

FROM THE FAIRWAY

Jim Arthur reaffirms his views

In replying to Peter Wisbey's arguments against 'little and often' irrigation patterns, I am sure that it would be more rewarding to debate personally, aided by some personal irrigation, as we used to do in the past years!

In writing a short note in general terms on any subject it is difficult not to over-simplify the problem, but it must be said that the arguments advanced for periodic heavy watering are not supported by either logic or results. In passing, I did not describe infrequent irrigation as a hearsay but as a heresy.

It stands beyond argument that greens must never be allowed to dry out completely before starting irrigation and it is equally vital that the capillary connection is never lost - otherwise, whatever watering pattern is adopted, it will result in the water sitting on the top and the roots coming up to meet it, with flooding on the one hand or dry patch on the other. Nevertheless, using those superb if tiny fescue greens on the short course at Peter's old Club as a justification for infrequent heavy watering is an example of correct observation but incorrect deduction, - a breach of the first law of logic.

The reason why these greens (heavily used though they were, thus contradicting those who claim that fine fescue is not hard wearing enough for today's heavy play) were so much better than the greens on the main course - though they improved dramatically under Peter's management - was that for years the small course was regarded as a poor relation, were never given anything like the fertiliser of the other eighteen and above all were watered by

hose an sprinkler, and that has its own built in restraint. There is of course nothing wrong with pop-ups except that it is fatally easy to over-water with them and this was a very badly designed system, redesigned on our joint insistence.

If we must make comparisons and first assuming that irrigation is a topping up process to make up deficiencies in natural rainfall and that we must never lose the capillary connection, then it must surely be better to enjoy an hour's light rainfall every night (which is equivalent to about 50 gallons per 100 sq. yds), rather than a tremendous thunderstorm at infrequent intervals. In passing, those charged with presenting courses for major events dread more than anything such a sudden torrent which can flood greens, or even if it does not, slows them up drastically and there is nothing that they or anyone else can do about it until they dry up.

Of course we must have very well aerated greens with the associated free drainage, whatever pattern is adopted, if the water is not to stay on the top. Of course one can use drought as an aid to management to kill off annual meadow grass. This practice goes back to the start of greenkeeping - hence the old adage that a good drought gets rid of a deal of rubbish, but it should be remembered that such draconian measures also get rid of good greenkeepers, unless management of the Club is very enlightened and the members educated! What it all boils down to is whether we use the weight of water from heavy infrequent irrigation to push the water down or do we rely on capillary suction to pull it down by topping up little and often, so that that connection is maintained.

What is certain is that over-watering is the

cardinal sin of greenkeeping and water must never be used to make greens soft and holding, or even 'nice and green'. Slow overwatered greens destroy the finer arts of putting even if they do not later become thatchy and have to be 'rested' for weeks if not more in winter.

All I have ever aimed at is to make those making decisions think logically so that they can make the correct decisions. So long as we do not over-water - and in all conscience there is still far too much over-watering despite all the debate - then all I can say is that there are more ways of killing a cat than drowning it.

It is not, however, logical to observe conditions which do not relate to our specific problems and certainly even less so to deduce treatments. The Mediterranean zone is not the same as temperate northern Europe. We do not get many Bermuda grass fairways in Britain and Penncross, bred for just those hot arid conditions and with an ability to stand up to the necessary high irrigation if the grass is to survive, does not long survive in our cold wet winters. My objections to greenkeeping methods and green construction designed for the hot arid States of the USA being adopted over here is that the conditions are totally different and it is this very point that the Green Section agronomists of the USGA stress in relation to their advice for both matters in the temperate States of America - as I have debated with them for some years and have been happy to note their agreement that in such areas austere greenkeeping gives the best playing conditions at much less cost!!

