

Doc's Dugout - An Inning from our Past & Present

by Dr. Kent Kurtz, STMA Historian

Similarities an Ocean Apart - Part II

A trip to the UK to visit STMA's friends - The Institute of Groundsmanship

As outlined in the last issue of the newsletter, I accompanied Alain Langlois, of Lanco Amenagement, Inc., to the UK.

We arrived in Glasgow, Scotland and were met by Stewart Aird of Souters Sportsturf and immediately set out to visit soccer stadiums in Glasgow - the Celtic Football Club, the Rangers Football Club and Hampden, Scotland's National Stadium. These fields were all manicured perennial ryegrass, with state-of-the-art, sand based construction. That evening we had dinner with John and Christine Souter at their home. The next day we visited Ann Murray, the Director of the European Turfgrass Laboratories. This is a certified USGA laboratory that provides recommendations for both sportsturf and golf course construction projects. The remainder of the day was spent with Alistair Connell, Grass Technology International (the consulting branch of John Souter's company) who drove us to St. Andrews to visit with Eddie Adams, the head greenskeeper at Old Course. Later that day we toured Kings Barns, a spectacular new links course that is carved out of the sand along the North Sea.

The next day we went to Manchester to visit Old Trafford, the home of the Manchester United Football Club. We spent the day with an old friend, head groundsman, Keith Kent, who gave us a great tour of his facility. While in Manchester, we also toured the construction site of the new sports complex where John Souter is building several soccer fields for the Manchester United Football Club. These fields, or pitches as they call them, are all underdrained, sand construction with a special root-zone mixture and perennial ryegrass turf. The irrigation system consists of several water cannons or large rain guns. I asked why they didn't install underground irrigation - the answer was quite interesting - this farmland was used for food production during the Great War; hence, the city council of Manchester will not permit permanent fixtures in this rich soil in case there is a World War III and then the land must return to agriculture.

We spent that weekend in Yorkshire with Brian Robinson, the former IOG educational chairman, who helped us coordinate some of the early STMA/IOG seminars back in the 1980's, when our annual meetings were held in conjunction with the GCSAA. From Brian's we went on to visit with David Shelton near Lincoln. David is the managing partner of Shelton's Sportsturf Drainage Solutions, Europe's leading manufacturer of sports turf drainage equipment. David has developed many fine machines such as: tractor-mounted super trenchers with clean-up conveyors, gravel and sand backfilling hoppers, hydraulically driven trenching machines, gravel band drainers and stainless steel hoppers.

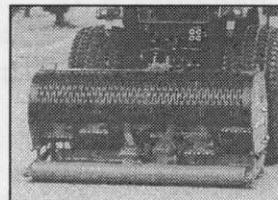
David was kind enough to take us to the Saltex show at the Windsor Racecourse in Windsor, just west of London, where we spent the last four days of our trip. As always we were well received by our friends at the IOG. All in all, I would say that it was a very enjoyable and productive venture.

In the next issue, I will discuss sports turf education in the British Isles, the Saltex Show at Windsor and how the Institute of Groundsmanship serves its members.



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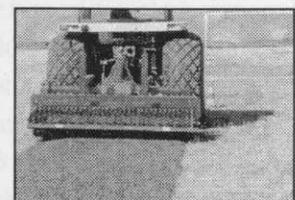
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