

become more than the norm, it has become the standard. It is, moreover, much easier to maintain a lush green look."

I couldn't have put it better myself!

It was the combination of golfers demanding soft green greens and the fact that irrigation companies were in a position to meet that demand that pushed events along. Few realised there might be unfortunate side effects. Bobby Locke, an arch proponent of watering, wrote in 1953 of his ideal golf course: "that I would want facilities for the greens and some of the approaches to be well watered. I would also want British turf for all fairways and greens."

I am sure he would never have dreamed that the one might destroy the other. Again, to be fair, neither did anyone else or, at least, they didn't make themselves heard. We all plunged into an orgy of bigger and bigger sprinkler heads and, if possible, automatic watering systems.

I am not out to pursue a witch-hunt against the irrigation companies—they were good salesmen, but that isn't a crime. I am surprised they only sold the implements, fitting and maintenance and missed out on the much fuller service that was needed.

However, returning to the history of automatic watering, it derived from agricultural irrigation, which had been developed in the States during the '30s to combat the needs of hot, dry regions. At first, it was received with suspicion here but, sold with the main advantage of saving expensive labour, it appealed to the richer clubs and, eventually, the great majority.

It is surprising how quickly the whole saga has been enacted. The first proper rotary sprinklers appeared in the USA in 1935, but were not really in use until the 1950s. The first automatic pop-up sprinklers came to this country in 1961 at a cost of about £5,000.

By 1984, it was estimated that something like 70 per cent of clubs had automatic systems. Today, they are costing in the region of £40,000 to install. The machinery has increased in sophistication and convenience, but most of it still originates in California or Florida.

So the watering of greens has become accepted in this country as an absolute necessity in summer and golfers now demand it, not for the health of the grass, but to make the game easier in the drier months.

They justify these demands with some extraordinary reasoning. One man said to me last summer: "Eddie, let's go back to basics, you don't get grass in the Sahara." I won't bother to

explain the double fallacy contained in that gem. Instead, as always, let's go back to first principles—back to my broad bean in wet blotting paper, in fact.

Every plant requires water in every stage of its life cycle. Soil conditions and structures affect the availability of water. Water applied to the soil, either as rainfall or artificially, will either run off the surface, be retained in the pores, or be lost by evapotranspiration to the atmosphere or by percolation down through the soil.

If we want to know the amount of water available to the plant, we must study all these factors. I would suggest that present practice is to study none of them, but simply to concentrate on installing enough machinery to pump and spray out indeterminate (but considerable) amounts on the surface.

Indeed, with many installations there isn't even a suggestion that we measure the quantity we apply. Greenkeepers speak not of so many gallons per green, but of so many minutes per green. Can you imagine a doctor giving medicine and not saying: "drink two teaspoons every twelve hours," but saying: "have a good drink at the bottle for three minutes every twelve hours"?

### Automatic watering

The next quotation appears in the leaflets of one company and also in an article about automatic watering. "When installation is completed and the system is made operational, the soil is quickly brought to field capacity—i.e. moist from the surface down to sub-soil. Thereafter, the system is programmed to apply only enough water to make good daily moisture losses. This topping-up procedure only requires a short application of water at a slow rate every night. It is this type of irrigation which is of maximum benefit to growing turf."

It sounds more like a car radiator than anything else and pretty crude at that.

Some agronomists—particularly our American friends—seem to be in a bit of a muddle about the situation as well. I recall a comment from the EIGGA conference at Cambridge last year: "At field capacity, plants will grow to their maximum." Which plants? Take the example of a sandy links green. The mind boggles at how much artificial water would be necessary to maintain this at field capacity (though, perhaps, many pop-up systems could manage it).

Even if that was achieved, I'll wager

the 'plant' growing there in the long term would be *Poa annua*, not *festuca rubra*. In fact, given sufficient fertility, doubtless you could grow crops of potatoes just as easily.

