France boasts some long-established golf clubs in superb settings which have large memberships but also attract visitors and holidaymakers. As a result, these courses are worked extremely hard and many experience long, hot, dry summers. This, together with the topographical features such as trees and mountains makes the courses so difficult, such as trees and mountains. This, together with summers. This, together with the topographical features such as trees and mountains makes the courses so difficult. Therefore, these courses are part of one of France’s leading sports clubs, Racing Club de France, and has frequently hosted the French Open. It boasts five 18 hole courses, Le Forêt and the older, La Vallée.

The greens are old and were built on a poorly draining base. The soil is clay with a terracotta drainage layer at a depth of 40cm. “Due to this construction, we have a problem with water not moving off the surface because, at 30cm down, there is a layer of clay and a lot of organic matter. We needed to get down to the gravel drainage layer at 30cm deep which is why we used Drill n Fill.”

At La Boulie there has been a nett improvement in the drainage level and also from being able to introduce sand into these clay greens. This has resulted in a ‘tightening’ of the greens and they are now much firmer with better grass growth. The greens are already firmer and draining faster.”

Golf de Chantilly is another club, which decided to carry out work this summer. The club offers two courses, the older, is 100 years old. There is a team of 15 greenkeepers and normal turf care includes verti-draining and the John Deere Aero Spike which goes to a depth of 3-4cms. “Although our soil conditions are good, greens are constructed from Laize Sand to a variable depth,” said Director Remy Dorbeau. “We had a problem with water not moving off the surface because, at 10cm down, there is a layer of clay and a lot of organic matter. We needed to get down to the gravel drainage layer at 30cm deep which is why we used Drill n Fill.”

The whole of the old course was treated, grass growth has already improved and surface drainage performing well after the first rain of 2012.

Golf de Fourqueux is in the environs of Paris, which offers 27 holes - three sets of nine which are interchangeable and so offer different 18 hole challenges each season. Superintendent Jean Marie Pardot contacted neighbours Chantilly about the deep aeration and backfill process, liked what he saw and booked four greens, 20000m, for treatment. "We had been struggling with compaction and poor drainage, because we have old clay push-up greens.” Jean-Marie also decided to import the sand/Sportslite backfill from the UK.

It was of a higher quality and more suitable grade than I could get locally,” he said.

Two weeks after the treatment, we had heavy rain and could see that the treated greens were firmer and draining more quickly,” said Jean-Marie.

Another club, close to Paris, Golf de St Cloud, can lay claim to a bloody battle having taken place on the site of the now 15th green and a view of the Eiffel Tower from the 14th. Course construction at St Cloud is again push-up greens out of clay, topped with fine native soils. As with the other courses, Director Denis Couture was experiencing slow drainage off the greens due mainly to build-up of top dressing on top of the clay base as our photo shows. He had the entire older course, Vert, Drill n Filled this summer and has looked in the Jacine course for the last two years, using the sand/Sportslite backfill from the UK.

"I have seen good results from this process at other clubs and feel sure it will be the answer for us. Paris has experienced some very hot summers recently and the greens have had a lot of use, so drilling down to around 30cm, completely replacing the rootzone and leaving a network of ducts will aid water percolation and improve grass growth,” he said.
Dollar spot and integrated pest management

Julie Wheeler looks at one of the most common turf diseases

Dollar spot (caused by Sclerotinia homoeocarpa F.T. Bennett) is one of the most common diseases of turfgrass in the USA, and for the unhygienic turfgrass manager in the UK it can be devastating to golf greens, tees and fairways.

The disease symptoms appear initially as hourglass-shaped lesions on the leaves followed by bleached circular patches in turf that can be seen as white areas on turf. Apart from the detrimental visual effect that occurs, this disease also adversely affects the cut appearance of the whole patch due to the bleached green areas affected. These patches may coalesce leaving large areas affected. From its dor...
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The disease symptoms appear initially as hourglass-shaped lesions on the leaves followed by bleached circular patches in turf, the shape and size of a dollar – hence the common name. These patches may coalesce leaving large areas affected. Apart from the detrimental visual effect that occurs, this disease also adversely affects turf quality and will wash out of the green and fairways. These symptoms may be mistaken for old pitch marks. 

Although not yet very common on UK turf, dollar spot has been observed on annual meadow-grass, bentgrass and fescues.

Dollar spot is a poly cyclic disease which means that there is more than one infection cycle through the season (see Figure 1). In turfgrass, a secondary infection occurs on foliage after initial infection from the soil. The dollar spot fungus survives as resting bodies of mycelia known as stromata. This inoculum may be present within the thatch layer as well as the root zone. Infection of turfgrass occurs as the active dollar spot mycelium enters the leaves through wounds (e.g. created by mowing, through the stomata (gas exchange pores) or by direct penetration where the fungus actively breaks through the outer layer of the leaf.

