

sharpen and care for a saw. Courses can include instruction on felling, snedding, cross-cutting and stacking, the take-down of hung-up trees, chainsaw clearance of wind-blow, felling large hardwoods and tree climbing and pruning.

Bert Watson of Tyrells Wood Golf Club lost a lot of trees up on the Downs. He had the good fortune, however, of having a first class squad of woodcutters from the north-east working on a nearby Estate. They have cleared a lot of the timber, with the Tyrells Wood greenkeepers working behind them, burning the rubbish and restoring any damage created by getting the timber off the course.

Jim Liddington of New Zealand Golf Club was confronted with a loss of some 2,00 Birch and Pine trees. The club have been able to get a pulp company to take the timber. They provide the labour to get the timber they want, and a squad of greenkeepers burn the debris. Jim reckons it will be some years before he catches up with the burning operation.

Kevin Munt was, at the time of the hurricane, into the second day of the Suntory World Matchplay at Wentworth. Anyone who witnessed the scenes of havoc on television created by the storm must be aware of how Kevin felt. Access roads to the course were completely blocked, large trees were down all over the West Course and television towers, complete with valuable cameras, were destroyed. The Wentworth club, Kevin and his staff, are to be commended that the course was made playable and the tournament completed.



Puttenham Golf Club have, in the last two years, been undergoing extensive alterations to lengthen their course. This has entailed cutting five new holes through woodland. By the time of the storm, the new holes had been completed and greens, tees and fairways were all sown. Ian Lowe now has his work cut out clearing some 700 trees, left to define the new holes, that were blown into a knot.

Jim Russell, assistant course manager at Hankley Common, awakened on the morning of the 16th to find himself without a car. A nearby tree had come down in the night and gone through the garage - wrecking both garage and car. Jim later discovered that the club secretary had suffered similarly - his car was also written off!

Alex "Lex" Armitage was basking in the sunshine in Spain when he first heard of

the hurricane. On arriving home he could hardly believe the scene that confronted him. The first hole at Richmond was completely blocked with blown Lime, Beach, Oak and Hornbeams. The course had to be completely closed for a week to allow for essential clearing and to make it safe for members. It took four weeks for the first hole to be cleared and made ready for play. Alex believes Richmond have lost 80 per cent of their timber.

The 18 holes at Selsdon Park Golf Course were only opened for play on 1st January. Clearance and restoration has cost a lot of money - the sum of £60,000 has been mentioned in the Press. Ian Hamilton, the course manager, says in all, 300 mature trees were brought down by the winds and a further 150 had to be felled in the interests of safety. Ian reckons he has something like two acres of replanting to complete. Selsdon Park's hotel carpark also suffered - twenty cars were completely written off and many more were badly damaged.

The loss of trees has made some courses seem rather bleak. Clubhouses were damaged, irrigation systems torn up, storage tanks smashed, vehicles lost, shelters and storage sheds brought down. But, driving across the home counties, I am amazed at the number of trees we will have, and I am sure every effort will be made to restore things for the future.



QUESTIONS, questions and more questions. Any comparison between the greenkeeping meetings of twenty years ago with those of today would have to take account of the fact that more people are asking more questions than ever before.

Not just technical questions, but much more fundamental questions concerning the whole structure of the game of golf.

A prime target for criticism among those involved with the maintenance of golf courses are the national golf unions and their apparent inability to shoulder tasks that would seem to be their responsibility. It would perhaps be only fair to first establish how they operate. So it was that I made my way to the headquarters of the largest of the national unions, the English Golf Union at Leicester to talk to their secretary Keith Wright.

Our first task was to put the EGU into a proper historical context. We all understand that the R & A constitutes the ruling body of the game outside America, but it is not responsible for the running of the game in each golf club. From a fairly early stage, in order to arrange local competitions, clubs banded together to form county unions. National unions were a later development and the English Union is a relatively recent newcomer, dating from 1924. The Scottish, Welsh and Irish unions consist of all their constituent clubs, but their English counterpart has as full members only "the county unions of England and the Isle Of Man".

Thus there is no direct link between the national body and the clubs. Everything has to pass through the county unions with funds collected by the county from the clubs and services given in return have to use the same roundabout method.

In recent times, considerable efforts have gone into modernising the mechanics of the EGU starting with the move in 1985 from Wokingham to a more central site at Leicester in a building specially adapted for the purpose. At that time Keith Wright was appointed as secretary, an encouraging if rather surprising appointment as his previous career was with the Football Association.

Keith and his very capable deputy Paul Baxter have now had time to set up an organisation well equipped for today's world. So where does it obtain its income and what does it do with it? Keith did his best to give me some answers.

