James de Havilland takes a closer look at the intricacies of current machinery

The anatomy of...

Battery powered kit

These days there seems to be a rush to adopt any green technology. Nothing wrong in that. But sometimes there is a great deal more to ‘green’ options than just cutting down on your carbon footprint.

Step-by-step Analysis...

Battery powered kit

It is tempting to concentrate on the fact that here we are looking at battery powered equipment. But pick up a diminutive Pellenc Selion C20 chainsaw or take a test drive on the Jacobsen Eclipse 322 ride-on greens mower and the chances are the power source will not be the first point of interest.

These tools are well engineered items of equipment that deserve close inspection for what they are as opposed to how they are powered. In short battery driven equipment can now be looked at for reasons other than just its power source.

“A key modern demand is not just to produce a quality mown finish but to deliver it consistently,” says Richard Comely, Ransomes Jacobsen’s Product Manager. “With the battery-powered Eclipse 322 ride-on greens mower, advanced CAN bus digital control enables the mower to be set up so it will deliver a consistent and repeatable frequency of cut every time it is operated. The clip rate will remain constant, adjusting the speed of the cutting cylinder to precisely match variations in forward speed. This cannot be achieved on a hydraulic mower but it is a standard feature of our battery and hybrid powered Eclipse:322 models.”

The important point here is not so much that the battery powered Eclipse draws its top-up energy from the mains but that it just happens to be a pretty decent greens mower. Approach it from this angle first, and by all means compare it to its hybrid and all-hydraulic alternatives, and that is perhaps a better way to consider the mower. Look at it solely because it is the only battery powered model of its type on offer and you run the risk of overlooking what it is designed to do: cut greens to a high standard.

Taking a sideways glance at a completely different set of kit, the Pellenc battery powered range of brushcutters, loppers, saws, pruners and trimmers is completely different. Powered hand tools are now well established so on the surface the offering from Pellenc is not really that new. But where Pellenc is different is in the way it builds its equipment.

Modern battery powered tools, such as drills and impact drivers, are now designed to be battery powered from the outset. You get the impression, however, that some hand held tools now offered with a battery pack are developed from a petrol powered equivalent. With Pellenc, all the kit the company makes is battery powered. There

So what? Well it is only when you operate a battery powered tool that you get to know if it will be up to a professional job.
are no engine powered alternatives. Although companies to include Stihl and Husqvarna do offer some well proven battery powered tools, the survival of these companies does not depend upon them being any good. With Pellenc it does.

So what? Well it is only when you operate a battery powered tool that you get to know if it will be up to a professional job.

Pellenc kit is engineered to be used for extended periods everyday. It shows. Similarly, the all-electric Eclipse 322 is able to maximise the capacity of its batteries by using it more efficiently and, of equal importance, having the battery pack managed to optimise the storage of electrical power. An argument against battery power in the past was that you stood a very real chance of the batteries giving up on you in the middle of the course.

“We have taken the proven charging technology of our E-Z-Go electric vehicles and adapted it to suit the all-electric Eclipse 322,” says Richard Comely. “The mower has its own integral digital battery charger.”

This intelligently manages the amount of electricity that is used to recharge the batteries and will not over charge. A centralised system also makes it simple to keep the electrolyte topped up to exactly the right level, points that combine to make it much easier to look after the power pack which in turn means consistent working periods between charges. So how long will the Eclipse 322 run between charges? Sensibly Ransomes Jacobsen suggests a lot will depend upon the distances between greens and terrain, but most operators should expect 18 to 21 greens per charge, this dropping if attachments, such as a groomer, are also operated.

With regard to operating costs, running a battery powered Eclipse 322 will save on red diesel, albeit easily overlooked, hydraulic oil too. Servicing times are also reduced, so this can also help reduce the costs of mowing overall.