We know that water availability is a powerful management tool. Plant ecology tells us that different plants are adapted to exist on vastly different degrees of moisture and, by controlling these levels, we can greatly influence the botanical composition of the sward.

As I have said many times, botanical analysis is the only objective guide. If we are not getting at least *agrostis* turf (with, in many cases, *fescue* as well), our mix of the environmental factors is faulty. The commonest faults seem to be, first, too high fertility, second, poor soil structure from compaction and, finally, more moisture than is required by the grasses we want. The latter may be due to water retention by thatch or an impervious layer, but I suspect that the commonest cause is simply too much water being applied.

I am quite sure I will be accused of over simplification and I plead guilty. Of course, there is a multiplicity of other factors, but I want to focus attention on just this one that has not, I feel, received enough attention. I have listened to hours of theories about artificial watering, but I have yet to hear anyone tell me about the ecological effects. In the complete absence of definitive research in this field in British climatic conditions, I would offer a few simple observations from my own course.

For many years, we had to keep records of water abstracted from a bore hole and the monthly figures, set side by side with local monthly rainfall figures, make interesting reading.

If we actually know the amount of water used on the course, we can soon translate it into something meaningful. The equation is not difficult to work out. Take the figure for total gallonage used and divide it by total greens area (in sq yds) multiplied by a factor of 4.7—this gives the equivalent in inches of rain.

We do not possess pop-ups, but in the 1970s, to allow greens to be watered at night, we turned to large Perrott sprinklers with a time clock on the pump. We could then apply large quantities of water, almost without knowing it. From average figures of well over a million gallons per annum ten years ago, there has been a drop to less than 20 per cent of that figure under our present regime. We had been adding perhaps 25in to 30in of

*Continued on page 27...*

## **My patience is exhausted—**

**says Jim Arthur**

**continued...**

encouraged the worms to return. Precisely! Bingley was making the point emphatically in the early 1930s, advocating instead the use of lead arsenate. Now we use chlordane and this proves that earthworm control has been continuous in one form or another for 60 and more years.

### **Misguided**

Irrigation is another case of the advocacy of demonstrably misguided theories. Before the war, irrigation was limited by either the absence of any facilities or by restraints of men and time. Yet, I was advocating 40 years ago what was then old-fashioned, old-established practice—namely, that areas requiring water should be given individual treatment by hand-held open hose rather than leaving sprinklers on all night and flooding greens. This was long before pop-ups were being used, even in the States.

Mr Jones advocates, in my hearing, the use of pop-ups for long periods at widely spaced intervals, letting the greens dry out thoroughly before watering them again! Quite apart from the practical problem that if we apply once a week the total amount given in minimal daily irrigation then we shall be watering for 18 to 22 hours a day, when do we find time to play golf? Also, how do we get that amount of water to penetrate without flooding bunkers, how do we play a course with soggy bogs at the start of the week, drying out to rock-hard greens

at the end, and how do we get the water to penetrate such dry areas anyway?

All those who have given the matter thought will, I am sure, agree that we ought to aim at—even if we do not always succeed—producing fine-textured, wiry *Agrostis* and fine fescue turf if we are to play our traditional pitch and run-up game as opposed to target golf. Most, including many American superintendents, would agree that annual meadow grass is our main enemy, responsible for most greenkeeping problems. Mr Jones claims that, at one course he advises, while in response to gross sanding of greens, the grass is now 100 per cent annual meadow grass, which "does not matter."

I have never decried American greenkeeping—if it is kept to America. Equally, most of the traditional principles here would not transplant save for those few areas in the States where soil and climatic conditions are equivalent to those in Europe.

### **Pattern**

There has always been a cyclic pattern, since greenkeeping began, of 'farmers', who know all about growing the wrong grass, destroying our courses and their being brought back, from the very brink, laboriously by 'greenkeepers', only to be thrown out by members who want to see more grass on the course and extolling the 'beautifully lush' turf of

other ruined courses. But remember that the initial impetus for the establishment of the Board of Greenkeeping Research (as Bingley was known) came from Norman Hackett, who was advising Yorkshire courses in the early 1920s on exactly the same basic lines as I do today!