J. H. Arthur B.Sc. (Agric.),
Budleigh Salterton,
Devon.

the Golf Course

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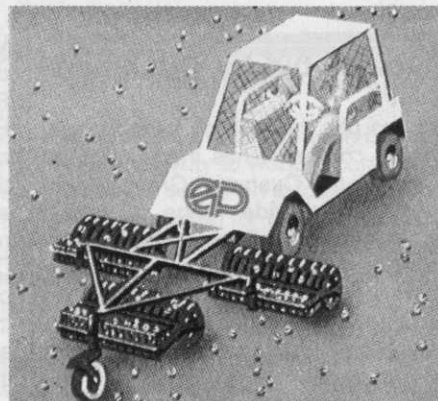
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Ransomes bid for Cushman

Ransomes plc, the Ipswich based grass machinery company, has made a £95m cash bid for the Cushman Group which manufactures a wide range of grass machinery under the Cushman and Ryan brand labels and also includes the Canadian Brouwer company.

At the same time as the announcement for the Cushman Group, Ransomes also told shareholders they were acquiring the Westwood company for £9m, the largest manufacturers of garden tractors outside the United States.

Shareholders are to be invited to raise £53m towards the purchase of these companies through a proposed 1 for 1 Rights Issue of new Convertible Preference shares, the balance to be provided through bank lending facilities.

Since Ransomes decided to move out of the farm machinery market, company profits have shown a considerable upturn, increasing yet again in the half year to the end of June by 10.3% over the corresponding period in 1988.

Commenting on the bids, Bob Dodsworth, Ransomes Group Chief Executive told The Golf Course.

"The acquisition of the Cushman Group further establishes Ransomes as one of the world's leading manufacturers of grass machinery. It provides Ransomes with a wide range of complementary products and strengthens the Group's existing manufacturing and distribution base in North America, the world's largest market. Westwood, one of the largest garden tractor manufacturers outside the United States, complements Mountfield's range of quality consumer products."

Last year the unaudited operating profit of the Cushman Group rose to \$16.3 million from \$12.2 million, with the successful introduction of a number of new commercial grass machinery products though profitability in the current financial year has declined, largely as a result of a poor performance at Brouwer, where there was a serious strike and the launch of an unsatisfactory new product, which has since been discontinued.

Ransomes has formulated plans aimed at improving the profitability of both Cushman and Brouwer.

Westwood tractors are supplied with a wide range of attachments, which include grass collectors, lawn groomers, garden rollers and dump trucks.

Westwood also manufactures a range of ride-on mowers.

Founded in 1969, Westwood is based in Plymouth where it has a well-equipped manufacturing facility of some 150,000 square feet and a workforce of some 300 employees. Mr. Roy Ashwell, the Director responsible for Ransomes Consumer Division, will assume responsibility for the company management.

It is understood the company have been experiencing difficulties this year due to the long hot summer and a number of employees have been 'laid off'.

Ransomes' growth in the worldwide commercial grass machinery market has been restricted by the fact that, as a foreign entity, its penetration of the United States market has been slower than the Board would have wished. The proposed acquisition of the Cushman Group represents an outstanding opportunity to remedy this. Each of the Cushman, Ryan and Brouwer product ranges has an excellent reputation and provides a complementary fit with the Ransomes product range, which is primarily focused on grass cutting rather than turf and lawn maintenance.

