



Some 3,000 trees are being planted in a course improvement programme by contractor Don Wells.



Resurfacing work to a public bridle path...



Hugh with assistant and engineer Peter Baker.

godsend to greenkeepers in view of the ever-increasing amount of play. Manual operations, such as hollow tining, scarifying, topdressing and a whole range of other time-consuming jobs so often neglected, can now be carried out without undue interference to play."

A useful and inventive flexible rubber finger drag blade disperses the early morning dew before Worthing's greens are mown. It was made by splitting a ten foot length of three inch metal tube with an oxy-acetylene torch. Thick rubber fingers 16 inches wide and 14 inches long are fixed on to a strip of wood that prevents them from falling out of the tube. This simple implement is easily mounted on the back of a small Kubota tractor on an A-frame and the greens on both courses can be brushed in three hours without any friction damage to the surface. It is also ideal for brushing in compost.

Hugh has a lot of experience and is brimming with enthusiasm and good ideas. He was one of the driving forces in the establishment of EIGGA and is a trustee of the association. His ambition is to raise the status of greenkeeping by providing more and better facilities for the education and training of craftsmen greenkeepers.

**We owe it to the young men
to provide suitable educational
courses with experienced
instructors...**

"I want to see young men having the opportunity for a sound basic training in the theory and practice of golf-course upkeep. We owe it to them to provide suitable educational courses with experienced instructors and lecturers," he said.

"In some areas, advanced training courses may be difficult to find, but the ambitious man should not be deterred and is advised to try an appropriate business studies course to prepare himself for the role of head greenkeeper or course manager.

"Course maintenance budgets at some clubs may be as much as £100,000. The responsibility of running a modern golf course involves intensive planning and preparation by a competent individual, who has to be able to show his club he's capable of leading and directing the greenkeeping staff and has the ability and business acumen to prepare an accurate budget to run the course efficiently and economically to the membership's satisfaction."



London

Forty members attended the first AGM, which was held at Aldenham GC recently. The meeting went very smoothly and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you for re-electing me chairman. I feel honoured and will endeavour to improve the branch and, so, our standing throughout the industry.

D. Low was appointed branch administrator and he can be contacted on 01-950 4270. The committee is now: D. MacIndoe—chairman (Ø Watford 36416); T. McDonald—entertainment (Ø 01-950 7469); M. Peters—golf (Ø Northwood 28167) and Derek Mason—who makes up the full quota and who will be responsible for educational trips (Ø 01-340 6498).

The AGM was held in conjunction with an impressive demonstration and talk by Fred Reed of Lloyds Machinery of Letchworth. This was followed by an excellent buffet and then, by way of a change, Fred talked about his escapades as a Football League referee!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lloyds for a most enjoyable day and wish them, along with Fred, many prosperous years in the trade.

The spring meeting will be held courtesy of Aldenham GC on May 1. Please return your entry slips today!

D. MacIndoe.

East Anglia

It seems to have been a short winter—not too wet, not too cold, not much snow. Pretty boring, really, and the grass hasn't stopped growing! Most of the machinery is back and it doesn't seem to have been away five minutes. Top dressing is being put on the tees and greens and away we go again, each year trying to better the last.

I sometimes wonder what perfection is. Not so long ago, the average club golfer and greenkeeper thought his greens were good—a bit slow, but true. Then the boffins started

on about annual meadow grass being public enemy number one, so everybody hunted it down and starved it out. Now the greens are like putting on lino and they tell us some of the bent grasses need verticutting twice a week and green is not beautiful.

In the search for perfection, we can only end up in one place (besides the funny farm) and that's on artificial greens—dead flat, with no fertilisers, no cutting, no greenkeepers and no boffins. Until that day comes, we can all go quietly potty playing the imperfect game of golf (well, it's the way I play anyway).

The list of venues for 1984 is: April 25—Stoke by Nayland with the AGM at 11am sharp; June 29—Bishop's Stortford; September 6—Bury St Edmunds; October 23—Frinton for a match against the captains. The last event will be staged in Norfolk on a date to be arranged.

Finally, we all wish John Moyce every success in his new venture, Town & Country Horticultural Suppliers. Give him as much support as he has given us over the past few years.

Mick Lathrope.

North West

The branch recently hosted an educational seminar at the Welsh College of Horticulture for the whole of the turf industry. Over 80 attended and there were representatives from more than 30 golf clubs and local authorities. It was particularly refreshing to see many greens chairmen and secretaries present including, in one club's case, the finance committee, chairman and professional.