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Hand tool battery technology

Pellenc uses Lithium-ion batteries and again these are replenished using an intelligent charging system. This ensures the battery can be charged at anytime, with no ‘memory effect’. In simple terms this means you can top up the battery without first having to fully discharge them to optimise their service life.

This used to be a problem with other early small battery designs. Of equal importance, Pellenc claim the batteries have an extended life. After 800 charges, the company suggest the batteries will still retain at least 80% of their original capability, with no reduction in the actual power delivered by the battery. And when the batteries are not in use for more than four consecutive days, the batteries will automatically manage how they discharge to optimise their service life.

Designed by Pellenc, it is the in-built software that is the clever part behind the optimisation of the batteries. A dealer can use the software, for example, to interrogate the battery. This can be used to list the number and duration of charges made, operating temperatures, duration and loads placed on battery and even shock loads. The benefit of this is that users can be given a clear outline not just of how much work a battery has done but also how much life remains.

Typically, Pellenc expect professional users to get as much as three years out of a battery pack. Now actual life expectancy can be monitored so you know how much life a battery has remaining. All useful information that can help keep an accurate tab on equipment running and operating costs.

So what? Well it is only when you operate a battery powered tool that you get to know if it will be up to a professional job.

Why no advanced batteries for larger kit?

The clever batteries used by Pellenc, and as will be fitted to cars like the forthcoming Nissan Leaf, are extremely expensive. For small hand held tools the price can be more easily justified. But the cost of a Lithium-Ion battery pack needed to power a ride-on mower has to be carefully balanced against the operating and cost benefits it would deliver over the whole life of the mower.

At present the sums do not stack up. The Nissan Leaf, incidentally, will benefit from a £5,000 government subsidy when it goes on sale. But even then the car will cost in excess of £23,000. That is a lot of money for a car that will ‘only’ do 100 miles between charges and is only the size of a VW Golf.

Put these figures into a mower context and it could be that a lithium-ion powered fairway mower would perhaps cost pretty much twice the price of a diesel hydraulic or diesel hybrid equivalent.

This is not to suggest only lead acid technology will be used to power electric mowers of the future as there almost certainly going to be alternatives available.

The question is what those alternatives will turn out to be and when they will become mainstream.

For more details on Jacobsen Eclipse 322 and operating costs, Ransomes Jacobsen has a website www.eclipse322.com.

This provides detailed information that is claimed to demonstrate the return on investment that can be achieved by switching to the all-battery powered 322.
Making the most of lead acid batteries but to hybrid mowers to.

Not just to its all-hydraulic alternative. It has to stand comparison to come to market simply because Eclipse 322 has taken a long time to show. Similarly, the all-electric professional job. You get to know if it will be up to a similar standard. With Pellenc it does.

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This provides detailed information that is claimed to demonstrate the return on investment that can be achieved by switching to the all-battery powered 322.
In an ideal world, every golf course would love to tackle drainage problems when the ground is relatively dry, when access is easy and potential surface damage can be kept to a minimum.

However, greenkeepers like groundsman in other outdoor sporting facilities are subject to limitations brought on by the demands of the sport. The dry summer months are the busiest time for clubs. Events are scheduled, matches played and maintenance issues have to fit into the busy schedule. Coupled with this is the desire for members to enjoy the sport. The dry summer months bring on the interminable conditions: the dreadful downpours and icy conditions. But this isn’t the Ryder Cup, the interminable rains are there to support you moving forwards. They are there to support you moving forwards. They are there to support you moving forwards. They are there to support you moving forwards. They are there to support you moving forwards.

The worst drainage problems invariably don’t surface until it’s too wet to get onto the course without causing more problems than you’re attempting to solve.

Last year seemed to be particularly dogged by poor working conditions: the dreadful downpours that caused such turmoil during the Ryder Cup, the intolerable wet weather in the late autumn followed by unrelenting snow and icy conditions. But this isn’t a new phenomenon. Winters are invariably cold, wet and windy - just varying in degrees.

