

the Golf Course

Incorporating Golf Greenkeeping

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1989



Politics

Another R & A document - "The Demand for Golf" is reviewed by Jim Arthur

Exhibitions

John Lelean reports on "Golf Course Europe"

Development

John Campbell looks at how Cirencester solved its own problem

Advice

The pros and cons of greenkeeping in Germany

Launch

The details of how to join the

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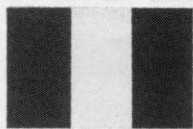
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RÉSUMÉ



FRENCH

La pression incessante exercée pour que de nouveaux terrains de golf soient créés afin de satisfaire le nombre croissant de personnes désireuses de se mettre au golf a incité le Royal and Ancient Golf Club de St. Andrews à produire un autre document-conseils intitulé: "The Demand for Golf".

Bien que le rapport se concentre entièrement sur la situation au Royaume-Uni, une grande partie de son contenu est applicable aux autres pays. Néanmoins, notre collaborateur, Jim Arthur, n'est pas entièrement d'accord avec le document: traditionaliste avoué, il déplore la suggestion qu'il vaudrait mieux, vu le prix élevé de la terre, construire des parcours à neuf trous suivant des spécifications moins exigeantes et les améliorer éventuellement à une date ultérieure.

Il insiste que ce n'est point la façon de faire face à la demande car il pourrait s'ensuivre d'innombrables problèmes d'entretien des parcours pour le responsable ainsi que des coûts proportionnellement plus élevés.

La plupart des terrains de golf de Grande-Bretagne appartiennent uniquement aux membres: il y a quelque quatre-vingts ans de cela la terre s'achetait à bas prix. Comme les meilleurs golfs sont situés sur un sol de mauvaise qualité, sur des landes, des brandes et des dunes, les propriétaires de ces terres étaient ravis de trouver des acquéreurs.

Maintenant, dit Mr. Arthur, il ne reste plus de terres de ce type à acheter, d'où l'achat de terres agricoles qui conviennent mal à des terrains de golf - des architectes non qualifiés en font le dessin et la construction en est entreprise par des personnes qui ne connaissent pas grand chose en matière de parcours de golf.

Cependant, le document "The Demand for Golf", comme le document précédent "The Way Forward", causeront, selon Mr Arthur, quelques 'remous dans la mare' et, comme il l'avoue, il est connu pour y jeter plus de pavés que la plupart!

Il est aussi communiqué que la USGA doit se défendre dans un procès intenté par la Karsten Company - fabricants des clubs Ping-Eye 2 qui font l'objet du différend - au sujet de la décision de la USGA et du Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews à savoir que ces clubs ne sont pas conformes aux spécifications des Règles de Golf.

La somme en jeu serait de l'ordre de 100 millions de dollars. La USGA met en question la position de la Karsten Company déclarant que si les fabricants peuvent vendre des clubs qui ne sont pas conformes, elle n'aura pas d'autorité quant à la conduite du jeu.

Dans ce numéro également: les expériences de l'entrepreneur de parcours britannique, Stephen Goldthorpe, qui a délaissé sa ville natale de Sheffield il y a deux ans pour prendre un poste de gestionnaire de parcours près de Munich. Il ne regrette pas cette décision mais fait remarquer que son salaire, plus élevé, ne lui vient pas sans effort dans un pays où les contrôles stricts concernant l'environnement peuvent rendre l'entretien d'un terrain de golf beaucoup plus difficile qu'en Grande-Bretagne.



SPANISH

La continua presión para que hayan más campos de golf y así satisfacer al creciente número de personas que quieren iniciarse en este deporte, ha hecho que el Royal and Ancient Golf Club de St. Andrews produzca otro documento de consulta titulado "The Demand for Golf" (La demanda de golf).

Aunque el informe se centra en la situación en el Reino Unido, mucho de lo que se dice se podría aplicar a otros países. No obstante, el documento no goza de un comentario del todo favorable de nuestro colaborador, Jim Arthur. Tradicionalista confeso, él lamenta que se sugiera que debido al alto costo de la compra de terrenos, es mejor construir campos de nueve hoyos siguiendo menores especificaciones, para posteriormente realizar mejoras en el campo.

Esta, según afirma, no es la manera de satisfacer la demanda, ya que puede conducir a problemas imprevistos para el encargado del "green" en lo que respecta al mantenimiento del campo, y a la vez puede generar proporcionalmente mayores costos. La mayor parte de los campos de golf británicos son de manera inconfundible propiedad de sus miembros. Los terrenos se compraron a bajo precio hace unos ochenta años y debido a que los mejores campos de golf se encuentran en terrenos de poca calidad, terrenos baldíos, brezales y dunas, los propietarios originales se alegraban de encontrar a alguien que quisiera comprar dichas tierras.

En la actualidad, declara el Sr. Arthur, no queda este tipo de terreno para construir, por lo tanto se utiliza terreno inapropiado que pertenece a tierras agrícolas, el diseño corre a cargo de arquitectos no calificados, y quienes lo construyen saben muy poco sobre la construcción de campos de golf.

Sin embargo, tanto "The Demand for Golf" como el anterior documento "The Way Forward" (El camino a seguir), causarán - en palabras de Mr Arthur - unas cuantas olas en el charco; y como él mismo lo dice, a él se le conoce por ser un buen "lanzador de piedras al agua".

También se informa que la USGA va a confrontar un juicio iniciado por la compañía Karsten, los fabricantes de los polémicos palos de golf Ping-Eye 2, relacionado con la disposición, tanto de la USGA como del Royal and Ancient Golf Club, en el sentido de que dichos palos de golf no están conformes con las especificaciones señaladas en el Reglamento de Golf.

Se dice que el dinero en cuestión asciende a más de 100 millones de dólares. La USGA cuestiona a la compañía Karsten ya que, según dice, si los fabricantes pueden comercializar palos ilegales, aquella no cuenta con autoridad para dirigir la conducción del juego.

También aparecen las experiencias de Stephen Goldthorpe, encargado de un "green" británico, quien dejara su Sheffield nativo hace dos años para dirigirse a Munich donde pasó a ser Gerente de un Campo de Golf. No se arrepiente del cambio, pero resalta que su mayor sueldo es el fruto del esfuerzo, en un país en el cual los controles del medio ambiente son tan estrictos, que mantener un campo resulta más difícil que en Gran Bretaña.



GERMAN

Die ständige Forderung nach mehr Golfplätzen, um die wachsende Anzahl derjenigen zu befriedigen, die Golf spielen wollen, hat den Royal and Ancient Golf Club von St. Andrews dazu veranlaßt, eine weitere Beratungsschrift mit dem Titel "The Demand for Golf" (Die Nachfrage nach Golf) herauszugeben.

Obwohl sich der Bericht ganz auf die Lage im Vereinigten Königreich konzentriert, läßt sich viel von dem Gesagten auch auf andere Länder anwenden. Diese Schrift findet jedoch nicht die volle Zustimmung unseres Mitarbeiters Jim Arthur. Als selbsterklärter Traditionalist mißbilligt er den Vorschlag, wegen der hohen Kosten des Landkaufs besser jetzt neun Löcher nach einer niedrigeren Spezifikation zu bauen und den Golfplatz später zu verbessern.

Dies, so behauptet er, ist aber nicht der richtige Weg, um die Nachfrage zu befriedigen, da er zu unzähligen Problemen für den Golfplatzverwalter bei der Instandhaltung des Grüns als auch zu entsprechend höheren Kosten führen würde.

Die meisten Golfplätze Großbritanniens gehören ausschließlich den Mitgliedern, da man das Land vor ungefähr achtzig Jahren billig kaufen konnte. Da die besten Golfplätze auf schlechtem Boden wie Heide, Moorland und Sanddünen liegen, waren die ursprünglichen Besitzer begeistert, einen Käufer zu finden.

Jetzt, so sagt Mr. Arthur, steht von diesem Bodentyp nichts mehr zur Entwicklung zur Verfügung, und daher wird ungeeignetes landwirtschaftliches Gelände in Benutzung genommen, von nicht qualifizierten Architekten als Golfplatz entworfen und von Leuten gebaut, die wenig vom Bau von Golfplätzen verstehen.

Doch sollen "The Demand for Golf" und das vorausgehende Dokument über die Grün-Verwaltung - "The Way Forward" (Der Weg nach Vorn), mit Mr. Arthurs Worten ein paar leichte Wellen im Teich verursachen, und wie er sagt, ist bekannt, daß er mehr Steine wirft als die meisten!

Es wird ebenfalls berichtet, daß die USGA eine Klage bekämpfen werden, die von der Karsten Company, dem Hersteller der umstrittenen Ping-Eye 2 Golfschläger, über die Entscheidung sowohl der USGA als auch des R & A, daß diese Schläger nicht den in den Golfregeln niedergelegten Spezifikationen entsprechen, angestrengt wurde.

Die in Frage stehende Summe soll sich auf mehr als \$100M belaufen. Die USGA greifen die Karsten Company an und sagen, daß sie keine Autorität haben, die Führung des Spiels zu bestimmen, wenn Fabrikanten illegale Schläger auf den Markt bringen können.

Ebenfalls veröffentlicht wird die Erfahrung des britischen Golfplatzverwalters Stephen Goldthorpe, der vor zwei Jahren seine Heimatstadt Sheffield verließ, um eine Stelle als Golfplatzmanager in der Nähe von München aufzunehmen. Er bedauert diesen Wechsel nicht, doch betont er, daß in einem Land, in dem eine strenge Umweltkontrolle die Instandhaltung von Golfplätzen schwieriger macht als in Großbritannien, sein höheres Gehalt verdient werden muß.

GREENSIDE COMMENT

The consultancy document from the Greenkeeping Panel of the R & A, was officially launched at the beginning of November with the expected 'bombshell reaction' from the national press.

The Way Forward, reviewed in part in last month's edition of *The Golf Course*, by Jim Arthur is a hard hitting criticism of the management and maintenance programmes of most of Britain's 1,800 member and public courses.