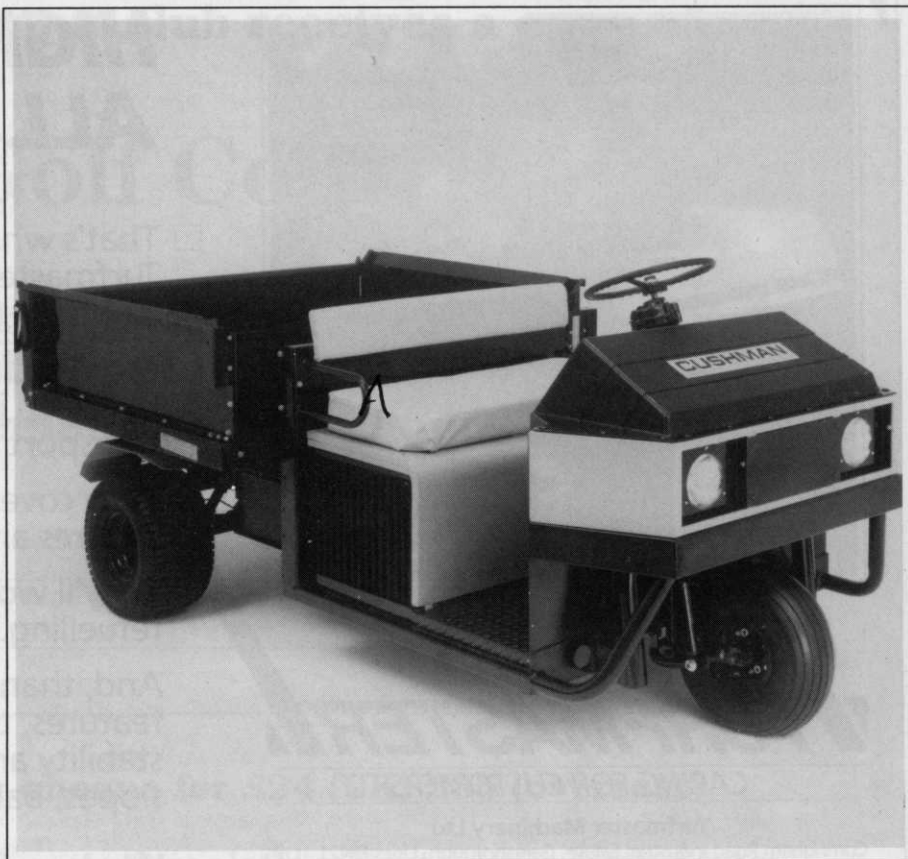
Ransomes believe it will be able to increase the volume of the Cushman Group's exports outside the United States, particularly through its European distribution network, which is well placed to handle the additional products from the Cushman Group.

On the basis of Ransomes' projections of the increase in the number of golf courses in the world, they expect this market to continue to show real growth beyond the end of the century.

Cushman's UK and Southern Ireland distributor, Paul Huxley, told The Golf Course from his New Alresford factory that it was "business as usual", and the company were continuing to service and supply customers and their dealer network.

He said that Cushman had telephoned him from Lincoln, Nebraska to give news of the bid, but to date he had not been in contact with Ransomes.

Huxley's Grass Machinery, not only distributed Cushman products, but also manufacture a range of equipment under the Huxley label, specifically designed to fit the complete Cushman system.



Cushman's latest truckster could be a money spinner for Ransomes

Human factors cause accidents

A survey has revealed that between 80%-90% of accidents at work can be attributed to - Human Factors.

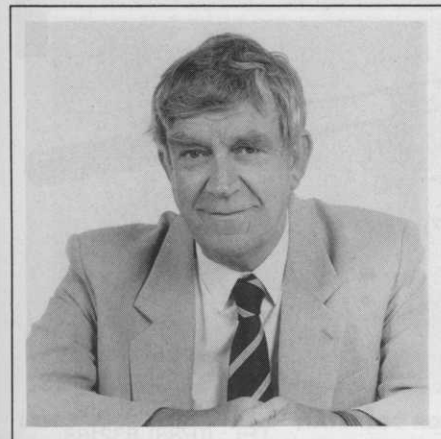
The ten most common items have been identified as:

1. Negligence - Failure to observe work rules, instructions or carry out maintenance.
2. Anger or Temper - Leading to irrational actions.
3. Hasty Decisions - Acting before thinking or taking hazardous shortcuts.
4. Indifference - Lack of attention or day dreaming.
5. Distractions - Interruptions by others or not concentrating on the job in hand.
6. Curiosity - Doing the unknown or experimenting.
7. Inadequate instruction - Poor training methods without safety features.
8. Bad Work Environment - Clutter, dirty conditions unguarded machinery.
9. Over Confidence - Taking matters for granted, becoming too cocksure.
10. Lack of Planning - Depending on others without ensuring what has been agreed has been done.

As a check list for managers, these ten points will ensure the chance of a workplace accident will be substantially reduced, if these human errors are rectified the moment they are spotted.

