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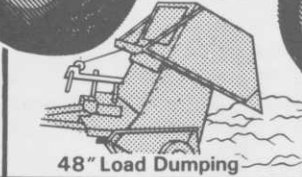
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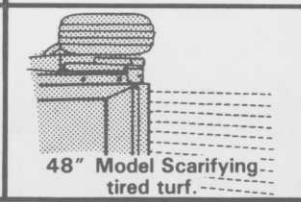
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This Issue

June 1984

Front cover: Steetley Minerals has launched two ranges of grass seed. Gold Key and Silver Key offer a mixture and blend for all sports, recreation and amenity purposes.

The Gold Key range comprises two fine textured mixtures, one turf type perennial blend and a multi-purpose mixture containing dwarf ryegrasses. All components are selected only from highly rated and outstanding varieties balanced to ensure top flight value and performance.

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Full details from Steetley Minerals, Vitax Department, Liverpool Road North, Burscough, Nr Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 0SB. ☎ 0704 893311.

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Derek Edwards is the managing director of Rolawn (Turf Growers)

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Make Merseyside A Must This Summer!

This issue's In My Opinion article (see page 6) features Derek Edwards of Rolawn. Derek recently attended the official opening by Her Majesty, The Queen, of the International Garden Festival at Liverpool.

"What a spectacle! There are over 30 theme gardens ranging from a *Blue Peter* Garden designed by a 14-year-old boy, a Witches Garden and a Jam Garden depicting giant toppled jam jars with large areas of red pansies giving the spilt jam effect. For the more serious minded, there are over 20 international landscapes including contributions from China, Japan, Holland, Egypt and Austria to name a few of the outstanding arrangements," Derek said.

"In addition to the impressive domed Festival Hall, I visited the water park, marine esplanade, a Grass Garden (in which I could not identify a single grass species!), a model forest, the BBC's 'Garden of Memorabilia' and, generally, a horticultural extravaganza on a scale I have never witnessed before."

Standing in the centre of the 250 acre site on the River Mersey across from Cammell Laird's shipyard, Derek found it difficult to appreciate that, just two years before, the whole area was derelict land, devoid of any greenery—in short, a tip.

Born out of the Toxteth riots in 1981, the final go-ahead for this Herculeaneum (the name of the old dock) project was given to the Merseyside Development Corporation by the Secretary of State for the Environment in May 1982. It has cost £12.5m to construct, of which, surprisingly, only £1.5m has been spent on the actual landscaping—most was gobbled up in civil engineering works.

"They are expecting three million visitors by the time the exhibition closes in October after which parts of the site will be sold off to private developers, while the Festival Hall will be retained for public use.

"This is the first International Garden Festival of its type in this country and is a must for all to visit," Derek added.



Derek Edwards (left) is pictured with Rolawn chairman Ken Dawson (right) and company secretary J. Gibson.



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In·My·Opinion

Derek Edwards

Derek Edwards is managing director of
Rolawn (Turf Growers)

WE ARE fortunate to be part of an industry that is expanding during a period when many of our basic industries are in steep decline. I suppose the best example of this came with the move from Motspur Park to Windsor of the Institute Of Groundsmanship international exhibition in 1981.

Presumably, the IOG was increasingly under pressure during the '70s to find more exhibition space and was able to predict the massive increase in exhibitors and visitors to the show.

There is a greater awareness that a well organised, professional sports turf and leisure industry does exist in this country. Indeed, the industry is probably the best in the world.

As far as our greenkeepers and groundsmen are concerned, they must benefit from this progress. Advanced maintenance equipment and materials, access to advice in publications, exhibitions and seminars, as well as the number of advisory services now being offered, all combine to further improve sports and leisure areas.

In my opinion, the greatest advances have been in education. Not only have horticultural colleges been running day-release and full-time greenkeeping courses for some time, but we also have an increasing number of seminars and training programmes organised by various trade associations.

Most notable perhaps is the educational programme that started just a year ago and which attracted a tremendous attendance to *Golf Course '84* at Cambridge and not just from the trade which, hitherto, dominated the attendance at many such events.

In my particular business, growing specialised mature turf, a number of advances have been made that, hopefully, will benefit everyone. We are now producing a 20/80 bent/fescue turf on a sterilised, sandy medium, which is ideally suitable for green renovation or, indeed, for use in the construction of new greens—either all



sand or conventionally built.