Much of the blame is laid fairly and squarely on the antiquated club management practices in member run clubs, who have persisted in keeping a Committee structure, which has proved inefficient, ineffective and quite unable to cope with the vast increases of play.

It is said committees are in the main far too large, particularly the Green Committee, whose technical knowledge is described as "either non-existent or at best woefully primitive". It is suggested they should consist of a maximum of three - The Head Greenkeeper, Green Chairman and the Club Secretary.

The panel also suggests that many Committee members take office more as a step on the social ladder, rather than in an attempt to make a meaningful contribution to the well being of the course and the interests of their fellow members.

They also accuse committee attitudes to greenkeeping as "astonishingly disorganised, penny pinching and arrogant".

Committee interference by those whose qualifications consist of a farming connection or an interest in gardening, together with low inadequate budgets are blamed for the increasing problems of course condition. It is suggested that even in winter it is possible to have mud-free fairways and firm fast greens, but all too few courses experience these conditions because of the lack of expertise.

The heart of the problem, which the panel under the Chairmanship of Tim Taylor see as the root cause of much of the troubles on British courses is the attitude of golfers, who expect their course to look like Augusta.

Club members and their elected representatives have failed to take into consideration different climatic conditions and maintenance costs, and in an attempt to produce target type greens have over-fertilised and over-watered. This has led to an increase in annual meadow grass, thatch build-up and wet, muddy conditions.

The recent 2p per head levy by the Golf Course Unions on club membership to

finance Greenkeeper Training is described as "totally inadequate" and they recommend it should be increased to 50p, rising to £1.

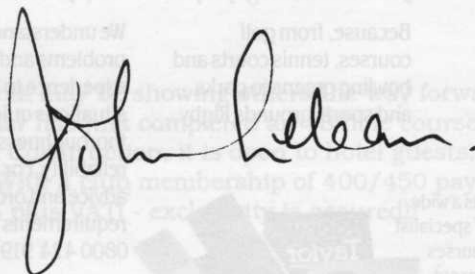
What should be worrying to any golf club is the allegation that some suppliers are using business methods which at best are described as "questionable". It is suggested that greenstaff are offered various inducements from some trade companies to purchase materials.

It is common knowledge that there are suppliers, who both through advertising and their representatives, offer clothing, glassware and other personal items to gain large orders, at the expense of bulk discounts, which should be passed on to the club. This practice according to the document is only excusable because of the "penny pinching attitude to greenkeeper salaries".

The R & A are to be congratulated on the publication of this document, which has appeared "warts and all", as the R & A have not escaped criticism themselves. They have incurred the wrath of their own greenkeeping panel for continuing to allow host clubs, together with championship committee agronomists to prepare for major events.

The new generation of golf course architects, mainly professionals with no architectural qualifications also receive a side-swipe. Reservations are expressed that too many of the new course developments will be difficult to maintain by greenstaff, because the constructions are unsound and sited on unsuitable land.

There is much to read in *The Way Forward*, together with a great deal of common sense. One can only hope that the criticisms will be regarded as constructive, those involved will take heed before it is too late and a conscious determined effort will be made to correct at least some of the problems.



EDITOR

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CLIPPINGS

By The Mower

Odds-on Sale for Race and Golf Course

Lingfield Park, best known for horse racing, but which also contains a golf course within the complex, is up for sale. Leisure Investments plc, who made a disastrous move into the casino business both at home and overseas are inviting offers for the freehold of Lingfield Park. Shareholders should also note that one casino has been sold and two others are at the contract stage, though how anyone can lose money when they own the wheel, beats us.

New Golf Course for Wisley

We hear that Southern Golf, the construction company headed by Ray Wilson, are about to sign up a £3m deal with Marlin Estates plc to build an 18 hole golf course at Wisley near Woking. Designed by Robert Trent-Jones Jnr, this will be the first UK course for Bob Junior. Let us hope he does't follow the principles of his father, on his first venture in Britain. When Moor Allerton, near Leeds was opened in the seventies, the greens were unreadable and the course so difficult, most professionals had to perform a minor miracle to break par.

Vacancies for Golf Writers

As the golf scene 'booms' so the serious golf writers decline. Doyen of the current bunch, Peter Dobereiner, is expected to put down his pen for the Observer in the New Year, which leaves Michael Williams on the Telegraph and Mitchell Platts for The Times as the two established names among a diminishing handful of readable and informed national scribes.

We hear golf course architect, Donald Steel, who writes for the Sunday Telegraph is also to cease his contributions, due to a staff editorial merger.

ICI's Media Day

ICI's Professional Products Division took a number of those hard-working amenity turf reporters to the Northamptonshire County Golf Club in October to test their skills with the little white ball.

Most would say it was purely in the line of business to inspect the bents and fescues (there were plenty of those), the golf was incidental!

However, The Golf Course publisher, Michael Coffey steered his ball nearest the pin for a bottle of Black Label - with borrowed clubs we might add, and 'The Mole' popped up from Turf Management and used his new Hogans to good effect, to also make the prize table.

Record Broken

Remember the article in March this year on the Yorkshire course at Shipley Beckfoot, where Head Greenkeeper, Pat Murphy, re-built a green from the drains upward and had it back in play within a month? Well, we hear he has slashed the time taken on his latest project by almost half!

Pat lifted the par-3, 17th green in September and had it playing in a major tournament in just 18 days. Not only that, but during the month the club were without a steward so he ran the bar in his spare time.

The Way Forward?

The owners of Hintlesham Hall in Suffolk may be showing others the way forward, for this exclusive hotel, once owned by chef Robert Carrier has just completed an 18 hole course. Designed by Hawtree & Son and built by Land Unit Construction, it is open to hotel guests, individual and corporate members only - no visitors. With a club membership of 400/450 paying £1300 entrance fee and £750 a year subscription (both plus VAT) - exclusivity is assured!!

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- To encourage and help its members to improve their professional competence as managers of golf courses.

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AN INSTITUTE POISED FOR THE 1990s

This month sees the launch of the Institute of European Golf Course Managers with a mail out of some 3500 letters. It is with a sense of pride that I have taken on the role of Director General - not in what I have achieved but pride in an Institute that is destined to become one of the most vibrant and dynamic in European golf.

The decision to form the new Institute of European Golf Course Managers wasn't taken lightly. An assessment was made about the needs of those managing golf courses and there was a lot of discussion with those working in Europe as well as those working in this country. There must be very few now involved in this industry that have not seen the new role emerging for those dedicated to the management of golf courses. No longer does the title Head Greenkeeper adequately describe the responsibilities of those taking charge and even young greenkeepers are now setting their ambitions towards golf course management.

In deciding then that there was a need for the formation of an Institute the next step was to establish the aims and objectives and the terms for membership.

The first part wasn't too difficult. The aims of the new Institute are clearly to represent the interests of its members and to ensure the experience of the golf course manager is brought to bear on the improvements of golf courses throughout Europe. Also it is to encourage its members to improve their professional competence.

The terms of membership were not quite as easy to determine. The role of the golf course manager had to be defined and discussed in detail. No one body serving the industry had done that before! Also membership had to be attracted from a wide area covering the whole of Europe - job descriptions and titles vary from one region to another so there was a need to find a title that the majority could relate to. Membership also had to be open to people with a responsibility for the design and construction and of course there had to be a category of membership for those working in the trade. Additionally because the sights of the Institute were set at a high level we were keen to attract developers, proprietors of golf courses and owners and managers of golf and leisure complexes. We hope that all will find the Institute provides a vital need in their business plans.

The categories of membership are Fellow, Ordinary and Associate. The definitions of these can be found on the Institute's Aims and Eligibility for membership and application form which is being sent to every golf club in Europe.

The most important category is that of Fellow. The IEGCM is the first organisation to recognise the achievement of those that have a long and dedicated service to the management and improvement of golf courses.

To become a Fellow of the Institute of European Golf Course Managers will not be easy nor will it be granted as a matter of course. Each applicant will be assessed on merit but on acceptance the member will be given the right to use FInstEGCM after his name.

Over the next few months the Council will be working hard and in earnest to bring in membership to the IEGCM. The importance of membership however goes beyond the immediate significance since everyone connected with the golf course industry stands to gain as the Institute gathers momentum.

GCSAA'S INTERNATIONAL SHOW EXPECTED TO BREAK MORE RECORDS IN ORLANDO

Orlando, one of Florida's hottest golfing destinations, is set to host an expected 15,000 attendees for the 61st International Golf Course Conference and Trade Show. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), sponsor of the annual event, is predicting that new records for both attendance and trade show participation will be set with the 1990 Conference and Show, which is set later this year from Feb. 19-26.

More than 70 new exhibitors are already scheduled to take stands at the 1990 show. The total number of exhibitors is expected to be between 475-500. Last February in Anaheim, Calif., 463 international exhibitors, took part, attracting 14,000 visitors.

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Technical Manager, Charles Platt, says that Knot Out is completely unique in its timing, weed spectrum and application.

The product has a low vapour pressure and the Government approval enables pedestrian controlled equipment to be safely and legally used - a bonus for less favourable areas.

Other products on the market, he says either carry weed control and spray equipment restrictions or a recommendation not to re-seed within 6 weeks which is impracticable for a groundsman's programme. He considers that the current weed species listed on the label do not reflect the true potential for Knot Out "Apart from the listing for mayweeds, chickweed, speedwells, parsely-piert, common Mouse-ear and knotgrass, excellent control of other broad leaved weeds such as plantains has also been achieved. It is envisaged that these will be added to the label in the near future".



Trevor Holmes, commercial sales manager with new Knot Out

TRELLEBORG INVESTS 5.5M IN NEW TYRE FACTORY.

Trelleborg are to invest 5.5 million pounds in a new tyre factory situated at their subsidiary, Bergougnan in Ghent, Belgium. The production of rims will also be increased through an investment of 1.2 million pounds at their subsidiary Savsjo Falgar, at Savsjo in Sweden.