Looking at the financial report it is clear most of the income is raised, by an annual levy on all golfers, currently set at 60p per head. This amounts to £204,000 out of a total of £260,000. There is some additional aid from both the Sports Council and the R & A.

It is when we come to look at the other

side of the figures that some doubts arise in my mind. Administration accounts for £97,000 of which salaries make up less than half, the remainder going on the general expenses of maintaining a national headquarters. Quite modest, but it then appears that the principal services being rendered are the running of committees and coaching, matches and competitions for the good players. Indeed the accusation has been levelled, that they do little more than train budding professional golfers. Keith Wright thinks that is putting it too strongly, arguing that "traditionally any governing body is expected to conduct and run a programme of competitive excellence and the EGU is not unique in this".

However, the first of the three official aims of the Union is "to further the interests of Amateur Golf in England" and if amateur golf is taken to include club golfers it is difficult to refute the argument that most of the money is being spent for the benefit of a small minority.

There's £2000 for greenkeeper training and £700 for the STRI

The Council and Executive Committee consist solely of members elected by the county unions and any debate as to desirable further services which might be carried out by the EGU will be carefully monitored to ensure that they do not encroach on the territory of either the county unions or of their constituent clubs.

Perhaps an examination of the ability to survey current problems and to react to them on a national scale is called for and it is first essential to identify the true aims of amateur golf. The sort of help that can follow could be illustrated by recent examples such as the problems of Common Land and taxation of green fees where clubs have been delighted to receive a national lead.

That brings us to today's problems on the golf course and here there is plenty of sympathy from the EGU which has not always been translated into action in the past. Although the EGU has always been strongly represented on the board of the STRI financial contributions could not be described as generous. Part of the blame for this must be shared by CONGU which is the body set up to represent all four Home Unions, with responsibilities in the field of handicapping and international competition. Representing all British golfers it might be thought that it could have ensured that matters appertaining to the health of British golf courses were properly looked after.

Now we are beginning to see the difficulties. CONGU has no teeth and no way of enforcing its will. Worse still, it has little in the way of income. Income is also a problem for the EGU. In most fields of sport the organising body has a

FACE TO FACE

**Eddie Park
talks to
Keith Wright
Secretary
of the English
Golf Union**

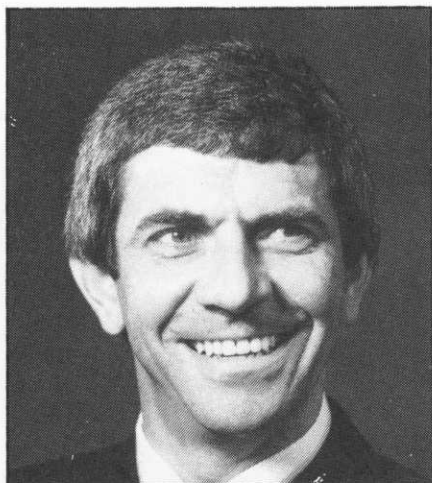
money-making event which it can finance desirable ends.

In recent years the R & A has begun to derive substantial profits from the Open and has set up a mechanism to distribute any surplus. I am not sure that the cash is really reaching the best targets for the good of the game as a whole, but both BIGGA and the STRI are receiving very necessary assistance.

The EGU championships are not regarded as being of enough interest to even justify admission fees, let alone TV interest and there is a limit to what can be derived from levies, but only this year when the R & A suggested that the unions should join them in better support for greenkeeper training the EGU have agreed and will gibe a two pence per head contribution which will provide in the region of £8000.

I asked Keith for some general comments on how he personally sees the future and he made some interesting points. For example, it really ought to be possible to cut out some of the overlap between the activities of the many fragmented bodies involved with golf eg. the EGU, the PGA, BIGGA, the golf Foundation and so on. The same goes for new developments with the Sports Council, the architects, the constructors, STRI etc.

Sponsorship is another difficult subject which is at least being thought about. The Golf Foundation has done a splendid job in interesting more and more young people in golf, but very little to ensure that good courses are available for them to actually play.



"It does seem sensible for the EGU to pull one way and another body to pull in a different direction"

KEITH WRIGHT

What is worse is the fact that commercial organisations do not readily see an alternative home for their generosity. A plan that has been in the back of Keith's mind for some time is the concept of a golf development body, financed by sponsorship, that would act as a channel to funnel money into worthwhile projects.

