

Pushing not pulling saves golf balls



Grounds technician Bernie Johnson sweeps the Bellerive Country Club driving range with the club's unique front-mounted ball picker

With a little ingenuity, the Bellerive Country Club has drastically reduced the number of balls lost on its driving range.

Not only has this saved money, it has enabled the club to provide a better service for driving range users by ensuring balls are readily available, even on the busiest weekends.

The Bellerive Country Club at St. Louis, opened in 1962 and in 1965 hosted the U.S. Open, won by Gary Player in a play-off with Cal Negel. The club today has close to 400 members, and its 18-hole course accommodates about 20,000 rounds of golf each season.

The club's driving range issues 400-500 dozen balls in an average day. At busy weekends they sometimes require up to 900 dozen balls. Keeping available the supply of golf balls to meet these demands is no small task.

Last spring, under the direction of Golf Pro Gary Fee, the club's maintenance shop rigged up a unique idea to retrieve more of the balls from the driving range.

They took a standard ball picker, but modified the hitch so the unit could be front-mounted on a Cushman Haulster utility vehicle. The idea has paid off well.

"When we changed the ball picker from 'pull' to 'push' we increased by 50%-60% the number of balls we were able to pick up, even when the turf is soft. On harder ground, we get nearly all of them", said resident professional Gary Fee.

"Too many balls were crushed into the ground when we used a pull-type picker. Those never get retrieved".

Being able to retrieve more of the balls also means fewer trips over the driving range.

"During the week, we can usually keep an adequate supply available by picking up the balls every evening. On weekends, though, we usually have to run over the range once or twice during the day, plus again in the evening".

Fee says it takes an hour to an hour and a half to "sweep" the fairway area. Two or three days a week they also sweep the rough, which takes about another 45 minutes. The front-mounted picker works well there, too.

The ball picker rig is mounted on a standard Cushman 452 Haulster vehicle, equipped with a cargo box and tailgate so it can be used for other hauling chores.

The cab was modified by replacing the right-hand door with a steel mesh covering, and covering the left-hand window area with steel mesh for operator protection. A plexiglass windshield was installed, too.

The picker unit itself is a standard mechanical ball picker, with wheel-mounted rubber fingers that pick the balls out of the turf. As the wheels rotate, the balls are "brushed" out of the fingers and drop into six wire baskets ahead of the picker wheels.

"It's really a simple innovation", says Fee, "but it has certainly proved worthwhile for Bellerive Country Club".

ROLAWN TURF FOR FESTIVAL

An exclusive contract to supply 50,000 square yards of purpose-grown turf to the 1988 Glasgow Garden Festival, has been won by a Yorkshire firm of turf growers.

Rolawn of Elvington, near York, began in Scotland 12 years ago with just half an acre. They are now Europe's largest growers of turf.

The company cultivates over 1,000 acres in various parts of the country and sells over 2m rolls a year to the general landscaping market, domestic gardeners and top sporting clubs.

The latest order, for the 120-acre Clydeside garden festival site will be supplied over the next 12 months. The company is also contributing £18,500 in sponsorship.

The £35m. festival opens next May for five months. The site will be used later mainly for housing.

INTER SEEDS EXPAND THEIR DISTRIBUTION

Inter Seeds, managed by Jeremy Howarth, have announced the appointment of main distributors for their PRO-Range of grass seed mixtures and PRO-FLORA range of wild flower seeds across the U.K.

The north is covered by Trident, based at Poplar Site, Knutsford Road, Lymm, Cheshire.

In Scotland the agency has gone to McNab Sports Supplies, based at 32 McBain Place, Kinross, Fife, under the control of Mr. Duncan McNab, at one time with Sports Turf Surfaces before setting up on his own.

In Northern Ireland the agency has gone to Samuel Stewart (Belfast) Limited, based at Glengormley Park.

The decision was taken to link with these companies because of their strong existing customer contact. In addition, Jeremy Howarth, was particularly impressed with their efficiency and organisation which he feels will be welcomed and appreciated by the professional amenity customer.

The extensive PRO range of grass seeds include mixtures of sport, landscaping and reclamation work. Varieties used include the highly rated Lisabelle, Lisuna and Lilotta perennial ryegrasses, Lifalla and Lirouge Chewing's fescues and NFG Theodor Roemer Creeping Red Fescue. In addition special mixtures can be formulated to suit individual requirements.