The new tyre factory will supplement the existing production carried out in Trelleborg itself. The investment will be carried

out in two stages during 1991-1992 and will increase capacity by approximately 30 per cent. The Ghent factory already has a well functioning plant producing large tyres, for tractors. Plans are also in hand to increase production at the main plant in Trelleborg.

AMERICAN TRIP FOR TORO YOUNG GREENKEEPER OF THE YEAR

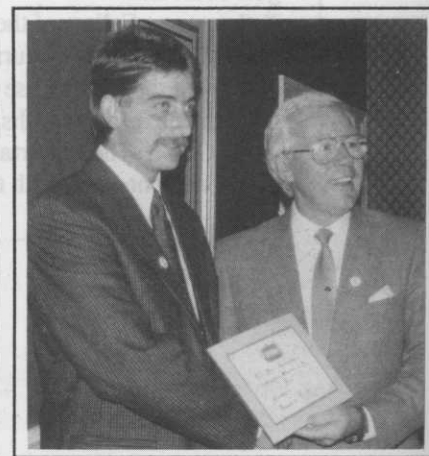
Mark Proctor, head greenkeeper at the multi-million pound, Donald Steel designed Tarporley Golf Course, has become the first 'Cheshire' phase two student to receive the Toro 'Young Greenkeeper of the year' scholarship award.

Nominated by the Cheshire College of Agriculture, Mark (below with golf commentator Alex Hay) came top of a group of young finalists interviewed by the judging panel. In January, Mark will fly to America and join U.S. students sitting for the six-week Winter School for Turfgrass Managers, held at the University of Massachusetts, Amhurst, Connecticut.

Later, he will spend the week at a Toro Company corporate headquarters and Mower Division, Minneapolis, before travelling to the Toro Irrigation Division technical facility at Riverside, California.

The finalists, studying phase two City & Guilds or Scotvec were nominated by 'turf colleges' recognised by the Greenkeepers Training Committee.

More information from David Golding BIGGA (03473) 581/2, Peter Roberts Toro (0425) 476261



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OUT AND ABOUT

CHESHIRE FARMER'S £15 MILLION GOLF AND LEISURE COMPLEX

A £15 million, 180-acre golf and leisure complex to rival the best in Europe is being constructed at Portal, Tarporley, in the heart of Cheshire by farmer and developer, John Lilley.

Included in the project will be a new 150-bedroom luxury hotel, set amidst some of the most beautiful gardens in the country and complete with three restaurants, a swimming pool, sauna, squash, tennis, snooker, jogging facilities and trout pool.

The 18-hole championship course currently under construction by Brian Pierson organisation - one of Europe's leading golf course construction companies - has been designed by golf architect Donald Steel.

Although work on the course is expected to be completed this autumn, it is unlikely to be open for play until the summer of 1991. "Our aim is to allow the course to mature and really become established long before people play on it," says John Lilley. The entire playing area has been treated with Round-up and is to be reseeded to a high specification. Fairways and tees will be sown with a mixture based on Hunters of Chester's Sports Supreme mixture and containing Agram, Wintergreen and Lustre chewings fescues, Baron smooth stalked meadow grass and Highland Brown Top. Roughs will be sown with Sports Sovereign - Lustre/Wintergreen chewings fescues, Boreal, creeping red fescue, Baron SSMG and Highland Browntop. Greens will be turfed.

The course will be open to everyone on a pay-as-you-play basis and the new clubhouse will cater exclusively for golfers. A second course is already being planned and, when completed, it is likely that membership will be considered.

CALL FOR NEW GUIDE-LINES FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Delegates attending a study workshop have called for an updating of the joint MAAC/NTC "Code of Practice" of approved pesticides in Amenity areas"

There was overwhelming concern at the lack of specific information, for risk assessment purposes, on the suitability of protective clothing, particularly coveralls and gloves. Delegates urged the Government representatives to bring together manufacturers of pesticides and protective clothing to exchange information and agree quality standards.

According to Terry Faull, a senior agricultural inspector on health and safety COSHH firmly places two responsibilities on employers. First they have to assess the health risks to employees who are working with substances hazardous to health and then to consider how to prevent or control their exposure to such risks. In addition to the application of pesticides in Agriculture and Commercial Horticulture and Amenity areas, the Regulations apply to many industrial processes in which substances such as Arsenic or Cadmium are used or to agricultural and manufacturing operations which release harmful dusts.

"Pesticides should only be used when there is no alternative method of controlling the pest or disease" he said.

"If substitution is not possible control of exposure should be achieved by technical methods such as remote operation of equipment, or by using closed systems for removing concentrate and washing containers". "Reliance upon personal protective equipment (PPE) alone should be regarded as the method of last resort", he added.

Andrew Bond Product Safety Manager at Rhone-Poulenc, suggested that technical controls, particularly when mixing and filling, provided the best means of reducing exposure. At this operational stage the use of granular or water soluble formulations should be considered. When a liquid was the only formulation available he advocated that the product chosen should be one packed in a wide necked container because, he believed, it is both easy to hold in gloved hands and causes considerably less dermal contamination during pouring.

He regretted that, apart from respiratory and eye protection equipment, MAFF does not recommend particular grades or types of protective clothing. This made it difficult

for employers to be sure that they were providing the right type of garments for their employees.

John Shildrick, the Secretary of NTC, agreed his organisation would start work on a revision of the code as soon as possible.

THOUSANDS OF GOLFERS ARE TAKING A SWING AT MOSS PLASTICS - AND SO WOULD MOST GREENKEEPERS!

Moss Plastic Parts, based at Kidlington near Oxford, produce the ubiquitous golfing accessory the golf tee. You name the colour, Yellow, Red, Blue, Orange or White, they will then produce it, in one of two lengths either 1 1/4" or 2".

Also available from Moss is another golfing aide, the small white marker. Both items are manufactured in tough and durable polythene.

Britain is one of the few golfing countries where so far, the plastic tee-peg is permitted. The USA use wooden pegs almost exclusively as it is a known fact that plastic pegs can damage grass cutting machinery. Cannot some-one invent a bio-degradable tee peg?



Various golfing accessories available from Moss Plastic Parts Ltd

TOP JOB FOR SCOTTISH GREENKEEPER

Chris Kennedy, the course manager at the thousand member Haggs Castle club near Glasgow will be taking the long trip south on 1st February to become Course Superintendent at Wentworth.

His appointment will strengthen the Scottish influence in the Surrey stockbroker belt and put him alongside Jack MacMillan at nearby Sunningdale.

This move for Chris to one of Britain's most prestigious golf courses, has long been forecast by those who recognised his expertise and enthusiasm for greenkeeping. Haggs Castle's loss will be Wentworth's gain.

USGA TO FIGHT \$100m LAW SUIT

The headquarters of the United States Golf Association have announced that they intend to fight a law suit in the American courts, brought by Karsten Manufacturing against the banning by the USGA and the R & A of the controversial square grooved Ping Eye-2 golf clubs.

Both the USGA and the R & A have stated that the grooves on the face of the clubs do not conform to the width and measurements defined as legal within the rules of golf. The Karsten company say they do and claim that by banning their use, the ruling violates anti-trust laws, slanders the company and interferes with their present and future business.

The USGA in their statement said they became aware in 1980 that Karsten were selling an iron which had not been submitted as a sample. It was examined and found to have grooves on the face spaced too closely together.

Karsten Manufacturing in Phoenix were advised it did not conform to the Rules of Golf and were asked to advise purchasers accordingly. This was not done, instead they continued to manufacture and supply.

The decision to fight Karsten in the courts cannot have been taken lightly. It is a matter of principle over who controls the game of golf. The USGA in the United States and the R & A in every other country of the world, or any club and ball manufacturer who can market a product, regard-

less of the ruling bodies in the game.

Should company owner, Karsten Solheim win his law suit and be awarded his full claimed damages and costs, it would bankrupt both the USGA and the R & A. According to the USGA statement Karsten puts the name of golf at grave risk. The issue becomes whether these controlling bodies can continue to write and interpret the Rules of Golf. If they can't - will any organisation ever again have that right?

TEAMING UP FOR TURFGRASS TRADE

The 1990s will see a tremendous upsurge in the demand for outdoor sportsground and leisure facilities, particularly for natural grass surfaces, irrespective of the Government in power or the state of our economy. In Europe as a whole the leisure boom has yet to reach its peak. Several recent reports have indicated a requirement of up to 700 golf courses, two to three hundred bowling greens and scores of playing fields in the UK alone, over the next ten years. Sadly, the resources in terms of suitably experienced and qualified professionals able to meet this demand is simply not available. This is due, in the main, to the lack of interest shown by students during the '60s and '70s when choosing a career. As a result we are now witnessing the arrival of frustrated developers and financiers who have identified these opportunities but are unable or incapable of exploiting them owing to their lack of adequate skills. In short, there are not enough people who know their grasses, let alone their onions!

Enter Turfgrass Services International Limited, a company within the Inturf group of Companies, newly formed in direct response to the increasing demands being made on their technical and marketing expertise in this field.

Turfgrass Services International Limited brings together a highly qualified and experienced team of horticulturists, turfgrass specialists and agronomists, well able to provide complete technical and marketing services throughout a broad range of sports turf developments. Derek Edwards and Graeme Forbes will head the team which has been carefully selected from within the industry including many leading groundsmen and

sportsground managers. Their services will be available for the developments of Golf Course and all other outdoor playing surfaces.

Turfgrass Services International Limited can be contacted on (0759) 305125.

FIRST EVER ARCHITECTURAL WORKSHOP

The British Association of Golf Course Architects recently held a new event organised by Martin Hawtree, Hon. Secretary.

Ten prospective members attended an evening followed by a day of lectures at the end of October. The Chairman, Tom McAuley and Full Members Simon Gidman, Stefan Quenouille, and Fred Hawtree spoke on contract law, green contouring, plan presentation, and the life of Harry Golt, founder of the profession. Students also completed an exercise in green design based on plan data provided.

