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# Golf Clubs, Greenkeeping and the YTS

Nick Bissett looks at some of the methods of employment and their costs

**T**he Youth Training Scheme (YTS) has been in existence now for some five years and has developed from a 1-year scheme to a 2-year scheme. Although the more cynical might claim otherwise, the scheme is designed to ensure that all school leavers under the age of 18 undergo some formal basic training. There are incentives to the individual to ensure that he/she does not join the unemployment statistics.

The scheme was set up by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) which is now the Training Commission (TC) and soon to be changed again to the Training Agency. It was organised on the ground by Managing Agents who had to prove to MSC that they were fit people to run schemes. Virtually anyone could call themselves a Managing Agency and run a scheme and this led to some strange schemes being developed in the early years of YTS.

However, more recently each Managing Agent has had to achieve the status of an Approved Training Organisation (ATO) and this has weeded out some of those more dubious organisations. To achieve ATO status the Agents had to satisfy the Commission that they were a suitable organisation to run a training programme.

The Commission pays the ATO the sum of about £2000 per trainee per year to cover the weekly allowance (£29.50 in first year - totalling £1534 and £35 in second year totalling £1820) with the balance for training. Any travelling or board and lodging necessarily incurred in doing the training can be reclaimed with a small daily deduction from trainees. This means that the ATO can make a profit by cutting the costs of training and indeed this is how some organisations have survived.

In the world of golf greenkeeping, uptake on YTS has been variable and despite some publicity there still seems to be confusion as to how the scheme operates. The Greenkeepers Training Committee have considered the implications of YTS and their training scheme and have come to the conclusion that it is a useful method providing the off-the-job training takes place at a college approved by the Committee to deliver correct training.

In order to clarify the position for golf clubs, use is made of case studies to cover the most likely situations and some costing is done to provide for comparison. The figures used are obviously rounded off to achieve that purpose and it is important to state that the figures for wages in no way are a suggested level for clubs to adopt.

In the case studies used in this article certain headings are used to provide an estimate of costs and the headings are explained as follows:  
**Wages** - based on a starting wage of

£50 per week for the first year, rising to £60 in the second year and £70 in the third year.

**National Insurance** - payable only if employed. Unemployed trainees receive credit for the first two years.

**Tuition Fees** - not generally paid by employed trainees until aged 18 i.e. for third year only. Approx. £75 per year.

**Board and Lodging** - while attending college these costs are based on 6 weeks block per year at £35 per week. If done on a day release basis at an approved centre then this will not apply.

**Travelling Expenses/subsistence** - this would be payable by the club for employed people and in any case for the third year of training. As the sum is likely to vary for each club it is left out.

### CASE A

A golf club wishing to employ an additional member of the green staff without involving YTS. The new employee is to be a school leaver aged 16.

In this situation there is no variation from standard employment procedures - the new employee works under the conditions laid down by the club who pays the going rate for the job and all costs associated with training.

The Greenkeepers Training Committee recommend that the training period should be over a 3-year

