

R & A Supports Turf Research For Golf

The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews has agreed with The Sports Turf Research Institute to provide £80,000 spread over four years to finance a programme of research into some of the most urgent problems affecting golf courses. The project will be in three parts.

1. A research investigation into the construction of pure sand golf greens. This work will involve looking into the construction and maintenance problems associated with the use of 100 per cent sand constructions. Fertilisation of golf greens is a controversial subject, with many people applying excessive amounts of phosphate in the mistaken view of its beneficial effects. On sands, or soils with a high sand content, the problem of fertilisation becomes more acute because of the inherent nutrient deficiency of sands. To fully evaluate the effects of fertilisers on sand greens, a large experiment will be set up at Bingley. The study will include measurements on aspects of playing quality, changes in botanical composition, including annual meadowgrass invasion, and thatch development over a number of years.
2. In conjunction with the University of Aston, Birmingham, a research student will study the properties of golf turf and relate this to the

playing qualities of golf greens. The project will involve studying the characteristics of golf green turf in relation to the roll of golf balls and ball bounce and spin properties.

3. A new research project will investigate fairy rings, including superficial fairy rings (thatch fungi), about which little is known. Particular emphasis will be placed on the control of these fungi and a range of chemicals will be evaluated for this purpose.

It was due to the efforts of the R & A Golf Club in the 1920s that the Board of Greenkeeping Research (as forerunner to the STRI) came into being 56 years ago.

Business As Usual For Jacobsen & Co

Much speculation has arisen regarding the future of the Jacobsen Buntun and Ryan brand names in the UK following the announcement by Lindsay Marshall of UK importers Marshall Concessionaires that, due to the adverse dollar/pound exchange rate, the company was to cease acting as the main importer.

Walter Kuhnen, managing director of Orag International, the main European distributor based in Switzerland, confirmed to *Greenkeeper* that a new UK importer is being sought after talks with

Charterhouse Turf Machinery failed to fructify.

However, Mr Kuhnen added that a 'caretaker' agreement has been reached with Marshalls to continue as main UK agents at least until the IOG exhibition at Windsor in September, when it is hoped to announce new arrangements for the UK under the Orag umbrella. Customers need not be concerned about the availability of spares or new machines, Mr Kuhnen concluded.

Paul Goes It Alone

Until recently head greenkeeper at Dale Hill Golf Club, Paul Wright has set himself up in business as Aeration & Drainage Services. Paul has purchased a Verti-Drain from his former club, where he first recognised its contribution towards easing compaction.

Dale Hill acquired the Verti-Drain last June and soon took on the aeration of other golf courses — now Paul is to continue the good work.

His machine is mounted on a tractor with a hydrostatic gearbox, which gives the variable forward speed essential for a satisfactory performance from the Verti-Drain.

With a background as a greenkeeper at several clubs, Paul feels he is well-qualified to assist others with the valuable aeration operation.

Contact Paul Wright at Aeration & Drainage Services on 0323 506725.



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Ransomes For Ryder Cup Course

Ransomes has won an order worth nearly £100,000 from The Belfry Hotel. "This is the largest single order we have had from a golf club," sales director Guy Catchpole said.

The Belfry, situated at Wishaw, north Warwickshire and nine miles from the centre of Birmingham, has two 18-hole golf courses—the Derby and the Brabazon—and stages the Bell's Scotch Ryder Cup Match in September.

"In addition to demonstrations here, we visited Ransomes' factory to see the back-up we expect when committing ourselves to a company for such an important part of our operations," Belfry chief executive Brian Cash said.

A wide selection of Ransomes equipment, including four triple greens mowers, is being supplied to the Belfry through the company's dealer near Stafford, Burrows (Grass Machinery).



Belfry chief executive Brian Cash signs the agreement while director Allan Hunter, horticultural officer Jack Broady and Ransomes sales director Guy Catchpole look on.

More Folks For Fisons Sales Force

Fisons Horticulture is increasing its sales coverage of the industry's professional side by four sales staff. "This expansion forms part of a complete sales re-organisation," sales and marketing manager Nigel Woodland said.

David Hull is operating the new professional horticulture sales force. He joins Fisons as national sales manager from Monsanto.

