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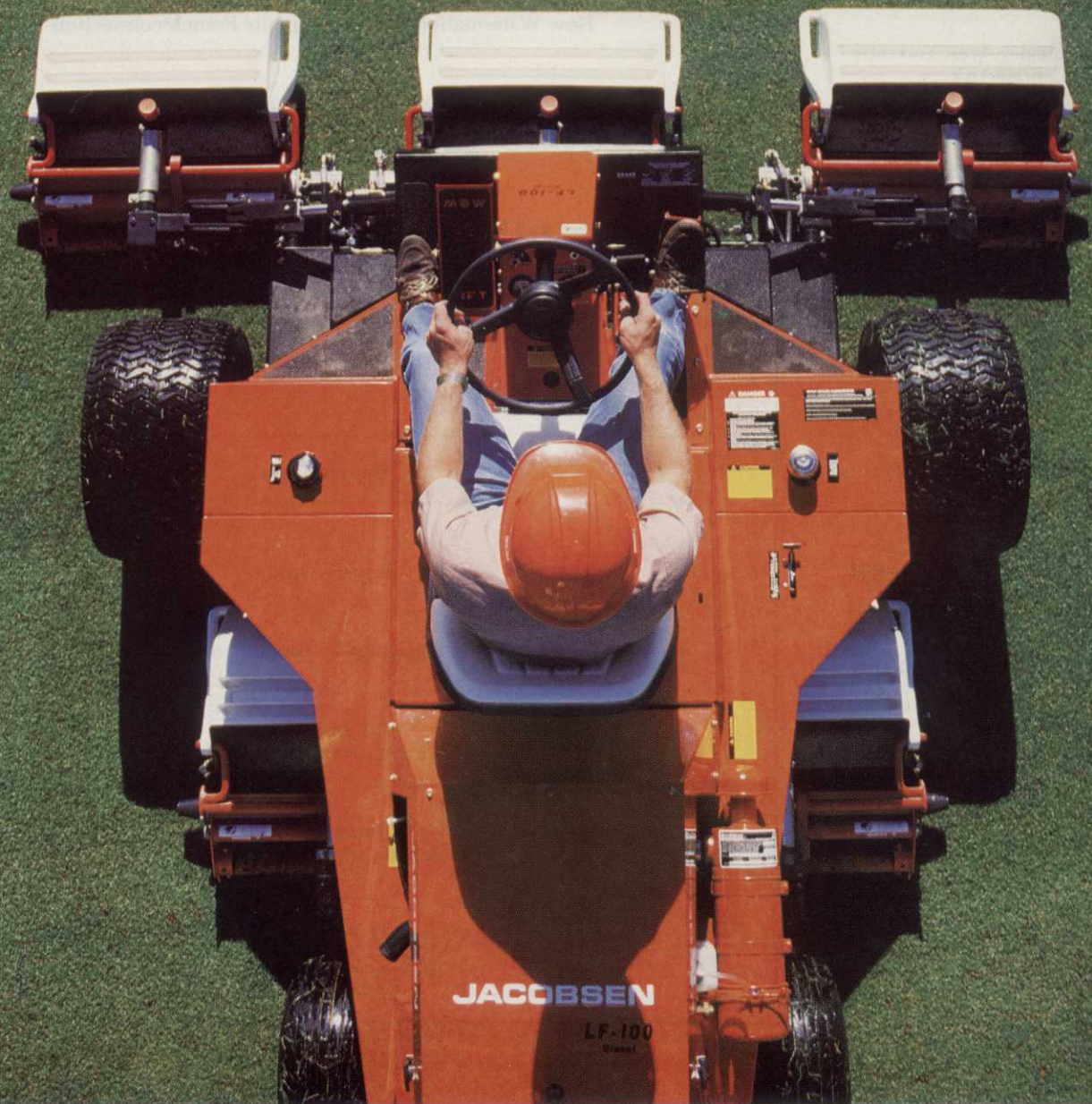
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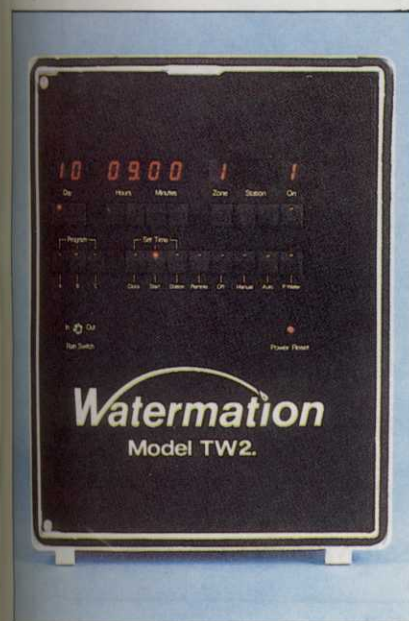
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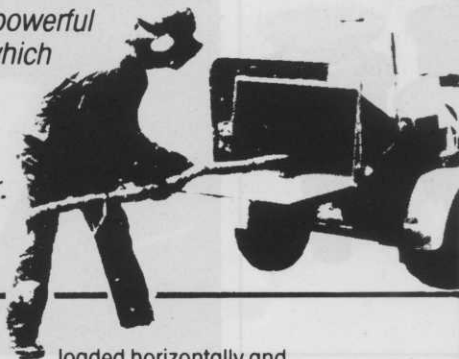
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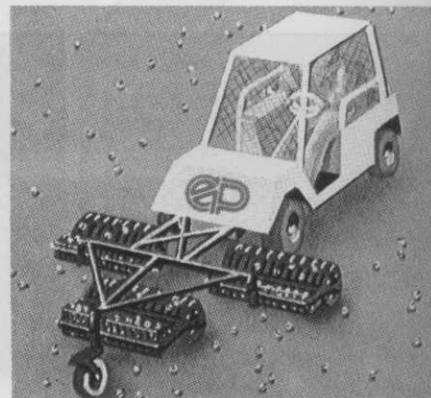
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BIGGA REPORT

