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this report that much is already happening and much is planned. Within the Association there is enthusiasm and optimism. Outside the Association, it must be said that we have some way to go. We will need to talk to the other major Organisations within golf, seeking to see how best we can co-operate in promoting the cause of greenkeepers. Although critical voices can be heard, it is my view that the way forward will include a professional working relationship with both the PGA and the PGA European Tour. They are often ready to talk of the need for better greenkeeping - now surely is their opportunity to join with us in ensuring this happens. We will certainly need to make many more golf clubs aware of the Association's existence and the benefits of membership for its greenkeepers. We will need to establish positive relations with the media. In relationships with

other organisations and companies, both within and outside golf, there will be no short cuts or doing what is expedient - the Board will make decisions it considers to be in the best interests of the Association - however difficult these may prove on occasions. The quality of golf depends on the course and its condition. This is all-important. The greenkeeper is therefore important within the game although this has not always been reflected in past attitudes. The new Association will seek to establish a professionalism throughout greenkeeping and an enhanced status for greenkeepers within the game in general. We will listen, talk and take advice but in the final analysis, we must be allowed to be independent and make our own way forward. I feel sure that 1988 will be a year of real progress and development".

**Neil Thomas**  
Executive Director.

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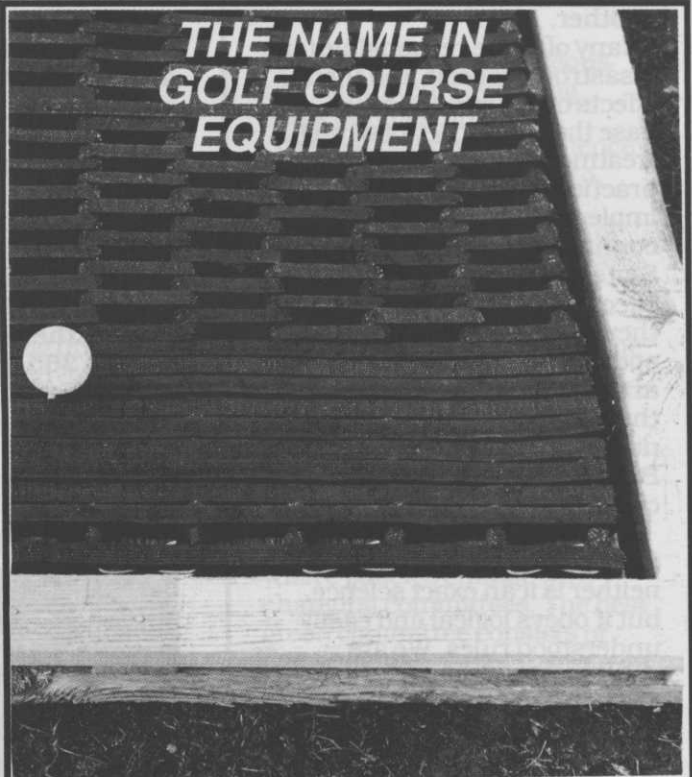
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# Greenkeeping today ...

GREENKEEPING practices and, with them, the condition of our courses, seem very vulnerable to a cyclic pattern of slow recovery from disasters directly caused by the enthusiasms of the unqualified, only to rapidly deteriorate again on a ten year pattern, sacrificed yet again to the short sighted interests of minorities who have neither the training nor the understanding to see the whole picture. Virtually none of these self styled experts can even identify one grass from another.

Many of those responsible for disastrous policies and their effects on course condition base their advocacy of wrong treatments on theories and practices they have seen implemented in other countries, notably the United States. Such policies may be effective for those areas where they have evolved to meet special problems, e.g. severely arid conditions, as found in the Middle East, but they are not relevant to conditions in Britain and most European countries.

Greenkeeping in Britain is not a complicated study, neither is it an exact science, but it obeys logical and easily understood rules. We are concerned, admittedly under wide ranging conditions, with the cultivation and encouragement of two grass species, fescue and bent and the discouragement of a third, *Poa Annua*. A weed has been described as "a very successful plant out of place" and with its track record of colonisation of bare ground and taking over fine turf areas and its ubiquity all over temperate zones of the world, *Poa Annua* must be one of the most successful weeds of all time!