Supaturf open new sales office

Supaturf Products Ltd has obtained new premises at Old Fosse Works, Coventry



David Palmer

Road, Narborough and is opening a new sales office.

Supaturf is also setting up a new system of distribution, using selected distributors throughout the country to join the existing distributors in Scotland and Ireland as well as in France, Holland and Belgium for its 'speciality' products such as a range of Supaturf fertilisers, Even-Speed fertiliser distributors, Aqua-gro and other selected products.

Chairman David Palmer says, "This new policy for England and Wales will allow Supaturf to concentrate its efforts on a range of products which our distributors will be selling to the amenity market."

Courses in Turf Management

The Sports Turf Research Institute will hold courses at Bingley in the autumn of 1989 and the spring of 1990 on the theory and practice of turf construction and management. The courses last five days (Monday to Friday) and will cover soils, grasses, turf diseases and pests, drainage, watering, fertilizers and machinery. The dates are as follows:-

Autumn 1989 - commencing Monday 16th October (General Course - places still available). Monday 23rd October and Monday 30th October (these weeks are specialising in golf only - very few places still available)

Spring 1990 - commencing Monday 19th February, Monday 26th February and Monday 5th March (initially the week commencing 19th February will be for golf only. Subject to demand the second week may be devoted to golf but the third week will be a general course.

Club Managers Course

This is a two-day course intended for Club Managers, Chairman of Green and other persons who need to be aware of the problems of turf care and management. The syllabus covers basically the same subjects as above, but in less depth.

The fees are as follows: Autumn 1989 - Members £110, Non-members £135. Spring 1990 - Members £125, Non-members £155. Managers Course £100. All fees are plus VAT and are exclusive of accommodation and meals.

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

One man mows for charity

Ian Ireland, 50, of Harlow in Essex aimed to cut his way to world record last month when he set off on a round Britain, fund-raising mission for Leukaemia Research. Ian did not make his marathon trip on foot, he was riding an Iseki SG15 Hydrostatic Diesel Engine Lawnmower and hoped to cover 3,500 miles in 28 days, clipping some 10% off the previous world best.

Ian's five year old son, Stuart, is chronically ill in London's Great Ormond Street Hospital and has been suffering from Leukaemia attacks since he was eight months old. Stuart's heart has been failing fast and he is now being kept alive on a support machine, pending major heart surgery.

Stuart's brave fight for life has been the inspiration for Ian, and big business, industry and commerce rallied round to help the cause.

The Lawnmower, and special clothing and equipment have all been donated by Iseki UK Ltd. A host of celebrities also promised to join Ian on his trip round the UK's major towns and cities including Barry McGuigan, Eric Clapton, Rula Lenska and Ian Botham - the man whose charity walks have done so much to help raise the level of awareness and support for Leukaemia Research. If you want to make a donation to Ian's fund, please send a cheque or postal order to:- Iseki UK Ltd, The UK Compact Tractor Centre, Broadway, Bourn, Cambridge. CB3 7TL. Marking the envelope Leukaemia Research.

New chief executive at the Institute of Groundsmanship

Keith Williams has been appointed to the new post of Chief Executive at the Institute of Groundsmanship. He will be responsible for the day to day management of the Institute's activities and for recommending and implementing policies to further develop the commercial growth of the Institute through marketing and promotional activity. He has run his own management consultancy company and was Director of Development for the Chartered Institute of Transport before taking up his present appointment.

Keith Williams is a keen sportsman, and has represented Hertfordshire in both soccer and athletics. He has served as a school governor and is actively involved in youth community work.

OUT AND ABOUT

New finance deal for Iseki

Low cost finance for Iseki dealers and their customers.. that's the promise from a new finance deal agreed between Iseki UK and Humberclyde.

"It doesn't make economic sense for a business to purchase equipment outright," says David Williams, Iseki finance manager. "It would be difficult for anyone else to offer a better deal than the one we're now promoting."

Iseki Finance provides funding in the form of hire purchase, lease loans and a recently introduced contract hire plan.

