

WHAT'S NEW IN GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT

'The Wearing of the Green'

Surprise addition to the Ransomes, Wisconsin stand were four machines easily recognisable as made in the Macclesfield factory of SISIS. A fact quickly confirmed by the arrival of none other than SISIS Sales Director, Arthur Harrison accompanied by Joint M.D. Bill Hargreaves.

The colours of the Auto Turfman, Autor Rotorake, Trio Rotorake and the Auto Seeder were still in the traditional SISIS orange but superimposed with the Ransomes logo, an event which raised several eyebrows among the newshounds seeking an inside story of intrigue within the international manufacturing industry.

Delving deep into his brief case, jet setting Mr. Harrison, produced a press release still warm from its passage through the photo-copying machine to announce that Ransomes Inc. had agreed to carry out a market evaluation of the SISIS products on their stand. He pointed out these machines were already distributed successfully in other countries through joint Ransomes/SISIS dealers, but denied the arrangement would be extended to the UK.

To match the Ransomes image, the machines would be re-painted.

Old Tom Morris Award Presentation

Gene Sarazen, winner of the Open Championship and the US Open in 1932, the year after he invented the sand wedge was presented with the prestigious "Old Tom Morris Award" at this year's GCSAA closing banquet.

Now a sprightly 85 year old, Gene, one of golf's all time greats received many tributes prior to the presentation, but none more moving than from his friend and colleague, Robert Trent Jones Snr.

Winner of the US Open for the first time in 1922 at only 20 years of age he went on to win countless championships, but became known best for his hosting of the television series 'Shell's Wonderful World of Golf' in the 1960's.

Sarazen last played in the Open Championship at Troon in 1973 to commemorate his 50th Anniversary and celebrated the event by holding in one in front of a huge television audience.



Yardage Markers Mushroom on fairways

Although some of our more rule conscious golfers will be thumbing through their bibles to check whether distance markers are defined as "outside advice", or information, they may be interested to know the provision of such information is a growing business in the United States.

Ways of indicating distance to the green come in a variety of both distinct and discreet fashions. Even the giant Karstan Ping company have diversified into a range of multi-coloured thermo-plastic yardage markers that can be let into the fairway surface at ground level at the same height as a fairway sprinkler head.

Three figures are shown on the 7½ inch diameter discs. The distance to the centre of the green, the distance to the front of the green and the yardage to the back.

If the club do not want their course marked out with red, white and blue discs, then the discreet way to speed up play is to use the metal discs that can be screwed to the tops of the fairway sprinkler heads. They are custom made to fit the leading makes of irrigation equipment, can include the name of the club and show the distance in yards to the green centre.

Getting players around a course in the shortest possible time is the responsibility of any commercially minded management. Members know their distances by experience. Yardage markers will help visitors to play the correct shot, enjoy their round and alleviate hold-ups from over or under clubbing into lost ball positions.

This is a golf course accessory which could do well in Britain once the initial prejudice has been overcome.

Our next issue will contain more news of machinery developments we can expect to see in the next few months.

RECORD BREAKING HOUSTON SHOW

Another memorable convention linked to a three day exhibition was held at the newly opened George R. Brown Convention Centre in Houston, Texas, during the first week in February.

Organised by the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America this 59th International event attracted an even larger attendance than the record breaking Phoenix show in 1987. By Sunday night, with a further full day to complete, registered visitors topped the 13,000 mark, 500 up on the total for last year's Arizona Convention.

British visitors, boosted by a party from the Institute of Groundsmanship, swelled the numbers from this side of the Atlantic to a respectable sixty plus, most of whom travelled out from Gatwick by DC-10 on a British Caledonian scheduled flight to stay at the Houston Grand Hotel adjacent to the magnificent Galleria shopping complex some eight miles from downtown Houston.

First time visitors to the USA, particularly to relatively new cities are initially puzzled by the distances most hotels are situated from the Conference facilities, though thanks to the faultless transport organisation this is never a problem. A fleet of courtesy coaches run throughout the five full days of the Convention, picking up visitors from

their hotels and taking them, often on a scenic route, to the hub of activities.

Those who did book into downtown Houston Centre hotels found that after 6.00 p.m. the night time activity had shifted out of town to places such as the Greenway Plaza with its teeming restaurants, bars and shopping Malls, many open until the early hours.

British greenkeepers, fortunate enough to make the trip were rewarded not only with a wealth of fascinating lectures and seminars, but one of the finest turf grass exhibitions staged anywhere in the world. If this was not enough they were on the receiving end of an extended hand of friendship from their American counterparts and hospitality to a standard, which can only be described as memorable.

The grateful thanks from those this side of the Atlantic must be extended to Ransomes' American subsidiary, the Toro organisation and the Jacobsen Corporation, for invitations to their dealer receptions. Not only were the Brits superbly entertained, but they were given the opportunity to meet and discuss golf course problems with others of similar interests from the four corners of the globe.

Where else could golf course managers, machinery manufacturers and their dealers, from

the East, West, North and South, meet in the atmosphere of 'an international family reunion' other than at an event such as the Jacobsen Banquet. From Tokio to Singapore, Sydney to Zurich, London to Los Angeles, regardless of colour or creed, all had a common purpose, the betterment of playing conditions on the golf course.

Jacobsen's International Director of Sales, Curt Kimpfbeck, must have been a proud man that night presiding over his gathering of friends and colleagues, all of whom he introduced by name, awarding accolades for achievement including one to Chris Smith, their Sales Manager in the UK, who heads up the King's Lynn operation.

Among the special guests was Berkhamsted, first assistant greenkeeper, Gerald Bruce, who last year won the National Greenkeepers' Tournament, sponsored by Jacobsen after a nail biting sudden death three way play off over Hunstanton Links Course in October. His birdie putt at the first extra hole not only took him to the international banquet but gave him a once in a lifetime opportunity to see another side of golf course management.