EMPLOYEES BUY TURFMASTER

The employees at grass machinery manufacturers Turfmaster, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, have bought the company from the previous owners, Harlow Agricultural Merchants (HAM).

Turfmaster is now an independent company with HAM retaining only a 20 per cent share. Funding arrangements are also in place.

HAM, of Bishops Stortford, Essex, was keen to reduce its stake in Turfmaster because the fit with HAM’s, “corn, seed and feed” business was poor. Equally Turfmaster’s managers and employees felt they were ideally placed to move the company forward into the 1990’s.

John deGraft-Johnson, Turfmaster’s chairman, says: “Product performance, quality and service are the key issues in the professional market. So employee commitment is paramount. “In many companies these words are truisms without teeth. But in Turfmaster’s case, the employees have backed their words with hard cash. The enthusiasm and dedication is therefore total.”

END OF AN ERA

WHEN George Small, Greenkeeper/Professional at Galashiels Golf Club in the Borders of Scotland, retires on the 29th March 1990, it will bring to an end 62 years of unbroken service by the Small family at this club.

George started as a greenkeeper at Galashiels, moved to Buchanan Castle under the late well known Willie Bradford before moving to Dunbar as Greenkeeper/Professional and finally back to Galashiels. George will stay in Galashiels after his retirement, where most of his family live and no doubt still will have a regular game on the hill and may be ponder over all the changes that have taken place in greenkeeping in the last 62 years. Even though the break has been made with Galashiels Golf Club the family connection with greenkeeping lives on in the shape of Bob’s youngest son as a head greenkeeper and this son’s son has also entered the greenkeeping profession.

ROUGH ON THE GRASS

T has come to our notice that the Marquess of Salisbury has a major problem with the turf at Hatfield House and the damage, perpetrated by the visiting hordes who pay handsomely to walk on the ancient sod.

In 1986 the Marquess decided gently to redirect people from the house by making more of the gardens maintained by a team of six gardeners. Last year over 60,000 people tramped round what was designed as a private pitch.

David Beaumont, the head gardener, explained that they have tried growing the grass through wire mesh, putting in four inches of easy draining sand and installing upturned cones with mesh tops at particularly susceptible parts of the paths and crossroads.

The current approach is to use a plastic variant on the concrete cone or simply putting in a few low wire mesh stepping stones. The topic is now standard at the quarterly meeting of the Professional Gardeners’ Guild but it seems no one has the answer. “There are some people,” he says, “who swear by some fancy method or other but most just re-turf. And to be honest, I think that’s all you can do.”

Can those more inspired with their own answers please write to me. And if you go visiting, please step on the bricks!