## NATIONAL TOURNAMENT 1989

Members should note that this will be held at  
The Lyme Regis Golf Club, Lyme Regis, Dorset  
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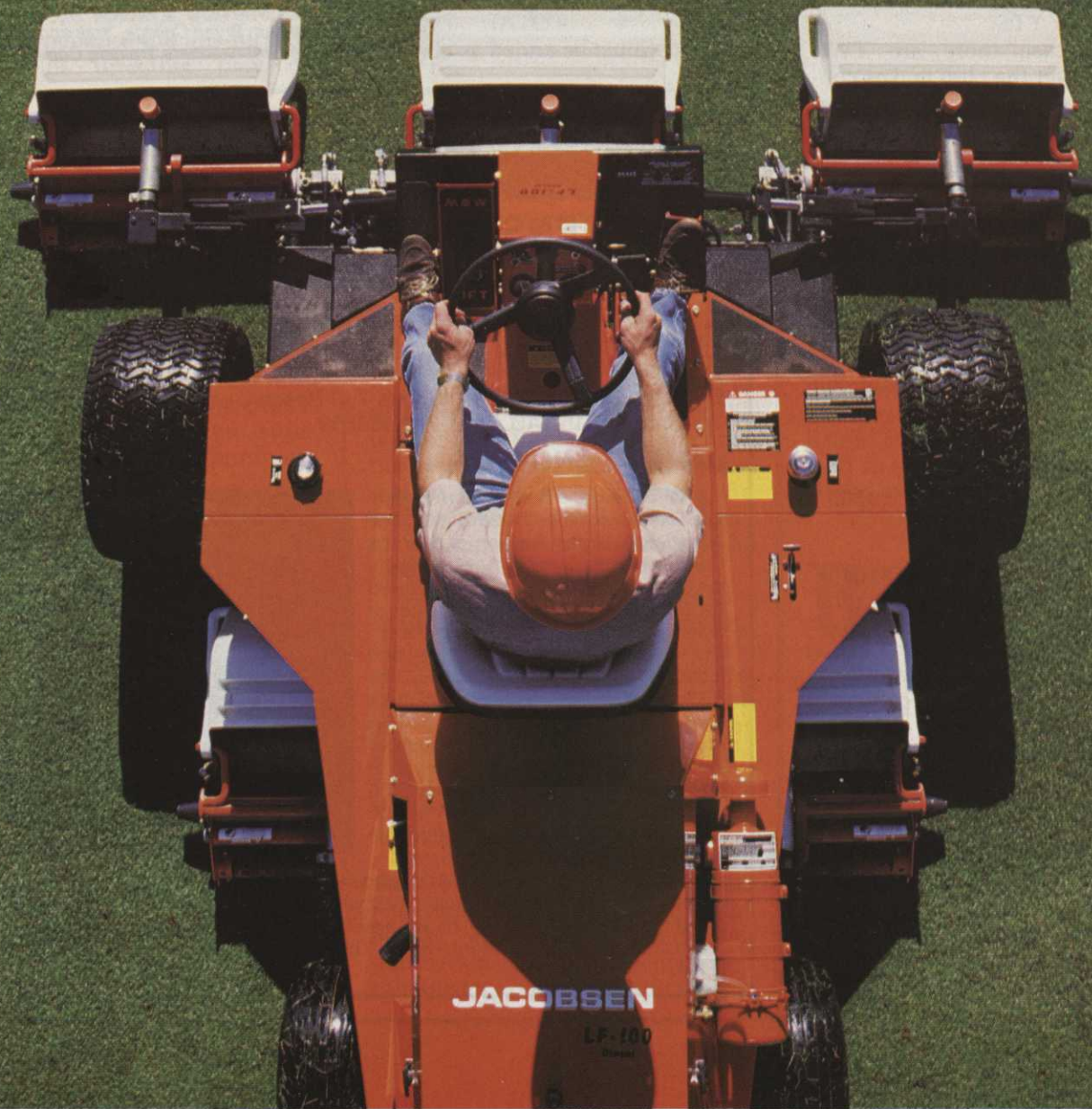
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# EDUCATION

period leading to the award of a City and Guilds Certificate at Phase II and completion of the Log Book. The off-the-job element will amount to six weeks per year for all three years.

## Approximate costs

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Wages (Based on 3-year average of £60)   | £9360         |
| National Insurance etc   | to pay        |
| Training Tuition Free to under 18s 1 year  | £75           |
| Board and lodging 3 years @ 6 weeks @ £35 travelling expenses/subsistence to pay | £630          |
| Examination Fees   | £40           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>£10375</b> |

(to which must be added as above.)

## CASE B

A golf club wishing to employ an additional 16-year-old member of the green staff having an individual in mind and wish to examine the possibility of YTS.

In this case there are TWO options. Either the club makes contact with a reputable ATO to inform them that the club would be willing to provide a work placement for the individual or the club directs the prospective trainee to the ATO.

In both options the person to be taken on will become an employed trainee. The club will make no contribution to YTS and will pay the going rate for the job as in Case A but will receive a rebate from the ATO in the sum of approx. £10 per week.

