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## **Reflections from The Bridge Of Sighs**

ONE factor for success clearly emerged from experiences at *Golf Course* '84—namely, audience participation. By far the most successful talks were those where adequate time was given for discussion.

In no way do I wish to be thought less than welcoming to the American visitors—indeed, their contributions were practised, competent and often very entertaining—but totally irrelevant to UK greenkeeping.

It was not just the vast difference in budgets—slides of some 14 triplex mowers mowing in echelon across fairways, echoing combine harvesters in limitless prairies are impressive, but unreal! Neither was it the hordes of pests and diseases, which have to be tackled with speed and determination if disaster is not to overtake the courses, but their basic greenkeeping, which is, to my mind, quite wrong for us.

It seems geared to producing more lush conditions than we would tolerate or could afford and though there is a swing towards 'Scottish' greenkeeping—i.e. a more austere, less wall-to-wall presentation—this is the exception rather than the rule and I suspect it is motivated more by financial cramps than full appreciation of traditional greenkeeping.

Perhaps the most telling US question (?)—really a statement—was the one suggesting that a pH of 6.2 was an essential aim in controlling thatch. It may be in the States, but it certainly is not here! We have excellent thatch-free greens from pH 4.5 to 8.5 and awful thatchy bogs in the same range.

Our ideas of regular routine deep aeration must seem as strange to American superintendents as their ideas of intensive aeration (twice a year with shallow hollow tining) is to me!

One problem of seminars is that statements are made by pundits which are never publicly challenged. I welcome being challenged as it gives another opportunity for discussion and explanation!

A brave attempt was made to defend annual meadow grass greens by Alan McDougall (Eastwood GC). I see his problems and do not at all disagree with him that if he manages his annual meadow grass greens properly by deep aeration (when it suits him, not on a set 'every Monday morning' routine), using limited irrigation and nitrogenous fertilisers,

By Jim Arthur

he will get quite good greens, but what he does not yet realise is that he will slowly, but surely, get Agrostis greens!

No-one ever wants to see scarred and devastated greens in the interests of a rapid change over in grass type. I have never said 'no water and no fertiliser'. But I am vulnerable to those who see my reports at another club and think that, irrespective of different conditions, they can adopt an identical programme with instant success!

However, I would contest one statement made at *Golf Course* '84—that all research is valuable. This certainly needs qualifying! Even if such research is wrong, it may be helpful in clarifying issues, but the problem lies not with the research, but in its application and interpretation.

Comments that research proves the best way to use pop-ups is to water heavily once a week and to let the greens dry out are almost criminally irresponsible. How can any normal green take such monsoon type applications of say 20 to 30 minutes at one flood? How can a course be presented with soaking bogs one day, progressively drying out to rock hard conditions by the end of the week? How can such greens ever be made permeable enough, once they have got so dry, to take even modest

watering without massive run off and surface waterlogged conditions and, so, thatch? How do you syringe greens "for 30 seconds" with popups? It needs probably two or three minutes to ensure a complete coverage on a normal cycle! Practical greenkeepers will share my derision of such research!

We are also told that the only way to get soils uniformly wet is to saturate them. What about aeration and detergents? Far too little mention was made of the fact that sound greenkeeping is not based on some narrow aspects of research into one factor only, but must be an interrelated study of everything. To talk of irrigation without mentioning aeration is, at least, irresponsible.

Too many American influenced 'authorities' seem to think all our problems can be solved by installing a computer and too few accept that the best computer exists between most people's ears!

However, it was an excellently run conference, in superb surroundings and with impeccable organisation, even extending to the weather. As always, it is in the discussion between 'lectures' that most is gained. Perhaps too much was crowded into too short a space of time and too little time allowed for questions and answers, but the good outweighed the bad and we can always learn from such experiences.

Whatever else, I felt it was interesting and entertaining, but sometimes less than related to our UK problems.



SIGGA's Alan McDougall expressed an acceptance of annual meadow grass.

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#### **Notebook**

#### People, Places, Products

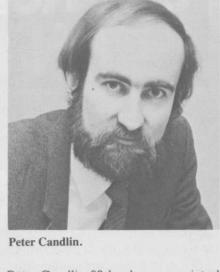
Over 200 dealers and customers from all over the UK attended two open days in Surrey recently to see the range of equipment handled by Charterhouse Turf Machinery. The occasion marked the company's first anniversary and the opening of its new premises in Milford.

On show were the Rolawn Power 5 gang mower, the Verti-Drain, Vredo Seeders, Team Sprayers, the Morrison Triplex and a new range of Top Dressers.