The meeting marked the launch of a two year home and field study course punctuated regularly by similar workshops, and exercises supervised by Full Members. The Association hopes not only to help newcomers to the profession in this way, but also, by projecting traditional design, values, and knowledge into new developments, to reduce the risks of expensive mistakes which can occur where experience is lacking.

COURSES COMPLETED

Brian D. Pierson (Contractors) Limited, having recently completed 18 holes at the Forest of Arden Golf and Country Club and a new 9 hole course at Meon Valley for Country Club Hotels, have just been awarded a contract to build an additional 18 hole course at the Hotel Groups Breadsall Priory complex, work is to start in the Spring.

The company has also completed alterations to various holes at Dalmahoy which Country Club Hotels took over during 1989 and which is due to reopen in August 1990. Pierson has also completed a 27 hole complex at Woodbury Common, Exeter for the Carter family which is due to be opened for play during 1990.

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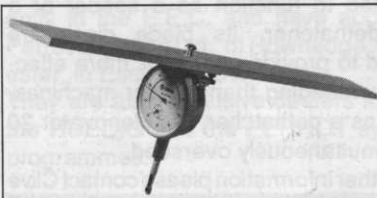
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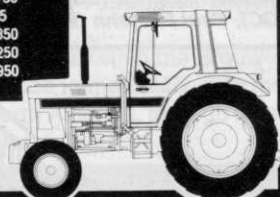
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OUT AND ABOUT

GREENKEEPERS AGAIN SUPREME IN THE KUBOTA GOLF CHALLENGE

British Greenkeepers have won the Kubota Golf Challenge held at the Belfry for the fifth time in seven years.

The Greenkeepers first defeated the Stewards 5/3 in a close match where 3 matches were decided with putts on the last green, all in the Greenkeepers favour. In the other semi final the English Golf Union heavily defeated the association of Golf Club Secretaries by a score of 6 1/2 - 1 1/2.

The final was a closely contested affair, but the Belfry always favours the lower handicapped and the Greenkeepers prevailed in by a score of five matches to three.

This made the Greenkeepers the winners for the fifth successive year. The other associations were given hope by Kubota's announcement of their continued support. In twelve months time they will be able to try again to topple the Greenkeepers, who are proving to be the golfing giants in the golf service industry.

LESCO AT LAST FOR UK

The Lesco range of products, probably one of the most comprehensive selections of golf course maintenance equipment in the world, is now available in Britain, thanks to Suffolk-based CDC Horticultural Equipment Limited.

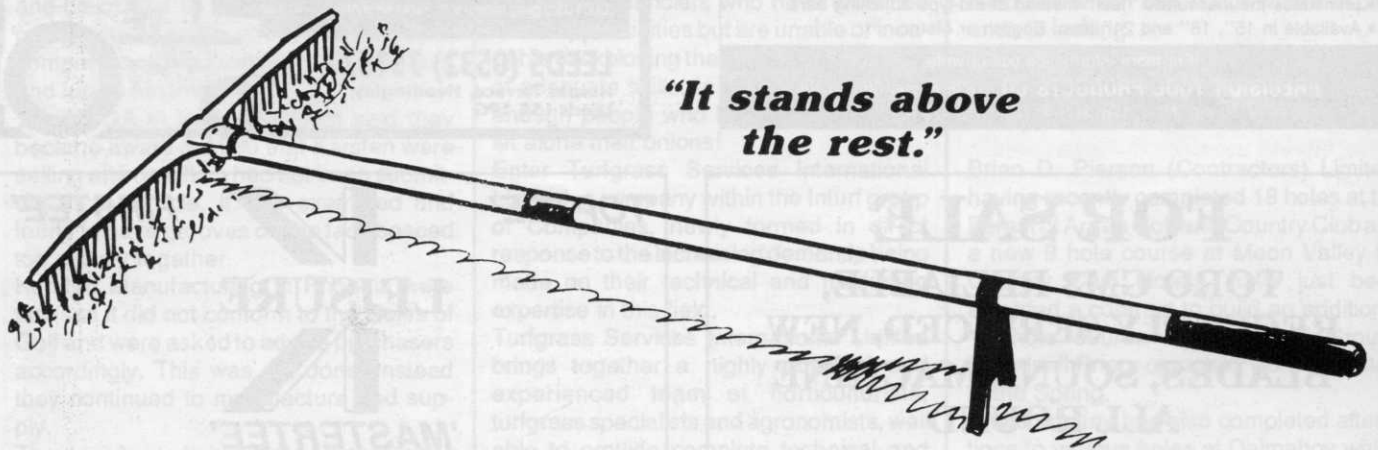
Established 27 years, the Lesco company's inventory is certainly impressive, offering more than 700 dedicated brand products ranging from seed, fertilizers and irrigation equipment to the powerful 500 series Fairway Mowers, 300 series Greensmowers, spreaders, turf renovators...the list is endless. Lesco even market a comprehensive range of golfing accessories which include personalised flags and safety clothing items.

The Honda powered Renovator 20 is another outstanding Lesco performer, designed to function as a seeder or a slicer/dethatcher. Its blade discs are spaced to provide over 40% more effective overseeding than regular machines, whilst as a dethatcher, the Renovator 20 can simultaneously overseed.

For further information please contact Clive Lockwood or Alan Clarke at CDC Horticultural Equipment Limited, Chapel Works, Waldringfield, Woodbridge, Suffolk. IP12 4PT. Tel: 0473 36791.



The Greenkeepers Team, winners of the 1989 Kubota Golf Challenge for the fifth time from left to right: Mark Diment (Knighton Heath GC), Gordon Payne (Maldenhead GC), Michael Hughes (Edgbaston GC), Barry Heaney (Wortley GC), Michael Hannan (Moortown GC), Paul Fitzjohn (Mill Hill GC), Edwin Walsh (Whitefield GC), John Borja (Epsom GC).



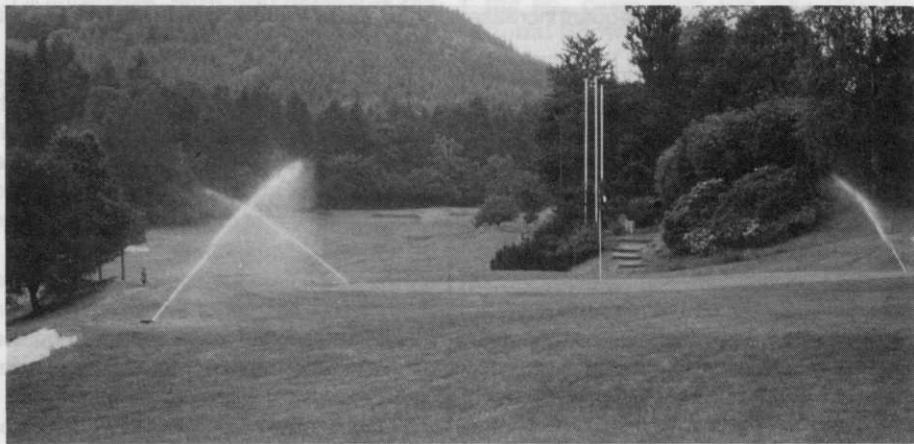
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influential visitors

The golf boom in Western Europe was evident for all to see at the first Golf Course Europe Exhibition and Conference held in the well appointed Rhein-Main Halls at Wiesbaden in October. The event attracted 2,574 visitors from



Perrot pop-up sprinklers

Perrot systems are now fully in production again after a management buy-out at the former Perrot works, liquidated a year ago in Western Germany.

Perrot companies are trading independently in the E.E.C. and have appointed Perrot Irrigation Ltd., of Rowhedge, Colchester, in Essex, as UK dealers.

They are also exclusive dealers for both the HUEDIG and the PERROT systems programmes.

US VISIT FOR LELY STAFF

TORO (International) division arranged for Lely Sales staff together with their UK TORO dealer principals to be flown to the USA for a thorough review of the latest TORO machinery bound for the UK.

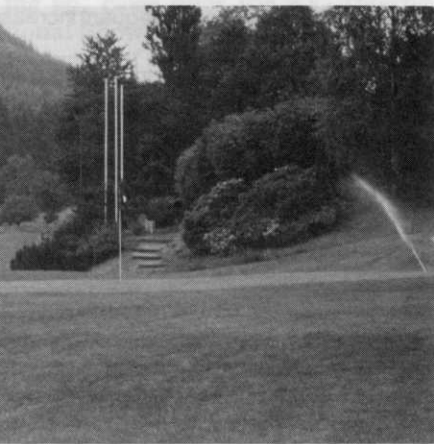
The first of several visits was to the company headquarter in Minneapolis, which also houses the engineering and test facilities.

Later the visitors toured the fully modernised commercial plant in Tomah, Wisconsin to see how the machines are assembled and create a greater understanding of their products to increase their background knowledge when marketing TORO equipment.

The sales training proved extremely informative and prompted much discussion covering every aspect of, sales and after-sales service. A number of the products reviewed were recently launched at IOG Windsor and included the new TORO flagship, the Groundmaster 580D which is considered to be leading the field in the terms of productivity and manoeuvrability.

Tracy Park Lagan

The leading Irish and American watercourse designers, Jacobsen & Partners and the British Waterways



WEST COUNTRY GREENKEEPER SETS UP GOLF COURSE DESIGN COMPANY.

Adrian Stiff, who resigned as Tracy Park's Course Manager in June has moved into golf course design in the traditions of the old style professional golfer/greenkeeper. A one time professional golfer, Adrian, 29, has been greenkeeping at Tracy Park since 1976. With a lowest handicap of 2.8, he realised that he was not going to make a successful career with the clubs, so changed his profession to greenkeeping. Now he has found a way to put both talents to good use.

