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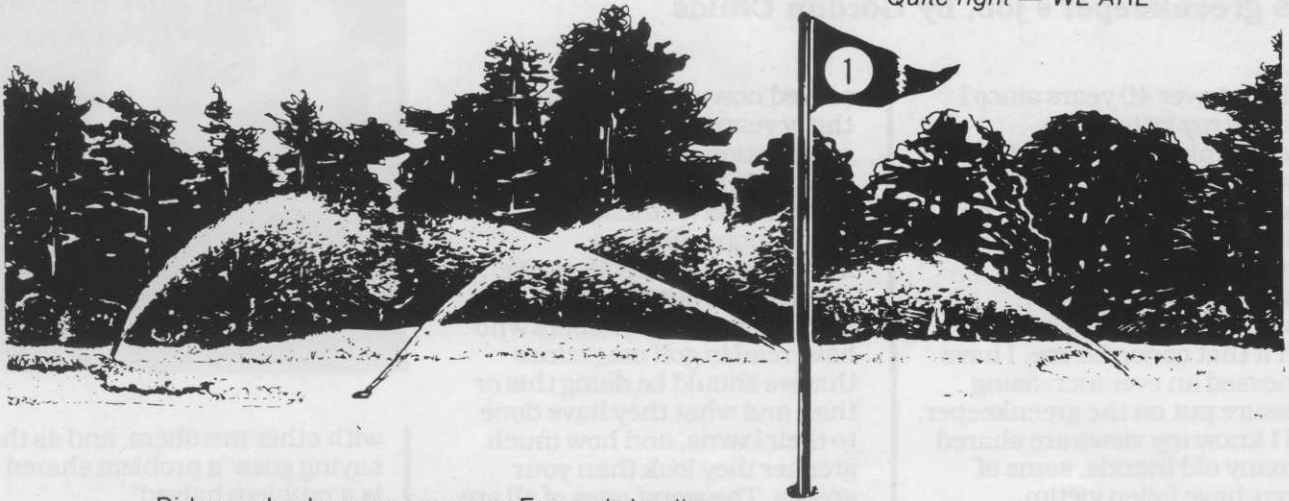


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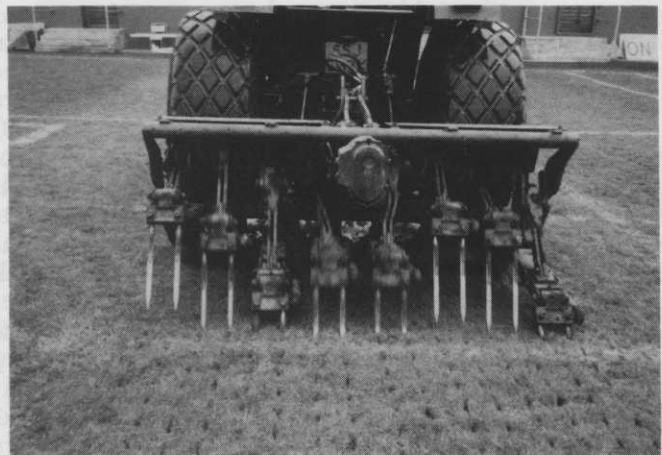
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UNDER PRESSURE

Living with the stresses and strains that come with the greenkeeper's job, by Gordon Childs

IT IS just over 40 years since I followed my father into greenkeeping, and in that time I have seen a great many changes. Surprisingly, not so much in greenkeeping itself, but more in the methods of application.

It is what change has brought with it that concerns me. I have witnessed an ever increasing pressure put on the greenkeeper, and I know my views are shared by many old friends, some of whom have fallen victim. So what are the changes that have brought about this problem, and what, if anything can we do to help ourselves? I can only give you my views and possible remedies gained from a lifetime of experience in greenkeeping.

Golf is far more competitive now, so there is a much greater need to have your course playing well all year round. When I started, you only had a few hardy golfers in winter to contend with. Work could go on uninterrupted, but not so today. I remember in the 1940's, when water was not even installed on most golf courses, it was almost impossible to over water your greens, and the golfer was quite happy to adapt his game to fit the conditions, a skill which today's golfer rarely needs. Now I am the last to condemn the watering systems of today, but many have been over used. I am sure in most cases it is the pressure put on by members who want you to water, water and water in hot, dry weather just to make their game easier. Never mind the long term damage to the turf.