## Approximate costs

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Wages (£60 per week av. for 3 years less rebate from ATO (£10 per week for first two years)) | £9360        |
| Wages total  | £1040        |
| NI contributions   | £8320        |
| to pay   |              |
| Training Tuition, Board, exam fees for 1 year  | £325         |
| Travelling expenses 1 year only  | to pay       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>£8645</b> |

(to which must be added as above.)

## CASE C

A club wishing to engage a trainee from a reputable ATO and eventually employ the same person as a full staff member. In this case the

ATO becomes the employer and sets out conditions of work - this may restrict such things as weekend working - and there is a need for 12 weeks off-the-job training in the first year and eight weeks in the second year although this may vary slightly. The club will be asked to contribute £18.50 per week in the first year and £25 in the second but there is no stamp to pay

## Approximate costs

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Contribution to scheme                    |              |
| first year                                | £962         |
| second year                               | £1300        |
| Third year wages outwith scheme £70       | £3£40        |
| National Insurance 1 year only            | to pay       |
| Training tuition, 3rd year only           | £75          |
| Board and exam fees 3rd year only 6 weeks | £250         |
| Travelling expenses 1 year only           | to pay       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>£6227</b> |

(to which must be added as above.)

## CASE D

A club willing to provide a work placement for a YTS trainee with no obligation to offer full employment at the end of the two years.

Many clubs have taken this option possibly as a source of cheap labour and if this is the case then they are unlikely to be involved regularly with a trainee.

It can be seen from the figures given for each example above that the cost of training to the club can vary but generally is cheaper through the YTS and must be considered. However even if the club is responsible for the full cost of training the amount involved over the 3 year period represents only the equivalent to the cost of the overhaul of a set of gang mowers.

It would be wrong for clubs to think of YTS as 'cheap labour'.

*Nick Bissett is a lecturer in horticulture at Askham Bryan College, York and a member of the Greenkeepers Training Committee.*

## BIGGA/SUPATURF 1989 EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, 4th-6th April, 1989

In this second profile on speakers to be heard at the conference, THE GOLF COURSE this month features James T Snow of the United States Golf Association Green Section. For Conference details, please contact Neil Thomas, Executive Director, BIGGA, Sports Turf Research Institute, BINGLEY, West Yorkshire, BD16 1AU. Tel: 0274-560556

### JAMES T SNOW

**J**im Snow is the Northeastern Region Director for the United States Golf Association Green Section and is the Co-Editor of its bi-monthly publication, the 'Green Section Record'. He received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees from Cornell University, specialising in horticulture and turfgrass science. Since joining the USGA staff in 1976, he has made more than 2,000 agronomic visits to USGA member clubs and courses throughout the Northeast. He has written more than 60 articles and given more than 150 presentations having to do with a wide array of turfgrass science and golf course management topics.



Jim and his wife Judy are avid gardeners, specialising in the growing of chrysanthemums and other perennials. Two year old son Kevin is destined to learn more about the art of weeding than he will ever care to know!

Jim's subject at the conference will be 'The Biggest Problem of Golf Course Turf in the U.S.A.'