Within the plant cells the fungus forms a network of hyphae which break down the cells with resultant necrosis. Infection can also occur from disease of the mycelia by wind, water, clippings and traffic. In addition, studies by STRI of dollar spot populations in the UK have described release of spores as a further source of inoculum.

The dollar spot pathogen can also adversely affect the roots of bentgrass due to toxins released by the fungus, which results in discolouration and stunting of the root system. This will improve the leaf wetness period thereby increasing the uptake of water and nutrients.

Influencing factors

Dollar spot symptoms are usually observed when temperatures are high enough to allow leaf wetness periods of at least one hour for at least 10 days of the growing season. Other factors that may influence infection early in the season can be made preventatively, hence a management plan of applying early in spring once soil temperatures are high enough is recommended. This allows the active fungus to establish in the rootzone and begin reducing the pathogen. Foliar applications can also be applied preventatively in order to ensure that an effective population of Trichoderma is present as soon as the dollar spot fungus begins infecting the leaf canopy – prior to disease symptoms being observed.

One of the key requirements for efficacy as a biological control is that control is proven against different isolates of the disease. As part of my recent studies I undertook a laboratory experiment comparing different isolates of the dollar spot fungus obtained from a range of locations in the UK. When grown on agar plates in the same conditions different isolates exhibited significantly different growth rates.

Being aware of the reported effect of the Trichoderma product on dollar spot in the USA, I tested the effect of growth of the dollar spot isolates when plated in conjunction with spores from the T. harzianum strain T-22. For all of the isolates tested, growth of S. homoeocarpa was inhibited by the presence of the Trichoderma. When examined under a microscope I was able to observe parasitic colonisation of the Trichoderma fungi around the mycelia of the dollar spot fungus.

There are a number of other biological control products in the USA which have demonstrated varying degrees of control of dollar spot. These products are described in the references. However, in the USA the data that control is proven against different isolates of the disease is more common. A study by Giannouli et al. (2004) suggests that a range of Trichoderma species occur naturally in the soil - many of which have demonstrated varying degrees of control of dollar spot. This suggests that the implementation of biological control products should be encouraged in the UK to allow the development of suitable integrated pest management programmes to reduce the dependency on chemical inputs.
James de Havilland takes a closer look at the intricacies of current machinery

The anatomy of...

Second hand machinery

These days, new equipment can be sourced through a raft of schemes that can help spread costs, typically over a pre-set number of years. Even the wealthiest of clubs will exploit some type of ‘package’ that can ‘soften’ the blow of funding a new mowing fleet or sustain a rolling equipment replacement programme.

A lease, rental or well-planned finance package can ensure frontline equipment is kept up to date and of course removes the worry of decreased dependability of worn and ageing kit. Add the ability to keep up with the latest developments – and, of equal importance, giving those who use the equipment all the benefits of improved operating comfort – and it is clear that going for new has a whole raft of attractions, so why buy used? Regardless of how equipment is sourced or funded, there is the simple truth that you do not get anything for nothing and every deal, lease or finance package will impact the bottom line. So injecting cost make a sensible choice.

But that is not to say all ex-demo kit is equal. Some items, such as an aerator, may be run for several seasons and have been left with numerous potential customers for an extended period. It is not unusual for such kit to have covered a lot of ground and be presented more as a used as opposed to an ex-demo buy. So there may be a limited warranty and any wear and tear will all be part of the deal. Some kit will also be sold off as ex-demo simply because it is ‘new old stock’. In some cases you will only know it is the old model by looking at the decals and model number. In others, the model may have been completely replaced. In either instance, the key is working out if the item you are looking at is an ex-demo buy. So there may be a canny used buy may help reduce impact the bottom line. So injecting

used turf equipment

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Ex-demo – check the true cost to change

An ex-demonstrator mower, sourced via a reputable supplier, may have done very little work and in effect, be as good as new. In some cases, the model in question may be fitted with costly options, some of which are nice to have but would be not added whereas a new purchase was being made. So the chance of an ex-demo buy can make a really sensible choice.

But the offer against a lower price ‘ex-demo’ unit may be less attractive. Do a few sums, and it may show that going for new to be a better long-term bet.