"The service we can offer will enable dealers to conclude machinery sales more

quickly and effectively at the same time as ensuring their customers a cost-effective deal," says Colin Gregory, sales director, Iseki UK.

Two new synthetic tees from Leisure K

"Top Tee" and "Mastertee" are the all-weather, all-the-year-round artificial tees that feel right and look right. With a tightly woven construction and thick resin backing, both have great strength to withstand the turning action from golf shoes as well as impact from a short iron club; and both will not harm club heads.

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enough for the tallest golfer using a driver. This square shape allows the tee to be turned regularly so as to provide play on all 4 sides, thus ensuring even wear underfoot and at club-head. Longer tee-mats can be supplied, cut to the length required. Pile height is 30mm which gives the "feel" of natural turf underfoot. A tee-peg can be placed anywhere in the pile - the short peg is necessary for most players - or the golfer can strike the ball directly off the mat. Colour is all - green, blending in with surrounding turf.

Toptee is equally ideal for the driving range or the practice net, where punishing use demands good wearability as well as the right 'feel' for golfers.

Leisure K can be contacted at Ingleside, Church Road, Mannings Heath, Horsham RH13 6JE. Telephone: (0403) 68500

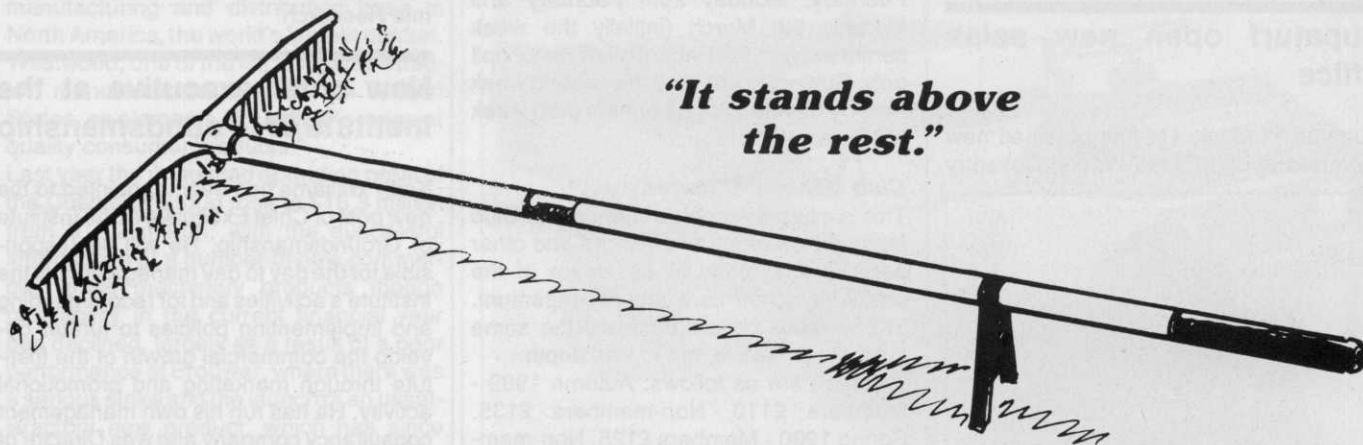
Appointment at Synchemicals Vitax

Mike Heath, formerly employed by Supaturf Products as a Senior Sales Advisor and Consultant, has joined the Amenity and Commercial Sales Division of Synchemicals Vitax Limited.

Mike Heath will cover Scotland and Northern England and the company see this addition to their sales team as an indication of their commitment to the development and expansion of the commercial range of products into the 1990's.



Colin Gregory (left) Iseki Sales Director signs up the Iseki finance deal with Peter Quigley and David Williams



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'Teach' Tallack advice on finance administration and construction of new golf courses.

A British concern that is enjoying considerable success in the burgeoning golf industry is the Leatherhead based Patrick Tallack Golf Course Design and Construction company. Patrick Tallack, a PGA golf professional of 30 years experience is internationally known as 'Teach' Tallack due to a star studded clientele including the Duke & Duchess of Bedford, Bruce Forsyth, Eric Sykes, Shakin' Stevens and currently Michael Aspel.