When discussing criteria of quality - in every aspect of life let alone greenkeeping - there is a choice between laying down the law without explanation or arguing the reasons behind statements, which may create more confusion than conviction.

However if we talk about good and bad greenkeeping methods, and good and bad course condition, explanations and definitions are unavoidable. IT IS THE END RESULT RATHER THAN THE METHOD ITSELF WHICH MUST BE OUR YARDSTICK. Perfection is difficult to achieve, but it is clearly impossible if there is no agreement on the definition of perfection. The first step must be to define these standards in the broadest terms.

**The simplest definition is that good golf courses should provide ideal conditions of play all the year round, or as near to 365 days a year as severe frost or snow cover permits, but remember we are talking about Britain. Good conditions mean fine textured, firm yet resilient, dry and well drained putting surfaces; tees**

**which are almost identical to greens save only in height of cut; and fairways which provide fine wiry turf, giving tight lies, only from which can control i.e. backspin, be imparted to the ball, since if grass gets between ball and clubface, the end result is a flier and no control.**

Sadly these conditions do not always appeal to all members. We are told in a dry summer that the greens are too firm and why isn't the water, for which the members paid so much, used to make the greens hold better? If those in charge give in to these demands the result is thatch and many weeks of temporary greens in winter.

It is beyond argument that annual meadow grass cannot, even in the mildest of winters, give good surfaces, especially towards the end of winter. In fact, the more open the winter, the more play and wear, and the thinner and bumpier the turf becomes. This is totally unsurprising as annual meadow grass has, despite its varied forms, a very short life-cycle and by the end of winter is dying on its feet. It also has



"The encouragement of two grasses fescue and bent"

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by Jim Arthur



**"Good golf course should provide ideal conditions of play all the year round"**

soft non-fibrous leaves and wears badly, as well as being susceptible to disease, not least the dreaded Anthracnose or Die Back, which hits annual meadow grass under low fertility conditions, thus giving those in charge the impossible choice between feeding and ensuring totally dominant annual meadow grass greens or continuing with a sensibly restricted nitrogen-only fertiliser policy, ending up, temporarily at least, with bare greens and irate members.

Assessment of quality is difficult because there are so many different standards. The tournament professional wants something vastly different from the average member and cares not one whit if the greens are killed by shaving them to achieve his ideas of perfection for one week out of fifty two. The poorer player likes holding greens and, perhaps being a fair weather golfer, is unimpressed by arguments about the inevitable corollary of soft thatchy bogs all winter. The spectator-golfer comments favourably on colour - the "nice and green" school. I fear it is only the minority who value the old standards as pearls beyond price, and indeed such traditional standards are getting harder to find each year.

Courses tarted up for professional events may look attractive to those brought

up to understand that "green is great" and indeed such presentation may hide a host of major troubles. Sadly, however, as troughs invariably follow peaks, the penalty for such artificiality is to see serious deterioration for many weeks or months afterwards.

Having failed to achieve fast greens by cultivating fine grasses, we then find demands by ignorant golfers to shave greens down to 1/8th inch for months on end in a misguided and vain attempt to emulate the unrealistically fast putting surfaces manufactured for televised tournament golf worldwide. These people fail to take into account the vastly different climate, financial resources, intensity of play, staffing and machinery levels and a host of other factors in other golfing countries and that such shaving is not possible for prolonged periods anywhere in the golfing world.

It is, I think, safe to say that in Britain there are more courses in poor order for some part of the year than consistently play well all the year round. The wrong reasons are advanced by many for this regrettable state of affairs. We are told that the all year round excellence of such courses as Walton Heath and Lindrick, to quote but two, is due to their being on sandy free draining soil". The only sand at Walton Heath is in the bunkers and the greens at both courses are

laid out on heavy calcareous clay, admittedly overlying chalk or limestone.