As the winner of the Jacobsen tournament in 1986, he visited the GCSAA Conference in Phoenix the following year and has



UK Toro dealer principals & Lely staff visit Toro (Int) Division, USA

been back twice since, renewing his many contacts among American Superintendents, both in the United States and Mexico. His current design projects include Hay Wood, a 6,800 yard moorland golf course at Weston Super Mare with superb views over the Bristol Channel and two 18-hole courses at Swindon and Bradford-on-Avon both measuring around 6,700 yards. Construction is due to start at Bradford-on-Avon next year, Eight Lakes at Swindon and Hay Wood are still at the planning approval stage.

He can be contacted through Professional Golf Design Ltd, 32 Charlton Road, Kingswood, Bristol. Tel. 0272-607892.

RANSOMES ORGANISE CUSHMAN DEALERS

Ransomes who bought the Cushman Group in August, will commence marketing through a selected dealer organisation in the UK and Republic of Ireland on 1st April next year. Ryan Products come under Ransomes on 1st July 1990.

On the Continent Ransomes will take over the marketing of the Cushman and Ryan lines from the Swiss based ORAG on 1st July. It is anticipated both Cushman and Ryan machines will be sold in these countries through most of Ransomes current distribution outlets..

Ransomes will be marketing the Brouwer products worldwide immediately, with the exception of North America, through most existing Brouwer distributors.

NEW HSE REGULATIONS NOW IN FORCE

THE Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued a reminder to employers that new regulations on health and safety for employees, came into force in October. To comply with these regulations, employers are required to display a poster or distribute leaflets informing their employees in general terms about the requirements of health and safety law. A poster and leaflet, approved by HSE for this purpose, are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO).

The regulations also require employers to inform employees of the local addresses of the enforcing authority (usually either HSE or the local authority) and of HSE's Employment Medical Advisory Service (EMAS).

MICROBES HARNESSSED TO REDUCE THATCH AND COMPACTION

OVER the past three years a series of sports turf trials have been conducted on a natural plant extract, which acts as a metabolic stimulant on most bacteria. BOOST was developed from an agricultural soil treatment which was known to increase the activity of soil micro-organisms leading to a "micro-tilling" effect which resulted in an improved soil structure, better

root development and consequent increase in crop yield.

Thatch accumulates in turf because the dead stems and roots of the grasses decay relatively slowly and result in a fibrous mat which becomes saturated and leads to wet, unresponsive greens.

At the same time this cuts off air circulation to the underlying soil, which in turn becomes compacted and prevents root penetration. Under these conditions the only kind of bacterial decomposition taking place is anaerobic hence the typically "putrid" smell of cores taken from such greens.

Regular mechanical treatment to aerate the soil and promote aerobic activity is the accepted remedy. This however is not popular with players.

Because of its ability to significantly speed up both aerobic and anaerobic activity trials were carried out on a neglected tennis court at Rease Heath Agricultural College. These compared a control area with one treated with a granular seaweed derivative and one treated with BOOST.

First applied in the Autumn it is soon noted that the area treated with the seaweed derivative was softer and contained a sticky gel.

The following Spring a further treatment was applied and STRI penetrometer tests carried out. These showed reduced compaction in both treated areas, but with the BOOST areas markedly better than

the seaweed derivative areas (17.5% improvement vs 4.5%).

The following Autumn wedges were dug which showed little or no new root growth or root penetration in the control area. In both the BOOST and seaweed derivative areas the soil structure was far better and good healthy root development had taken place well down into the soil.

At the same time it was obvious that there had been a degree of thatch reduction in the seaweed derivative area, but on the BOOST area the thatch reduction was far greater.

At Beaconsfield where BOOST was applied in the Autumn of last year the treated greens were much drier and firmer in the Spring following a wet winter. Similar effects were noted at The Berkshire and The London Kosaido. At Bangor BOOST was used in the Spring together with mechanical treatments. Deep root penetration and improved soil structure were evident by mid Summer. Prior to this there was little or no strong root structure in the soil.

BOOST is showing signs as a useful new tool for the Greenkeeper, able to reduce the amount of disruptive mechanical treatment required and contributing significantly to the playing quality of the greens.

Further information can be obtained from D & M Hudson, Environmental Products, 15 Hawthorn Gardens, Talke, Stoke On Trent. Tel. 0782 771462

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European Golf Course conference attracts influential visitors

by John Lelean

The golf boom in Western Europe was evident for all to see at the first Golf Course Europe Exhibition and Conference held in the well appointed Rhein-Main Halls at Wiesbaden in October.

The event attracted 2,574 visitors from 14 countries, with 350 delegates registering for the conference sessions, to hear the 50 guest speakers, presenting technical, design and golf marketing papers.

Although the exhibitors were relatively small in number, the response by visitors to the accompanying conference was exceptionally encouraging. It was obvious from the first day of the three day event that there are a massive number of potential golf course developments waiting on the launch pad from the Arctic Circle to the Southern tips of Italy and Spain.

There are so many prospective golfers on the European Continent, the existing courses will need to be more than trebled in the next ten years to give any hope of club membership to the vast numbers wanting to take up the game.

The problem facing golf club developers are enormous. As well as the exorbitant cost of land, political, and environmental considerations are likely to play a significant part before the demand for golf can be anywhere near satisfied.

In Northern Europe, particularly Holland, Belgium, and West Germany, where there is probably the greatest pressure to build new courses, a strong well organised environmental lobby, staffed and supported by young intellectuals are opposed, not only to the application of fertilisers and chemicals, but to the concept of land use change, even if it is to build golf courses. Their political aims appear to be based on preservation, rather than conservation.

This is the message that came through from many of those at the conference, who are either wanting to extent existing courses or develop new ones.

A much wider spread of knowledge among those who may not necessarily want to play the game, but understand that responsible golf course maintenance and management can enhance the environment rather than destroy it, is the only way the demand for golf on the Continent will be satisfied.

As a first exhibition aimed purely at the professional section of golf construction and maintenance, many of

the leading British and American manufacturers and distributors decided not to take stand space. Following so close after the IOG International Show at Windsor and equating the costs of three days in the heart of Germany, it was no doubt a financial decision, not to take part.

However those that did participate, felt in the main it was a most worthwhile event, particularly from the quality of the enquiries and subsequent orders.

Companies representing Golf Course Design and Architecture were the most prominent, five of the 15 with stands coming from the USA. Ten UK based companies took stand space, but apart from McConnell Dabro, none of the turf maintenance machinery manufacturers were represented. Ransomes, Toro, Jacobsen, Cushman, Huxley, Charterhouse all gave the event a miss, which was surprising with such a potential market about to open up.

Fisons Horticulture was the sole UK-based supplier of fertilizers and chemicals to take stand space and they certainly did not regret their trip from Ipswich.

According to Export Manager Tony Hutchinson the timing of this show could not have been better. He told "the Golf Course" - "We have seen the European golf course industry expanding dramatically and as one of the UK's leading suppliers, we decided the time had come to launch our professional product range on the Continent."

The main product featured was the Greenmaster Fine Turf Fertiliser range,



specially designed to meet the needs of greenkeepers with a choice of nutrient ratios, accuracy of application and performance reliability. Displayed against a background picture of Jim Thorne, Wimbledon's Head Groundsman, the Fison range attracted considerable attention from the "tennis mad" Germans.

"For Fisons this first GCE Exhibition was a success. The quality of contracts and their reaction to the Greenmaster range, plus the back-up we give from our Research and Development Station, was well received", added Tony Hutchinson.

Among the design companies who found Golf Course Europe an outstanding success was Calum Todd, the European Consultant for Bradford Benz. He said the enquiries received on the stand ranged from Ireland to Russia and Finland to Hungary with even an approach from Korea. "Many of these initial contacts have already been converted into firm contracts and we will surely be back to Golf Course Europe in 1990", added Mr. Todd.

Likewise Chris Williams of the International Golfers Club, launching their computerised golf management system reported great interest, with several orders resulting. The quality of attendance in terms of commercial decision taking was another plus point. Bob Roberts, Sales Manager for Dura Plastic Products of Beaumont California, manufacturers of irrigation pressure fittings said the company thought long and hard before deciding to show their products at the Exhibition, but it was a decision they had not regretted. There was an excellent response to the firm's product and they obtained more than sufficient orders to make the trip worthwhile.

A number of expatriate British Greenkeepers were seen at Wiesbaden, including Peter Shaw, one time Head Greenkeeper at Preston Golf Club, now working for Heinz Fehring Golf Projekt near Munich, Stewart MacIntosh, managing a course outside Munich and Kevin Munt now with, Golf Projection International, who have plans to move into the U.K. market on behalf of overseas clients in 1990.

Next year there will be another Golf Course Europe at a venue to be announced shortly at approximately the same dates in October. Details can be obtained from Ellen MacGillivray, EXPOCONSULT - P.B. 200, 3600 AE MARSEN, Netherlands.

Is Greenkeeping in Germany an opportunity not to be missed?

Ja - Ja, says Stephen Goldthorpe, but with reservations

As one of those increasing number of British greenkeepers, who have been tempted to seek their fortune on the Continent, in my case, West Germany, I have been asked many times, "Is Greenkeeping in Germany all it has been cracked up to be?"

In my case the answer is - Yes!

Two years ago, after spending the first ten years of my working life at Lees Hall Golf Club in Sheffield, I successfully applied for the position of Assistant Head Greenkeeper on a championship course on the outskirts of Munich and this year was promoted to Course Manager.

The past two years at the 18-hole Olching Golf Club has convinced me that I certainly made the right decision. Brought up on a background of tight budgets, staff shortages and low wages has increased by belief that the majority of greenkeepers in Britain are expected to give far more in time and effort than is justified by their rewards.

The average Head Greenkeeper in West Germany can earn a salary ranging from £350 to £600 a week, dependent on the position, size and quality of the course. First assistants are paid between £250 and £300 a week, and rank and file greenkeepers around £200.