David Jenkins, managing director of Charterhouse Turf Machinery, said sales so far this year, particularly of the Rolawn and Verti-Drain, meant that the company was certain to exceed the turnover target set when the company was formed in February 1983.

"This is not only encouraging news for Charterhouse Turf Machinery," David said. "It is good news for the whole amenity market because it reflects what we believe to be a continuing priority given to recreational needs, despite cutbacks. We also like to think it reflects the cost-effectiveness of our two major lines."

The demonstrations took place near Guildford at Rolawn's southeastern production base for its cultivated turf products.



Peter Candlin, 32, has been appointed inventory manager for Charterhouse Turf Machinery. Peter will be responsible for the company's spare parts same-day despatch service, as well as administration and order processing.

Alan Hewitt, 33, has joined Supaturf and will cover the area around his Hatfield, Doncaster home. Alan's interest in golf developed during 16 years in the RAF, which included two tours in Germany where he helped build and maintain a nine-hole course. He can be contacted on Doncaster (0302) 845765.



Alan Hewitt.

Richard Lawrence, formerly marketing manager of Rigby Taylor, has been appointed a director of the company with full responsibility for marketing and, in particular, Rigby Taylor's range of Mascot products.



The Mayor of Godalming cuts the ribbon on Charterhouse Turf Machinery's open day. David Jenkins is also pictured.

Steetley Minerals, manufacturer and distributor of the Key Range of fertilisers, is organising and sponsoring a golf tournament at Clevedon GC, Avon on Thursday, May 10.

Although the competition is limited to members of the BGGA sections in Devon and Cornwall, the south coast, the south west and Wales, it is a pilot scheme for a national contest in 1985 which will be open to all members of EIGGA and SIGGA, as well as the BGGA.

The 18-hole Stableford competition will be a team event, with six

members from each section forming the four teams. Two members will have a one to nine handicap, two a handicap of 10-18 and two a handicap of 19 plus. The best five of six cards will be the team trophy winner.

Steetley's Key distributor in Bristol, David Brown and Son Seeds, will present a special trophy to the best single card recorded.

The competition has been organised by Steetley in conjunction with Mark White (secretary) and Barry Reeves (head greenkeeper) of Clevedon GC.

Over 60 greenkeepers, groundsmen and forestry workers attended a chainsaw clinic held by Newton Mowers in Griffin Park, Porthcawl recently. Martin Davis of Sachs Dolmar chainsaws spoke on the development of his company's saws and the health and safety guidelines regarding chainsaws.

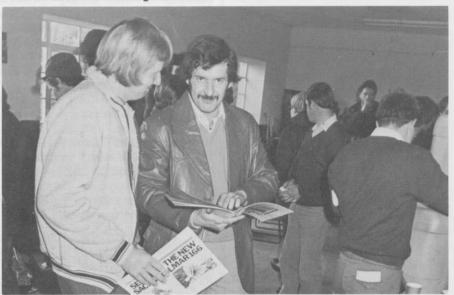
Mike Patton of Hemming and Wood

discussed chain maintenance and the prevention of 'kick back' in chainsaws.

From over 50 competition entries, only Ken Russell of Mid Glamorgan County Council managed to get all the correct answers. He was presented with a watch donated by Sachs Dolmar.

Huxleys Grass Machinery has appointed C. Tolliday & Son of Kings Road, Newnham, Cambridge as area dealer for its Cushman. Rover and Huxley professional equipment ranges in East Anglia. A member of the Kingston House Mowers Group of Harpenden, Herts since 1968, C. Tolliday & Son will now be supplying and servicing the Cushman Threewheel and Four-wheel Trucksters for all-season transport and turf maintenance duties, the Royer range of mobile soil, compost and peat processors and Huxley grass and turf care implements designed for use with the Turf Trucksters. Tolliday will also handle the new Huxley TR66 Hydraulic Reel Mower for compact tractors.

E.J. Tong retail of Spilsby, Lincolnshire is the appointed dealer for Toro commercial products together with Lely Iseki. Gibsons of Kirkham, covering Cumbria and Lancashire with a branch in Clitheroe and previously offering Jacobson, is now a Toro commercial dealer also offering the Lely Iseki range of tractors.



John Priddle (right) of Newton Mowers talks to Terry Clease, head greenkeeper at Cardiff GC.





Huard Parks and Garden Equipment of France has appointed Lely Import of St Neots to direct marketing and sales throughout the dealer trade in the UK and Eire. The vast Huard product range complements all Japanese compact tractors. For example, there is the reversible plough, rotary hoe and flail mower, as well as slashers, spring time cultivators, tool bar and log splitters.

A new compound fertilizer—SHL 8 has been added to the range of specialist fertilisers manufactured and marketed by Sinclair Horticulture and Leisure. It is designed to be equally effective when used as a general purpose fertliser or in the making of composts.