His background includes many years of being responsible for the viability of the golf courses under his control. One of the reasons for the company's success is this knowledge of all aspects of the subject as clients certainly enjoy the comfort factor knowing they will be recommended whether a course should be private or public; the level of charges for green fees and membership; projected income and expenditure; and most important of all advice in staffing the club and course.

The company has a team of experienced designers and skilled constructors supported by solid administration from a new head office in Leatherhead.

This amalgam of skills 'in-house' allied to Patrick Tallack's background of golf course management means that any project they are involved in has the benefit of sound business experience.

The company's latest project is the new

Paxhill Park Golf Club at Lingfield in Sussex, which is scheduled to be open in August 1990 and they are conducting several feasibility studies in Northern France and Southern England for new clients.

Sisis seminar and demonstration days

Anyone who would like to know how to choose the best of the modern grass seed cultivators; how to get the best results when buying cultivated turf and how to maintain the finest playing surfaces - should make a note in their diaries now.

Sisis, Rolawn and British Seed Houses are joining forces to present a series of three Seminar/Demonstration Days in Birmingham, Stoke-On-Trent and Southampton on 24th, 25th and 26th Oct 1989. There will be practical demonstrations of the latest Sisis turf maintenance machines including the new Power Force range, demonstrations of the best ways to use the different types of Rolawn turf and advice from British Seed Houses on selecting grass seed and the best methods of seeding. Buffet lunch provided. Admission is free of charge but by invitation only from Lynn Hilton at Sisis (0625) 26363.

Win for Sonning Secretary

Parkers Golf Club Secretaries' Tournament was again held at Walton Heath Golf Club, on August 7th.

Eighty golf clubs were represented at this popular annual event and competitors included the National Captain of the Asso-

ciation of Golf Club Secretaries, Anthea Wilkinson, and the National Secretary, John Crowther. The weather was superb and competition was as keen as ever with Peter Williams, of Sonning Golf Club eventually winning the Stableford with 42 points, with a better score over the back nine against David Bradney of Betchworth Park Golf Club.

Results: Men -

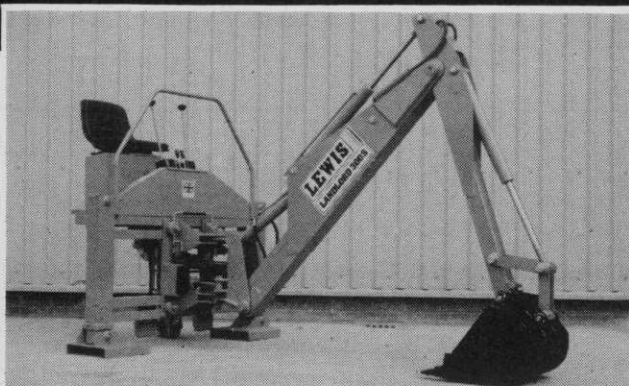
42pts P. Williams (Sonning GC), D. Bradney (Betchworth Park GC); 41pts P. Pelling (Abridge GC), Roger Stallard (Croham Hurst GC).

Ladies -

43pts S. Scott (Cuddington GC); 34pts K. Pudner (Purley Down GC), A. Wilkinson (Stoneham GC).



Peter Williams receives his trophy from Mrs Parker, wife of the Chairman of Parkers.



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10

How 'green' is your course?

Jim Arthur believes some of the environmental activists have overstated their case and become anarchists, not conservationists.

The trouble with any good idea is that so often it is in danger of suffering irreparable harm by being adopted by undeducated cranks who with their indisciplined and over-enthusiastic interpretations bring the whole concept into disrepute. Animal Rights activists who seem to rate all animals, even insects, as being more important than the human species, have by their militant actions discredited the entire campaign which has become synonymous with anarchy. I can assure you that what I relate is absolutely true. One such hairy anarchist was all set to put an old building to the torch on some pretext, until it was pointed out to him that the walls would be full of creepy crawlies who had an equal right to live - so he desisted!