Promotions from within Fisons' existing sales force include Mike Burdett, who becomes key account manager for the south eastern region, and Ron Page, who takes on the new position of regional sales manager for the west central area.

The new post of amenity technical

advisor has been filled by Keith McKee, previously southern area sales supervisor. Keith joins Bob Hardwick, who has been the Fisons' grower technical advisor for several years.



David Hull.

For Course Consultations

Malcolm Kenyon and John Jemmett have formed Western Golf Course Consultants based in north Devon. Malcolm's commercial experience was formed in the seed-supply industry when he supplied grass seed mixtures and advised golf courses and playing fields for some 25 years.

John spent 30 years in the experimental and trials fields with most growing plant species and grasses. Before, he worked in the family nursery business.

Contact Malcolm Kenyon on 0271 44633 or John Jemmett on 0271 62177.

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New Fairways For The Falklands

When what is perhaps the world's smallest golf club—with just 23 members—has its course dug up by an invading army and is then shelled by the Royal Navy, it has to rate among the top hard luck stories in sport. That is what happened to the golf course at Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, but there are now plans for the damage to be repaired.

Golf-course architect Bryan Griffiths of Golfconsult Associates, Epping recently flew to the Falklands to assess restoration of the old nine-hole course or the construction of a new 18 holes. Hopefully, construction costs will be met by commercial and industrial sponsors.

Bryan, who was a guest of the Civil Commissioner Sir Rex Hunt at Government House, has travelled the world appraising golf project investment and course design. So far, he has worked in 37 countries, including Ghana, the Seychelles, Barbados and Venezuela. Nearer home, he designed the Telford Golf and Country Club course.

Interest In Absorbing Product

Maxwell Hart reports heavy demand for its water-absorbing Broadleaf P4—a Polymer that may be mixed with any planting medium to create a well-conditioned, water-retentive, growing environment.

P4 can absorb up to 400 times its weight in water. Thousands of tiny reservoirs are formed. Then, as required by the plant root system, water is released on demand, resulting in vigorous, robust plants

with strong and extensive root systems.

With unlimited drying out and rehydration capacity during its lifespan of about five years, Broadleaf P4 is a long term solution to soil conditioning. It reduces evaporation, inhibits leaching and limits the build-up of harmful salts. Broadleaf P4 upgrades the structure, hydration capacity and aeration of any soil, sand or compost. It is safe in all types of soil and with all kinds of vegetation.

Maxwell Hart says P4 is a major contribution to growth promotion. For example, it alleviates moisture stress in transplanting or growing on. Hanging displays require much less attention and for newly planted trees and shrubs P4 is already proving a boon.

Typical application rates mean that the 25 kilo bags of Broadleaf P4 are very good value. More details from Maxwell Hart on Wokingham (0734) 785655.

Obituary

George Hitchcock, 81, died recently. He came from a greenkeeping background and started work with his father at Langley Park Golf Club, Kent in 1918.

In 1935, Henry Cotton asked George to join him at the Royal Waterloo Golf Club in Belgium, where he stayed until 1940 when, with the assistance of Aubrey Boomer and the Prince of Wales, George managed to escape the advancing Germans.

During the war, he worked as a civilian at Southampton with the diving service. In 1945, again encouraged by Cotton, George took up the post of head greenkeeper at Coombe Hill Golf Club, Surrey, where

he stayed until 1978 when he retired. In his hands, the course was always in perfect condition.

There was a large attendance of greenkeepers, professionals and friends in the trade at the funeral. With Mrs Hitchcock was daughter Mary, son Jim and brother Wally, who was the professional at Langley Park. Jim, who now lives in South Africa, will be remembered for winning the Dunlop Masters, playing in the Ryder Cup and giving creditable performances in the Open.

George's memory will continue at Coombe Hill in the form of a competition to be played annually.

New Range Of Turf Fertilisers

C. Taylor and Sons of Oxted, Surrey has introduced Hurstridge 2000 to complement the range of Hurstridge Fine Turf Dressings and prescription mixes already marketed by the company.

The new 2000 range consists of four spring/summer and three autumn/winter fertilisers. Included in the range is a nil-phosphate fertiliser to meet the demand for increased nitrogen and potash levels where there is already adequate phosphate available.

