

Record profit from Ransomes

A 36 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £13.2 million (£9.7 million) has been reported by Ransomes for the year to 31 December 1988. This is the sixth consecutive year of record profit growth. Turnover increased by 13 per cent to £92.1 million compared with £81.2 million in the previous year.

The Group's strategy in both the commercial and consumer grass machinery markets is to grow organically by the development of new products and expanding the range whilst, at the same time, seeking acquisitions which either complement the product range or strengthen the Group's geographical coverage.

Sales of grass cutting machinery, Ransomes' main activity, improved by 25 per cent.

The benefit of new manufacturing techniques introduced since 1986 are starting to show in the results. Computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing systems have proved particularly successful at Ipswich, whilst the 'just in time' manufacturing principle at Mountfield and robotic welding equipment in the USA are reducing unit production costs.

During 1988, Ransomes made three strategic acquisitions. In January, Steiner Turf Equipment Inc based in Ohio was

purchased for £1.19 million. In September BTS Green SpA situated in Renate near Milan was acquired for £0.86 million whilst Granja S.A. located at Toulouse was bought for £2.58 million in December.

Steiner Turf Equipment increases the Group's presence in the American market, and provides Ransomes with a range of specialist products which complement the Group's existing range of commercial machinery. The Steiner products are now sold worldwide using the extensive Ransomes distribution network.

BTS Green and Granja, which both manufacture domestic rotary mowers, have strengthened the Group's position in the European consumer grass cutting machinery market. They provide manufacturing centres as well as distribution networks in Italy and France.

The existing Ransomes businesses generated a positive cash flow during 1988, but the purchase of the above companies together with the working capital needed for their day to day operations meant that Group borrowings increased during the year to £7.8 million.

New operator for golf centre

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council have appointed A M Golf Services as the operators for the par three golf course and new driving range on the West Ham Lei-

sure Park site. The company was chosen from six others for their package which proposes a high standard of service.

The new driving range is currently under construction by John Jacobs Associates, and will consist of 24 floodlit bays which will be open from 9.30am until 10pm seven days per week. The conversion of an existing building into a Pro Shop will be another addition to the par 3 course already on site.

A M Golf Services is run by Anthony Walters and Mark Howell; Mr Walters has had considerable experience in leisure management and Mr Howell is a club professional who has been a professional golfer for ten years, three of them playing on the European Golf Circuit. They are both committed to making golf accessible to all members of the public, and providing facilities and opportunities for everyone to become involved in the game.

Despite record attendances, the growing popularity of the game and the mild winter allowing more play, the golf Centre is expected to have operated at a small deficit for the 1988/89 financial year. By the Council providing the additional facilities and appointing a golf professional to operate the facility on their behalf, the public will have greater opportunities and the centre will produce an operational surplus. The company has been awarded the concession for five years.

New amenity grass seed brochure

Booker Seeds Ltd has just published the 1989/90 edition of "Grass Seed Mixtures For Amenity Turf Areas" and copies are available free of charge from the company's Sleaford office.

This 32 page booklet is one of the most comprehensive publications of its type. The new edition highlights the company's well proven range of 'Designer' mixtures and a useful selection chart makes it easy for all customers to identify the most suitable formulation for their individual requirements.

The company says it has extended its selection of grass and wild flower mixtures to cover a more diverse range of habitats and also include a wider choice of colourful native species.

In the introduction to the booklet Booker Seeds stress the importance of their Technical Support Team and point out that specialists in this field are available for 'on-site' consultations.



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Director of Leisure Services, Gordon Holdcroft (right) and the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee, Councillor Martyn Frost, with Anthony Walters of AM Golf Services (seated).