Contractors know all about poor working conditions, it comes with the territory. It’s how they approach the job that makes the difference to whether objectives are achieved, in spite of whatever nature throws at them.

So how do you get round the need to do the work but at a time which isn’t ideal? The first and the most important step is to select a reputable contractor preferably a member of the Land Drainage Contractors Association (www. ldca.org) who understands fully the implications of working in less than ideal conditions. Another important though rarely used resource is the reference. Get to know your contractor. Talk to others who have used them on previous projects. Get to know their strengths and weaknesses before taking them on to do a job which has a direct impact on the quality of play enjoyed by members of your club. Experience in dealing with similar situations can offer huge benefits to the greenkeeper managing the wide range of drainage issues that can arise and choosing the different methods of solving them. It is also critical to understand the effects of drainage installation on the playing surface, particularly in adverse circumstances.

The relationship between club and contractor has to work on many different levels with communication always being the key to success. It is vital that you choose a professional outfit which has a very positive attitude and understanding of Health and Safety obligations for instance. You need to be confident that any legal requirements are adhered to and all the necessary service searches for gas, water, electricity and existing drainage lines are in place before any work is undertaken.

MJ Abbott is an experienced and specialist contractors to the sports industry and have set out a list of helpful pointers for the Course Manager to help them obtain the most from their contractor and ensure that whatever the installation and whenever it takes place, it will run as smoothly as possible.

“The role of the Course Manager is crucial to the successful completion of any drainage project,” said Nathan George, Contracts Manager.

“The relationship between all the parties is even more critical when the project is difficult. Patience and appreciation of all the factors coming into play from both parties can make all the difference to progress and a satisfactory outcome. So we recommend the following:

1. Provide details of existing drainage and services, outfalls etc. to the contractor before the project commences.
2. Be aware of relevant Health & Safety issues and regulations.
3. To minimise disruption to the course, installation should take place during spring, summer or autumn. If that isn’t possible, choose a contractor that is experienced in challenging environments.
4. Tendering – Encourage different contractors to tender for the work, but check its like-for-like, particularly in difficult economic times when costs are not always transparent.
5. Make your contractor aware of your expectations and limitations
6. Communication is the key – open lines of communication to keep up-to-date with progress.
7. Approve all materials before use – check the quality.
8. Be realistic in your expectations and prepare club members for a small amount of disruption to your course.
9. Keep your Greens Committee informed on progress with regular updates so they can keep members informed.
10. Keep in contact with your contractor - Good client/contractor relationships are built over time as contractors become accustomed to the site and staff. When the project is completed, maintain contact with your contractor and keep them informed of progress. They are there to support you moving forwards.

Murray Long, Courses & Estates Manager at Sunningdale Golf Club, has had first hand experience of the difficulties of timing essential remedial drainage work.

“We were aware that work needed doing well before the winter of 2008 but it wasn’t possible to even contemplate interrupting the Members’ fixtures for the coming season,” explained Murray.

“Any drainage works would have to be scheduled for late summer early autumn and recovery would have to be swift so that the Senior Open Championship due to take place the following July would be played on a course at its peak. We just had to hope that weather conditions would be favourable. In the event, they couldn’t have been worse. There are many factors to consider when choosing your contractor,” he continued. “We have always used several different contractors for a variety of work but what we looked for in this instance was a company that had the experience to give us the confidence that they were capable of the work. We had to acknowledge the significance of re-instatement and the need to avoid surface disruption. It meant the work would take longer and the contractor would have to dedicate their time and resources of labour and equipment over a prolonged period of time to ensure quality of finish rather than speed,” said Murray. “Traditionally we would always aim to do drainage schemes in the drier late summer months” explained Nathan.
Getting on top of your drainage problems

In an ideal world, every golf course would love to tackle drainage problems when the ground is relatively dry, when access is easy and potential surface damage can be kept to a minimum.

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The drainage of surface water lying between the lateral pipework.

Gravel, and approved sand/soil mix rootzone.