Although compared to wages in Britain, this may seem high, what must also be taken into consideration is the increased cost of living and the compulsory expenses, such as private health insurance. A single man will also pay around half his salary in tax.

Low wages in Britain must reflect low membership subscriptions and green fees, coupled with poor club management practices, which in turn results in insufficient course budgets for the Course Manager to invest in capital equipment and day to day maintenance materials.

As a comparison, my course budget for next year allows for the purchase of £50,000 worth of machinery, £17,000 for chemicals and fertilisers, plus a monthly allowance for items such as petrol, oil, spare parts and repairs. Most of the newer courses have a high quality irrigation system and it is not

unusual to find two or three Ransomes 350Ds, plus a number of triplex mowers in our Greenkeeping Sheds.

We do have our problems however. Fertilisers and chemicals are difficult to obtain in Germany so we find that it is necessary to have them sent over from England, with the result that we often fall foul of the German Customs Authorities.

Earlier this year they confiscated three cases of fungicides and only after they had been tested by the appropriate authority and been paid the money for the testing and release did we receive the goods - three months later! Machinery breakdowns can also be a headache. There is no such thing as a prompt reply in response to an urgent telephone call to a dealer, like at home. A three or four day wait is much more likely, though the situation is slowly improving.

As far as working conditions are concerned, they are far better than at most British clubs. A car or utility truck such as a Jeep is at the disposal of the Head Greenkeeper which can be used on and off the course. Also living accommodation is invariably provided for both the Head Greenkeeper and his first assistant either free or at a reduced rental.

At Golf Club Olching I have a staff of five, including an English first assistant who has been working in Germany for the past four years. The

four other greenstaff are German locals, who despite no formal greenkeeping training are able and willing to tackle any new job on the course. Their training has been "on the job", but starting this year a three week crash course has been set up for assistants, which one of my staff will be attending in January. Hopefully this is just the start of greenkeeper education and training in Germany.

All my staff are allocated specific work tasks and each one is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of certain items of machinery.

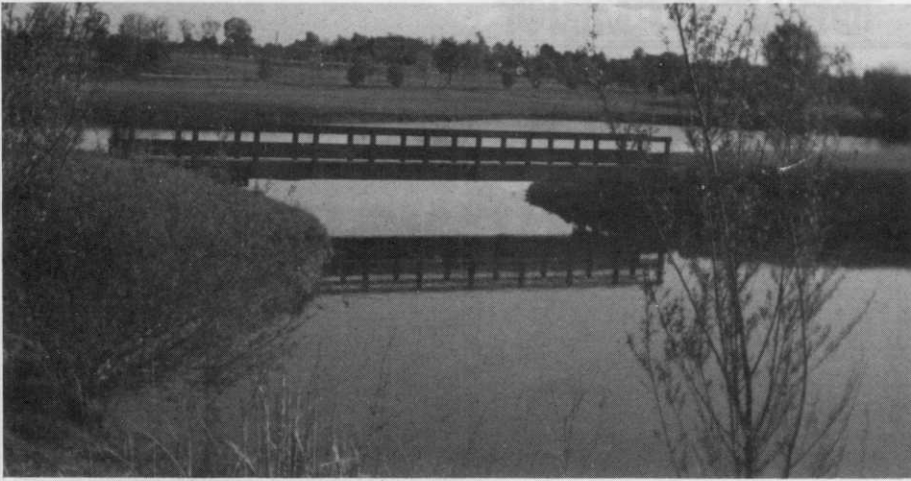
Although Olching is in a highly populated area, my course can be said to "come to life at night", not from merry makers, but from the emergence of a teeming population of wildlife. We have six lakes on the course, attracting various species of duck, geese, swans and a colony of kingfishers.

The anglers of Sheffield, well known as the home country's largest number of fishermen, would be green with envy if they could see the huge carp, tench and roach in the lakes. However the laws on fishing in this part of Germany are very strict and a licence can cost up to £300.

As the sun sets, the sight of a deer roaming across the course is common place, rabbits and hares are in abundance, and at dusk the course becomes a naturalists haven. Although there is a certain amount of damage, they don't take divots!



Course Manager, Stephen Goldthorpe does not regret leaving Sheffield for West Germany



Lake in front of 15th tee looking towards club-house

My biggest problem at present is moles. They have wrecked havoc on numerous tees and fairways in their search for worms, but hopefully this little headache will be solved as I have just obtained a licence to set various traps to reduce the population. As you can see, we need a licence for everything here in Germany.

German golf is enjoying a "boom" at present, with large numbers of beginners applying to join clubs, but it is very, very expensive compared to golf clubs in the UK. Entrance fees for a new member can cost anything up to £100,000, plus an annual subscription of £2,000.

The atmosphere at Golf Club Olching can be described as friendly, though they take their golf seriously. On tournament days, the players join in with a meal in the club-house after the competition, followed by the prize giving and this makes for a very enjoyable evening. Food and drink is always served on the course at the half way stage for major events. In the summer, cold drinks, ice-cream and sandwiches, in spring and autumn it is usually hot soup and warm rolls.

As a relatively new sport, golf course etiquette leaves something to be desired and differs from club to club. Some for instance allow the members to bring their dogs with them to walk the course during a round, though they are supposed to be on a lead. More often than not the owner slips the leash, causing a great deal of aggravation to the greenstaff, who the dogs probably feel have no right to be there! Etiquette is a problem the professional golfers have realised will have to be tackled and a number are now holding behaviour evenings which will hopefully improve the situation.

Moving to a country with a foreign language, despite the fact we are all part of the European Community is very demanding and requires considerable stamina. For every five ex-pats

from Britain who arrive here to seek their fortune, three will return home, unable to adjust to a new way of life. It is the single man without ties that golf clubs will seek out. The married man with children will find it much more difficult to adapt, not only because of the language barrier, but the difficulties with schooling, a job for his wife and the ability to make new family friends.

Learning German is absolutely essential, but most clubs will pay for language courses. It is not necessary to be fluent, though the better one can communicate both in the written and spoken word, the easier the job and for that matter your social life becomes.

For instance the paper work is never ending, what with work permits, health insurance, registering as a citizen, plus the usual daily requirements to complete forms, order materials and the hundred and one other items of literature.

Having printed the black side, with perseverance, hard work and a determination to succeed, the rewards will actually be reaped. New golf courses are under construction throughout Germany, offering the opportunity to move on to better positions, find greater challenges and seek improved status,

with of course the advantage of higher salaries.

All work, despite its challenge, can make Jack a dull boy, so there is also time for relaxation. Any member of the staff can play in the club tournaments and this is something I try to do when possible. Playing off a 16 handicap I have managed to win two of the club events this year, which I must confess has given me a great deal of pleasure.

The of course there is the Munich Beer Festival in October. Ten tents each one housing over 5,000 people, take three months to put up. There are also rides shooting galleries, side shows and many other attractions, but for me, I'll settle for the German beers!

I have not regretted exchanging the steel mills of Sheffield for the motor manufacturing of Munich, nor the Derbyshire Peaks for the Bavarian forests. In this part of Germany the course is usually playable from the beginning of March until the end of December and these are the months when all the work has to be completed. There is no overtime payment and in the spring and summer the days are long and hard, but there is always the three months holiday to look forward to - and if you ski! But that's another story.

We cut out our own ski-tracks on the course during the winter, so people can go cross country ski-ing. The club own a snow mobile which makes the tracks as it is driven along. There is little or no damage to the course as the greens and tees are fenced off at the end of the playing season to keep the ski-ers on to the open part of the fairways and rough.

If any greenkeeper would like to know more about applying for jobs in Germany, then don't hesitate to write. I would be very pleased to answer any questions that they might have that has'n't been covered. *Stephen Goldthorpe can be contacted c/o Golf Club Olching, Fourstrasse 89. 8037 Olching. Nr. Munich. West Germany.



Approaching the 18th green in front of the impressive clubhouse

Cirencester Golf Club gets a new 18th fairway

by John Campbell



Phillip Franklin, Green Chairman points out the distant 18th green in front of the white building. He is standing on the edge of the new fairway landing area for tee shots

Many courses have potential bottleneck spots where holdups occur during busy periods slowing down play and causing frustration to golfers. Cirencester Golf Club is one course who have successfully dealt with a problem area, which was often a source of slow play. Two holes, the 14th and 18th share the same fairway along a deep valley with play going in opposite directions. The 4th, measuring 377 yards, is one of the good holes on the course played up the valley flanked by a steep hillside of rough on the right. The run of the ground is against play, calling for a good drive and a well placed second shot to a raised green set into the foot of the left hand slope. The green is strategically bunkered with no room for error.

Higher up the slope, overlooking the 4th green is the tee for the finishing hole, 457 yards running in the oppo-

site direction, which demands a downhill drive into the valley towards oncoming traffic playing the 4th hole.

Phillip Franklin, Green Chairman at the Club explained, "They are both good holes but the snag is having to share the same fairway, it was always a source of slow play and potentially dangerous for golfers. Really we are in a situation now, where every fairway should be separated in view of the amount of play taking place."

"We decided the time was ripe to alter the 18th hole, by carving a new fairway out of the hillside along the valley to create an alternative route to the green. The earthmoving work was undertaken by a local contractor with a Hy-mat under our own supervision. The bulk of the work was carried out last year.

Phase 2, this autumn, involved minor adjustments to increase the ball land-

ing area for tee shots, also additional subtle mounding of features, so that the whole thing blends in naturally with the surroundings."

"Ground clearance work at the start entailed the removal of 31 mature conifer trees from the site and a further 9 were taken out after much consideration during stage 2, to enlarge the tee shot landing area. It was our desire to preserve as many trees as possible, for they provide a shelter belt and have always been a feature on this part of the course."