So, instead of the watering system being an asset to the greenkeeper and his course, it can become, if misused, a source of extra pressure in winter when greens are boggy and have to be closed.

The increased amount of golf

played now, against twenty or thirty years ago, has given us a compaction and wear problem on a scale not known before. To combat this we must aerate much more, all to the annoyance of the golfers. We also have to put up with comments from members who have read in golf magazines that we should be doing this or that, and what they have done to their lawns, and how much greener they look than your greens. The worst ones of all are the people who set themselves up as experts, but in truth know very little about the subject, but still seem to be able to convince members that they are right. To a young man starting out in greenkeeping, it must be very confusing to read the different views expressed by agronomists on their methods of good greenkeeping.

Then we have the golf courses beautifully presented on television for a tournament, and your members want their course to look the same, but without the cost, of course. We would all like to present golf courses in immaculate condition, given the chance, but money and time are in short supply in most golf clubs. All you can do is try your best with what you have and work to convince the club to change its attitude so that you can give them what they ask for.

At golf clubs where tournaments are held, the pressures can be even greater. I could go on and on naming the pressure points, but that is no help. So I would like to suggest a few things we can do to ease the problem.

First, BIGGA is trying very hard to help by promoting greenkeeper education, which in turn will give the knowledge and confidence to resist bad policy. It also gives the opportunity to share problems



with other members, and as the saying goes "a problem shared is a problem halved".

Another very good saying, is that "a change is as good as a rest", and I don't mean a change of job. How many of us work all day on the course then go back at night to play golf, and half the time we are thinking about tomorrow's work. This can only add to the pressure you are under. I am not suggesting you should give up playing - far from it. Playing golf helps you to understand the needs of the golfer, but more time spent on outside interests or even playing golf on other courses will help.

Too many greenkeepers never get away from their jobs, and that can only be bad news for you and your family. Not only are you boring to live with, but you are risking your health in later years.

We all need an interest away from work. I personally dropped out of the pressure area seven or eight years ago, and my main interest now is horse riding. I am very lucky that my wife Marion shares my love for horses. That is an added bonus, and makes keeping a horse much easier as we share the workload.

I can honestly say, and I speak from experience, that a relaxing interest outside of work will release a lot of the pressure. There are many ways to help yourself, but it is an area we all need to be very conscious of.

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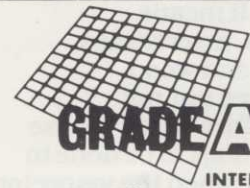
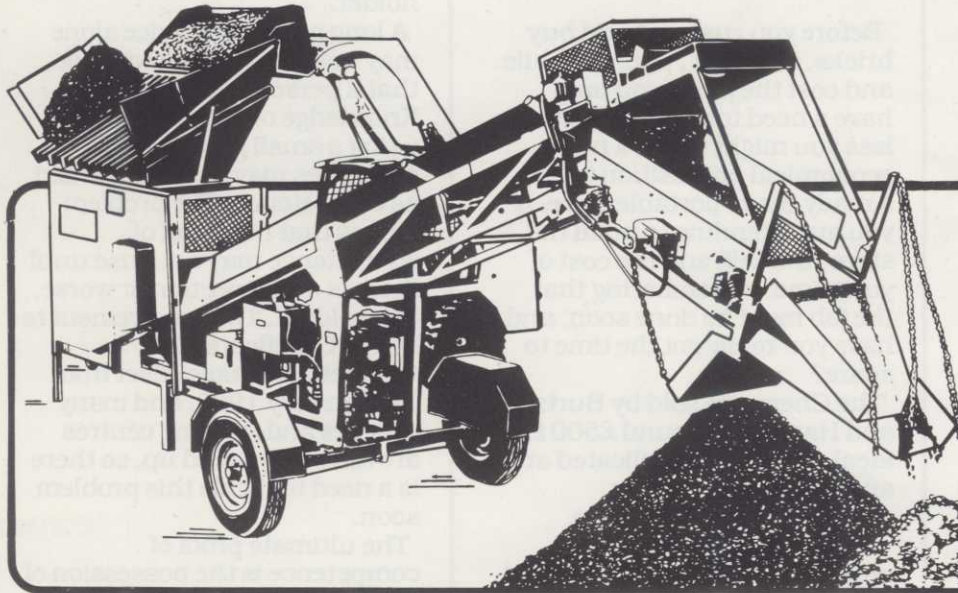
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The Food and Environment Protection Act

WITH the season upon us and the 'alligators' thick all around us, there is the problem of what to do about the new regulations. You might wonder, why us? What did we do to deserve this? The answer of course is nothing, the record of safe application of pesticides in greenkeeping is outstanding. But we must accept that the new law is necessary to control the activities of all who use pesticides.