Equally the 'Greens' have grossly overstated their case and so sensible-thinking conservationists find it harder to accept it. One example is the acid rain theory, for which no really convincing case can be made for *all* or even most defoliation of trees or loss of aquatic life.

In fact no less an authority than Dr. Philip Ineson of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology is reported as stating, in the roundest possible terms, "there isn't a single tree in the UK of which someone can say, this has died of acid rain".

For one thing, if the U.K. is responsible for arboricultural problems in Scandinavia, does the air borne acidity propel itself against the Easterlies, which prevail for most of the year - and when, even with South Westerlies, the

associated rainfall reduces its travel? Many Swedish lakes have *NEVER* had any aquatic life in recorded times, e.g. from mediaeval maps. Furthermore, we in this country should suffer as much or more than those countries further distant from reputed sources of pollution, and we do not. The problem of acidification is nothing new and on the whole must be considered, but a major cause is the excessive planting of conifers and associated increased acid run-off. This is now admitted by the Forestry Commission who confess they "got it wrong".

New planting at Kielder in Northumberland, England's largest (150,000 acre) man-made forest, will consist of 10% of native hardwoods "to improve the landscape and environment", replacing those solid rectangular plantings of Sitka spruce, marching over the Border hills.

In any case it should be remembered that on heavy land courses at least, we *want* acidity to lock up excessive fertility, which would otherwise produce lush meadows, not fairways. Our best and finest turf grows on the poorest soils.

On one course which I visited recently, great concern was expressed that acid rain was killing their trees. This was incidentally on a heather



March orchids by the fairway at Trevoze golf course Cornwall

POLITICS AND POLICIES

course where fifteen years ago, everything was dressed with basic slag which killed all the heather! The trees, about a score at most, were 40-50 year old birches dying on their feet from old age and a few smothered oaks and pines which were being choked under the canopy of their larger and more aggressive neighbours. If one does not manage forestry and neglects routine thinning to give the survivors room to grow, then nature will do the job itself, - but less tidily.

Our main problem on most courses after traffic, is that there are too many trees - often totally alien and 'unsympathetic' to their environment. That awful invasive alien Sycamore, delightful as a single, majestic mature tree, has just about destroyed much of our unfarmed downland. Many forest trees are planted where they have no room to reach even semi-maturity and soon interfere with play. Seedling birches and even oaks and pines invade our heather courses and turn them into woods. If culled in the seedling stage, this is accepted as correct management, but just let those invaders become established and many members start agonised objections the moment they hear a chain saw.

Sadly, now that the Nature Conservancy can no longer employ cheap Y.T.S. labour (quite correctly, of course) organised scrub clearance has stopped. Birches need no second invitation. Left even for a few years the task of clearing, including stump removal to prevent even worse regeneration, becomes highly expensive. Yet such is the emotive thinking of ignorant 'preservationists' that they managed to put a tree preservation order on felled birch stumps at one golf course extension, to prevent them being grubbed out - and the (temporary!) result was an impenetrable, rubbishy wilderness.

Too many of our old heathland courses in the past 60 years become woodland ones, and this is a very poor alternative to true parkland conditions, where a few isolated mature trees define layout and impose severe penalties for mishit strokes.

There are too many cases where semi-mature trees have been allowed to grow, restricting teeing space or otherwise impeding vision of the full green from every part of the tee. Worse still, instead of grubbing out the offending tree, it is savagely lopped, to become a hideous caricature, and the problem is merely postponed. Everyone planting a tree must have the knowledge to realise what it is going to look like and whether it will have room to develop to



Broomrape at Trevoze golf course maturity.

Choice of trees is always important, not just for aesthetic reasons, but because it is reasonable to suppose that the native trees suit the soil and environment and vice versa. Yet a short distance from where I write, quick growing and totally alien Leylandii conifers are being planted on a golf course - and quite apart from looking totally out of character, they will of course, blow over when they get taller, being so shallow rooting.