"It took six weeks with the Hy-mat to move about 10,000 tons of heavy material and 600 tons of topsoil to provide a seed bed to finish the job. Machine hire cost £12,000. Imported top soil £2,000. Grass seed £600. An elevated tee was built by our own greenkeeping staff, which gives an excellent view of the fairway ahead, which slopes gradually downhill into

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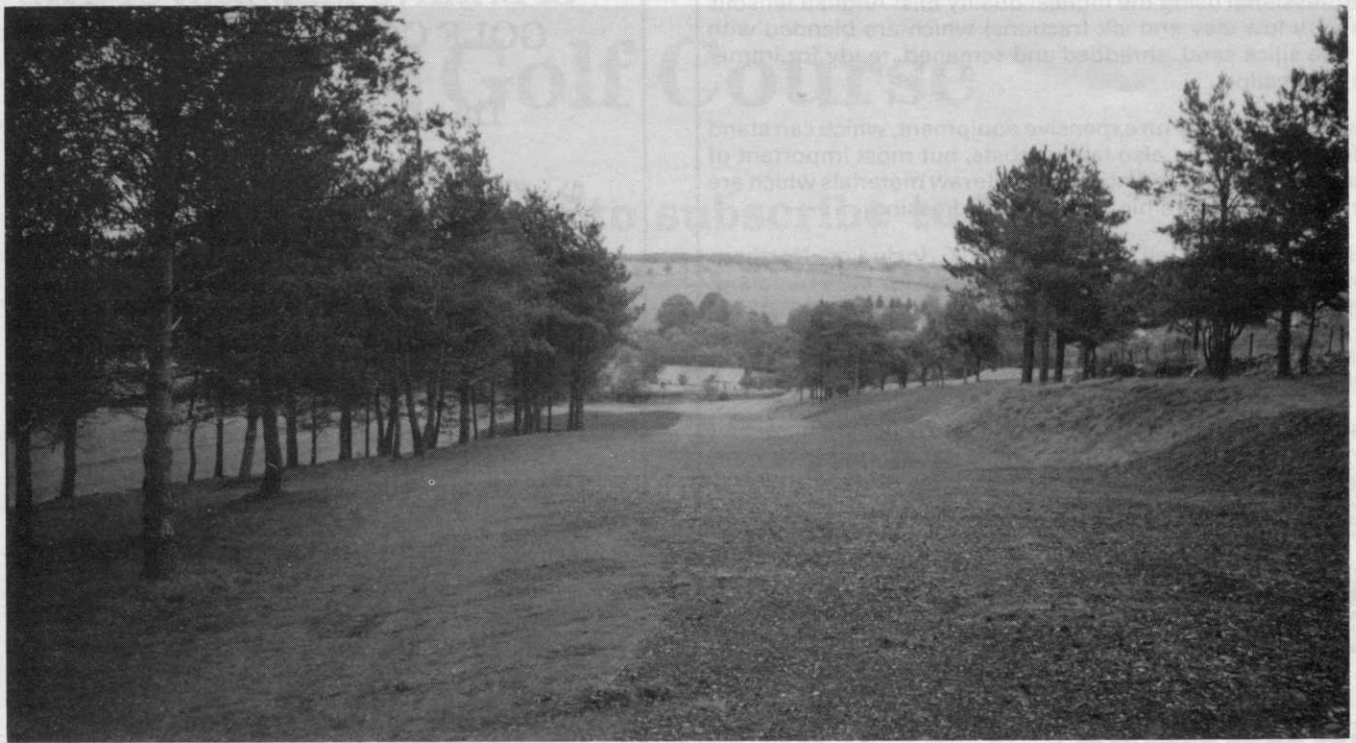


View of fairway from a tee shot landing spot. The position marked by small bush on horizon between gap in the trees. Exposed soil left and right is where features were modified this autumn to enlarge playing surface width.

the floor of the valley." Phillip Franklin added, "I suppose by the time all the work has been completed we will have spent around £20,000 on the project." Building this new fairway will make a

considerable difference to the smooth flow of play, particularly at peak periods and it is estimated that it will reduce by up to 40 minutes a round at the end of the day. The new 18th will

undoubtedly be a challenging test for all golfers. It already has its own character, where the elevation provides splendid views over the rest of the course and surrounding countryside.



Looking down the new 18th fairway towards the green in front of the white building. Soil areas in foreground are where features were modified during phase 2.

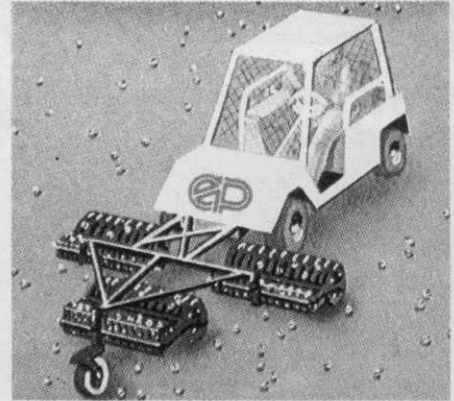
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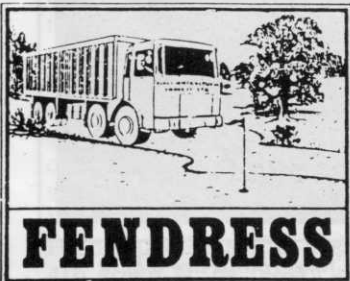
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HARD on the heels of the discussion document 'The Way Forward', produced by the Greenkeeping Panel of the Royal and Ancient, comes another paper commissioned by the Royal and Ancient's Development Panel dealing with the expansion of golf. It would be invidious to compare these publications, though both are designed primarily to stimulate discussion and to postulate problems rather than propose solutions at this stage. Both cover aspects of the game of golf which are threatened by many factors, not least the sheer popularity of the game itself. That there is a demand for more courses is unarguable. What is more debatable is the realistic level of expansion, from which develops the discussion on how to provide the predicted increase in golfing facilities.

The Demand for Golf' despite the unarguable fact that a great deal of work and research has gone into its preparation is, in my opinion, seriously flawed. It purports to show that 700 new 18 hole courses are needed in the next ten years. This is based on the arbitrary assessment that one course is needed for every 25,000 of the population, man, woman and child. This takes no account of the regional or indeed national popularity of the game and therefore related demand and indeed the paper accepts this by admitting that the actual level in Scotland is one course to every 12,000 population, - but not even a Sassenach would find this extraordinary! This arbitrary yardstick has incidentally long since been abandoned e.g. in the States and by those conducting U.K. feasibility surveys.

If one works out the projected population of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the year 2000, it does not need an Einstein to calculate on the above basis the total number of courses required, nor, by deducting the actual courses, to find the balance. It is however an incontrovertible law of logic that incorrect observations always result in wrong deductions!

At least the survey has provided one excellent service to golf, by demolishing the often-quoted statement that "there are more than 2000 golf courses in England, Scotland and Wales". In fact the figure given (including 58 in Northern Ireland) is 1862 facilities - and by facilities is meant anywhere where golf can be played from pitch and putt Par 3's to 36 hole 'championship' courses.

The demand for golf

Simple arithmetic has produced the figure of a 700 course deficiency, 600 of them in England - but this is clearly wishful thinking and takes no account of the difficulties in providing them. Such problems would have been brought to light by exposing the paper to debate and discussion by qualified persons and bodies before publication, such as the EGU Golf Development Committee. As it stands, the paper will be of value in stimulating discussion and lead to a much more accurate assessment of the realistic and achievable demand. To fail to ask the opinion of either the Architects or the Contractors, through their Associations, seems to be an extraordinary omission. Indeed it is not very clear who provided at least some of the evidence on which these conclusions were based and recommendations made.

by Jim Arthur

It is in connection with the deductions based on wrong criteria that the greatest exception will be taken by those who really know the more accurate picture.

Equally, one must admit that in periods of enormous change, it ill behoves anyone to stick rigidly to the precepts which governed previous decades. One is all too conscious of the extent and rapidity of changes taking place in Eastern Europe, to dismiss such a scale of change in golf as totally impossible - but it is certainly stretching credulity to the limit to calmly state that we must build more golf courses in the next decade than in the previous eight, especially when no account is taken not only of the inordinate time it takes to get any new project off the ground in terms of planning and financial restraints but, even more pertinently, the huge problems in regard to planning permission and conservation limitations, which are not even mentioned, nor is the desperate scarcity of even half reasonable

land or the equal shortages of Architects to design the course, Contractors to build them, Greenkeepers to look after them and Advisers to deal with problems. Eighty years ago, in the pre 1914 boom, excellent golfing country could be bought for nothing and courses cost even less to build.

It is with regard to the recommendations based on these assumptions that issue must be taken. The first is the rash assumption that the interest in golf will continue to expand on a straight line graph - and life certainly never runs so smoothly and predictably and golf, like life, has always suffered from ups and downs, as many of us can confirm on both counts! Golf has boomed in response to television coverage but there are signs that television's paymasters are looking askance at present levels of cover, let alone considering increasing them. Participants and organisers in many activities and sports have had unpleasant surprises in the past when television coverage was reduced, and golf is not immune.

Sources of providers of the new courses are briefly itemised - but many are debatable. The report accepts that members clubs can take no more golfers - but what it does not say is that many are considering taking far less. Societies and asking members to pick up the financial short-fall. This will have increasing relevance if the Inland Revenue persists in the view that the money from societies is primarily being used to keep subscriptions lower than they would be and so would be liable to taxation. Whilst accepting that there can be no significant provision from creating new member-owned and run clubs to fill the need, the report suggests that members clubs could utilise adjacent spare ground to provide public facilities - but this is highly debatable as very few Clubs that I know have any such spare land, especially in areas where it is most needed. Most are increasingly cramped by today's demand for extra length to accommodate longer drives with improved balls and clubs to bother about providing facilities for non-members. I doubt whether this source might produce more than about 1% of the demand, if that.

Local Authorities, it is suggested might help but, in England anyway, where the demand is greater, none has spare cash for such expensive developments and are in any case being pressed to privatise the management of their existing courses. Public course golfers may get a nasty surprise - with a

round of golf on public courses quoted in the report at only £1.70 for Richmond Park, down to 44p-90p in Scotland. With greater accountability to their Poll Tax payers and their extravagances being made more obvious in the near future, I cannot see municipal authorities filling any of the need.