With Bingley now preaching the same gospel, backed by the Royal and Ancient, we could be thinking seriously of the feasibility of establishing an advisory body based there, with the same power and influence as the USGA's Green Section wields in the States.

Naturally, course conditions were not perfect by today's standards 50 to 80 years ago. Neither was household plumbing! But, by the standard then accepted, conditions were as good as the equipment could make them and better golfers were turning in scores as low as any today, playing on fine perennial grasses, not annual meadow grass, and using less efficient clubs and golf balls.

Even that pioneer of agricultural grassland research, Professor W.B. Stapledon at Aberystwyth, said in the 1930s: "I would rather putt on poor fescue greens than on lush annual meadow grass ones."

No one pretends that every course was in good condition then, not that we would accept for one moment today what, by their standards, was good presentation, even for a championship, before the war.

Lindrick's detailed records show a cyclic repetition of traditionalists unseating the farmers—who were at the root of all their problems—only for the farmers, in turn, to win in response to ignorant golfers demanding more grass on the course.

The swings and roundabouts still operate, invariably triggered off by some half-thought-out theories on the grounds that to be noticed one has to be outrageously different!

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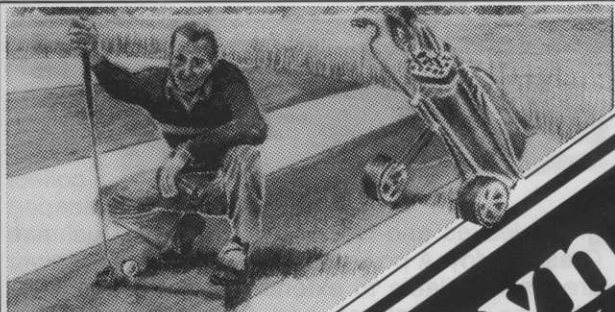
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## President's Report

Since the last executive, I have visited Elmwood College to give a talk to 24 greenkeepers. I feel that we, as head greenkeepers, with the experience of management, should get more involved in the teaching of younger greenkeepers.

Mike Taylor, head of the horticultural department, welcomes comments from greenkeepers about alterations to the course's context and would be delighted to have more experienced head greenkeepers who are prepared to talk to students on these courses.

I recently attended the STRI seminar at Dunfermline Golf Club. The lecturers were of exceptional quality, the organisation was first-class and the wine one of my

favourites!

I went to a meeting of the International Golf Tournament and symposium committee at St Andrews and am pleased to report that good progress is being made. Walter Woods, as chairman of the committee, has to be congratulated, along with his committee members, for the way things are being organised.

This is a very important fixture in the SIGGA calendar this year. For the first time, it is to be held in Scotland and we, as an association, in conjunction with Ransomes, must make it a success.

Walter, my vice-chairman, will give a full report on the event's progress later on.

*Jimmy Neilson, SIGGA President.*

## East

A total of 52 members, guests and trade entered the annual spring tournament at Peebles GC.

A circular has been prepared and given out to members. It asks for suggestions on how they would like to

see the section run and ideas on how to improve it. The committee would particularly like to know what kind of events and lectures are wanted.

The annual match against the North East of England, sponsored by Stewart & Co, will be played over Turnhouse GC in early October.

The committee has decided that the section AGM will revert back to the usual time and place—at the end of the autumn tournament, at Newbattle GC on Tuesday September 10.

George Dollichen, ex-head greenkeeper at Livingston, had a slight heart attack recently. He is now all right and back at work.

## Central

The section held its fifth spring outing courtesy of the Crail Golfing Society at Balcomie when 50 members and guests had a most enjoyable day.