A true used buy is just that; an item of equipment that has been used and is now being sold on. If the item in question is sold through a dealer, the equipment will typically have been through the workshop and any obvious faults put right. Extra work may also be carried out. A greens mower, for example, may have a re-grid and some flexible hydraulic hoses replaced if they are showing signs of age. Some manufacturers also have a ‘replace by’ date stamped on vital hoses. This is to ensure age-hardened and fatigued hose is renewed long before its integrity is compromised.

A bit of a cosmetic makeover may also be carried out, glossy paint helping to add buyer appeal. But in all cases look beyond the superficial smartening up and instead concentrate on the machines finer details. Weld repairs, scuff markers caused by impact damage and paint spray over gouge points that should routinely see attention are all little warnings that suggest the machine in question may not be all it appears.

Also consider equipment that a club may offer for sale ‘privately’. This can be a great way to source equipment. In fact, if your course is on friendly terms with a ‘wealthy’ club neighbour you could do worse than striking up a relationship that sees about to be traded in kit offered to you first.

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A lease, rental or well-planned finance package can ensure frontline equipment is kept up to date and of course removes the worry of decreased dependability of worn and ageing kit. Add the ability to keep up with the latest developments – and, of equal importance, giving those who use the equipment all the benefits of improved operating comfort – and it is clear that going for new has a whole raft of attractions. So why buy used?

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But that is not to say all ex-demo kit is equal. Some items, such as an aerator, may be run for several seasons and have been left with numerous potential customers for an extended period. It is not unusual for such kit to have covered a lot of ground and be presented more as a used as opposed to an ex-demo buy. So there may be a limited warranty and any wear and tear will all be part of the deal. Some kit will also be sold off as ex-demo simply because it is ‘new old stock’. In some cases you will only know it is the old model by looking at the decals and model number. In others, the model may have been completely replaced. In either instance, the key is working out if the item you are looking at is at what you want and not just to buy it due to an attractive saving. Factor in available warranty too.

The most important point is the true cost to change. Where you may get a good part exchange allowance against a completely new machine, the offer against a lower price ‘ex-demo’ unit may be less attractive. Do a few sums, and it may show going for new to be a better long-term bet.

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Regardless of whether or not you buy from a dealer, there are certain criteria to ensure a sensible purchase.

Ex-demo – check the true cost to change

An ex-demonstrator mower, sourced via a reputable supplier, may have done very little work and, in effect, be as good as new. In some cases, the model in question may be fitted with costly options, some of which are nice to have but would be not added where a new purchase was being made. So the chance of an ex-demo buy can make a really sensible choice.

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Refurbished equipment

A quality, refurbished mower may well look every bit as good as new. If the same machine is also backed by a warranty, the higher price you will have to pay over a similar used model could be well worth the extra. That said there are genuine refurbishments and those that merely look the part.

A thoroughly refurbished fairway mower, for example, will really be put through a complete rebuild. As an example, all cutting unit bearings will be renewed, regardless of the condition of the originals. Key hydraulic hoses will also be replaced.

Look also for OEM parts, third party fuel, oil and hydraulic filters suggesting other replaced items made also be spurious. This is not to suggest non-OEM parts are always inferior but more that with OEM replacements you know what you are getting.

Know the true value of your trade-in

It is all too easy to get tripped up by the cost of new equipment. When replacing a mower, tractor, top-dresser or aerator, for example, the new kit can seem desperately costly. But it is the cost to change that really matters. Just as new kit prices have climbed, the value of well cared for used equipment has also risen.

It therefore follows that you can only really get the best deal by ensuring you know the value of the kit you may wish to part exchange.

It also pays to look after equipment as you can really get more for it if it makes an easy used sale for the dealer.

And remember, if you do not like the part-ex deal you can consider selling your existing kit as opposed to exchanging it.

If you look on-line you can get a good idea of what used equipment fetches. It also pays to keep service records of all equipment. Just as you would like to know a mower has had its engine oil changed to schedule, being able to show the kit you are selling has been cared for counts for something too.

Those clubs that currently have a rolling equipment replacement programme can also help themselves by looking after any kit on long-term hire or lease. Service records and a clean bit of kit will always be regarded more highly than that which has obviously been worked hard and not cared for.

Does a used buy make a sound buy?

For many clubs, the whole reason for keeping key machinery up to date is to ensure the quality of the course is not compromised and that key mowing tasks are not interrupted by equipment down-time.

Modern golf course mowers are for the most part beautifully made and designed for intensive use. Many courses will swap out kit that still has hundreds of hours of useful life remaining.

And it is sourcing such kit as a used buy that can really help reduce equipment overheads. If you are on a tight equipment budget – and that will apply to many clubs – then it really is well worth considering certain items of used equipment even if you still buy new for certain key items.