Lectures were delivered by Jim Arthur, A. Patterson and W. Fisher of Lely Iseki. Our sincere thanks to these gentlemen for their assistance and providing us with an interesting day. Thanks are always due to G.M. Wright and the officials of the college for helping us to prepare for this event.

Will members please note that the South Wales match has been arranged for May 14 at Chester GC. Information will be given in the quarterly newsletter sent to all members.

Andrew Campbell.

Sussex

It is with sadness that I report the death of Jack Holland, who was assistant greenkeeper at Willingdon GC. Peter Negus, the head greenkeeper, said: "Not only was Jack a good worker, but a gentleman and a very nice bloke." Peter and all his staff will miss him very much.

As the winter lectures draw to a close thanks go to Richard Bishop from Ransomes for the January lecture and Brian Richardson from May & Baker (February).

The Student Of The Year Award went to Tony Patching from Hill Barn Golf Course, Worthing for successfully completing the two-year course Phase II Greenkeeping And Sports Turf Maintenance at Plumpton Agricultural College. Well done, Tony.

In Sussex, we are very fortunate in having a college specializing in greenkeeping/turf culture. Our thanks to Nick Rigden, the head of horticulture, for organising and encouraging clubs to send their trainees. Those greenkeepers and secretaries who are not aware of the training available can contact Nick on 0273 890454 for any information concerning greenkeeper training and education.

Also thanks to Bob Surridge of J.D. Ward. All members will have received a booklet outlining pension schemes available—very useful for those members not fortunate enough to have a club pension.

Golf Events for 1984: May 24—a match versus the secretaries; June 19—Holtye, 3pm start; July 11—Tilgate Forest, 3pm start; August 16—Mannings Heath, 3.30pm start and September 25—36-hole autumn tournament, Rowlands Castle.

The Sussex branch would like to welcome all new members especially those who have worked so hard to form new branches in all parts of the country. We look forward to seeing you all at Cambridge for *Golf Course '84*. Well, good golfing and remember that spring is just around the corner!

Further information about the branch can be obtained by phoning me on Crawley 25301.

C. Dryden.

**Turn to page 14 for
Surrey and Kent news...**

GET KUBOTA ON COURSE. ON YOUR COURSE.

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Surrey

The branch annual dinner and dance takes place at the Drift Golf and Country Club on April 28. Tickets are £8.50.

Golf fixtures include a spring meeting at Old Thorns Golf and Country Club on Tuesday, May 29, starting at 8.30am. Numbers are limited to 51 and the price is £12. The Cresta Cup will be played over the New Zealand Golf Course on Monday, June 11, commencing 3.30pm. The McMillan Tankard is an afternoon fixture at Sunningdale on Friday, August 3.

The Surrey branch meets Sussex at Tyrrells Wood GC on August 21 and The MacGillivray Shield will be played over Banstead Downs Golf Course on Monday, September 10 in the afternoon.

Finally, the autumn invitation meeting is at Guildford GC on October 11, starting at 8am with numbers restricted to 60.

The Surrey branch held its AGM recently at the New Zealand club and these officers were elected: president—J.Parker; vice president—D.Craig; chairman—A.Bradshaw (Malden GC); vice chairman—

D.Lenham (Sunningdale GC); secretary—K.MacNiven (Effingham GC, ☐ Bookham 54312 for entry forms); treasurer—A.Watson (Tyrrells Wood GC); committee—A.Armitage (Richmond Park GC), B.Moreton (Berkshire GC), M.Pearson (Royal Wimbledon GC), I.McMillan (Datchet GC) and R.Denning (Guildford GC).

FIRST CLAIM ONE I.G.G.A.'s INSURANCE SCHEME

When E.I.G.G.A. was formed, it was felt that, for their subscriptions, the members should have some sort of accident insurance cover, and the good sense of this decision has recently been born out by one of our members being the first to benefit from the insurance scheme.

Last year Mr John Roots, of the Mid-Kent Golf Club, sustained an injury to his leg whilst playing football, and was subsequently off work for some time.

He believed that his E.I.G.G.A. insurance cover extended only to accidents sustained at work, but decided to make enquiries anyway. The result was, that he made a successful claim on his insurance, and was extremely satisfied with the amount he received.

His E.I.G.G.A. insurance cover gave him that extra security when he most needed it. Our very best wishes to Mr Roots for a total recovery.