Conservation - true conservation not preservation - has many facets but clearly golf courses, in common with motorway verges, are becoming some of our best wildlife sanctuaries as they suffer far less from the unwelcome incursions and disturbances of that dangerous predator - man.

Many golf courses have established unofficial - and in some cases official - reserves to protect a 'speciality; from rare orchids to sand lizards; from a rare if inconspicuous flora to natterjack toads. Sensibly, we should always enlist the support of those professional conservationists, the Nature Conservancy officials and the trained employed staff of County Wildlife Trusts, who themselves suffer severely at the hands of their over-enthusiastic but ignorant and emotive dear lady members who believe every scare-mongering report they read.

We also suffer in greenkeeping from the influence of 'greens' in our efforts to grow healthy grass. Our mainstay insecticides, fungicides and herbicides are progressively being banned. The reason for the ban is often, that they are persistent - yet a moments thought will show that to deal with persistent pests we need long lasting control. Otherwise we will be constantly dosing our courses with short lived and ineffective control products, which is not only needlessly expensive, but

could create as many problems as it resolves.

Research has very belatedly attempted to find answers to this serious problem. Of course there were careless and ignorant users of mildly toxic products - mainly farmers who could more afford the high costs of massive overdosage, - but enlightened education would produce better as well as safer results.

I was astounded during my visit to a number of American courses to discover the way they had found round a ban on worm killers was to apply a ten fold overdose of a permitted fungicide, which killed everything grass and worms alike, and they then reseeded!

Meanwhile, all we can do is to attempt to prevent such problems occurring. It is all very well saying that proper management, a low fertiliser regime (and especially the avoidance of one slow release source of nitrogen which has become synonymous with *Fusarium* patch disease and thatch), and the clearance of shading trees will avoid disease. However what do we do when foolish greenkeeping, perhaps twenty years ago has left a legacy of problems, e.g. earth worm casting from stupid liming (advised "because the soil is acid") or disease attacking susceptible annual meadow grass turf caused by gross over-feeding with NPK in earlier years?

Money should be expended on researching these urgent priorities and not wasted on irrelevancies to prove what we already know - even if this may dissuade those building sand-only greens from repeating predictable disasters. What price pure sand greens when there is a total ban and using water on golf courses!

Education, as in all walks of life, is the key to correct assessment of all problems - and if only the 'Greens' would educate themselves better, they would make fools of themselves less frequently.

One gets so sick of hearing that some event is the "worst disaster since Chernobyl". In fact Chernobyl, bad though it was and caused by gross incompetence, killed directly about 30 people and the official estimated world wide lethal after-effect is much less of a risk than my being knocked down by a London double decker bus in Budeleigh Salterton High Street! How is it that we, so unfairly labelled the dirty men of Europe, have suffered some contamination of North Western Moorland from Russia and in the same breath are accused of polluting countries to the East of us with wind-borne acidity?



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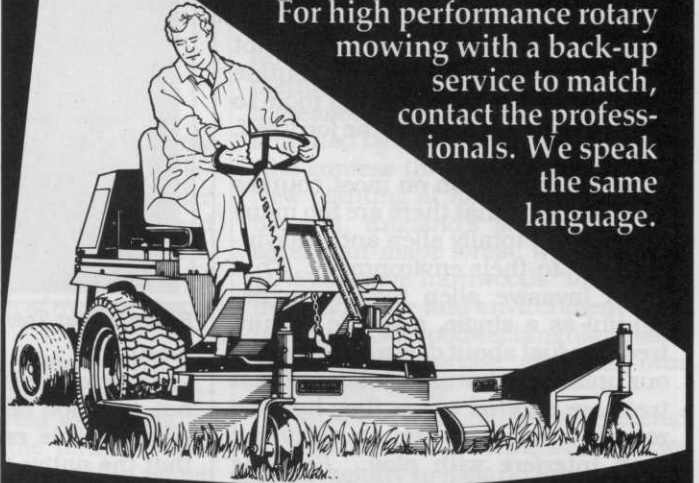
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