"The indications are that there are problems with courses and it would seem sensible for a fund administered by the EGU to be set up to support any project which is required" stated Keith, "and it could be argued that the EGU has a duty to provide services that individual clubs cannot provide, chief among which is education". There is at present nobody to educate golf club members and their committees in how to manage their golf courses. In some other countries there is a much greater input of expertise into golf clubs and it need not be costly.

A further criticism of the EGU is that, if it runs competitions with a view to encouraging excellence, it does not always select venues which match that aim. Youngsters need not master ball control if the examination is target golf. Some of the courses seem to have been selected more on past reputation than on current excellence. The EGU does not consult or employ expert advice in selecting courses, but that problem may be more easily solved now that a member of the executive, Peter Wilson, is also chairman of the STRI.

It will be of interest to readers of this magazine that Keith Wright told me that when the EGU is running a tournament it prefers to deal at first-hand with the course manager. He is also realistic enough to recognise that the members of a host club have more influence over course preparation than a visiting union.

I went to Leicester armed with a barrage of criticisms that I have heard over the years from those involved in the

maintenance of golf courses, especially from members of club committees and Keith was able to answer many of my points or at least explain the difficulties. I certainly came away with more optimism that problems are being investigated with sympathy and efforts being made to find solutions.

A few doubts remain in my mind. A common feature which seems to link most bodies working on the interface between golf and golf course maintenance is that they frequently lack expertise and therefore fail to appreciate what they don't know! I remember raising this point with a VIP in the golf world when talking about one of the most important committees in golf. (no names, no pack drill!) "Well they have all been good golfers and they're all good chaps".

Applying such criteria does not help very much if decisions are taken which affect the way a golf course is to be treated. This criticism is equally valid whether discussing club committees or national committees and national unions are certainly not exempt.

Appointing a consultant and then ignoring or misusing his advice is another mistake. Of course, this kind of criticism works both ways. Do the boards of management of the STRI and BIGGA know enough about the needs of their customers?

A more serious matter in my mind is the cumbersome arrangement that stems from working through the counties. The EGU seems to be a sleeping giant and efforts are being made to rouse it, but the process is agonisingly slow - much too slow if help is to come in time to the men struggling to maintain English courses. The tragedy there is that all this has happened before. In the late Twenties, when the EGU and other unions joined with many clubs in setting up the Board of Greenkeeping Research when courses faced a peril similar to that of today.

Continuity is a frail commodity in golf and golf courses are the losers.

The EGU headquarters staff have already been able to offer BIGGA some help with such things as computer lists of club details and I feel sure the time is ripe for BIGGA officials to talk about the problems of their members with the EGU.

The last word must rest with Keith Wright. "The responsibility for maintaining a golf course does not rest with the EGU; it rests with those charged with responsibility within the club. The role of the EGU is in the long term concerned with providing means whereby people in clubs can obtain educational help to do a better job. The fact that a club has not come to grips with a thatch problem or whatever is not the fault of the EGU.

"The future role of the EGU must centre around the building of a better co-ordinated programme for golf and golfers. It does not seem sensible for the EGU to pull one way and another body to pull in a different direction".

FACE TO FACE

NOTEBOOK...

New system

UNIVERSAL Materials has evolved a new type of Tee Mat system which combines what managing director Geoff Russell calls "the best of both worlds".

The stance area is a traditional rubber link mat of the type which Universal, under their trade name "Unimat", has been making for over 50 years. Constructed from used truck tyre material, these mats are still easily the most durable on the market.

The striking surface comes from Japan where its manufacturer, Soko of Tokyo, is the largest supplier of artificial turf to the country's 3,000 driving ranges.

"The Japanese driving range market is so enormous", says Geoff Russell, "that it is feasible to produce a deep pile artificial turf specifically for golf. We have tried to combine our mats with many different artificial grass products from several different countries and there is no doubt that Soko's is superior to every thing else on the market".

The mat is available in both single and double-ended configurations and is mounted on a treated wooden platform.

The artificial grass runs the full width of the stance mat, thus giving the user a generous area on which to position the ball. For further details ring Geoff Russell on 01-421-1236.

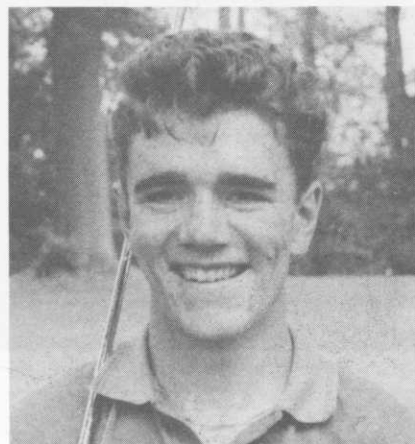
Three wheel drive from Jacobsen

JACOBSEN'S Tri-King 1471 triplex reel mower is now available with 3-wheel drive for improved traction and maneuverability. The powerful new hydraulic traction drive system along with aircraft-style steering, a foot-operated hydraulic reel lift with auto start/stop, and a 71" cutting swath gives the Tri-King increased efficiency and productivity. For details call Chris Smith on 0553 763333.