C. Taylor also offers a low-cost soil analysis service. Cores are taken and a 12 point guide prepared giving recommendations of balanced fertilisers and top dressings to suit individual requirements in order that a correct level of acidity, balanced nutrients and improved drainage may be achieved.

Full details from C. Taylor & Sons, Hurstridge, Crowhurst Lane End, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9NT. ☎ 0342 892194.

NTC Golfturf

Three constituent members of the National Turfgrass Council in the Golf Turfgrass industry are planning to combine to hold a short conference in October.

Following their involvement in GOLF COURSE 84 the British Association of Golf Course Architects, British Association of Golf Course Constructors and the British Turf Irrigation Association, will under the auspices of the NTC, host three days of lecture and seminar sessions in mid October, at Woodhall Spa Golf Hotel, Lincolnshire.

The proposed event, which extends the aim of bringing together the various parts of the golf turfgrass industry, will feature national and international presentations on architecture, construction and irrigation at technical levels, as well as social and golfing events, there is likely to be a 'wives' programme also whereby the 'widows' of the various principals and managers of the Associations' members may be a part of the whole NTC GOLFTURF concept.

Education and discussion will be the essentials of the programme, and details will be issued shortly.

Further enquiries to John Shildrick Secretary NTC, 3, Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1HZ. Telephone: Bradford (0274) 565131.

The logo for NTC (National Turfgrass Council) features the letters 'NTC' in a large, bold, serif font. The 'N' and 'T' are connected at the top, and the 'C' is positioned to the right. The letters are white with a black outline, set against a dark, textured background.

The Battle Between Heather And Grass

Heather on a golf course has always produced mixed emotions from golfers and greenkeepers. To the golfer who finds his ball resting among its wiry stems, it can be a problem but, at the same time, he probably marvels at the sight of a course ablaze in drifts of colour. The greenkeeper, too, appreciates the attractive features of the heather, but it is often the case that where the heather is inundated with grasses, the area is, in fact, very unattractive.

The heather and grasses battle it out and neither wins, occasionally the coarser grasses will gain the upper hand, but more usually the appearance is of patchy weak heather with grass foliage and flower stems sticking out and large clumps of grass, particularly along the sides of paths.

Traditional management of heather does little to control the grass. Cutting hard back in the spring will encourage the grass at the expense of the heather; autumn trimming will improve the appearance, but in mild winters especially the grasses will continue to grow slowly.

A close examination of the rough in a natural heathland soil will show a diversity of young plants including young heather seedlings, but they appear to be suppressed by the mat of vigorous grasses and only the young trees and gorse seedlings appear to be able to compete effectively for light and nutrients. The solution to this problem would seem to be the repression or removal of the grass to allow the heather to dominate.

A glance through some text books

Can You Help Name Names?

This photo is believed to have been taken before the first international greenkeepers' match between England and Scotland, in the mid-1930s at Barnton, Edinburgh. If older greenkeepers recognise anyone, they are asked to contact the editor at Greenkeeper, 121-123 High Street, Dovercourt, Harwich CO12 3AP. ☎ 0255 507526.



on the subject usually only reveals talk of eradication of heather with little or no advice on the management of heathland rough. An example of this is a section on heaths in Reginald Beales' book *Lawns For Sports*, published in 1924. He wrote: 'Some of the best and most beautiful inland courses have been won out of rough heaths, such as Sunningdale and Walton Heath. Gorse, bracken and heather should be cut and the ground broken up by steam tackle and allowed to lie fallow for as long as conveniently possible.'

In 1984, some preliminary work was

carried out at St George's Hill to assess the potential of Dalapon as a controller of a diverse range of grasses, while leaving the heather undamaged and free to grow away to form a thick cover. At Walton Heath, some spraying was also carried out with the same aim, but head greenkeeper Clive Osgood decided to try larger areas using the Cushman.