The real reason for excellence at any course is not hard to find. It is, in one word, continuity - a combination of members wanting the best and one amiable dictator seeing that they get it. That dictator may be a course manager, if he has the power, a devoted and permanent chairman/convener of a green committee, or even secretaries or the chairman of a proprietary club. Perfection in my experience is never found where policies change with changing committees. The best green committee consists of one person.

Howard Keele who asked to be chairman of green at his local club, on the grounds that to anyone who could sort out J.R.Ewing, handling the average club member would be child's play. He accepted, provided that the green committee was made up of uneven numbers, and three was too many!

Sadly our Horatios, subject to constant complaints and yet receiving very little praise when things go well or even recognition of their time and energy consuming tasks, eventually despair and go, and then the snapping terriers at their heels see a God-sent opportunity to impose their ideas, and the result is disaster and another course is lost.

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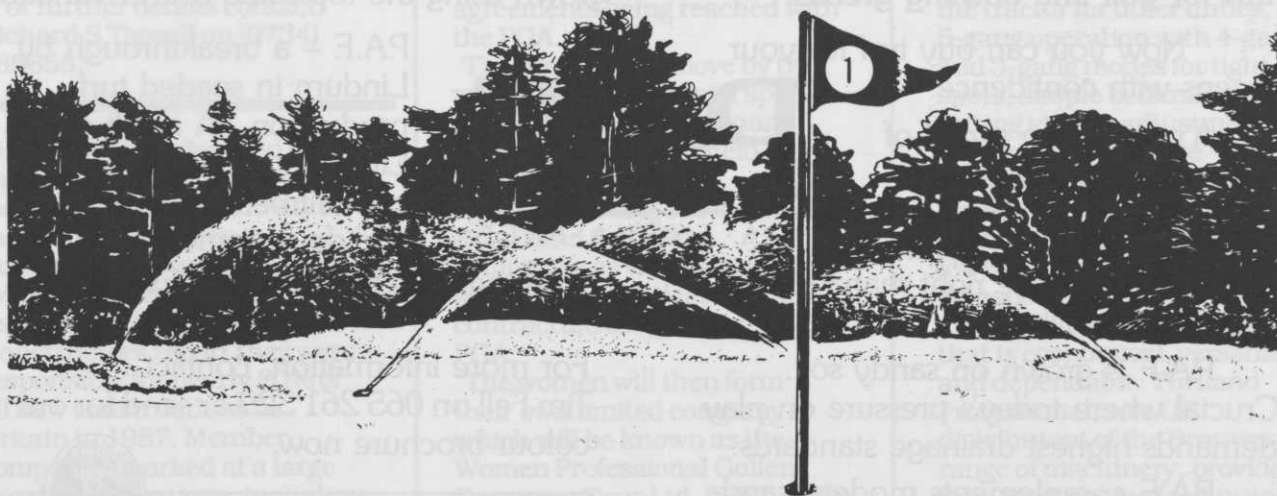
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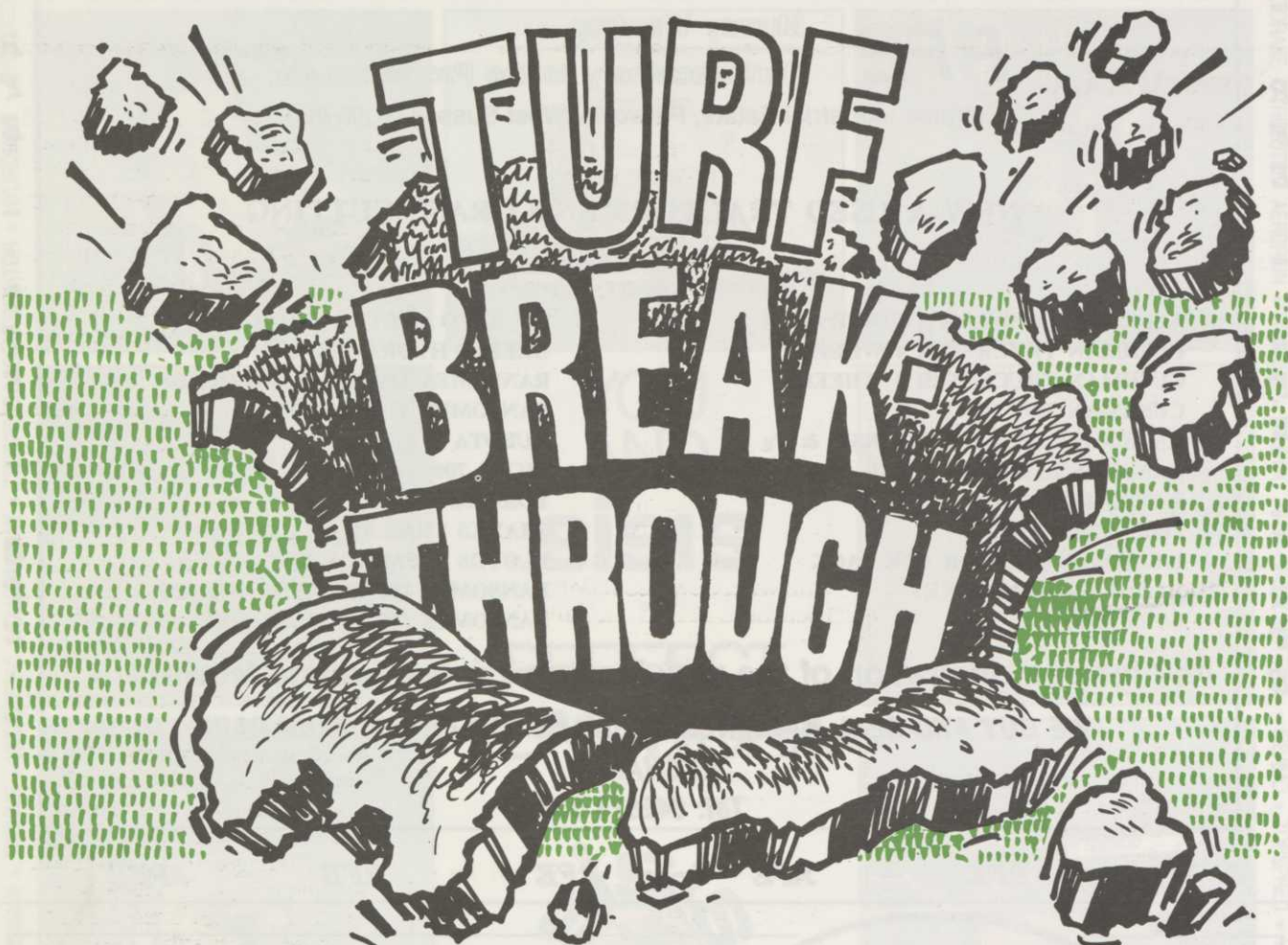
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THE increasing demand for the game in UK and Europe is meaning increased activity for those who specialise in building golf courses.