Proud student

TOM BRANNON (19) assistant greenkeeper at Ratho Park Golf Club in Newbridge near Edinburgh, is the proud recipient of a new award introduced in 1987 - the Institute of Groundmanship's Prize for best Greenkeeping and Groundmanship -Practical Student.

However, to Tom, who hails from Fauldhouse, this ultimate accolade was simply the pinnacle of a successful three year course at Oatridge Agricultural College, Uphall West Lothian. In his two previous years he took Best Greenkeeping and Groundsman Student Award. In recognition of his excellent performance, Ratho Park Golf Club presented Tom with a



Tom Brannon

cheque.

At present Tom doesn't play golf but he is eager to learn, and if he applies himself to the game with the same vigour he attacked his studies he's sure to prove successful.

'Survivors' of John Deere course manage a smile

AS part of their plans for expansion in the UK market, John Deere consider the best way to ensure that the quality of service matches the quality of their machines, is to train their staff at first hand. So behind the smiles in this photograph was an intensive five day training course for British ground care dealers in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

A large part of the company's success over the last 150 years

has been due to their firm commitment to training, research and development at all times.

* * *

The happy picture below shows Mr. D. M. Walker, managing director of John Deere UK (3rd from left) Mr. F. A. McKee, commercial manager (2nd from left) and Mr. M. Rhodes (2nd from right) with British ground care dealers.



...NOTEBOOK

New course gets "thumbs up"!

GLENEAGLES HOTELS plc have presented a trophy for a new two-year college training course in gamekeeping and estate maintenance.

The course is at Elmwood Agricultural and Technical College in Cupar, Fife.

Jimmy Kidd, estate manager at The Gleneagles Hotel, said: "Elmwood is the most progressive college of its kind anywhere in the UK and is particularly renowned for its greenkeeping courses. The new course was prompted by Scotland's need for the conservation of its wildlife, which is vital to the tourist industry.

"We hope it will encourage youngsters to enter this buoyant sector of the estates management industry".



Kevin Bandeen 17, of **Kirriemuir**, gives a 'thumbs up' as first winner of the Gleneagles' trophy. Kevin is 17 and a second-year student at Elmwood.

A NEW Code of Practice has been prepared jointly by the National Turfgrass Council and the National Association of Agricultural Contractors, with the approval of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Code gives guidance on the application of pesticides to recreational areas, parks, sports grounds, airfields, road and motorway verges, housing estates and hospital grounds. It also covers the handling, storage and transport of chemicals. It gives advice not only on selecting the correct pesticide, but on whether and when to use one at all. Keeping records of chemical treatments is an important part of the legislation, which the Code explains in detail.

Copies of the Code are available from the National Turfgrass Council at a price of £7.00.

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SPECIFICALLY formulated for the professional greenkeeper and groundsman who requires the ultimate in easy-to-use sprayable iron, Farmura have introduced Ferrosol Liquid Iron to the UK market.

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Ferrosol can be tank mixed with other Farmura Products and will compliment their liquid fertiliser programmes is available in packs of five litres.

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...NOTEBOOK

STRI courses

THE STRI will hold two courses at Bingley in early 1988 on the theory and practice of turf construction and management.

The courses last five days and will cover soils, grasses, turf diseases and pests, drainage, watering, fertilizers and machinery.

The commencing dates are 22nd and 29th February. If there is sufficient demand for places a third course will be held commencing 7th March.

The fee is £100 for members and £120 for non-members, plus VAT (exclusive of accommodation and meals).

Further details from The Secretary, Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1AU. Telephone Bradford (0274) 565131.

Going South

AFTER travelling south across the border, twenty members of the BIGGA Scottish Section, in addition to an informative day at Ransomes' Nacton Works, also spent an enjoyable two nights in Ipswich.

The party of head greenkeepers, led by Jimmy Neilson, besides having a tour of the factory also had the opportunity to try out Ransomes latest equipment for golf course maintenance. "We greatly value such sessions" said Ransomes technical sales and service manager Brian Mitchell, "because it is always helpful to hear what users have to say about our equipment".

Howard Swan goes solo ...