Dalapon is not recommended for overspraying any plant and spray guards are used to prevent accidental spray drift. However, there have been

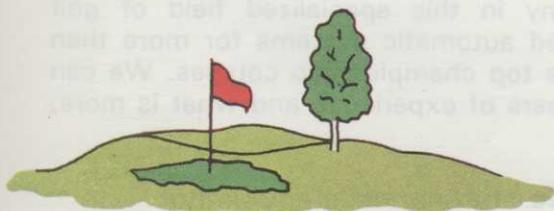
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Continued from previous page...

reports that when applied as an overall spray before heather growth commences in January/February there is no damage. As there are a number of different application rates for Dalapon and some of these are applied as dormant sprays, the objective was to find a rate of application and a time when the grasses would be controlled or suppressed allowing the heather to flourish.

The rate of application for Dalapon varies according to the crop being treated and, so, various rates were tested to try and establish a rate that would kill grass, but not heather. Treatment commenced in February at St George's Hill and March at Walton Heath. A knapsack sprayer fitted with a flooding jet and set at low pressure, 1 bar (10 psi), was used at St George's Hill. The Cushman fitted with size 0 nozzles was used at Walton Heath.

The results indicated that when the Dalapon was applied at between 10-11.2 kilos per hectare (9-10 lbs per acre) in February-March in a water volume of 337-560 litre/hectare (30-50 gallons per acre) a good kill was achieved with most of the grasses.

At Walton Heath, the treated areas showed a marked difference in their untreated surroundings. The majority of the grasses were killed and by mid-season there was a proliferation of wild flora and a considerable increase in growth by the established heather. The young second generation heathers were also growing out of the areas of dead grass.

The site at Walton Heath was inspected again in October and November and the treated area was still easy to identify by its lack of long

Watermation Wins Again

Jack Wheeler, Watermation's customer services manager, received a golden circle distributor award from Weather-Matic at its annual sales conference in Houston, Texas recently. Weather-Matic manufactures lawn and turf irrigation products and Watermation of Woking, Surrey has been the sole UK distributor for 15 years. Due to Watermation's success, largely in golf irrigation, Weather-Matic has increased sales steadily. Watermation has now received the award a record eight times since 1975.



grass. A close inspection did show that the fescues in particular were coming back but, as yet, only as young plants. This application rate seemed to be the best from the point of view of tolerance by the heather, very little effect was noticed and they grew away well after treatment.

Some important lessons were learned during these trials particularly when using the Cushman—great care is needed to avoid any spray drift on to fairways, tees, etc; when spraying has been completed, avoid driving or walking across other areas until sprayer wheels and feet have been washed

down; as a general precaution, it is best to avoid spraying near greens, tees, etc and cleaning out spraying equipment, paying particular attention to nozzles and filters, is very important to avoid the possibility of spray damage with later treatments.

Work is continuing on this project and it is hoped that more specific information on heather and grass species treated will be gathered. Synchemicals would be pleased to hear from clubs preparing to carry out trials. The company can supply a trial report upon request. Full details from Synchemicals, 44 Grange Walk, London SE1 3EN. ☎ 01-232 1225.

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Where There's A Wall There's A Way

A short hole with a small teeing ground, the 11th on the Ailsa Course at Turnberry has always worn badly. To overcome the problem, management decided to use winter's lull to rebuild the tee and increase its size fivefold.

However, the hole's location against the sea was a major problem. A wall 50 yards long and 17 feet high in places and strong enough to keep out the sea on one side while holding up 2,000 tons of in-fill and earth on the other was needed.

Estimates of cost jeopardised the entire project, then came the brainwave. During the last war, Turnberry was used as an RAF fighter base and parts of the old runway still remain. With a hired HY-MAC, course manager Russell Brown and his 12 staff broke the concrete into manageable blocks.

Using them to build the wall, the team completed the project within a week and at a fraction of original estimates. With the wall in place, Brown and his boys cut into a nearby mound and moved 2,000 tons of rock and earth to build up the new tee before covering with turf taken from the nearby Culzean Estate.

The project was part of a winter programme of improvement that included enlarging the tee at the famous lighthouse hole 9th and lengthening the 12th hole by about 50 yards. The tee has been taken back into ground recently purchased and

brings two large bunkers, previously too close to the tee, into play.

In addition, 40 bunkers have been, or are being, refaced. "Most of the changes have been planned for some time," Turnberry general manager Chris Rouse said, "although the lengthening of the 12th hole has been done mainly with the 1986 Open in mind."



The wall that Russell Brown and his boys built.

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