I am mindful of those who are against turfing, particularly for fine turf areas such as golf and bowling greens, and everything is being done to grow turf in its most acceptable form for the non-converted. Ideally, turf for golf green construction needs to be mature, evenly cut, grown on a stone free sandy/loam soil, free from all broadleaf weed and rogue grasses, dense in sward, mown down to approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ in and, most importantly, should be laid within 24 hours of harvesting.

Once established, preferably over the winter months, the sward can be gradually reduced in height, scarified and top-dressed to produce a good playing surface, within approximately nine months, assuming that the turf is laid during early to mid-autumn. It is our experience that a great deal of time and effort can be saved in creating a new green with the use of correct mature turf.

Due to the greater awareness of

grass seed cultivars, we now make a point of stating the varieties employed in our mixture. I am somewhat surprised that it has taken the industry such a long time to recognise the differences and be more discerning about its choice of cultivars. There can be vast differences in characteristics in any single specie. Take smooth stalked meadowgrass (*Poa Pratensis*) for example. With something like 25 cultivars being produced, there are only about a quarter of them that, in my opinion, are any good for use on sports turf areas and only a few that are fine textured and attractive all the year round.

When selecting cultivars for our R1 bent/fescue turf, we look for speed of maturity, fineness of leaf, compactness of mature sward, disease resistance and all-year-round colour and appearance. We do not simply take the plant breeder's opinion, but look at the STRI ratings (a turf grass booklet is produced annually) to make sure that the Bingley trials confirm our assessments. We are also making full use of some of the exceptionally good varieties being produced in Holland.

I do feel, however, that many of the problems experienced in turf management have never been fully resolved. The weed grass *Poa annua* is still around in abundance. Unless you are fortunate to live in one of the few *poa* free environments in this country, I feel the only successful way to create a weed free sward is to sow completely pure seed into a sterilised medium.

Of course, there is nothing new about this theory. In 1260, a Dominican monk used to sterilise his soils with boiling water prior to planting. Keeping *Poa annua* out of your sward is the main difficulty and, with all our advisory services, chemicals, machinery, etc, we still seem unable to master it.

I believe it was Dr Peter Hayes of the STRI who, writing in *Greenkeeper* last August, stated that many of the theories expounded about turf culture

Continued on page 9...

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London

The spring meeting was held courtesy of Aldenham Golf Club, which was a credit to Alec, Graham and Jeff. Dinner was up to Aldenham's usual high standard in the hands of its capable staff.

A big thank you goes to Mr Thompson and his secretary for retrieving the first prize in time for the presentation!

Many thanks also to Rigby Taylor, Patisson and David Craig for donating prizes. The winners were: 38 points—D. MacIndoe; 37 points—A. Green, J. Robertson and N. Bennett.

Tommy and I recently attended the Surrey branch dinner-dance, which was a roaring success. Well done, Surrey, and book your tickets for next year, please!

David MacIndoe.

East Anglia

Not a good start to the year I'm afraid as I lost the notes of our meeting at Stoke-By-Nayland, so please accept my apologies if I omit your name from this report.

The AGM was a quick and efficient affair with all officers being re-elected. I must single out secretary/treasurer Steve Noye for the exceptional way in which he handles our affairs. He is a credit to us and long may he wish to stay.

Thanks must go to Stoke-By-Nayland for looking after us so well. It really was a super day. Both the inside and outside staff headed by Kevin King did a wonderful job. It has been a bad spring for us all, but it's still nice to see that you're not the only one with a 'lively' course.

Over 80 turned up and the prizes (or

Obituary

It has been reported that Mr J. Howe of Bremhill Park Golf Club, Swindon, Wiltshire died of a heart attack recently. The association's sympathies are extended to his family.



Golf Course '84 - All the participating Associations get together.

those I can remember) went to: Richard Smith, who won the 0-18 section and the Jacobsen Shield with 33 points; Steve Freestone, who won the 18-28 section and the Atco Cup with 44; Roger Plummer and Jeff Fayers were in there somewhere and Mark Spooner declined the guest prize because of his professional status. Other than that, I don't know!

However, I do know it was an exceptional meal in very good company and surroundings.

The next venue is Bishop's Stortford on Friday, June 29. See you there.

Mick Lathrope.

Surrey

What a great dinner-dance—the best yet! The Drift proved to be a super venue, looking out on to the 18th green. Tables were arranged in sixes, eights and tens, which kept the atmosphere warm and friendly. The food was superb with a choice of starters, three different main courses

and a variety of sweets from the trolley.