Kent

The joint EIGGA/STRI seminar held at Broome Park Golf And Country Club last month was a great success. Over 80 delegates attended, some coming from as far afield as Ipswich, Crawley and Worthing. Also present was Nick Rigden from Plumpton Agricultural College, who brought along a group of his students.

The splendour of the Broome Park mansion provided a perfect setting for an interesting day of lectures. Chairman Peter Wisbey introduced Gordon Macadam who started the day with an interesting talk on the complex subject of drainage. This was followed by Jeff Perris whose subject was golf green construction. Jeff talked us through the various stages of preparation and construction with the help of slides. I feel sure that some of the younger members of the audience will feel more confident about construction work on their courses having listened to these gentlemen.

After a short question and answer session, Dr Peter Hayes took the floor to talk on grasses with special reference to Poa Annua—the old

Continued on page 22...

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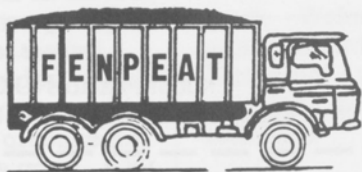
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Six months!! We've had our fourteenth out for nearly 2 years because of re-seeding!

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Viva Las Vegas!

Jack McMillan, Sunningdale course manager and EIGGA president, reports his trip to the spectacular GCSAA annual show and conference...

With my wife, I joined a party of delegates at London's Heathrow Airport bound for the Golf Course Superintendents' Association Of America's 55th International Turfgrass Conference And Show in Las Vegas. There was a sizeable British contingent when the various groups assembled in Las Vegas from several tours organised for greenkeepers, groundsmen and members of the turfgrass industry.

I had looked forward to the trip—my first visit to the United States. I must confess I am not keen on flying, but the flight via New York was very comfortable. After 16 hours travel, we were delighted to get to our hotel and a well-earned rest.

Las Vegas, Nevada is designed for the gambler and holidaymaker and is fast becoming one of America's main convention centres with 450 conventions a year. Las Vegas has a wide variety of entertainment and we were taken to several shows, including an amazing magic show that had disappearing lions and tigers! We also enjoyed a spectacular



This view of the Hoover Dam was captured during a tour by helicopter.

review and evening at Caesar's Palace, where the cabaret was headed by singer Diana Ross.

Thanks are due to all our generous hosts including Philip York, Archie Paterson and David Jenkins. We could not resist a visit to the gaming machines and although our fortunes fluctuated, I think we broke even by the end of the day.

We also drove out to the Hoover Dam, where we enjoyed a breathtaking flight over the lovely Lake Mead and the dam itself. This was definitely one of the highlights of the trip. The scenery was quite spectacular and unlike anything we had seen before, although it did seem that the pilot thought he was



A 'swish' entrance to the Flamingo Hilton, Las Vegas.

auditioning for a James Bond film!

I was very impressed by the sheer professionalism of the GCSAA who promote this annual event, which is specifically designed to meet the educational and professional requirements of the golf course manager and turfgrass maintenance industry.

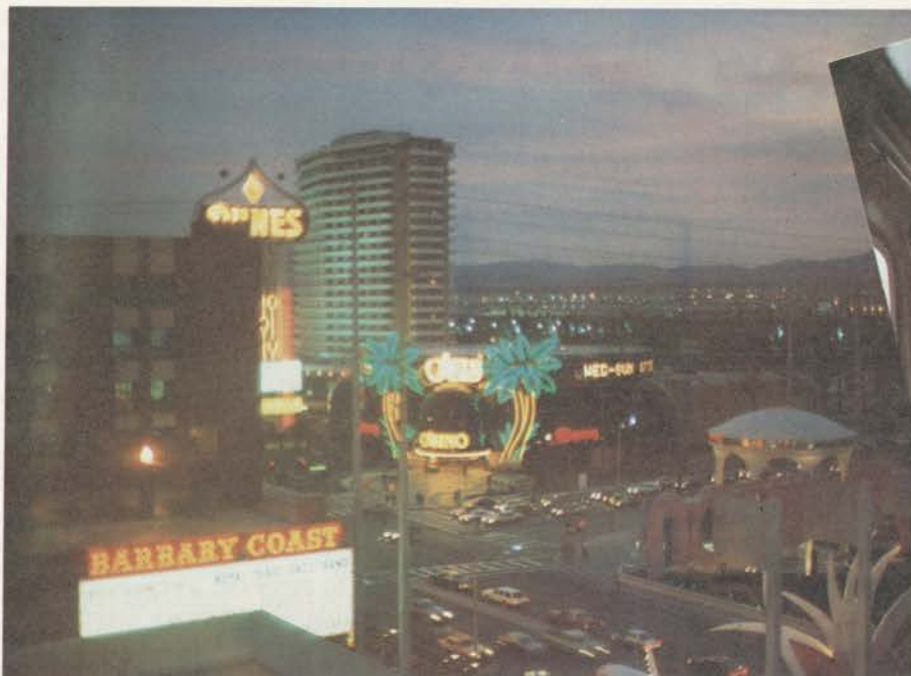
The GCSAA strive to cover a wide variety of subjects by inviting the best speakers available for this important occasion. There were 122 individual presentations, a total of 325 hours of continuous educational sessions and if delegates missed any, they can still hear the presentations as the week's programme is available on tape.