The heavy rain during the summer

Six of the fairways at Fồhills had suffered the previous winter and had to be closed for short periods, not only because of water not draining but because of slippery surfaces in some areas becoming a health and safety issue for players.

The rainfall in 2009 between the beginning of October and the end of February was a record 18 inches, said David.

The soil conditions on the course vary between sand and heavy blue clay, but in general the soil is heavy and poor draining.

The three greens that were sand-filled are on the Longcross course. They have always been prone to wetness but they now drain well, said David.

“Fòhills has superb surrounds,” he continued.

Six of the fairways at Fòhills had suffered the previous winter and had to be closed for short periods, not only because of water not draining but because of slippery surfaces in some areas becoming a health and safety issue for players.

The drainage systems, pipes or cables as and when needed. Ideal for sportsturf, agricultural, domestic and industrial markets.

M J Abbott

AFT Trenchers

AFT45 for compact tractors from 20hp

With chain or slitting wheel, augers or conveyor to quickly install drainage systems, pipes or cables as and when needed. Ideal for sportsturf, agricultural, domestic and industrial markets.

George Pitts, Course Manager at Yelverton GC, offers some practical advice to preserving the over worked parts of the course

These days, the expectation of the modern golfer and the culture of the game demands “year round” golf along with a course that can cope with heavy bags laden with all the latest gadgets.

It is unrealistic for most to expect zero damage and compaction from grazing traffic. The skill is to limit the amount of damage.

Trolley / Buggy Policy.

The majority of golfing traffic damage will be caused by trolleys, power trolleys and golf buggies. It is useful to have an agreed policy in place. The Course Manager the option of restricting the use of trolleys and buggies on the course. There are no hard and fast rules with implementing trolley bans, it is a balancing act of reducing traffic and subsequent wear. It is important to encourage members and visitors to the course in order to meet revenue targets.

Directing Traffic.

Inevitably, golfing traffic will need to be moved around the course to spread the wear, in the same way hole cups need to be changed and testing boxes moved. This will include, signage, post and rope, hoops, flags and line marker. All these methods can be used to direct traffic away from high wear areas. If post and rope is used, it is important to ensure there is a system of regularly moving its position and a strategy of moving post and rope forward in increments to ensure that the wear is spread. Signage will need to be clean, tidy, easy to read and prominently positioned.

Paths.

Where “bottle-necks” and concentrated areas of wear cannot be avoided through directing traffic, paths may need to be installed. Construction and materials used will depend on budget, site, design and council constraints. When installing paths, the position, shape and colour must always be sympathetic to and never compromise the overall aesthetic and design of the course.

Improved drainage.

The effects of concentrated areas of wear and compaction, especially in wet areas, can be greatly reduced through improved surface drainage. Drainage, regular aeration and soil exchange with compatible, sandy free draining materials will all help to direct water away from the surface and thus alleviate compaction and wear issues.

Anti-erosion / Compaction products.

There are many products on the market that have been designed to improve grass plants resistance to heavy wear. Turf reinforcement mesh and rubber-matting, if properly installed, can provide compaction and erosion relief on areas such as path ends and steps. Where traffic is at its most intense. Other innovative products include winter trolley wheels that are designed to limit damage by evenly distributing the load over a smaller surface contact area. It is important to always exhaustively try any new products.

Course Design.

The psychological of a human being this includes golfers is to take the shortest route, a straight line to the next destination. There will often be random movement from tee to green, as the golf ball dictates the players movements, but, from tees to tee there maybe limited exit points to often only one destination. If exit points are restricted by hazards, traffic routes will be limited so wear further concentrated. Exit points can be greatly increased by removing some trees or repositioning a bunker.

Communication.