The word pesticide itself causes confusion. It means weedkillers, insecticides, fungicides and wood preservatives but not fertilizers. On the golf course there are things to be done to ensure that when the inspector visits, all will be well.

The way pesticides are stored leaves a lot to be desired. Some stores are almost non-existent, others are well constructed but the pesticides are in with the fertilizers, tools, etc.

In future, pesticides will be stored separately and will need to be securely locked. The guidelines on a typical chemical store are intended for use by large users of pesticides; there are as yet no specific guidelines on small stores. A small pesticide store will contain less than 200 units of pesticide i.e. litres or kilos or a mixture of both.

SENSIBLE APPROACH

The most sensible approach on the golf course would be to have the store within an existing building and built to meet the following requirements:

1. Insulated from extremes of temperature and have high and low ventilation.
2. Have strong non-absorbent shelving.
3. Be able to contain any spillage within the store area, a concrete floor with minimum

6" bund across the door.

4. Have a stock list inside (and a copy in the office), a standard hazard sign on the outside of the door.
5. First Aid, including eyewash and washing facilities, should also be nearby.

Before you rush out and buy bricks, sand etc., pause a while and cost the job. If you only have a need to use 200 units or less you might find it a more economical proposition to buy a ready made portable store. If you are intending to build the store yourself, add the cost of your time, remembering that the job must be done soon, and have you really got the time to spare?

The Chemsafe sold by Burts and Harvey at around £500 is ideal, being uncomplicated and approved as a store for pesticides up to 200 units.

Finally, before you do anything, check with your local Health and Safety Executive Inspector that what you propose to do will meet with his approval.

SQUIRREL-LIKE

Greenkeepers do tend to hang on to their favourite pesticides, especially fungicides. This squirrel like habit has its problems, because only those pesticides that have current approval can be used. Disposal of old material by the local authority or authorised waste disposal contractor can be expensive so resist the squirrel syndrome! The inspector will check and won't be amused to see old cherished fungicides hidden in corners.

Providing those who spray pesticides do so only within the confines of their place or work, they need only be 'competent'. If however, spraying is carried out on other sites, the operator

must have a Certificate of Competence. A further consideration is that regardless of where the spraying is carried out, any person born on or after 31st December 1964 must have a Certificate of Competence or be supervised by a certificate holder.

A long period of service alone may not be sufficient to prove that a person is competent. Knowledge of one sprayer and using a small group of pesticides may not be regarded as competence. The problem here is that the proof of competence may not arise until there is an inspection or worse, an accident. The requirement to hold a Certificate of Competence takes effect from 1st January 1989, and many colleges and training centres are already booked up, so there is a need to tackle this problem soon.

The ultimate proof of competence is the possession of a certificate. Take the test; it is a very good qualification and may even be asked for in job interviews in the future.

Finally, examine your spraying operation and check that you are meeting your duties under the law "to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health of human beings, creatures and plants, to safeguard the environment and in particular to avoid pollution of water."

You will need a copy of the *Code of Practice for the use of Approved Pesticides in Amenity Areas*, available from John Shildrick, secretary of the National Turfgrass Council, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire. BD16 1HZ. Cost £7 plus postage.

This important document gives detailed guidance on how to prepare for spraying, to calibrate, dispose of empty containers, clean out machines and more. In fact it should become the sprayer's bible!