I was pleasantly surprised when attending the first lecture, by Geoffrey Cornish on the master architects. He talked about Willie Park and up flashed Sunningdale—it made me feel quite at home!

The show is not as extensive as



Activity in the hall.



Las Vegas By Night! An insomniac's delight, the place hardly stops...



One for the family album by Rita McMillan.



Windsor, but being indoors and aimed exclusively at the golf-course market makes it unique. It was nice to see the British stand with the Union Jack and EIGGA flags. It created great interest with American and Canadian visitors—wherever greenkeepers meet, they always have so much to share and talk about. I understand this is the first time a British stand has been included in the

show and hopefully it won't be the last.

In just 20 minutes, I found myself talking to superintendents who had left ten foot snow drifts at home and others from the desert regions and the Southern States who had all-year-round vigour in growth and winter temperatures that never drop below 60 degrees.



A toast to the show by Bob Osterman, GCSAA immediate past president.

The show attracted all the manufacturers we would normally see at Windsor and while I did not find anything revolutionary among the machinery, there were a number of improvements and additional facilities that will be available to us in this country in the near future.

I left the show with the impression that we are going to hear more from the Japanese in the manufacture of machinery quite soon.

For any greenkeeper on a visit abroad, a trip to a golf course is a must. Gary Myers, course superintendent at the Desert Inn Golf and Country Club, kindly arranged a visit to his course for Gerry Coley and myself. The course measures 7,089 yards from the blue tees and with its many large lakes and lush green presentation, I could hardly believe I was in the middle of the Nevada desert.

The greens are of a sand structure and the grasses are bermudagrass oversown with ryegrass, which gives them constant colour and vigour. The ryegrass is dominant in winter and summer. When temperatures exceed 100 degrees, the bermudagrass comes into its own. Gary said he had used about 40 tons of ryegrass seed the previous year.

Some interesting facts for comparison are: aeration—four passes per year; staff—22 full-time; rounds of golf—65,000 a year and a budget of \$1,000,000. At the time of our visit, greens were being cut at three sixteenths of an inch and the pace as read on a stimpmeter was six foot. Desert Inn is on the USPGA tour and during an event, the height of cut is dropped to a tight eighth and the pace of the greens moves up to eight feet on the meter.

On the question of pace, it was most interesting to talk to William Bengeyfield, western director of the USGA Greens Section, who expressed the view that seven to

Continued on page 20...



Trust your own eyes...

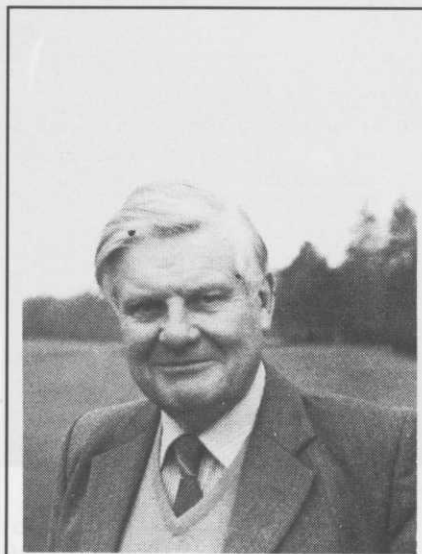
The theme of this concluding article, triggered by questions posed by younger greenkeepers, is based on what is often the first thing tackled in greenkeeping training—namely, the soil itself. Sadly, many lecturers who admit to limited ability on grass identification feel they know all there is to know about soils, basing their teaching on standards applicable to growing agricultural or horticultural crops.