But remember the basic rule. It is the whole life operating and ownership cost of any item that matters. Always do a few sums and work out if a used buy that saves money up front will actually be cheaper than new over a given period.

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Back in time looks back at cuttings of greenkeeping news from days gone-by, 2012 will be a landmark year, as it will be the centenary of Greenkeeping Associations, as well as 25 years since BIGGA was formed. Each month we will look back at the current month, but in a different year, from over the last hundred. This month we travel back to October 1982.

BitGA Chairman, Harry Herrington, of Lindrick Golf Club, was featured on the front cover, while the Association’s newly appointed President, Peter Alliss, wrote an article expressing his appreciation of the work of the country’s greenkeepers. Peter, who was elected for a three year period, also wrote of some of his personal dislikes on golf courses – daisies on the fairways and the need for good housekeeping around the course. He also called for some fresh thinking by both golf clubs and the Association to move the game forward.

The Letters page included contributions from Sid Arrowsmith, urging people to contribute articles to the magazine; Honorary BGGA Secretary and Treasurer, Walter Heeles, welcoming the magazine’s new Editor, John Lelean, and Bill Pile describing a problem with a hydraulic pipe on a greens machine.

Do you have any old artifacts from days gone-by? Perhaps your grandad was a greenkeeper and has something stowed away in the loft? Maybe an Association tie, or a journal? If so we would love to hear from you. We are particularly interested in the early part of the last century, but anything you have would be worth considering for future editions of this article.

Please contact us on 01347 833800 or email Elliott Small, BIGGA Past Chairman, elliott.edna@hotmail.co.uk.

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Please contact us on 01347 833800 or email Elliott Small, BIGGA Past Chairman, elliott.edna@hotmail.co.uk

Back in time
Scotland

West

Sorry for not submitting something last month but it was due to a typing error that I sent the 2010 article to head office instead of the 2011 version. There really wasn’t a great deal to report other than the Spring outing held atCowglen Golf Club on May 19, which, surprisingly, experienced a lovely sunny day, unlike many of the other days in that month.

The course was in excellent condition for the time of year after all the difficulties and for that we must thank Michael/Slack and his team for their efforts and the Council for allowing the Section to play the course.

The results were as follows


North

Sorry for there not being much/news last month but there was a bit of a mix up at Headquarters with our report being sent in instead of the 2011 version. We did manage to thank Ben Brooks for all his efforts which was appreciated, also to let all the runners-up get in the magazine. Robert and myself are still finding our feet with the Section news report but here goes. We would like to start by saying congratulations to the North Section team for winning the Norrie Whytock Trophy at Auchterarder on August 17.

In what was a very close match the team on the day was Captain and Committee regular Ross Macrae, of Newmachar, Richard Pitz, also of Newmachar, David Allen, of Killearn, and Ian Robertson, of Cadenhead. The golf was followed by a fantastic buffet meal, our thanks go to Gary and his staff. We hope our winners on the day were, G. Potter & P. Davies, 2. K. Christie & B. Alexander, 3. R. Rotheroe & E. Shaw, 4. S. R. Smyth & B. J. Smith, 5. P. Rowbottam & T. Callan. Thanks also to the local Amenity Technology, for sponsoring the refreshments. A big thank you goes to our captain David Allen, for putting up with our antics, with our usual, the third toughest machine nowadays 104 is the winning score, which apparently in the past has been a round of 88 point which in my opinion was way out of five teams on 88

Finally, I am hoping to release the General AGM report before the next issue.

There really wasn’t a great deal of columns in recent months.

East

I missed last month’s news but here is the next issue.

Well, as I write August is over and we may wonder if we have had a summer of any kind. The links at North Berwick have never been so green for so long, the white dormant colour that is never been so green for so long, links at North Berwick have been in excellent condition. Well done to all involved, Eugene Brune and his team for the wonderful working conditions we have been able to enjoy. However we will be back on the course for the North of the river versus the South, which I will report on at a later stage.

The Scottish National Tournament was held at The Duke’s course on June 15 where there was an excellent turn out of 70 to play a reformed course which proved to be a great test of golf. Congratulations to Derek Robson and his staff and thanks also to the in-house staff, along with the administrative staff for their assistance in helping to make a successful day. As usual Peter Boyd organised everything in a first class manner and we appreciate the assistance of Andy O’Hara, the Vice Chairman, I am sure both obliged to them for all their work.

I played at the East Section West Willie Wood Tournament over Mortonhall Golf Club in August and was very pleased with my first experience of the course, the layout created a variety of interest and tested the golfing ability by altering the club selection throughout the course.