Learning from the GCSAA

A BIGGA party of 30 attended the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America event in Anaheim, California headed by the Association's chairman, Jack McMillan. Following the long flight to Los Angeles, it was indeed a surprise to be greeted by the news that Los Angeles was experiencing its first snowfall in 20 years! indeed for the first two days of the trip, this 'major' event received saturation media coverage and yet the snowfall was measured at the two inch level! Such was the novelty value! Luckily, the snowfall surrounded the Anaheim area but missed the city itself. By the third day, the 'crisis' was over and the party was able to enjoy much more traditional Southern Californian weather.

The GCSAA event is a major affair with an estimated attendance of some 15,000-16,000 persons this year. I was primarily interested in the structure of the educational seminar programme and the trade exhibition, with reference to the future development of our own event at Harrogate. The Exhibition is well-staged and planned with plenty of room to accommodate visitors. It takes a considerable time to get around given the vast number of stands and, even if attending for three days, it would be quite easy to miss a particular company.

A number of companies use 'gimmicks' to attract visitors to their stands, and I am not sure that this is a development we should encourage at Harrogate. It seemed to suit the style of the American event, and yet would seem out of place at our own.

The real problem facing the GCSAA Exhibition is its continued growth. The Association is already limited to a select number of venues which can accommodate the show, and this number is likely to decline with the envisaged continued expansion. There is therefore some concern amongst GCSAA officials and they are constantly planning ahead.

Seminar sessions are run concurrently and attract large numbers. Speakers are rigorously kept to allotted timespans and consequently

there is only a token attempt at question and answer sessions. Indeed, questions seemed to be called for as delegates were leaving their seats to attend another seminar of their choice elsewhere. I found this disconcerting and there seemed to be a constant movement of people and a generally unacceptable noise level whilst speakers were in action on the platform. Having said this, it is not easy to suggest an alternative system given the numbers in attendance at the seminars.