FOLLOWING on from the successful launch of the National Turfgrass Councils' new initiative, the Premier Patrons Scheme, designed to revitalise industry awareness and set a progressive strategy for the future, it has been announced that the STRI has donated financial support in the form of a £800 gold patron pledge.

Responding to the STRI gold patronage Howard Swan, chairman of the NTC, said; "We are particularly pleased and honoured that such a respected and authoritative body has joined with the major commercial companies and organisations within our industry to support this NTC initiative".

Greenkeepers win awards

DAVID BAKER from Walton Heath Golf Club came first out of 24 students on the head greenkeepers supervisory management course at Elmwood Agricultural and Technical College, in Cupar, Fife.

Paul Seago from Hunstanton Golf Club, Norfolk, received two awards - best second year student (out of a group of forty) and also best practical greenkeeping student. Peter Bancroft from Taymouth Castle Golf Club, Aberfeldy received the Gleneagles Trophy for the best greenkeeping project.

HOWARD SWAN, chairman of the National Turfgrass Council and secretary of the British Association of Golf Course Constructors, has resigned his position as director of Golf Landscapes, and as from 1st January has formed his own company, Howard Swan Ltd. Swan's intention is to specialise in golf construction management, with an advisory service on design, irrigation and golf course maintenance.

His position in the industry is already well established and he has been a keen advocate of bridge building between the various professional bodies within the amenity turf market.

He plans to employ experienced personnel to manage projects in Europe and elsewhere on the fee-based system, and to this end, work is underway in Portugal (for Bovis International Ltd and Quinta do Lago; McInerney Ltd at several new sites in The Algarve; Quinta de Marinha Golf and Country Club outside Lisbon; Pinecliffs - a new development in The Algarve). Swan is also advising Corfu Golf and Country Club on the upgrading of their course and maintenance practices. Another project is in Turkey in collaboration with Hawtree & Son.

An area of particular interest is golf course maintenance management. In Europe Swan has discovered a great lack of skills and the professional approach to golf course maintenance expected in the UK is lacking also.

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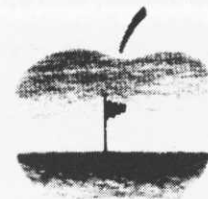
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**Collingtree Leisure Ltd.,
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 NN4 0HT**

...NOTEBOOK

"Slow Release" disclosure debate speeds up

THE STRI has recently been advocating that suppliers of turf fertilizers containing nitrogen in slow-release form, such as IBDU, should disclose openly and fully the actual amount of nitrogen from such a source contained in their fertilizers. This disclosure would enable specifiers and users of slow-release fertilizers to make effective comparisons of quality and value for money between the various products available today.

Rigby Taylor, suppliers of fertilizers, have endorsed this course of action and details of their market-leading Mascot Microfine range of fine-turf fertilizers are set out (right). Rigby Taylor believe that it is in the interests of all users that other fertilizer companies follow this positive lead on the question of disclosure of slow-release contents in support of the STRI's campaign.

Analysis	Percentage of Nitrogen from IBDU
18. 0. 0 + 6% Iron	80%
12. 0. 6 + 2% Iron	60%
8. 0. 0 + 4% Iron	50%
14. 4. 7	50%
4. 0. 8 + 2% Iron	50%

RIGBY TAYLOR, the UK's leading supplier of materials and equipment for the sports turf and horticultural industries, have doubled the size of their Midland sales and service centre at their existing address on the Budbrooke Trading Estate in Warwick.

The added resources now offered by over 10,000 square feet of warehouse and administrative offices represents a positive response to increased business and is

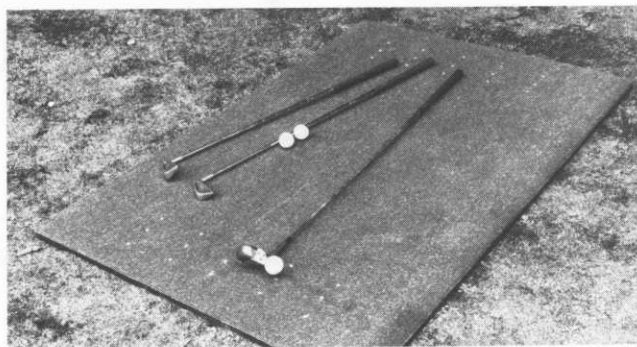
intended to maintain the company's reputation for a comprehensive and impeccable service.

To support this expansion, Owen Jones, a well known respected authority within the industry has been appointed sales office manager. His wide experience gathered from over thirty five years in the horticultural trade is now available to enhance the many other benefits already enjoyed by customers of Rigby Taylor.

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