## Bunkers and Bunker Sand

Advice from Ian Greenfield on the type of sand to use

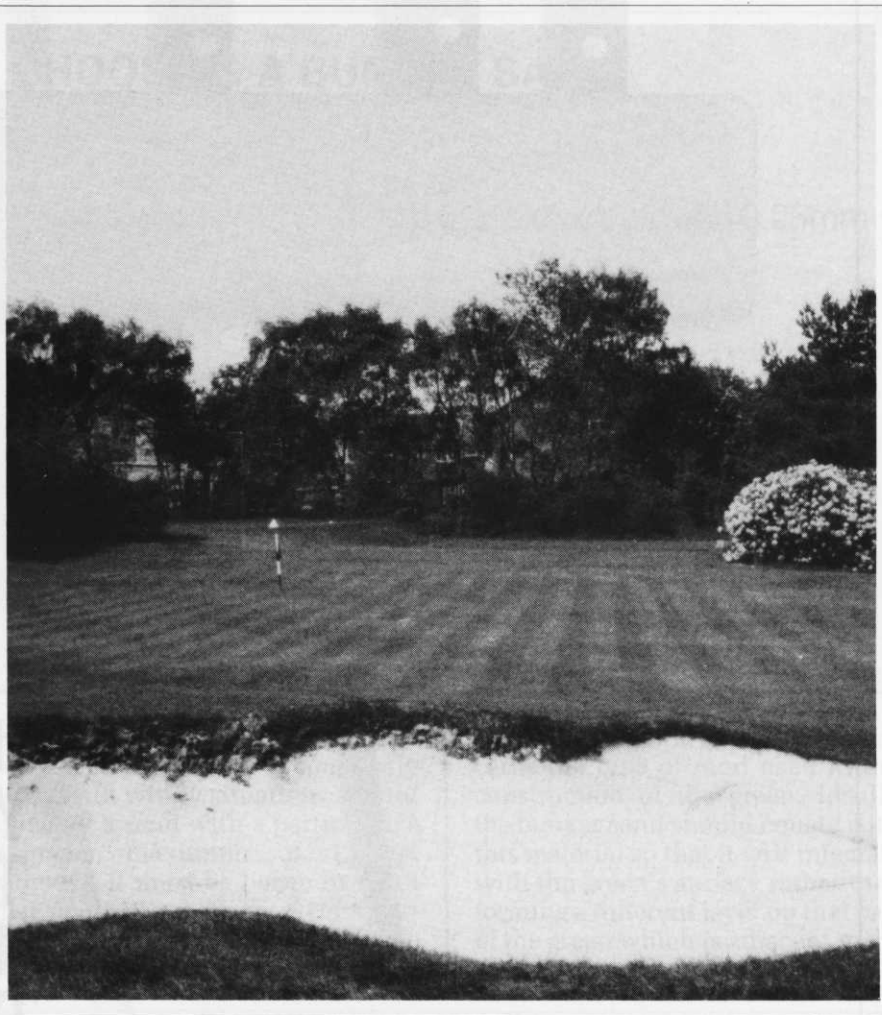
**B**unkers are an essential feature of the golf course and originated as hollows formed by sheep, rabbits and wind on sandy dunes along the seashore in Scotland. They soon became integrated as hazards to be avoided when playing and thus by accident became an important part of the game of golf.

Today, as an integral part of course layout, they form strategically placed hazards designed to catch and penalise the mis-hit shot as well as directing play on fairways.

The course designer decides bunker position, size and shape according to the type of course he is designing in relation to the topography, shrubs, trees, and the general landscape as well as proposed or existing water features. The contrast between a preferred off-white bunker sand and the green of grass and trees creates a most attractive picture. Coloured sands are also used but off-white is much preferred avoiding the glare of pure white.

There is no limit to the minimum or maximum number of bunkers that may be built on the course. It may be as little as 20 or 30 on the one hand and sometimes as many as 80 to 100 on the other. The shape and depth of bunkers varies and these may be large and small or deep and shallow but they should be readily visible to the player so that he can fairly plan his shot according to the demands of the hole.

**I**t is important when planning the hole in respect of these factors that bunker siting, construction and drainage to enable proper maintenance should also be considered. Efficient bunker drainage is essential and requires the installation of a herringbone or



grid arrangement in the base comparable to that provided for the greens. It is also important to prevent water running into the bunker by the construction of swales (during green and fairway formation) to direct water away. The face of the bunker must be clearly visible from the approach and basic bunker formation should be in the form of a shallow saucer with the face visible on the approach high enough to be readily visible.

Fairway bunkers are generally shallower with of course the exception of the Scottish pot bunkers, many of which are quite demoralising. Wind corrosion of bunker sand can be quite a problem and often as much as a tenth of the sand content will be lost annually due to wind as well as sand removal when playing out.

