

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

*John Lelean reports on the
GCSAA Convention and Show*

Why is it that a business trip abroad invariably produces the comment around the bar of the 19th - 'Have you had a good holiday?' The eight day trip to Phoenix to visit the GCSAA Annual Convention was certainly enjoyable, interesting, educational, informative, well worth the effort - but holiday!

Our party who included the Jacobsen Tournament winners, Peter Shaw from Preston and Adrian Stiff, Tracey Park, left Heathrow by TWA an hour late due to snow problems across the Atlantic. Despite an early arrival at Heathrow to book adjacent seats, on boarding the Jumbo 747, we found the aircraft already half full with passengers from a previous flight, whose plane had failed to arrive.

It seemed for a time it was to be either standing room only or those without a seat proceed to Gatwick.

The first leg to New York took about six hours where incoming passengers went through the usual immigration procedures. 'Stand on the white line and don't move until you are told'. However on this occasion the queue did move reasonably quickly.

Baggage was checked by customs and then it was a short walk through the John F. Kennedy airport to the domestic flight departure to Phoenix - Sky Harbor.

This flight was considerably more civilised, with a great deal more room to stretch out and curl up for a much needed sleep. There was also the opportunity to spot the odd familiar face, such as Christine Smith from the IOG, Jonathan Franks from British Seed Houses and Sunningdale's Jack McMillan.

On arrival at Phoenix, quite an exciting experience as one descends over the mountain ranges into the vast valleys alive with flickering lights, we telephoned to our chosen hotel for transport. Imagine our surprise when what should arrive but a shining white London Taxi-Cab! Certainly a tight squeeze but we made it.

1. Setting off to explore the 'Wild West'.
2. What could be nicer than a dip in the heated hotel pool after a long tiring day at the Convention!
3. Tree like cacti dominate the new golf course at Troon Village.
4. Jacobsen had one of the biggest and busiest stands at the Show.
5. Ocotillo Golf Course abounded with lakes. The brown patches are dormant bermuda grass, not bear ground.
6. The vast indoor exhibition housed ever conceivable piece of equipment for use on the golf course.

The Ultimate in 'One Upmanship'



Golf carts are very big business for American Golf Courses.

A 27 hole complex would have around 180, many making two trips a day.

For the golfer looking for the touch extra this mini 'Roller' has colour T.V. above the driver, video camera for recording the putt that sinks, a built in bar with ice-box and mobile telephone to keep in touch with the office.

It is surprising how the tiredness lifts after such a trip and after an exploratory tour of the Westcourt in the Buttes hotel, certainly the best appointed most of us have ever seen, it was 'down-town' to an all-night diner to experience a real hamburger with all the trimmings. If one wants to eat well in clean, neat surroundings, with friendly helpful staff, the roadside diners take a great deal of beating.

Our main objective was to visit the American Golf Course Superintendents Convention and Exhibition, attend some of the seminars and if time permitted, see a few golf courses.

Outstanding Hospitality

It should be said from the outset, the GCSAA hospitality to the British contingent was outstanding. Through their newly appointed public relations man, Bob Still, they did everything possible to make our visit memorable. We congratulate him on his appointment and thank him for his kindness and concern.

As far as visiting golf courses was concerned we managed to go one better, through the good offices of Abe Hughes of the host section, the Cactus & Pine GCSA. He offered to arrange a round of golf for exhibition visitors at one of a number of courses in the Phoenix area. We were able to take advantage of this offer and play two courses, El Caro and Ocotillo. The first was a small privately owned par 60 where taking a golf cart or walking was optional. At Ocotillo the golf cart was mandatory, but with the temperatures in the mid 70's riding was certainly preferable to walking over the 6,600 yard course.

Another unexpected bonus visit was to the Karstang factory, the home of Ping golf clubs. We managed to join the small, twice weekly tour, to see the world famous clubs assembled and appreciate the precision and technical application required to produce a golf club developed by an engineer in aerodynamics. It is hard to believe the demand for golf clubs is such it keeps a workforce of around 1,500 fully occupied for six days a week. Even then there is a waiting period of around sixteen weeks for the new copper headed irons, despite the £1,000 price tag.

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£ For £

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2. EFFECTIVE COVERAGE

Being gear driven each Toro Sprinkler provides a smooth, uninterrupted working action which enhances water distribution.

3. SELF PROTECTION

The gear drive assembly inside a Toro Sprinkler is lubricant sealed and, therefore, protected from water-borne materials such as particles of sand. This ensures the gears work smoothly and helps reduce maintenance.

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6. EASE OF MAINTENANCE

Toro Sprinklers are designed to make servicing simple. Repairs can be carried out on the spot - no need to take the sprinkler away to a workbench!