The key to the all above is to ensure that there is always a healthy line of communication to members and visitors of the golf course. Policies can be communicated through websites, notice boards, newsletters and presentations to the members.
machines were working side by side the drainage of surface water lying tive contact with the piped drainage 400mm centres. They make a posi primary drainage. The 20mm wide x installed perpendicular to the pri secondary drainage, consisting of narrow bands of gravel banding installed perennial to the primary drainage. The 28mm wide x 180mm depth bands of 6mm gravel are injected into the surface at 400mm centres. They make a posi tive contact with the piped drainage gravel and are designed to speed up the drainage of surface water lying between the lateral pipework.

In order to keep surface disruption to an absolute minimum, boards were deployed to displace the weight of each piece of equipment when in operation. Three machines were working side by side at any given time; the trencher, the dumper for spoil removal, and the gravel cart. Individual boards had to be laid, removed then re-positioned.

Foxhills Golf Club and Resort in Surrey called in Speedcut to carry out drainage work on greens as part of continuing improvements to course conditions.

“A wet summer in 2009 brought drainage problems to a head on several badly-draining greens,” said Course Manager, David Wyborn.

Speedcut Contracts Manager Kevin Smith said: “We carried out sandslitting on two greens that October with our AFT Wizz Wheel, having done one in March, and the heavy rain during the summer showed the full extent of the problem.”

Previously, two laser-guided Masterbrook 10/120s had been employed on six fairways at Foxhills, cutting trenches, removing spoil and laying pipeline.

“The torrential rain in July, up to two inches in a day on two occasions, would have been a real problem on the Longcross course but we fairways one, two and three sandbanded and they drained fantastically,” said David.

“In 2009 we had the second wettest year on record, and certainly the wettest summer,” he recalled.

“Our drainage programme became increasingly pressing. During that summer we were hit by dreadful rain in July, which fol lowed a terrible winter.”

“The rainfall in 2009 between the beginning of October and the end of February was a record 18 inches,” said David.

Six of the fairways at Foxhills had suffered the previous winter and had to be closed for short periods, not only because of water not draining but because of slippery surfaces in some areas becoming a health and safety issue.

“We decided to drain three fair ways on the Longcross course and three on the Bernard Hunt course,” explained David.

“The serious conditions on the course vary between sand and heavy blue clay, but in general the soil is heavy and poor draining.”

The three greens that were sand bled are on the Longcross course.

“They have always been prone to wetness but they now drain well,” said David.

“Foxhills has superb surrounds and is very challenging from a greenkeeping point of view.”

To maintain the very high stan dards drainage work is essential. It is unrealistic for most to expect the soil conditions on the course to be changed and teeing boxes moved. This will often be random movement from ease to green, as the golf ball dictates the players movements, but, from geets to tee there may be limited exit points to only one destination. Exit points are restricted by hazards, traffic routes will be limited and wear further concentrated. Exit points can be greatly increased by removing some trees or repurposing a bunker.

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The series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country.

The 'Golf Club Management Partnership' recently celebrated its first anniversary. Sandy Jones charts the progress made so far and looks ahead to the future.

The Golf Club Management Partnership (GCMP) has been set up by the PGA, BIGGA and the GCA to provide a co-ordinated approach to the management of golf clubs.

We chose a particularly appropriate time to join forces, as golf clubs feel the effects of the economic situation and adapt to changing attitudes to leisure activities.

In every golf club there are three providers of services to the golfer – the manager, the professional and the course manager and his team, and it makes sense to work together and ensure that these services are provided at the highest level.

This has proved essential as golf club committees consider ways to cut costs in order to survive the recession when in fact they should be looking to add value. There is a temptation to simply chop out areas of the operation, often because committees may not fully understand how the club is run.

‘There is a temptation to simply chop out areas of the operation, often because committees may not fully understand how the club is run.’

Sandy Jones, chief executive of the PGA

Marketing is a further example – the professional and the course manager can contribute as much to marketing the club as the managers.