During the evening, the captain of the Drift Mr C. Lody presented the branch with a trophy to be played for annually between Surrey and Sussex for which the branch is very grateful. The raffle was well-supported and our thanks go to the trade for their generous support with many of the prizes.

The disco played on until the early hours with hardly anyone leaving until after lam.

A final word to Chris, our host at the Drift. Many thanks for a truly great night and I am sure I speak for everybody who attended. Roll on next year!

Bert Watson.

North West

The North West branch held its first AGM in March. Although the number of members present was small, some very constructive ideas were given for the committee to work on during

the next year. Full copies of the minutes are available to members.

The turnout in April at Heswall Golf Club, Merseyside was much better—more than 80. This number was boosted by another 70 guests of SISIS, all of whom helped get our first spring tournament off to a fine start. As members may appreciate, a lot of hard work goes into organising such events and, therefore, thanks are due to Terry Adamson and Bill Lawson. Bill had a particularly demanding task on the day, preparing the course and handling all the normal duties of a chairman.

The committee wishes to thank SISIS and Maelors for their tournament sponsorship and particularly Walter Briggs of SISIS for his hard work on the branch's behalf throughout the year.

The prize table, as usual, was of an excellent standard, which again goes to show how much support we receive from our trade members.

First prize winners were: Paul Pearse—assistants' trophy presented by G.Cox, professional at Rhuddlan GC; Terry Adamson—shield donated by Walter Briggs, and Francis Cripps of Abergele GC, who won a shield donated by Maelors. The many more prize winners are too numerous to mention.

Thanks go, as always, to our hosts and their staff who made a valuable contribution to the smooth running of things, making the event such a success.

Finally, may I inform members that there is absolutely no truth in the rumour that Bill (Wm.) Lawson only donates William Lawson's Scotch Whisky as a prize because he receives a generous discount. In fact, he gets it for nothing!

Andrew Campbell.

Kent

The spring tournament that was to be held in May was cancelled, but at North Foreland on June 20 we will play for the shield usually contested in April/May.

The golf will be followed by a lecture on first aid for minor injuries and correct procedures in the event of something more serious. If you can't make the golf, please try to attend the lecture at 7.30pm.

The Kent branch would like to welcome Steve Richardson and Gordon Farrington. Steve has taken charge at Cob Tree Manor Golf Club, constructed by Golf Landscapes for Maidstone Council and due to open in late summer. Gordon replaces Mike Smith as head greenkeeper at Littlestone. Good luck also to my first assistant Steve Suttle who has taken over as headman at Sene Valley GC near Folkestone.

Following the undoubted success of the EIGGA/STRI seminar at Broome Park in March, we are looking to arrange something along the same lines for the autumn. Members might like to know of a one-day seminar arranged by the Sussex branch and to be held at Plumpton College where the speakers will be Martyn Jones and George Shiels.

A lecture by Dr Bryn Green of Wye College is being arranged at Chestfield GC in September.

Two other forthcoming events with dates to be finalised will be a trip to Lely Iseki at Cambridge arranged by Hugh Page (Sussex) and a machinery class held by Paice & Son in conjunction with Ransomes.

The autumn golf meeting will be at Canterbury GC on October 4.

Peter Wisbey.

In·My·Opinion Continued...

in the 1930s are still relevant today. I am sure he is right. Are our sports and grass areas really that much better than they were 50 years ago? I suppose that without control of the main elements, and let us hope that day never comes, we will only ever be able to control the fine tuning.

Whether it be a new grass variety, chemical or piece of machinery, I find that whatever new techniques are adopted—and we have a full-time technical manager constantly experimenting with new systems—we are still at the mercy of the basic elements.

I can remember producing some fine mature turf by our 'standard' production method in just over seven months. Normally, the process takes around 18 months and sometimes turf will not harvest after two years. Yet, that year, with that particular turf, the elements were obviously on our side, illustrating the degree of influence weather can play on the speed of establishment.

With our turf production nurseries now totalling about 1,000 acres throughout the UK and having sold well over that quantity since our business started (much of which has gone for golf course use), I can confidently say that, in our small sector of the industry, all is well and growing.

I am convinced that there is a tremendous future for us all in the business of growing and maintaining grass, not only here but in Europe generally where the industry is still in its infancy.