This addition to the company's professional range of products has a formulation of eleven nutrients, which include six trace elements added in a fritted form. This allows the nutrients to be released over a controlled period of time, making sure they are available as the plant requires.

SHL 8 is available in 25kg bags from all leading wholesalers.

details from Sinclair Horticulture and Leisure, Wigford House, Brayford Pool, Lincoln LN5 7BL. Ø Lincoln (0522) 37561.

The new Verti-Drain has been purchased by Brian D. Pierson (Contractors) and is available for hire throughout southern England. Brian believes that this type of specialist equipment should be available to clubs on hire, as the initial investment precludes many smaller clubs from ownership.



Admiring a layout of Wentworth's new practice ground are (left to right) Richard Doyle-Davidson, secretary of the club, George O'Grady, PGA European Tour tournament director and Alan Callan, chairman of the Whyte & Mackay PGA Championship organising committee. Gerry Coley, course superintendent of The Wentworth Club, lays the first turves on the teeing ground. The new practice area, situated to the right of the 18th green on the East Course and which has been specially constructed for the championship, is over 270 yards long and wide enough for up to 30 players.

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The fifth International Turforass Research Conference will be held in Avignon, France from June 30-July 5, 1985. The main themes will include Breeding, Physiology, Management, Soil And Nutrition, Plant Protection (Weeds, Pests and Diseases) and Erosion Control. For each theme there will be scientific papers, a focus on technical points and a general presentation of research into the subject. There will be translation into English.

Steetley Minerals Vitax department has added a new Winter Tonic to its Key Range of fertilisers. The 24 per cent nitrogen, zero phosphate, 2.5 per cent potash compound—with an added 3 per cent iron—has been formulated for use during late autumn and early spring.

The Winter Tonic, which helps to control moss and is ideal for all fine areas, especially where phosphate levels are high, has been developed and launched conjunction with Barry Reeves of Clevedon GC and Bill Curtis of Kingsdown GC.

Shrewsbury-based agrochemical specialist Hodges & Moss has created a new environmental services division responsible for golf clubs, local authorities and other sporting and leisure organisations. Heading up the new team is Bob Bolland, who has appointed H&M's environmental services manager for Shropshire and the border counties.

Apart from advice and

comprehensive range of weedkillers and fertilisers, H&M's environmental services division will also be able to offer its new customers specialist contracting equipment to undertake such programmes where required. This equipment includes low ground pressure vehicles, fitted with flotation tyres.

Contact Bob Bolland Shrewsbury 60481.



Alan Lewis (left), head greenkeeper at Llanymynech GC, discusses soil conditions at the club with Bob Bolland, H&M's environmental services manager.





The proceedings of the 2nd National Turfgrass Conference held last September at Keele University have now been published priced £2.50 (including postage) from The Secretary, NTC, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1HZ.

The 142-page, A5 booklet gives the full text of the 13 papers delivered at the conference, as well as the most important discussions.

In addition to technical papers, there are reports on the work on the NTC and the discussion group meetings. The NTC was formed to encourage discussion and the exchange of information and to foster research and strengthen education. The final pages of the conference proceedings show what has been, and is being, done to help the industry.

The Weed Research Organisation at Oxford is under threat of closure by the Agricultural And Food Research Council. For years, the WRO has screened new herbicides, meeting acricultural and amenity requirements. While sympathising with the council's predicament of declining financial resources and acknowledging amenity research is only a small part of the WRO's work, the National Turfgrass Council does not believe that the Long Ashton Research Station—the proposed alternative-will be able to serve the amenity industry as effectively as the WRO.

"With increasing demands to reduce maintenance costs." NTC chairman Michael Chance said, "it is essential adequate continues under an independent body monitoring the effects of existing and new chemicals including growth retardents."

Some 140 delegates attended two turfcare seminars in Scotland recently organised by British Seed Houses, Lloyds and Co and Synchemicals.

Jeremy Howarth of British Seed Houses revealed the success of his company's product range in England and Wales over the last seven years. He believes it can be attributed to the company's continual research and development into new varieties, such as Loretta and Derby perennial ryegrass and Frida Chewings fescue, which have been highly rated by the Sports Turf Research Institute in its 1984 Seed Guide. The range is now available through the associate company of David Bell, Eastfield Industrial Estate, Penicuik, Mid Lothian.

Allbutt of Synchemicals emphasised that the use of chemicals cannot be considered a substitute for good turf management, but more an important part of a comprehensive turf maintenance programme. He outlined the factors that can affect the success or failure of a herbicide treatment. The correct selection and application of a herbicide was dealt with in detail.

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