The PRO-FLORA range includes mixtures of wild flowers for acid neutral and calcareous soils as well as heavy soils, sandy soils and shady environments. A new mixture for 1987 exclusive to Inter Seeds is the PRO-FLORA VIII-"Old English Meadow Mix" which is the result of harvesting a natural meadow.



GREENKEEPER JOINS RIGBY TAYLOR

Martin Dignam has joined Rigby Taylor Limited and will be responsible for direct sales in the North.

Martin, 29, started his career in Greenkeeping at Phoenix Park Sports Club, Bradford and later moved to Woodhall Hills Golf Club as first assistant, where he obtained City and Guilds in Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management. This subsequently led to his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Knaresborough Golf Club.

A keen golfer he has won several major competitions including the B.G.G.A. President's Trophy, and last year qualified for the Jacobsen National Finals held at Hunstanton Golf Club in Norfolk and finished a commendable 9th.

He is welcomed to his new position at Rigby Taylor by John Holt, the Bolton based Sales Manager and a single figure golfer himself.

Martin Dignam (left) about to set off on his round, is welcomed to the staff by Sales Manager John Holt

Fairway yardage markers

A subject certain to produce controversial discussion in the bar of any golf club, concerns fairway markers.

There are some who believe distance guides destroy the spirit of the game, taking away the visual estimate of which club to use. Others take the view they speed up play and as most keen members already carry detailed notes of distance marks at their own course paced out to within a foot of the pin position, an 'on course' marker would appear not to offend against the rules.

The experienced caddy on the major courses is expected not only to give the golfer yardages, but also advise the club to use and the line of approach, so for those golfers who do not have this advice or know the course, fairway markers would not seem unfair either.

Some clubs already put white marks on trees or plant easily distinguishable shrubs at the 150 yard mark, but an

American company have now come up with a completely new idea - white 'plastic mushrooms' let into the fairways.

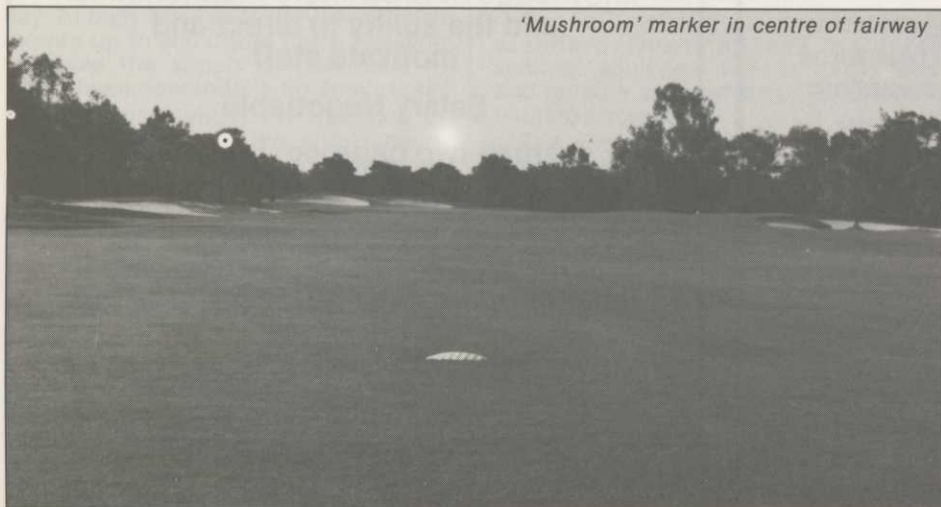
The inventor, Ed Carmen has designed the 'mushrooms' in such a way that the base is let into the ground and the top, standing slightly proud so it can be seen, is fitted on to the 'stalk'.

They do not have to be removed for fairway mowing, because as the mower moves over the top it is pushed flat to the turf level and completely misses the revolving cutters.

If white tops offend the eye they can be provided in red, green or blue or different colours used at varying distances down the fairway.