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Planning to achieve course objectives

Planning involves the development by the head greenkeeper of a realistic work programme that will ensure the successful accomplishment of management objectives for the course. Proper planning of maintenance and construction activities reduces the number of unexpected emergency problems. On any course, there is always something more that needs to be done or improvements made. One of the advantages of long-range planning is that you put down on paper the areas that require attention, regardless of magnitude, so they can eventually be included in a priority list. It has to be recognised that a perfect course does not exist and not all improvements can be accomplished. Time and money will be key factors in determining what can be done. After deciding to develop a comprehensive plan, there are some definite steps I would suggest.

By J.S. Philp, Assistant Links
Supervisor, St Andrews Golf Courses

You Must Become Totally Familiar With The Course Itself

This involves an initial assessment of the course, which is best done by touring the course alone noting down everything that does not look right and drawing small sketches of the area. You may want to formulate solutions to the problem at this time or think over corrective measures.

Begin A Thorough Examination Of All Available Records Again Making Notes On Every Aspect

Even if you are totally familiar with the situation, a new listing of major maintenance procedures will help freshen them in your memory or cause you to conclude there are better ways to accomplish your goals.

Seek Local Knowledge

Talk to as many people as possible, including staff or others who are knowledgeable about the course's maintenance history. With their firsthand experience, your staff may be able to make a valuable contribution and their inclusion can generate pride in being a part of the planning process. This will bring out any areas you have overlooked or are not immediately apparent.

Take Your Information To Your Immediate Superior

Arrange a tour of the course with the greens convener. Point out what you have concluded and suggest the steps you feel are required. Do not overlook the advantage of having a second opinion. He may have seen something you did not. Remember, you are trying to sell your concept of a long-range plan, so encourage your convener's participation. His input may be valuable as he may have in mind improvements or alterations that have been discussed for some time, but never made an official part of course development policy.

With All The Relevant Information It's Time To Go To The Drawing Board

You can now begin to apply solutions to each hole individually in a graphic way. Devise a key to keep all operations consistently marked.

Staffing Levels

The actual work will be done by the greens staff, except for major developments, so it is important to

make superiors fully aware of the necessity to maintain adequate levels of staffing. Work-force considerations are essential before making project recommendations.

Costs

Material cost estimates for particular projects will have to be evaluated. This may be done in conjunction with the secretary and/or greens convener, if necessary, contacting suppliers and so forth.

Establishing Priorities

You probably will not be the individual who finally determines the priorities, although you should have some major input into the final decision making process. It is virtually impossible to provide you with exact guidelines for establishing priorities, but some of the general areas to consider include the safety of golfers and workers. If there are areas that may cause an accident, they should be dealt with first. Playability of the course is also important—that's our reason for existence. We must provide a highly playable course, or we may not have enough golfers to pay for overheads. The course is your club's biggest asset and needs to be

well-maintained, enjoyable to play and of interesting character to attract and bring back the customers. Costs, in terms of pounds and time, must also receive strong consideration in the priority establishment scheme. There will be projects that take a great deal of time but few pounds and vice versa. Finally, the time of year that a certain project can best be accomplished is another factor. For example, some landscaping requires autumn planting, while other areas will require planting in the spring. The majority of projects are undertaken 'out of season'—that is, from October to March. A short-range, or winter programme, can be drawn up, involving a number of priorities from the long-range plan, but as the weather is obviously a critical factor during this period, it is difficult to forecast project completion dates.

Plan Term

Four or five years is about the longest period for which you would want to prepare a plan, but keep in mind that every year you should add another year and, so, always be five years ahead. If you try to extend the plan beyond five years, the turnover of committee members would be too great and, in any case, it is difficult to envisage a plan beyond five years. In addition to establishing priorities, the material you have gathered has other uses.

Golfer Public Relations

Whenever a golfer complains about a problem area on the course, you can refer to the plan and say you are aware of the problem and that it is planned for correction in the long-range plan. If you do not have a planned solution, the golfer could tell other members that you did not know a problem existed. Also, photocopy the plans for a particular hole or area when you are about ready to work on it and post them on the club noticeboard. This tells the golfer you are going to remedy a situation that has been causing problems and he won't be surprised to see men and equipment or excavations in the area. In all likelihood, he will be pleased to see you are spending his money to improve the course and will more readily accept interruptions to his game.

Staff Relations And Instructions

Another advantage of these plans is the ease with which you can give directions to staff. Referring to the plan, they can see and you can outline