The weather was kind for a change, with sunshine and just a slight sea breeze. The course was in excellent condition, which reflected in the

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scores returned: best net—Ian Ritchie (75-10) 65; best scratch—Ron Christie 72; first-class, 1st handicap—Graeme Hampton (78-8) 70, on best inward half, 2nd handicap—Brian Inglis (75-5) 70; second-class, 1st handicap—Mike Hanlon (89-23) 66, 2nd handicap—Joe Oliver (84-14) 70; new members' prize—Craig Small (107-21) 86; visitors' prize—Joe Dalling (70-4) 66 and two-ball foursomes—W.Lyon and R.Taylor 30½ points net.

Our thanks go to Jim Donaldson and his staff for having the course in excellent condition, to the bar and catering staff for the service and meals provided and to the council and members of the Crail Golfing Society for their courtesy.

At present, we have 67 paid-up members as well as a number of enquiries about membership.

## Ayrshire

The spring outing was held at Southernness Golf Club in dry, but windy, conditions. Because of the distance involved in travelling to the venue, the section hired a bus and 30 members took advantage of this

facility. A further ten members from the local area joined us.

Southernness is a great venue and a traditional links course, which everyone enjoyed thoroughly. Our thanks to Southernness GC, its clubhouse and greenstaff for their warm welcome.

The scoring was good on a difficult course and a special mention must be made of J.Robertson who, at the age of 81, had a net score of 69. He was pipped by S. Devlin for the best score of the day—a net 68. D.Gray (Lahinch) and J.Grainger (Largs) will compete in a play-off for the Scottish team place at St Andrews in October.

Results: Scratch—J. Grainger (Largs); 1st Class—D.Gray (Lahinch), runner-up R.Burke (Irvine, Bogside); 2nd Class—S.Devlin (St Cuthberts), runner-up J.Robertson (Troon); 3rd Class—G.Heron (Turnberry), runner-up T.Parker (West Kilbride) and Two-ball foursomes—D.Graham and I.Douglas (Kilmalcolm).

The section is now in a healthy position financially and with an ever-increasing membership. This year, we have gained 14 new members and the committee is working hard to see that this trend continues.

*J.Grainger, Secretary.*

## West

Since the last report, the West section has held a committee meeting and formed new sub-committees. The chairman has asked the convenor of the committees to be more actively involved in the running of the section this year.

The SISIS pairs trophy for greenkeepers and convenors was held courtesy of West Kilbride GC. The golf was played in cold, but dry, conditions that seemed to help the general low scoring but, mostly, this must be put down to the excellent condition of the course, for which the West section thanked Jim Paton and staff.

Prize-winners were: 1st—A.Hastie and A.Meechan (Bellshill) 65; 2nd—D.Fleming and I.Ferguson (Hilton Park) 67 and 3rd—J.Paton and B.Gossman (West Kilbride) 69.

Fifteen teams from different clubs took part in the competition. This, added to the excellent attendance at the AGM, has given the West section an encouraging start to the year's activities which, hopefully, will continue throughout the season.



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## North West

The branch recently held a one-day seminar at Helsby Golf Club—the speaker for the day was Archie Pattison, contracts manager of Watermation. Mr Pattison brought with him an impressive array of some of the latest irrigation equipment which, combined with his vast knowledge and experience, gave us all a rewarding day.

Our thanks to him and Helsby GC for the use of its clubhouse and catering facilities.

Following the seminar, the AGM was held. Bill Lawson was elected branch chairman; Terry Adamson, administrator and Guy Cannings, treasurer.

The spring meeting was held at Caldycote GC on the Wirral. Our thanks go to sponsors J. Mealar (Grass Cutting Machinery) and Eurotec and also to the captain and secretary of the club for the use of its superb facilities. Ricky Fletcher and his staff are praised for the magnificent presentation of the golf course.

Terry Adamson received the Mealar's Shield for the best gross score. Cliff Lunt had the best nett score and Allun Roberts the best visitor's score.

We welcome Derek Green to the North West branch and wish him every success in his new post of links manager at The Royal Liverpool Golf Club.