Sta-Brite sales growth

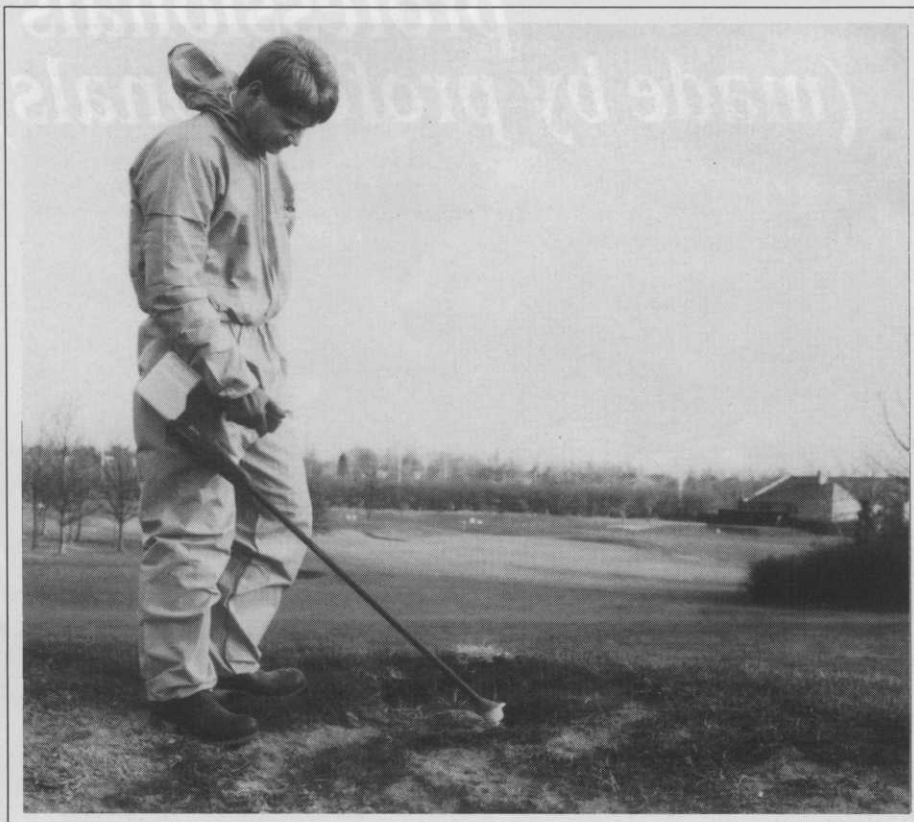
Thermax Sta-Brite Products Ltd is celebrating a year of phenomenal sales growth with the enlargement of its sales force and new distributorships.

The Farnborough, Hants based company now covers the whole of southern England, with the team headed by Chris Sharp and now being joined by Chris Rudkin and Bernard Wall.

Sta-Brite has recently been appointed sole distributors for England and Wales for the Swiss-made Schweizer Royal range of top grade, slow release nitrogen fertilisers. The Royal range is said to be ideal for golf courses and includes four different formulations that are micro-granulated specially for use on golf greens, plus seven other products ideal for tees, fairways and roughs.

Farmura have also granted distributor status to Sta-Brite for a range of organic fertilisers.

Sta-Brite's new 1989 Catalogue is available now and lists a host of new products including its own Nitrosolo range of economically priced high nitrogen fertilisers, a re-formulated range of grass seed mixtures, TSP HI-FLIERS, plus a new range from Booker Seeds.



Weeds 'picked off' in bunkers with pin point accuracy by the Panther Compact Lance.

New herbicide lance gives 'sniper' accuracy

A new applicator that will spray weed killing chemicals with pin point accuracy is about to be launched onto the British market.

The hand held Panther Compact Lance manufactured by the Nomix Co. and available in May through their subsidiary company, Chipman Ltd has taken the controlled droplet applicator to its ultimate efficiency.

Weighing less than 2kg including a full container of chemicals an operator can set the rate of spray at a comfortable walking pace, to cover fence lines, out of bounds trenches and the edges of bunkers, without any danger of chemical drift.

Before setting off, the operator calibrates the flow rate and spray width into a sealed cup. The chemical is then automatically let back into the container.

The sealed 750ml plastic pack of the herbicide, Stirrup, with a glyphosate base is produced by Monstanto Chemicals. The pack is snapped into the handle of the lance so it becomes a complete sealed

unit. This quantity is sufficient to spray a band of weedkiller 15cm wide along three miles of fence line.

The lance can also be adjusted to spray over a wider band or at its narrowest for treating around trees, shrubs or spot application. Greenkeepers will find this lance particularly useful for weed treatment in sand bunkers and along path edges between tees.

Power for the lance is provided by four easily purchased pencil type batteries either disposable or the rechargeable variety.

So far only Stirrup has received MAF clearance as a herbicide, but John Collins, Chipmans commercial manager, anticipates a further range of chemicals will be available later in the year after approval at the Ministry Testing Laboratories.

The total droplet control system allows undilute chemical to be sprayed with great accuracy and minimum drift. There is also incorporated a tracer element so the operator can see exactly where the chemical has been applied.

The advantage of Stirrup, according to Dr Richard Garnett, Monsanto's UK manager is that the chemical acts through the leaves of the plant, leaving no residue in

the soil or leaching. He also confirmed there would be no harmful effects on wild life.

Complete Weed Control take to the water

Following its purchase of Aquaply Ltd in 1988, Complete Weed Control is now set to tackle the aquatic weed market on a national basis.

In November 1988, CWC held an aquatic training course for its staff which was conducted by David Spencer-Jones of 'Waterwise'. Over the past two months they have received additional training on boat handling and application techniques from CWC sales and marketing director, Nick Thain, who is himself an NPTC aquatics examiner. These courses were held at various locations throughout the country and each was then followed by an examination, using independent NPTC examiners.

