduction of an environmental sub-committee at Gog Magog Golf Club. The Course Manager, Kerran Daly, together with the new committee has developed a highly impressive and comprehensive Environmental Management Plan, which encompasses communication, conservation, landscape, turfgrass management and waste disposal. Communication is good and the membership appears to be supportive of the club's environmental objectives. The main emphasis of ecological work has been the improvement of chalk grassland through cutting and removal of vegetation and the felling of invasive scrub, primarily Hawthorn. The Club acts as a responsible custodian for a number of locally, nationally, and internationally rare plants such as Kidney Vetch, Perennial Flax and Moon Carrot.

Cottesmore Golf and Country Club is the first Club from the "American Golf" stable to enter the BIGGA competition. It has recently had an environmental management plan drawn up by employee, Abbey Miller. The plan is of a high standard and should stand the club in good stead for the future. Indeed it is also possible that it may be used as a template for the other 23 American Golf Clubs in the UK. The Club has carried out much work on the course in terms of improving grassland, woodland and water bodies. This work along with the erection of many species-specific nesting boxes is testament to the influence Abbey has had on this course. Yet the true test for Cottesmore is to see whether it can continue improving now she has departed.



One of many areas at Notts Golf Club which are reverting to heathland following large scale tree removal



Preparations for Open Evening at Beaconsfield Golf Club to strengthen communication between greenkeeping team and the membership

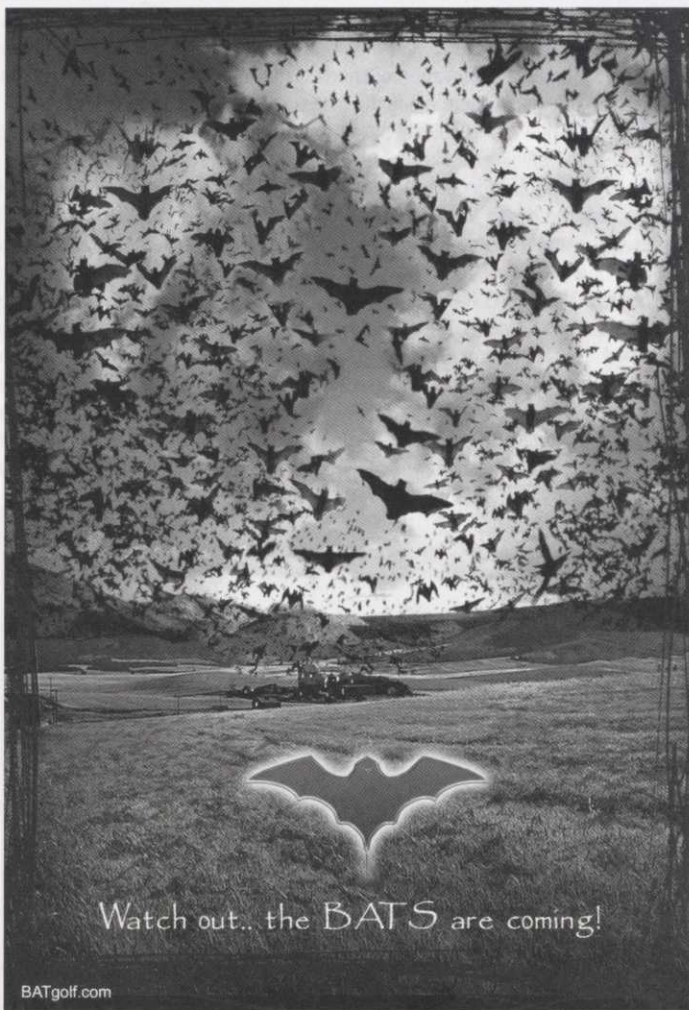
#### MIDLANDS AND SOUTH WEST

Kenwick Park Golf Club came extremely close to winning the overall competition last year. Since then the club has addressed some remaining few problems and is now the perfect example of how golf courses can be successfully managed for both golf and as havens for wildlife. This has been achieved over many years by bringing together all the things the judges are looking for in this competition; organisation, education, communication, consultation and most importantly dedication.

Charnwood Forest Golf Club was the only nine hole course that made it through to the last 16 of this year's competition. While the size of the Club means there are constraints on funding for ecological management, the enthusiasm of the Chairman of Green, Gary Thurman, and the greenkeeping team more than compensates for this. The Club has developed a five-year management plan which ensures that the enhancements of the many habitats on the course are long term. Head Greenkeeper, Tim Allard, has

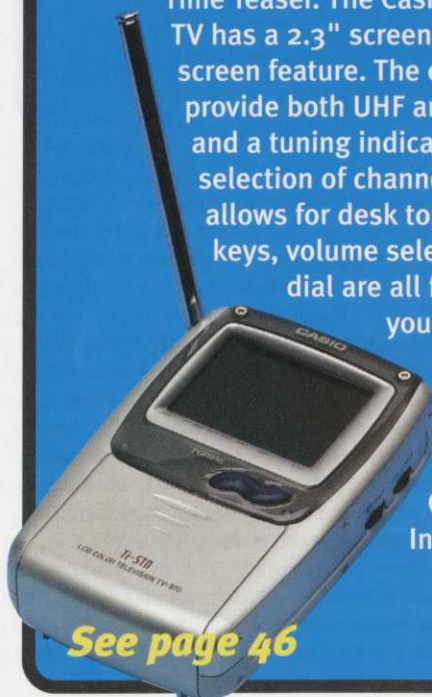
experimented with a number of different techniques for heather restoration and is now getting good results from turf stripping and the spreading of brushings, harvested from other stands on the course.

In terms of sheer scale of physical improvements on the course, no club could match Notts Golf Club, Hollinwell this year where the work has to be seen to be believed. Vast tracts of low ecological value woodland have been cleared and turf stripped to encourage the restoration of heather and gorse. Aftercare treatment involves sapling removal and the use of a roller as a bracken basher. Yet some of the areas of tree clearance are simply too large to manage and therefore the Club have recently embarked on a sheep grazing scheme. With works occurring on such a dramatic scale it is crucial that there is good communication between the Greenkeeper, the Greens Committee and the membership. This appears to be the case and the membership are fully supportive of the push to re-capture the course's original heathland character. The benefits are obvious when one considers



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