The report accepts that proprietary courses and clubs will provide the major share of the increase - but ignores the fact that golf courses built by hotel groups are not for the benefit of the golfing public but are there to fill hotel bedrooms, attract conferences, or even to build houses round them. Many in fact insist on some proof of competence before paying guests are let loose to wreak havoc on heavily played courses. Clearly there is a limit to the number of such hotels on grounds of sharing a limited market. Furthermore, experience contradicts the report, in that if there is a club at such 'hotel facilities' it is there purely for social and competitive reasons and is barely tolerated and certainly has no influence on course presentation, for which those in charge are duly grateful. All this may be of some encouragement to the more proficient of club-less golfers but holds out little real hope for the beginners whose enthusiasm can be measured in reverse order to their ability.

There may also be scope for a very, very few proprietary ventures where money is no object and sheer expensiveness keeps membership exclusive, but some of these multi million pound ventures could well be vulnerable to any change in the country's economic health - quite apart from the fact that some have been built to standards more applicable to Texas or the Middle East, producing conditions which both research and practical experience shows will not stand up to being intensively played on during our wet rather than very cold winters and relatively short growing period.

At the other extreme the report suggests that very inexpensive courses may be built to supply local demand. This advice to entrepreneurs to start low-cost, low-risk ventures might just work if some ideal natural golfing country were cheaply available, as it was to our forbears, but it almost never is. Light, sandy, free-draining sites are rare indeed. What is generally available is heavy, poorly-drained, flat land where skimping of (expensive) drainage means problems. Frankly the days when one could fob off rubbishy conditions on new entrant golfers are over. As the Society

problem illustrates, many are used to playing over the best courses.

Advice to build on the cheap and improve later is simply bad advice. One does not need to spend millions - but skimping on basic specifications means eventual rebuilding to achieve a longer playing season and better profitability - with all the vastly increased costs as well as disruption to play and income. "Do it right first time" is a much better maxim than "fix it later" and applies equally to small DIYS schemes as to major hotel-based tournament ventures, whether built 20 years ago or recently.

The one recommendation that the report should have made is missing. That is that there must be some form of control, or if that is impossible, detailed advice must be readily available to developers on the question of specifications as well as the practical advice offered by the EGU golf development committee. We want to see no more of those awful muddy golf-in-a-field ventures of twenty years ago, with ryegrass fairways and with bad drainage. Equally we do not need vastly expensive courses built with pure sand greens, which research at the STRI has demonstrated so clearly are simply not relevant to our climatic conditions. If such greens are not fed generously with lime, as well as with phosphate and potash, the grass just dies - not surprisingly in such sterile hydroponic conditions. If it is fed, then the fine grasses (often of strains bred especially to withstand very high temperatures and the associated very high irrigation of hot arid environments) revert to annual meadow grass which is not a risk in desert conditions and as the recent heavy rainfall has shown, those unplayed-on, research plots flood! Waterlogged conditions on pure sand? Yes, because the water is held by the annual meadow grass thatch. By sand greens, few people expect 'browns' - i.e. greens with no grass on them, even if they do drain well!

I understand even the latest extravaganza to be built in Surrey, to a design by Robert Trent Jones Jnr. will have a sand-soil mix for its greens. Advice in the report to start with nine holes in preference to eighteen is again short sighted. In all costs, be they construction or maintenance, nine holes cost disproportionately more than half the same items for eighteen but the revenue is only half at best. One of the first rules of feasibility surveys is that if financial restraints

make a start on nine holes inevitable, there must be adjacent space to develop the second nine quickly, or the project is unviable. Similarly golfing hotels must have in excess of a hundred bedrooms, with two 18 hole courses, to be guaranteed to be an economic success.

Another dubious source advised by the report is the development of 'surplus' farmland. This is so fraught with problems that few proposals actually take off. One problem is that often the land is too distant from its potential clients, with no major attraction locally to draw customers. Unless there is a hotel with ancillary attractions (swimming pool, sauna, squash, tennis etc.) clients will not come and frankly farmers have in general little experience of dealing with the human race and so must employ costly management, so good bye to the profits. Furthermore, developers want to build their own hotels and are not ready and willing to take over existing affairs and what farmer wants to sell his land for a marginal (development) profit - even if he could negotiate in addition a small share of the profit.

Another problem with farmland is that it is all too often flat, prairie land devoid of natural features and what is far worse is that it has been intensively farmed with such high residual soil fertility that it is impossible to grow fine turf on it - it becomes golf in a meadow and a high-cost meadow for maintenance at that! Costs of construction to provide some contours or features or tree planting are consequently much higher.

It is worth noting that even in America, where far from disinterested sources claim that the needs of golf can be met only by opening one new course every day for the rest of this century, there are areas away from the coast or in basically dull farming areas where supply exceeds demand. In other areas climatic considerations, from the extremes of deep snow to a combination of heat and humidity, limit the effective playing season to much less than the full year and there, unless clubs can charge members more to pay for the high cost (e.g. disease control) of times when they cannot or do not wish to play, some clubs are in financial difficulties. Equally, one has to admit that in the States there are enough examples of entrepreneurially-built leisure centres, initially without a golf course, lacking profitability, which has dramatically improved by later incorporating a golf course.

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POLITICS

Where, then, do we go from here. Clearly a level of 700 new courses is highly unlikely even if they were all needed.

There is no law which says the demand for golf will continue to expand on a straight line graph - and indeed all the experience this century shows a cyclic pattern with peaks before the First World War, again in the twenties, in the sixties and currently.

Who is to provide these new facilities? Clearly it is not going to be by new member-owned clubs, and the supply for local authorities, entrepreneurs and farmers will be relatively small. The bulk must come from hotel and leisure groups who are the only ones with the money - and money is needed in a form, since we are not just talking about new courses but the associated 100 + bedroom hotel and leisure buildings. This again must be limited or it could be self defeating - you can easily end up with excessive competition leaving low occupancy rates!

My guess is that we shall see perhaps a maximum of 200 new courses in the next decade - and we shall be hard pushed to find the money, the land, the architects, the contractors and the greenkeepers to build and run them well, quite apart from endless battles with planners and conservationists. There are welcome signs that the Nature Conservancy Council do not now automatically reject any golf course proposals, even on environmentally sensitive areas (which are often on the best golfing country anyway), as they accept that golf courses when established, like motorway verges, are some of our most valuable conservation areas - less subject to man's interference over large areas than (especially) farmland. These developments will benefit the well-heeled element of new golfers but will do nothing for the rest. In areas where golf is the natural game we are probably reasonably well supplied with

existing courses, but there is an undoubted need for expansion in high population areas and in traditional holiday areas. In such cases it may be more constructive for golfing authorities to mount an official campaign to woo the planners and coincidentally the conservationists.

There is however one point in the report which is unquestionably wrong and indeed dangerous. It concerns a proposal to set up a National Golf Development Council, chaired by the R & A, to include "all those who stand to benefit" from golf development. An advisory organisation is certainly needed and would be welcomed, but I would agree with the report that it is unlikely that "leadership from a group of honorary Committee members supported by a part of the available time of the EGU Secretary can provide enough input to achieve the dramatic increase in the rate of development of facilities." as the problem requires a more "full time" solution.

The National Golf Foundation in the States is quoted as the prototype. This is a trade-supported and motivated body which is kept very firmly at arms length by the USGA. Those formulating rules or providing impartial advice must never be seen to be in cahoots with those benefitting, or those who are penalised will call foul in very expensive Anti-trust law litigation. By all means listen to what interested parties have to say - but they should not be part of the ultimate decision taking. It is all very well talking about inviting trade Associations to contribute and worse still to pay - but it is as well to remember that not all members love each other and any apparent discrimination in favour of one (say a convincing lobbyist) would mean litigation by disappointed suitors. We have too many grandiloquently titled trade bodies already in this country taking on a 'National' mantle. The

NGF in America provides the statistical arm of golf - a useful function if you believe in statistics - and also feasibility surveys. Those of us in this country conducting feasibility surveys, if we are honest to ourselves and our clients, turn down far more than half of potential schemes as being predictable failures and usually make some qualification on the rest. This is why I think 200 new courses is top weight in the next decade in the U.K. but in the States "one a day until the end of the century" is still the parrot cry!

The R & A are to be congratulated for publishing "The Way Forward" and "The Demand for Golf". They are intended to create discussion and there is nothing like throwing a rock in a pool to stir ripples - as I should know being one of the best and oldest rock throwers in the business!

What is needed is sensible, informed and expert debate. It is certainly not going to come from those with an axe to grind nor from those who live in isolation from today's problems. What we need in the next decade is not only more courses but better courses (which might take some pressure off the existing ones). We are not going to achieve this by listening to the wrong advice or ignoring all the experience from previous golf booms. Hindsight has many advantages and should not be ignored. One must remember the parable of the old and young bulls and consider that the old one might just have a better answer than his junior.

Since this article was drafted and submitted in the form above, it has come to my notice that there will be an opportunity for discussion and debate of the document 'The Demand for Golf' at a date early in 1990, this date shortly to be announced and advised to relevant parties by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

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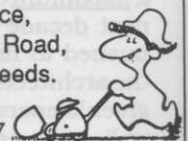
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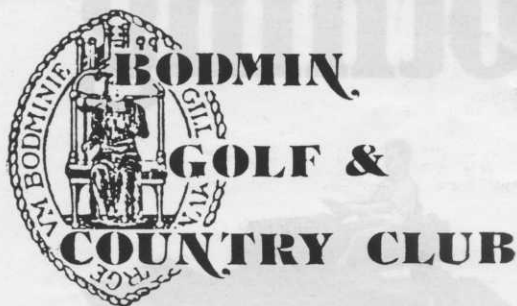
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