One of the biggest sources of trouble in greenkeeping is reliance on soil analysis as an end in itself. Even in my agricultural advisory days, I used to preach that the quickest way to loose money in cropping was to chase a theoretical standard for phosphate, potash (and lime), instead of feeding for the crop. Some farmers loved to have soil analyses carried out on every field every year and related their manurial programme to the annual results. An awful lot of fertiliser went straight to the drains, partly because the crop concerned did not need it and partly because it was leached out, before it could be absorbed.

The same thing applies in greenkeeping, with chemical and physical analyses of soils. I do not decry them totally, but they really only confirm what visual observation should indicate to any reasonably experienced eye and, if an abnormal result shows up, my first instinct is to assume the sampling was wrong!

Where the theorists go wrong is in failing to realise two things. First, we want 'poor' soil conditions chemically, though not physically, and, second, there is no such thing as an ideal pH, phosphate or potash figure.

To deal with the chemical side first, there is now general acceptance by users and suppliers that fine turf needs no phosphate or potash—in fertiliser form, anyway—and that, on the whole, acid soil conditions are desirable. Some of us knew it nearly 40 years ago and it has taken a long time for facts so well supplied by research, as well as experience, to be agreed. I expect before long some pundit will emerge who will decry it all just to be different for difference sake but, at the moment, there is no argument.



By Jim Arthur

Of course, as with all black and white statements, this needs to be modified in detail, but if we want to encourage the finer-textured fescues and bents and discourage annual meadow grass, we must find out what one likes and the other dislikes.

Though these fine grasses grow happily in such widely different environments as arid dunes and tidally-flooded salt marshes, alkaline downs and limestone heaths, as well as acid sandy heathland or moorland and on all soils from pure sands to heavy clays, there are, however, two basic factors common to all these widely different ecologies. These are an uncompacted, well-structured, free-draining soil and a very low level of plant foods, especially phosphate.

The pH does not matter and, in any case, altering it from its natural level can be expensive or have undesirable side effects. Acidity locks up phosphates especially, but it also improves the physical structure of heavy soils by flocculating the finest particles. It can, of course, be induced quickly by applying sulphur or more slowly by the use of acidic reacting fertilisers, but this is of primary importance in order to restore conditions reversed by some stupid action, such as liming acid land just because it is acid and thus destroying one of that course's invaluable assets—fine, wiry, worm-free turf. It

is, however, possible to grow fine turf on very alkaline soils—for instance, sandy links—if there are no earthworms because there isn't food for them.

If, however, we alter any aspect of the chemical or physical characteristics of a soil, then we alter its grass cover, for good or bad. (It is usually quicker and easier to alter it for the worse!)

It seems to me to be rather a waste of time to carry out a repeated series of soil analyses on every green when we can well guess that the phosphate level will be too high anyway and the potash is unimportant—high levels being known to depress fine fescues as high phosphate levels favour annual meadow grass. It is for this reason that, in my view, autumn fertilisers are a big mistake. They only encourage disease, not fine grasses.

My experience is confirmed by Bingley's surveys of its analysis results—in less than five per cent of all soil analyses was the phosphate low enough (below 60 ppm) not to actively encourage annual meadow grass. Fine grasses are happy at 10 ppm! I have found greens at over 600 ppm!

What we must always do is to relate the quality of, say, a green with its soil analyses. All too often, the best greens show the worst manurial 'deficiencies'—but we are, of course, comparing several variables, physical as well as chemical, so we must beware of rash deductions.

Over-stressing the importance of chemical soil analyses in the past has, in fact, been a prime cause of annual meadow grass invasion. It is sometimes as difficult for the seller as the buyer to accept that a fertiliser with an analysis of 8:0:0 is both more expensive and far better for fine turf than, say, one of 10:15:10. But, what matters, of course, is that such a pure nitrogen fertiliser must be compounded with a high proportion of slow release organic nitrogen in the form of dried blood and fine hoof and horn meal, where the release is dependent on the activities of soil micro-organisms rather than slow solubility.

Obsession with fractional analyses—that is, the percentages of any soil divided into particle size groups—can lead to some false assumptions. In any case, such

analyses only confirm what an experienced man can assess by running the soil between fingers and thumb! That remark will, I know, arouse the ire of soil chemists but, in my book, they are equivalent to accountants, useful servants, but disastrous masters.

There is an old business axiom which advises that an accountant should never be put in charge of running any business—all he will do is concentrate on balancing the books and will forget about making profits. Some chemists are so obsessed with comparisons against some quite theoretical stands, that they never look at the grass itself. What is the point of having well structured soils if other management—for instance, manurial—produces 100 per cent annual meadow grass greens and thatch?