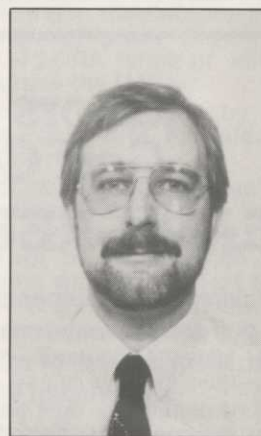
This system is not yet available in Britain, but if there are any distributors who might like to market the idea, Ed Carmen can be contacted at Fairway Products, P.O. Box 611, Elmer, New Jersey 08318.

'Mushroom' marker in centre of fairway



NEW APPOINTMENTS

AT **DABRO**
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*BRUCE CUSWORTH
Sales Manager*

Bruce Cusworth had joined the staff of Dabro International as Sales Manager.

He is married with two teenage children and lives near Shawbury.

He has an O.N.D. in Mechanical Engineering and C.&G. in Agricultural Engineering.

Bruce's interests include D.I.Y., Motor Sport, Sailing and Shooting.

Heading up the Sales/Demonstration Team is Andrew Smith who lives in Cholmondeley, Cheshire.

Mr. Smith previously employed by the Burgess Group for the last eight years, brings a wealth of experience to Dabro, especially in the field of Tractor mechanics and hydraulics.

Andrew is a very active sportsman and has a wide range of interests from Ski-ing to Parachute Jumping.

THE BLOWER VAC

A portable, easy to operate, blower vac is introduced by McCulloch. This not only cleans by blowing the debris away, but also converts quickly into a vacuum cleaner, sucking the rubbish up into a sturdy fabric bag with a capacity of 60 litres.

It has an air blowing velocity of 140mph with a 21cc engine and a mulching suction fan that reduces the volume of the debris. The VAC unit is designed to vacuum up leaves, small bits of paper, small twigs, weeds, grass clippings, etc. and comes complete with shoulder harness.

The blower vac weights 5kgs and comes in attractive four colour packaging. It is available at a retail price of £189.95 and is distributed by Markt (UK) Ltd.



WENTWORTH JOB GOES TO KEVIN MUNT

The appointment of Kevin Munt at present Head Greenkeeper at Royal Dornoch to the prestigious position of Course Manager at Wentworth has now ended considerable speculation as to whom would succeed Gerry Coley at this world famous Surrey golf course.

The position was widely advertised to find the right person to fill the shoes of one of golf's most competent greenkeepers and it is understood the competition was more than fierce.

Details for the development of the new 'South Course' have also been finalised and work is due to start this summer to a design by John Jacobs in association with Gary Player and Wentworth's resident professional Bernard Gallacher.

It can also be announced that the consultants for the construction are the Sports Turf Research Institute at Bingley, who will also act as consultant agronomists to the whole of the Wentworth golf complex.

The new course construction is expected to take at least eighteen months to complete, with an opening date sometime in 1990-1991.

Plans to renew the Wentworth Clubhouse have however hit an unforeseen snag. The building, generally accepted as ugly and by many as a monstrosity, has had a class 2 listed building regulation slapped on it by the Dept. of the Environment. How this has occurred no-one can envisage, unless a local resident or someone with a confused sense of architecture has made representations to the D. of E.

The owners will now have to go through the formalities of a planning approval before further progress is made.

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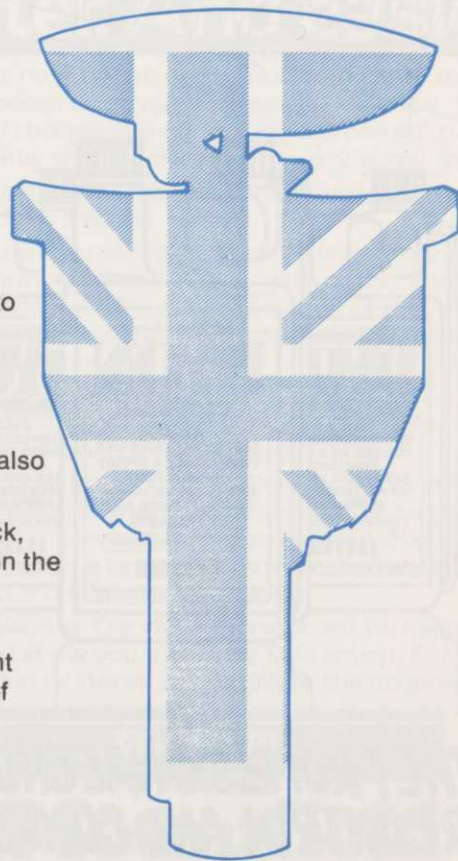
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YTS GIVES BRADFORD SCHOOL-LEAVERS JOBS ON THE GOLF COURSE

The Shipley College of Science and Technology at Bradford are currently running a two year YTS scheme for trainees in Horticulture and Green-keeping.