As a result, CWC now has a total of 21 personnel holding PA5A certificates of competence, including two NPTC examiners. The PA5A module covers boat mounted hydraulic boom nozzle, viscous

OUT AND ABOUT

gel, granule and hand held applicators to water.

This major achievement means that for the first time there is a truly national network of contractor staff from a single company covering the important aquatic weed market in Great Britain.

Elmwood students visit Gleneagles

Recently a one week course in Supervisory Studies for greenkeepers was held at Elmwood College. This year there were 20 students on the course from throughout the UK, from Islay and Inverness to Woking.

Apart from a full programme of study including topics such as staff motivation, budgeting, communication, interviewing techniques and public speaking, the students had the opportunity to be shown round the golf complex at Gleneagles by Mr Archie Dunn, Head Greenkeeper on the Kings Course. The students were also addressed by external speakers from the greenkeeping world including Alistair Connell, Estates and Golf Course Manager, Cawdor Golf Club, Bishopbriggs and John Philp, Head Greenkeeper, Carnoustie Golf Club, Carnoustie.

The group are shown in the photograph



with Mr A Smith, (extreme left) Senior Lecturer in Horticulture and Course Tutor.

Improving the approach

However lovely the venue potholes in the approach roads, through roads and paths spoil the whole effect and give rise to complaints and possibly claims for personal injury or damage to vehicles.

Yet unsightly and dangerous as such potholes are; their repair has to wait on suitable weather, on being able to shut the area for repair, on waiting for enough holes to warrant calling in a contractor.

Now however permanent repairs which completely blend with the road surface taking an average of 3 minutes each can be effected by unskilled labour to any type of breakdown in tarmac/asphalt, in any weather conditions using only a broom, shovel and a British product Emcol Instant Road Repair without even having to close the area. Packed in 25kg buckets with a storage life of 10 months this product is applied cold with no mixing, cutting out, tack coats or rolling except for large overlays.

Formulated by Emcol International Ltd of Bristol and manufactured in 35 locations in 25 countries overseas, Instant Road Repair is available throughout the UK (carriage free) in quantities from two packs to truck loads.

Basingstoke Golf Club to be sold

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held by the Basingstoke Golf Club Ltd, on Wednesday 29th March, the voting members present resolved by 335 votes to 47 "That the company's existing golf course and premises shall be sold and the company shall acquire in its place two new 18 hole golf courses with ancilliary golfing facilities and such sale and purchase shall

be on the best terms reasonably obtainable by the board of directors."

This decision confirms the rumours and happenings of the past 12 months during which time several offers have been received for the 105 acres 18 hole golf course. The board has appointed the residential and leisure divisions of chartered surveyors Humberts to act on their behalf in the disposal of the course and the acquisition of an alternative site, probably south of the M3 motorway, upon which can be placed two 18 hole courses and a modern club house.

The fact that these momentous decisions can be considered by the existing Membership, is brought about by the strong possibility that the 105 acres course will be included in the second alteration of the North East Hampshire Structure Plan due for publication in the near future. Basingstoke requires 4500 houses and Hampshire County Council in its recommendations to Nicholas Ridley, Minister for the Environment, have suggested that these be provided as an extension to Basingstoke Town between 1991 and 2001.

Provided that a suitable site for the relocation of the existing Club can be found, the development of the 105 acres could receive the support of the planners.

Humberts partners, Jeremy Blanchard and Nigel Talbot-Ponsonby, are in contact with interested developers.

Course measurement changes

A change in the regulations now allows clubs to set the par score for every hole on their course effective from 1st April.

The Council of National Golf Unions have included the revised regulations among a number of modifications to the standard scratch score and handicapping scheme introduced in 1983.

Previously only length had been the criteria for deciding par. A par three hole measured up to 250 yards from the competition tee marker to the centre of the green, a par four between 251 and 475 yards and a par five 476 yards and above.

Under the new rules a par three cannot be longer than 250 yards, but a par four can be in the range of 220 yards to 500 yards. A par five can be set from 440 yards upwards.

The revision does not affect the standard scratch score of a course, but does allow clubs to adjust par to take account of the terrain between tee and green and the normal prevailing weather conditions.

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

17th-23rd JULY, 1989

If you wish to assist with bunker-raking and other duties at Troon, please forward your name and address to the Executive Director as soon as possible with an indication of the dates on which you are available. Please note that assistance is needed for the practice days as well as the four Championship days.

Preference will be given to those members who can make themselves available for the whole period.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Members should note that this will be held at **The Lyme Regis Golf Club, Lyme Regis, Dorset** from 14th - 16th August 1989.