As one of the North West members who attended the EIGGA conference at Warwick, I would like to congratulate the board of management and Danielle Jones in particular for an excellent educational conference.

Finally, congratulations go to North West chairman Bill Lawson who, as members are now probably aware, has been appointed national chairman of EIGGA. I am sure members would agree this is an honour not only for Bill, but also for the North West.

*Raymond Hunt.*

## Surrey

The branch held its annual dinner-dance recently at the Drift Golf Club, East Horsley and although everyone had an enjoyable evening, it was noted with regret that the majority of those present were representing trade organisations or EIGGA members from other areas.

The spring meeting of the society was held at Home Park Golf Club. The results were: best am score—J.Jennings 66; best pm score—G.McNiven 67; best overall score—J.Jennings 134; second best overall score—A.Cale 140; third best overall score—G.McNiven 141; fourth best overall score—S.Gudge 141; best scratch (to 12 handicap) score—B.Pearse 147 and best scratch score—B.Turner 154.

The branch would like to express its thanks to the event's sponsors Dimex and to Home Park GC for its generosity in granting courtesy of the course.

*M.Hale, Branch Administrator.*

## The 1985 Kubota Golf Challenge

This year's Kubota event takes place at The Belfry on October 17-18. It is now a four-cornered match with a team from The Association of Golf Writers entering the fray. Each association is responsible for selecting eight players. The timetable is:

### Thursday October 17

Arrive at midday; practice round, 1pm; team photos, 5.30pm; cocktails, 7pm and dinner at 7.30pm.

### Friday October 18

Breakfast at 7pm; semi-finals, 8am-9am; buffet lunch, midday-2pm; final and third-place play-off; 1pm-2pm; cocktails, 7pm and dinner/prize-giving at 7.30pm.

Departure is after breakfast on Saturday.

## Now We Know

Members may be aware that, at a meeting towards the end of last year, certain matters, including EIGGA's membership and education at some colleges, were discussed by the Greenkeepers' Training Committee.

In order that the exact current position be known, *Greenkeeper* contacted Mr W.N.S. Bisset, administrator and secretary of the GTC. He replied:

'Thank you for your recent letter regarding the work of the Greenkeepers' Training Committee. At that meeting, EIGGA was admitted to full membership of the GTC.

Just before the meeting, the committee organised a conference to which all colleges offering greenkeeping courses were invited. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the problems that exist in England and Wales with the college/City and Guilds part of the training scheme. The colleges were made aware of the worries that exist, the mechanics of the training scheme and the situation in Scotland, where the college part of the scheme has been less troublesome.

Although the conference reached no firm conclusions (not unexpectedly), the committee reaffirmed its aim to reduce the number of colleges offering courses to those with suitable resources. How this is to be achieved is currently being examined and further discussion is to take place with the City and Guilds.

Financially, the GTC is now much sounder with donations of substantial sums having been given by the four home golf unions, the LGU and the R&A. A great deal of progress has been made with the training of greenkeepers over the past few years, despite a lack of support and the apparently inevitable apathy. Progress will continue to be made in an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary sense, because the general feeling is that a sound foundation has been established on which to build.'

**EIGGA AT WARWICK—  
PHOTOS OVERLEAF...**

## EIGGA'S WARWICK WEEKEND REVISITED...



Peter Wisbey (right) made a presentation to outgoing EIGGA president Jack McMillan.



The University of Warwick and its campus grounds provided excellent and modern facilities.



A relaxing atmosphere for the educational sessions was created in the lecture theatre.