Bradford, to the non-Yorkshire man conjures up ideas of satanic, dark, damp woollen mills, working around the clock converting Australian sheep fleeces into cloth. Or perhaps a city now more associated with Karachi and Calcutta, brim full of an immigrant population complete with curry and their Eastern cultures.

Part of both these images are true, but Bradford is also surrounded by some of Britain's finest countryside, starting a mere mile or two from the centre of the city.

What better place to develop golf courses. Many of them, now overtaken by residential sprawl, which has had the unplanned advantage of dropping oases of countryside into urban development.

The Shipley College has fifteen golf clubs in the immediate area who have offered to provide placements for students taking the two year course. All these clubs have been approved by the MSC Assessors as suitable 'on job' training grounds for those young people who have expressed a desire to work in golf course maintenance.

The two year training course consists of twenty weeks of horti-

cultural theory, plus a proportion of continuing education. This takes place in the College spread over a number of one and two week blocks. The rest of the time is spent at the golf clubs under the supervision of the Head Greenkeeper.

There is an advantage for both parties. The trainee is able to learn at first hand the skills of amenity turf maintenance, the club receives an extra pair of hands, plus a Manpower Services Grant. And what else must not be forgotten, the Head Greenkeeper also gains a tremendous inner satisfaction from seeing the development of a raw callow youth into a skilled greenkeeper, under his guidance.

The YTS trainees at Shipley College follow the syllabus for the C & G Horticulture Phase 1 and 2 for two years and if successful can go on to take the C & G Groundsmanship and Sports Turf Management Course over the following year.

Last year the Department of Trade and Industry organised a national competition during 'Industry Year' and the only YTS scheme in the country to win an award was Shipley College in the 'Working with Small Business Section'. They were awarded first prize.

Many of the early young trainees have now found full-time jobs with golf clubs, several at the clubs where they were trained.

JIM ARTHUR TO EASE UP ON CONSULTANCY VISITS

In a statement issued by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews it has been announced that Mr. Jim Arthur will be reducing his work load and this in turn will affect his advisory role as consultant agronomist to the Championship Committee.

The R&A point out that there is an 'ever increasing and closer liaison between the STRI and Mr. Arthur' and they go on to say a start is being made in the form of joint advisory visits by specialist golf agronomists employed by the STRI together with Mr. Arthur, to those courses hosting the qualifying competitions for this year's Open Championship.

Jim Arthur was asked by the Championship Committee sixteen years ago to advise them in the preparation of both qualifying courses and those chosen to host the Open Championship. At that time it was believed a greater measure of uniformity was required to produce similar course conditions and presentation.

The Open Championship is still regarded as the premier event in golf despite the incentive of massive prize money in other parts of the world. It is unique because it is the only major tournament played over the traditional Links. It is the intention of the R&A to continue producing true Links for all their Championship courses.

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LATE SECTIONAL NEWS

The Spring Tournament for the North East will be held over the Whitley Bay Course on 9th April. Teeing off between 9.30 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.

Ponteland G.C. in the venue for the annual fixture against the Secretaries on 6th July, commencing at 4.00 p.m.

The Welsh Section have fixed their annual Secretaries match for Southerndown G.C. for June 3rd.

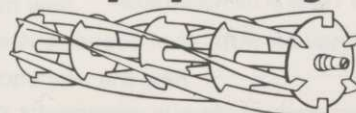
The Welsh team to take part in the inter Sectional Vitax Tournament to be played at Ferndown G.C. on Wednesday, 20th May has been nominated as follows:

Scratch - 9	Graham Cox, Mike Jones; Res. John Hopkins
10-18	Hugh Morgan, Philip Swain; Res. Ted Thompson
19-plus	Walter Jones, Colin Lewis; Res. Robert Kitchen

Would Welsh members please note the 16th April fixture is to be held at St. Mellons G.C. not St. Mellion as published in the Tournament Diary. *Cornishmen on alert to repel invaders, can stand down!*

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