The course condition was first class and absolutely first class, congratulations to Dave Anderson for his staff for the course presentation.

I may extend a well done to two of my section members, Stuart Taylor, the new Captain of the month, and pay on the day. The entry fee is £10 and this will include coffee bacon roll on arrival and a drinks reception.

We hope we will get a good support for this annual tournament. Two of our regular members Brian Hunter and George Simpson have had some heart problems both needing a bypass operation. Our thoughts are with them and we wish them both a speedy recovery. If you have any news please get in touch with Chairman Robert Patterson on 01931393954 or Secretary Dale Robertson on 0774517534.

Northern

Hello everyone. Hope you are all well. It seems only five minutes ago we had the start of the hot dry spring weather, now looking out over the golf course at the leaving changes that have taken place and some more rain, autumn is here. On August 31 we held our Invitation Day at Blyth GC.

The Section’s thanks go to the golf club for allowing courtesy on the course, also Alan and his team for providing a good test of golf. The golf was followed by a fantastic buffet meal, our thanks go to Gary and his staff. We hope our winners on the day were, G. Potter & P. Davies, 2. K. Christie & B. Alexander, 3. R. Rotheroe & E. Shaw, 4. S. R. Smyth & B. J. Smith, 5. P. Rowbottam & T. Callan. Nearst the Line - M. Builner.

Thanks to everyone for making it a great day, and to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the event. Congratulations to go Bing- ley Hill for winning the Golf Day, the first time Mortonhall has won the event and also to Carl Crocher for putting them together.

The Autumn Tournament is on our doorstep, this year it is being held at Portmaddog golf club and by the photographs I’ve seen the course looks an absolute picture and would I’m sure be a beauty to play too! The Autumn Tournament this year is being split into two venues to encourage all and any of the membership to take part. All will be covered by Birchgrof golf club on November 30, so please try and get along on the day.

The Section Tournament is being held at Tregaron golf club on May 14, and the final will be held at Penrhiwceiber golf club on 31 July. The Section Tournament will be the only Section tournament this year and will be held at Blyth GC.

Finally, if anyone has anything they would like to see in the section's newsletter please contact me on 0141-942-5554 or 07709823914 or e-mail me at stuart.taylor@glasgowsgolfclub.com I hope everyone has a good remainder to the season and eagerly awaits your call.

Stuart Taylor

Central

The Section AGM will be held at the Training room at Elmwood Golf Club on October 26, at 2pm and be preceded by a presentation from Cale Bigelow at the same venue.

Cale is a professor at Purdue University in the USA and is expected to talk about the latest treatments, and pay on the day. The entry fee is £10 and this will include coffee bacon roll on arrival and a drinks reception.

We hope we will get a good support for this annual tournament. Two of our regular members Brian Hunter and George Simpson have had some heart problems both needing a bypass operation. Our thoughts are with them and we wish them both a speedy recovery. If you have any news please get in touch with Chairman Robert Patterson on 01931393954 or Secretary Dale Robertson on 0774517534.

North Wales

I have to apologise for the lack of columns in recent months. There are various reasons for this but I'm not going to bore you with the in’s and out’s. So, let’s get on with this month’s newsletter.

There have been a couple of things going on since the last column. First of all the annual North Wales/North West match took place at Helensburgh on June 16, and with our Section only able to produce a team of five on the day, we were destined to play only for honour as most of our better players where unable to play that day. However, Luckily, Jason Moody and two players from the North West Section played for the North Wales team, making up the sheet as an eight a side four game match.

We where extremely lucky that the day ended with a score of 2-2 and with the match harded North Wales, as holders, retained the trium tough machine, so I personally didn’t believe we really deserved it as we showed up as poorly supported as we did. A big thank you goes to Jason Moody, and Amenity Technology, for sponsoring the day and taking as much care of the players as you did. A big thank you also to, Heather Moore for the fantastic course and great welcome from all at the club.

Secondly, on July 6 a 20/20 cricket match was held at Ashley Cricket Club, I didn’t attend this event and I’m afraid the North Wales team got a good thrashing. It’s a good job we Welsh don’t really count cricket as an actual sport but a thank you has to go to Nick Gray, and Battaglione, for putting the北least the tournament and also to Carl Crocher for putting them together.

The Autumn Tournament is on our doorstep, this year it is being held at Portmaddog golf club and by the photographs I’ve seen the course looks an absolute picture and would I’m sure be a beauty to play too! The Autumn Tournament this year is being split into two venues to encourage all and any of the membership to take part. All will be covered by Birchgrof golf club on November 30, so please try and get along on the day.

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Stuart Taylor