The range of speakers is excellent and golf course superintendents are actively encouraged to participate in the speaker programmes. This is something we have adopted at Harrogate and will be developed for the future. Whilst certainly learning much from the seminar programme, my overall view is that we need to develop our own individual programme rather than follow the American system which is essentially geared to the large numbers for which they cater.

Our party enjoyed excellent hospitality and the traditional warm welcome from our American hosts. Hospitality rooms abound and there are many invitations from trade companies as well as to the official GCSAA functions. The climax was the Monday night banquet with some 1,500 in attendance. So vast were the seating arrangements that the chairman and myself at the guests table could not see our party sitting at the other end of the banqueting room!

Whilst there were some gremlins in the registration procedures, one could only admire the organisation.

The American Superintendent holds a respected position at his golf club and this is due, in no small measure, to the professional image projected and the structured education programme which produces well-qualified greenkeepers. There was much interest in BIGGA and positive comments regarding our uniform. The Americans are looking for a close relationship with ourselves and an exchange of information, together with reciprocal visits where possible.

Socially, our party did extremely well, indeed one or two seemed quite overwhelmed by the hospitality on occasions! Members took the opportunity to visit and play on Southern Californian Golf Courses and there was the obligatory visit to Disneyland - enjoyed by all. Some greenkeepers of mature years were seen taking numerous turns on the most tortuous rides - a tribute to their stamina and many healthy years spent on the golf course! Anaheim is not an attractive city and exists primarily for its Convention Centre facilities and Disneyland. Those able to spend some time away from the city area appreciated a taste of the real America.

The week passed quickly and half of the party then left on extended trips whilst the unlucky ones departed for the airport. There was much talk of plans for next year in Florida and every expectation of a large BIGGA contingent attending. A good time was had by all and much learnt for the future.

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CLIPPINGS

By The Mower

Ton-up at Tunbridge

Tunbridge Wells Golf Club will be celebrating their centenary with eleven days of club, invitation and an open event during June.

Little is known of the club's origins, but it would seem that an enthusiastic Scot, homesick for the game he had left north of the border, laid out a few holes in the grounds of the Spa Hotel, mainly for his own amusement and that of the hotel guests.

For almost 87 years the tree lined parkland course remained in the ownership of the Spa Hotel until bought by the club members in 1976. A bargain buy with hindsight, though no doubt the Committee had difficulty at the time persuading the members to part with their money.

Scottish stone for Japan

The golf mad Japanese have not only adopted much of Scotland's golf course designs, but are now building a prestige club house in Scottish sandstone.

But it will only be an appearance of the real thing as the stone blocks have been cut down to a mere 65mm, two thirds of the width of a putting cup, which proves the point that even Scottish beauty is only skin deep.

Because the club house is in the midst of an earthquake belt, the building has to be constructed in reinforced concrete and the stone will be used as facing.

Getting help from golfers

Last year's joint campaign by the American PGA and the Golf Course Superintendents to make golfers more aware of course etiquette through a poster campaign, was voted a great success.

Tom Watson was featured asking golfers to rake bunkers, repair divots and attend to pitch marks.

This year Nancy Lopez and Curtis Strange have agreed to be the featured professionals on a new theme entitled "Practice Your Follow Through". The message will be the same, getting golfers to be more aware of their responsibilities to keep the course in good condition.

European golf course exhibition

The growth of golf on the Continent has prompted yet another exhibition and conference aimed at the specialist golf course maintenance industry.

Golf Course Europe will take place between 4th-6th October in Wiesbaden, West Germany concentrating on golf course design, construction, maintenance and management.

Twenty-five speakers have been engaged and translations will be in French, German and English. It is estimated that in addition to the lectures between 100 and 150 companies will be exhibiting.