To prevent soil encroaching into the bunker sand, geo-textile materials can be used to line the bunker and prevent sand contamination by the indigenous soil causing an originally white sand to

turn rapidly into an orange one. These materials allow water through to the drainage system and prevent sand contamination by the soil. Well manicured bunkers are a delight, neglected ones are not. Control of weed growth and a well manicured sharp edge to the bunker as well as the removal of rubbish and stones are essential.

**B**unker sands are usually washed to remove clay and silt as well as coarse sand and gravel and it should be stored on a hard surface prior to being introduced to the newly constructed bunkers.

The ideal bunker sand should consist of sharp or angular grains in order to provide a firmer and harder surface. Rounded grain sands produce a softer surface resulting in a deeper ball lie. Off-white silica sand as opposed to soft chalky yellow or silty sands are preferred and provide a smart appearance as a result of the white and green con-



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# MANAGEMENT

trast. It is essential however that the sand is free from foreign material such as clay and silt, weed seeds, earth, rubbish and gravel although it must be said that most Clubs do tend to buy the cheapest sand available for their bunkers!

Feel sensation is important for bunker play whether making an explosion shot or chipping off the sand surface.

The particle size distribution of the sand is critical and top sands ranging from 1mm to 0.25mm and with at least 75 per cent of the sand within the 0.25mm to 0.5mm particle size diameter provide the optimum material.

It is important to provide good ball lie within the bunker and a degree of firmness enabling a better shot which means a lack of surface crusting and a good basic drainage within the bunker to avoid the plugging associated with wet sand and poor maintenance.

The use of rounded sand tends to produce a loose and fluffy surface and quite often the ball will sink level with the surface as opposed to penetrating about half this depth although ball lie, of course, apart from the type of sand does depend on the angle and velocity of the ball

## CHOOSING A BUNKER SAND

Guidelines suggested by the USGA

1. Minimum of 65% sand particle size between 0.25mm and 1.0mm.
2. Ideally 100% between this range.
3. Sharp angular sand preferred to round particle shape.
4. Light coloured, not white sand.
5. Minimal amount of silt and clay, determined through soil testing laboratory analysis.
6. Silica sand rather than calcareous sand.

entering the bunker.

Golf clubs that are constantly faced with windy situations should consider a sand with a particle size diameter maximum of 1.5mm, although it must be borne in mind that sand with more than 1mm particle size diameter may well cause mower damage and blade blunting.

A further point to consider concerns the type of sand used in the construction of the green. Ideally the bunker sand should equate with this material so that it will integrate with the green's surface rather than forming a different layer on that part of the green which is adjacent to the bunker.

## STUDENTS AWARDS AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE

Plumpton College recently held its annual prizegiving ceremony to award all its students with their certificates and trophies. Below, Michael Kirkham and Andrew Paynter are receiving their prizes from John Austen of the NFU and the Principal, John Wilson at the ceremony.

Michael was the best Phase III Enterprise Management student and was awarded the cup sponsored by the Sussex Golf Union. He attended the college on a block release course being released from his position as Head Greenkeeper at the West Surrey Golf Club.

Andrew Paynter was the best Phase II

Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management student and won the cup sponsored by the Southern Section of the British and International Golf Greenkeeping Association. He attended the college on a day release basis, the rest of his week being spent as Head Greenkeeper at East Brighton Golf Club.



John Wilson college principal presenting Michael Kirkham with his award.



Andrew Paynter receives his from John Wilson with John Austen of the NFU looking on.

# RFE

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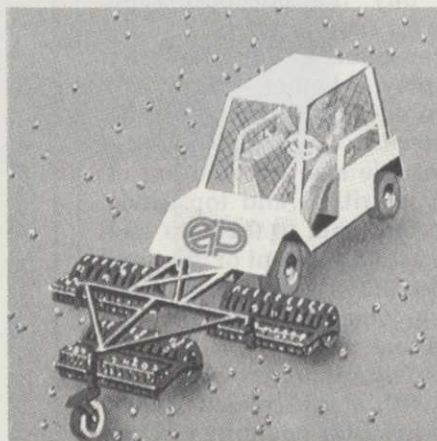
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