This, really, is the first lesson in greenkeeping—that everything divides between those who fight, with every method at their disposal, the invasion or even presence of annual meadow grass and those who, at best, tolerate this wretched weed grass or feel they can do nothing about it or, worse still, who actively encourage it, consciously or unconsciously, by feeding and watering to produce tarted-up greens for tournaments, caring little about (or perhaps being incapable of altering) the disastrous state of such greens once growth ceases.

They earn a short-lived reputation among unthinking young professionals and whoever heard one of them plead for 365-days-a-year excellence, especially if they are presented with holding, easy paced, very true greens for the week of their tournament.

The game is won on the green and it should be the best putters, with the skill to read fast contoured greens, who come out on top. With slow

greens, all you need is strength and direction and nuances about borrows are subtleties that never come into contention.

It is understandably confusing to young thinking greenkeepers, who listen to the contrasting remarks of television commentaries, misguided tournament professionals, the agriculturally-biased teachings of too many college lecturers teaching to a bad syllabus and the pleas of those striving to retain and improve the old standards all saying different things. They must choose, but if they choose

**They may pay for four months
praise with eight months
of complaints...**

annual meadow grass, they will never sleep easily at night and may pay for four months praise with eight months of complaints. They must be prepared for a migratory life since, sooner or later, disaster will strike and they will inevitably be blamed.

Of course, we need well-structured, free-draining soils, but we are not going to make them so by analyses, nor by miracle cures, which claim to produce free-draining soils without the aid of mechanical aeration. With present intensive levels of play causing gross surface compaction, routine remedial mechanical measures will be needed, whatever the soil and however well it meets some theoretical standards of fractional analyses. Even 'perfect' sands will pack down with traffic and hold water. They need structuring with humus. Silts and clays in which sand is mixed can go down like concrete.

Perhaps the message that may sum up what greenkeeping is all about is to think deeply before acting; to avoid that all too common error 'correct observations but wrong deduction'

and to realise that, while methods may vary, principles never do and never have and if we want the traditional grasses that produced our traditionally best courses, then we must treat them on traditional lines.

Greenkeeping has become a highly specialised technical subject, with the development of a specific cure for every weed, disease or pest problem. These are excellent aids to management, but sound, basic management will almost certainly make routine corrective measures unnecessary.

Chronic disease is certainly a sign of managerial errors. Highly expensive and repeated deworming will have to be carried out for years after rash liming or slugging of fairways.

Badly designed and grossly over-used pop-up systems were a major cause of thatch in the past decade—admittedly primarily because poor golfers demanded holding greens and managements were not strong enough to refuse them. Equally, many other problems could be laid at the door of management so weak that it gave in to every demand by players. "Can't you leave the greens alone for five minutes?" is still an all-too-common complaint, to which the only answer is: "Yes, certainly, if you stop playing on them!"

All this opposed advice and opinion cannot but be confusing to those starting on their road to top greenkeeping positions, but all I can plead is for them to think things out from first principles, to work with, not against, nature, and to realise that the biggest enemy of golf greenkeeping is the golfer and his ill-effects are predictably going to increase every year, not only in terms of extra play, but because necessarily there will be far more poor golfers about and they will all demand greens and fairways to flatter their game, instead of trying to improve it.

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eight feet was the general average across the country.

I left Desert Inn thinking Gary does a first-class job. It is, of course, difficult to explain to American golf-course superintendents about our lovely links and acid heaths, where grass is dormant for six months of the year and we play golf 365 days of the year. Whoever said greenkeeping is the same the world over?

John Schilling and James Prusa, executive and associate directors of the GCSAA, invited us to the show banquet and, as president of EIGGA, I was afforded a seat on the dias with the honoured guests. Stars of the show were Arnold Palmer and Bob Hope. Palmer presented The Old Tom Morris Award to Hope for services to the game. Palmer made an excellent speech and Hope told some wonderful, if irreverent, stories in reply.

This was followed by officers of the GCSAA toasting themselves and the association with the SIGGA whisky the last team of visiting Scots presented. I promised to tell Walter Woods that the stock was running low—a promise I have duly carried out! The evening ended with the '50s and '60s cabaret, which was enjoyed by the 1,200 guests.

Viva Las Vegas! Continued...



'Marshall' McMillan with his side-kick Howard Swan.



The show's British Booth attracted a great deal of interest. Here, David Jenkins of Charterhouse Turf Machinery and Jack McMillan man the stand.

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