NTC conference in Arnheim

The NTC are also looking ahead to the single European Market in 1992 by taking their Biennial Conference to Arnheim in Holland.

Scheduled for the 17th to 19th October, EUROTURF '89 is seen as an opportunity to fly the Union Jack by NTC Chairman Howard Swan. He said "We have great expertise in the turfgrass industry which is eminently exportable".

As well as a series of papers by speakers from several countries, technical visits are being arranged. The cost of the two day event is likely to be around £190 including travel and hotel accommodation. Details from NTC, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, West Yorks BD16 1HZ.

Kubota support Amateur Team Championships

Kubota (UK) Ltd have moved into the sponsorship of Amateur Golf in a big way. Following on from their sponsorship of the Golf Foundation where they offered a Kubota G1900S mower worth over £5000 as a prize in a golf club free draw for any club donating more

than £200 to the Foundation, they are now putting up £30,000 to support the European Amateur Team Championships.

The 16th Annual European Event to be played over the links at Royal Porthcawl from 28th June to 2nd July is expected to attract entries from twenty countries including Czechoslovakia.

Welsh viewers will be able to see the championships live on BBC TV.

Pesticide certificates

Clubs who have not sent their greenstaff on training courses to obtain certificates of competence to apply pesticides are likely to find themselves in trouble with the Health and Safety Executive.

As from 1st January this year all greenstaff under 25 years of age, using chemicals must have obtained a certificate.

Those born after 31st December 1964 can still use pesticides under what is known as the 'Grandfather Clause', but they cannot supervise others. In effect this means the Head Greenkeeper must obtain a certificate himself before sending out the 'lads' to spray.

All pesticides must also be stored in approved fire resistant, lockable, leakproof cabinets or a purpose built building, dependant on the quantity kept on the course.

There are also strict rules where pesticides can be kept. They are not to be stored in a staff room, office, food areas or a dwelling house, or in a room with direct access to a dwelling house.

Greenkeepers must also keep a log book record of quantities and types stored and used out on the course.

A check on the first aid kit in the sheds is also advisable to ensure the right eye-washes and antidotes are available.

Thirst for knowledge in Japan

Two research seminars held by the Kansai Green Research Institute in Japan last year attracted over 920 greenkeepers. By comparison BIGGA's own conference in Cambridge this month struggled to get 60 greenkeepers in attendance.

Martin leaves Vitax

News has just reached me that Trevor Martin one of the industry's entrepreneurs is to leave Vitax, a company he helped to create and then sold the majority shareholding to Synchemicals last year.

Trevor is to take over as joint managing director with Frank Garvey of Rufford Top-Dress Supplies Ltd where I understand he will have special responsibility for the development of the Rufford range.

Honour for Yorkshire greenkeeper

Roger Bielby, Hornsea's Head Greenkeeper has been elected President of the East Riding Union of Golf Clubs at the annual meeting at Beverley.

A single figure golfer, Roger has captained the East Riding Team for three years and represented the Union in their matches since 1976.

He has competed in the Yorkshire Amateur Championship on many occasions and three years ago reached the quarter finals at Alwoodley.

Sign of the times for TIS

Turf Irrigation Services Ltd of Sandbach, Cheshire has now moved into the big league. From being primarily a North Western operation it has established itself as a nationwide designer and distributor of irrigation systems.

So director Robin Hume decided it was time to show this publicly by shedding the regional image and adopting a suitable company symbol.

In briefing his advertising agency, Ashley Griffiths Associates of Crewe, three aims were agreed. The company mark must reflect the company's true status in the irrigation industry. It must be visually eye-catching and memorable. And it must distinguish the company's title from any similar names.

The agency has created the logo-style, using the pattern of a sprinkler's jets to form the shape of a strongly affirmative tick. This mark has already been applied to Turf Irrigation Services documents and advertising. Within 1989 it will go onto everything else, from servicemen's overalls to service vehicles and the company premises themselves.