7. IMPROVED WARRANTIES

Toro now offer increased Warranty protection for large size sprinklers - in some instances these have been given twice the length of validity - there's confidence!

8. WHO USES TORO SPRINKLERS?

St. Andrews, the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, Wimbledon and Wembley Stadium - three good examples!

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Enjoy twice the performance!

Among several invitations, including the GCSAA Banquet on the final day, a number of the UK visitors attended a reception by the Toro Organisation and the Jacobsen International Dinner. Jacobsen's event, comprising some sixty guests, was a truly cosmopolitan affair with representatives from every country where golf is played. What is more, despite the range of nationalities and many differing languages, there seemed to be no bar to communication.

The conference began with educational seminars - almost 400 hours were offered throughout the eight days of the conference - and ended with more educational seminars, sessions and special events. Among the highlights of the conference week activities were award presentations, personal appearances of famous speakers, a huge trade show, a gala banquet with big-name entertainment, allied golf association seminars and more educational programmes.

Record Attendance

The Trade Show opened on Saturday at the Phoenix Civic Plaza. Among the 331 exhibits were 81 exhibitors new to the show. Last year in San Francisco, 317 companies exhibited their products - 74 for the first time - and in Washington, D.C., the year before, 292 exhibits were on display. The attendance record was also broken with 12,588 registering throughout the week. Additional Educational programs were also conducted by the USGA Green Section, the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the National Golf Foundation (NGF) and the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA).

An international session was also held on the opening day of the Trade Show, with speakers from China, Sweden, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines and Britain.

The Association Vice-Chairman, Jack McMillan, explained the problems besetting the British greenkeepers through their various Associations and the work that had been done to unite the profession under the BIGGA banner.

Howard Swan took the audience through the traditions of the starting point of golf on the Scottish Links and its initial development inland on the heathlands of the home counties.

Our third representative, Jim Arthur, headed his presentation 'Common Sense and Technology', but rather like the Member of Parliament who fell foul to the lashing from the Rt. Hon. Winston Spencer Churchill he was somewhat 'overcome by the exuberance of his own verbosity' and incurred the wrath of at least two members of his audience.

The first, an old protagonist, Jim Wyllie, from the Bay View Golf and Country Club, Toronto and secondly from Richard Fry, a British Marketing Consultant, who at one time headed the Amenity Turf Chemical Sales Division of May & Baker. He took exception to the suggestion that the Agro-Chemical Industry since the banning of DDT had produced chemicals with an even greater degree of toxicity.

However, it was a lively session to end the proceedings, but perhaps unfortunate that the audience was somewhat sparse and dominated by a substantial representation from this side of the Atlantic.

Award for Trent Jones Snr.

The newly elected Association President Donald Hearn told a full house at the annual Banquet, "I am very honoured and humbled to assume the presidency of GCSAA. This is a great time for GCSAA and its membership to grow and expand its services".

Later in the programme, NBC golf commentator Jay Randolph presented GCSAA's highest honour - the Old Tom Morris Award - to Robert Trent Jones, Snr.

He described "Trent Jones as the Beethoven of the golf world, designing one masterpiece after another". Of Ballybunion's new course, also a creation of Trent Jones Jay Randolph quoted Golf World's writer, Peter Dobereiner who wrote - "I have no hesitation in proclaiming this course a masterpiece, the greatest links course in the world, and by a clear margin". Jones accepted the Old Tom Morris Award and then shared personal thoughts and concerns about the future of the game he loves so much. He believed the design of courses will be hurt tremendously if the authorities don't do something about the ball. "It's too hot (long) nowadays. These top guys are driving past the natural and designed obstacles that make skill part of golf".

Following the banquet and award presentation, Marie Osmond and the Osmond Brothers entertained the audience with a blend of pop and country and western tunes.

The next GCSAA's International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held in Houston, Feb. 1-9, 1988.

INVENTOR OF INNOVATIVE GREENS CONDITIONER HONOURED DURING GCSAA SHOW



A plaque picturing the Turf Groomer™ and commemorating its inventor, her late husband Larry, was presented to Mrs. Barbara Lloyd by Jacobsen's President, John R. Dwyer, at a special ceremony in Phoenix.

An accomplished golf course superintendent, Larry Lloyd had identified a need for improvement in his greens, said Dwyer. "He turned this need into a concept for a product and then, through experimentation and hard work over a period of several years, he perfected the idea of the Turf Groomer™ greens conditioner.

Jacobsen have the exclusive manufacturing rights to Lloyd's patented invention, with proceeds from the sale of each Turf Groomer™ going to the Lloyd estate. "It is only fitting and proper that a man's family should benefit from his hard work and ingenuity in creating such a revolutionary new product as the Turf Groomer™", said John Dwyer.

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