by John Allbutt

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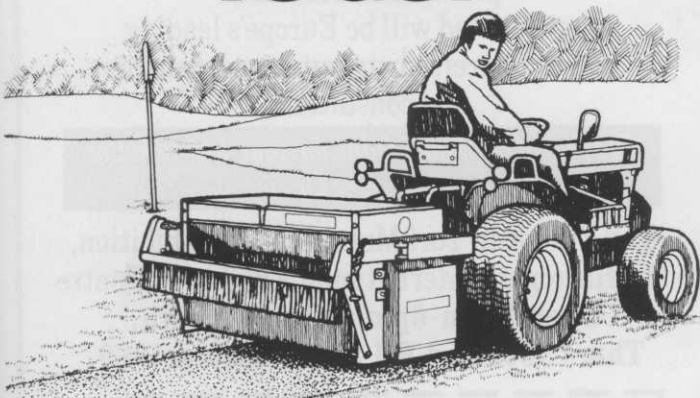
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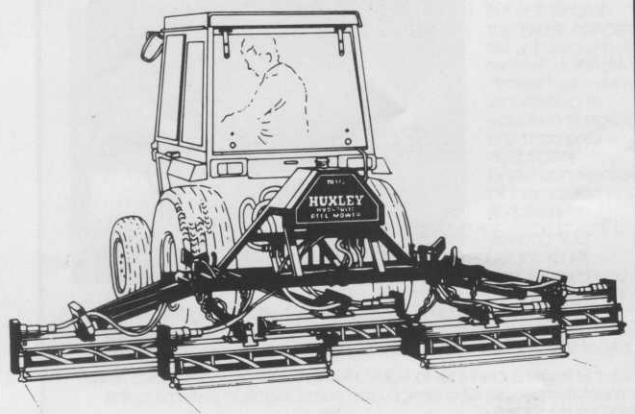
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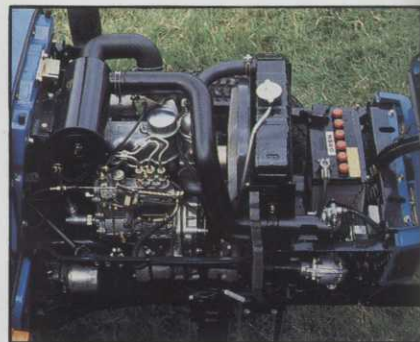


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GOLF IN SWEDEN

by

Michael Williams

AFTER being presented with the first prize for the Scotec Greenkeeping and Groundsmanship course at Elmwood College, Cupar, Michael Williams, an assistant at The Gleneagles Hotel, was invited to participate in an exchange visit organised between the hotel and Ljunghusen Golf Klubb in Sweden.

MY host, Stig Persson, was the high profile chairman of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association and general manager of Ljunghusen golf course. I worked during my first day in Sweden at Ljunghusen and then went on to the Swedish Greenkeepers Conference in the evening. This was held at Hollviken, about 30 miles south of Malmo on the south western tip of Sweden. The Falsterbo peninsula is a tourists' resort with three golf courses; Ljunghusen; Falsterbo, the oldest in Sweden; and Flommen. The three golf courses host the PLM Open in rotation. This year, the tournament is being hosted by the Falsterbo club.

The Ljunghusen club is 55 years old and has been extended twice since its conception in 1932; in 1954 to an 18 hole course, and then again in 1965 when an extra nine holes were added. The course was originally built as a nine hole golf course during the first boom in Swedish golf in the 1930's. Since then, as is happening all over Europe, the country is experiencing a second boom, with many new golf courses being constructed. At the eastern edge of the golf course is the Ljung nature reserve where many migratory birds assemble from both Sweden and Norway before continuing south.

salt marsh

The golf course is constructed on a salt marsh, having approximately six inches of semi-decomposed peat on top of



a pure sand base. There is obviously a very high water table with many lagoons scattered around the course. With such a high water table, during winter the ground can freeze to a depth of 5ft, which results in a mass die-back of the grass. This problem does not exist solely at Ljunghusen, but throughout Sweden. Alongside the problem of winter freezing is that of low light levels. Greenkeeping practices therefore have to be adjusted to encourage the growth of grass under such restrictive conditions.

aeration

Aeration is not carried out to the same extent as in the UK. I cannot recall seeing any aeration equipment, although the greens had been hollow-cored with four inch centres.

Sand is taken from the beach at Skanor and is stockpiled for a year before being used by all three golf courses on the Falsterbo peninsula. At Ljunghusen they add nothing to the sand - it is spread over the green using a fertiliser spreader mounted to a Ford 1710 tractor. Once the sand has been spread there is no rush to clear the green. During such operations a composite course is used, i.e. playing the first nine then holes 19-27.

The golfers are extremely patient. If a greenkeeper is working on a green the golfer cannot play until the green is clear, and could forfeit his membership if he were to play a shot prematurely.

Ljunghusen have two Toro triplex mowers and no handmowers. One is set for cutting the greens, while the

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