Members of the British Association of Golf Course Constructors report they were responsible for nearly 80% of all new constructions in Britain in 1987. Member companies worked at a large number of locations, including Lytham St. Annes, St. Andrews, Goodwood (Brian D Pierson), The Berkshire, Gosfield Lake, High Wycombe (Golf Landscapes), Collingtree (Southern Golf), Kings Langley, Goring and Streatley (Land Unit Construction).

Members also worked extensively in Europe, Austria, West Germany, Portugal, Greece and France.

Optimism is high for a busy 1988 both at home and abroad, and perhaps most notably Golf Landscapes will build the new South Course at Wentworth, and Brian Pierson will further alter some of St Andrews hallowed holes.

The Association has been enlarged by the addition of new provisional members in Blakedown Landscapes and Sportsworks, from Scotland and with new associate members in Patrick Tallack, Owl Consulting (Hong Kong), In Turf, Wright Rain and Howard Swan, and all members now look forward to an exciting year.

Further information from: The Secretary, BAGCC (0245) 48640.

## All change for the ladies

THE Women's Professional Golf Association has been given the go ahead to establish an independent company, subject to contract agreements being reached with the PGA.

The break-away move by the women was agreed at a special meeting of the Professional Golfers' Association held at The Belfry, subject to agreement being reached by the Board and the WPGA committee as to the transfer of assets and the release of the contractual obligations of the PGA.

The women will then form their own limited company which will be known as the Women Professional Golfers' European Tour Ltd. (WPG European Tour) and will operate out of the PGA's Headquarters until it can establish its own offices.

The site of the tour's new offices has yet to be confirmed following several approaches from golf clubs throughout the

country, but it is hoped it will be finalised as soon as possible and certainly long before the end of the eight month transitional period in December.

Joe Flanagan, former director of the Carrolls Irish Open, has been appointed as Tour Executive of the WPG European Tour.

## A new mower

NEW from Turfland Professional Ltd is the Brouwer 5-gang tractor mounted mower.

The Brouwer range of turf-care machinery has a first-rate reputation for quality and reliability and the latest tractor mounted reel mower is loaded with exciting new features and options. The golf course model is fitted with floating heads to cope with 1/2 inch fine cut to 2 inch rough cut. No lengthy adjustments are needed, just a flick of a lever. Optional brushes are also available which virtually eliminate tractor tracks from fairways.

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## Lindum launched

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The company were naturally reticent when asked how this has been achieved, saying that it is as a result of carefully husbandry, the judicious use of herbicides and much time and patience.

For more information on PAF contact Tim Fell (065261) 329.

## Producing professionals

THE National Turfgrass Council is holding a workshop at Pershore College, Worcs, on Friday 17th June entitled "Producing professionals: Turfgrass Education in the '90's". Many changes are taking place in the national system of training and education and leisure and recreation management is expanding both in numbers and skills. The education committee of the NTC has been closely concerned with several recent developments, including the preparation of a

BTEC diploma in turf science and sportsground management and the integration into managerial training of the new award "Master of Sportsturf Management (IOG)".

Here is an opportunity to find out what is happening in turfgrass education today. The cost is £29 (inc VAT).

Details from: John Shildrick, Secretary NTC, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, W. Yorks (0274) 565131.

THE initial three months has seen an extremely encouraging beginning to Howard Swan's management practice.

Construction management continues for Bovis International at the new Sao Lourenco Golf Course, Quinta do Lago, Portugal, which opens for play this summer. In conjunction with this, a management contract to administer the maintenance of the course is being effected, with Peter Wisbey as golf course superintendent. Also at Quinta do Lago, Howard Swan Ltd are managing the construction of a further nine holes for Shell Portugal which will bring the courses in this prestigious resort to 54 holes.

Elsewhere in the Algarve, a nine hole course at Pinecliffs, for golf course architects Hawtree & Son and including a Sheraton Hotel, is being built under this company's management. Superintendent Steve Richardson, late of Cobtree Manor Golf Club, in Kent, is supervising the preparation and planting prior to becoming the managing superintendent.

They have also secured contracts for the construction management of two new

courses in West Germany. One, near Stuttgart, for German golf course architect, Reinhold Weisshaupt, is about to begin and will be supervised by David Lucas, until recently golf course manager at the Tytherington club, Macclesfield.

The company has also been engaged to build Turkey's first golf course for Hilton Hotels International near Izmir, some 400 miles south of Istanbul. The architects for the new country club are Hawtree & Son, in association with Land Design Research Inc., and works will commence in June.

## New executive director at PGA

JOHN LINDSEY, the 41 year old businessman who has been involved in golf organisation and promotion for nearly twenty years, has been appointed the new executive director of the PGA, starting his new role at National Headquarters at The Belfry on May 9th.

His most recent role was as the tournament manager to initiate the Dunhill Cup.

Commenting on his appointment, he said: "One of the first things that has to be done is to restore the feeling that the PGA is the overall body responsible for the welfare of all its members whether the newest young assistant or the oldest senior member, and also to restore its eminent position in the game and to take advantage of the boom the game is currently enjoying in Europe for the benefit of the Association.

I would like to see the PGA set the standards for those who make a living from golf."

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