Another goal will be to communicate the significance of golf to the wider community, and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

This is one area where the Americans are ahead of us, producing statistics on the industry and creating an economic impact of the Ryder Cup was more than $1 billion. Going forward, we are keen to foster closer relationships between golf and its business allies. Clubs work best if all parties understand that golf makes an important contribution to the economy – for example the economic impact of the Ryder Cup was more than $1 billion.

Managers and professionals must not see each other as rivals – it is understandable that a manager would see a professional who gains management skills as a threat, but they can be much more effective as allies. Clubs work best if all parties use their skills together, rather than in isolation.

The GCMP has also looked at ways the bodies involved can provide an improved service to members – this is the time to get organised.

Jane Carley, always the mate winner if we can understand each other better and appreciate what the other is doing, we can provide an improved service to members and guests. This economic crisis will not last forever, and this is the time to get organised and prepare for the opportunities that are ahead of us.

Sandy Jones is chief executive of the PGA.
Three kings

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The Golf Club Management Partnership (GCMP) has been set up by the PGA, BIGGA and the GCMA to provide a co-ordinated approach to the management of golf clubs.

We chose a particularly appropri- ate time to join forces, as golf clubs feel the effects of the economic situation and adapt to changing attitudes to leisure activities.

In every golf club there are three providers of services to the golfer: the manager, the professional and the course manager and his team, and it makes sense to work together and ensure that these services are provided at the highest level.

This has proved essential as golf club committees consider ways to cut costs in order to survive the recession when in fact they should be looking to add value. There is a temptation to simply chop away at the core of the business, often because committees may not fully understand how their club operates.

The difficulty is that many people providing the services don’t connect their role directly to the committees. The whole message needs to be sent via the committees.

We believe that our role is to communicate our joint value proposition process, and we are already working on the industry and creating a message to the club owners and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

This is one area where the Ameri- cans are ahead of us, producing statistics on the industry and creating a golf club management message to persuade the clubs to look at the course, in the pro shop and in the clubhouse.

Our united approach is already benefi ting clubs – after the severe winter we produced some recommen- дations to help tackle claims relating to health and safety in bad weather which have been taken up by the clubs dealing with those situations.

We have also set up a network to tackle credit card scams affecting pro shops, getting the word around clubs after an incident, and this has led to the arrest of offenders.

The internet will become increas- ingly important in the communica- tion process, and we are already looking at the latest technological solutions for managers dealing with those situations.

The internet can be a big weapon for managers dealing with those situations.

Managers and professionals both are constantly trying to add value together and provide an improved service to members and guests. This is a time of huge economic climate which may be more effective as well.

Managers and professionals may need to create a new business model for the industry. There is a temptation to simply chop costs in the short term, but this will not be sustainable in the long term. The club must engage its management, its professional and greenkeeping team – as they are the first point of contact with members and visitors – to ensure that the golfers’ needs are met, on the course, in the pro shop and in the clubhouse.

Another goal is to communicate the significance of golf to the wider community, and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

The golf club is run as a business, and we have to see each other as allies. Clubs work best if all parties understand how the club operates, and we have to communicate our joint value proposition process, and we are already working on the industry and creating a message to the club owners and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

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Scottish Region

It is now the beginning of January that I am writing this and thankfully the snow seems to have disappeared. It’s still pretty cold so by the time you read this in February the snow will probably have returned. If it is every year but it doesn’t half set you back with your winter programmes, especially if it’s pretty bad! We at Murcar Links were in the middle of building up our snow removal stocks when the snow arrived and now we’re just getting back to normal.

There’s been a couple of sad bits of news been sent to me recently. The first was that Jackie Campbell has passed away at the age of 78. A Lossie native, he was a fit and active man who’s been sent to me by the 5th. Thanks to George Paterson for his news.

Our Competition Secretary is still closed, forgetting that the course is open, but on tempo for that but isn’t it marvelous and dust them off just in time for that day. We’ll have to wait until later on.

It is now the beginning of February 2011 and it’s the beginning of the year and the big thaw. That’s all for this month guys eh?"