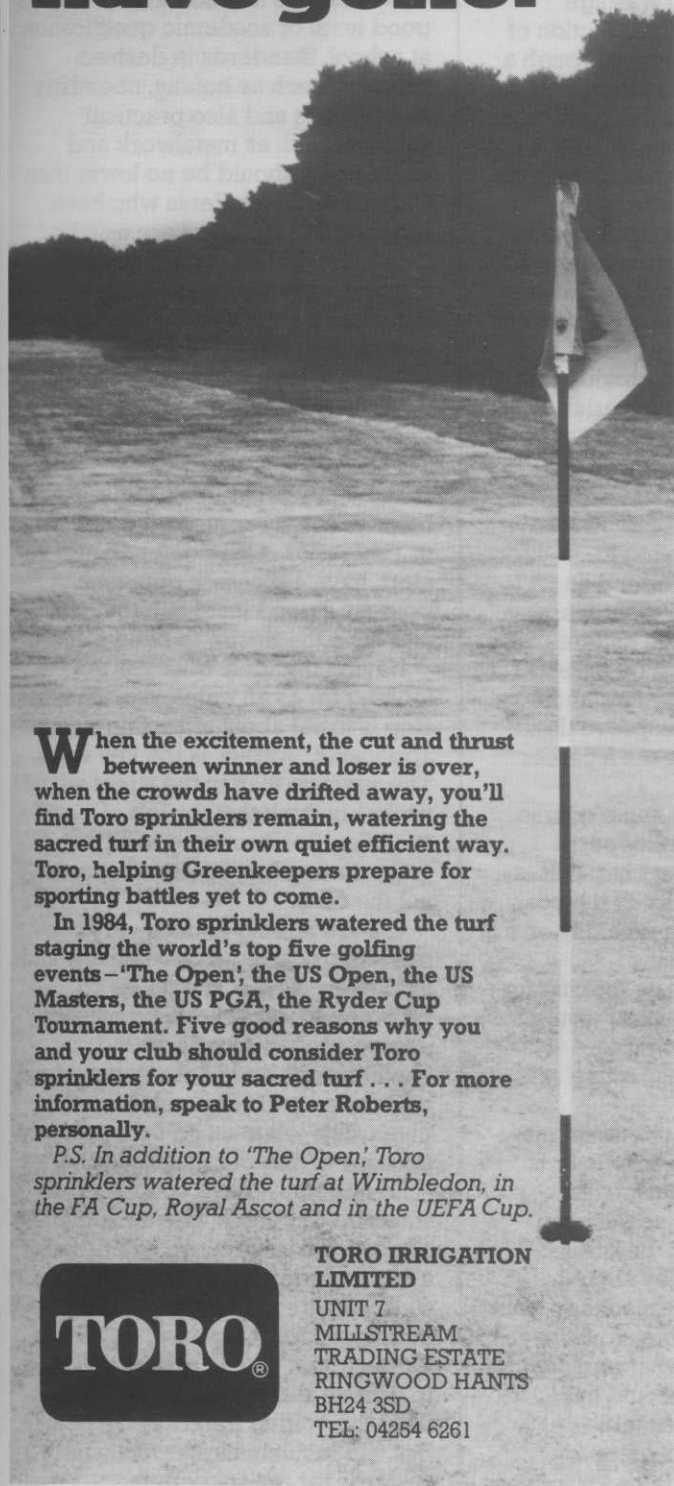
Association chairman Bill Lawson makes a point to colleagues from the North West and London board member David Lowe.



Effingham GC course manager Kenny McNiven (right) received a gold diploma from outgoing EIGGA chairman Peter Wisbey.



# We remain after the crowds have gone!



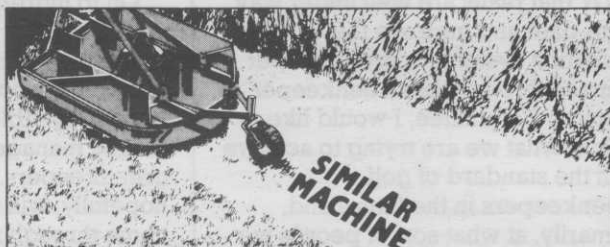
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# TRAINEE RECRUITMENT

*Raymond Hunt, 23, is a member of EIGGA's North-West branch.  
He is the assistant greenkeeper at Heswall GC, Merseyside.*

NOW that plans are well under way to up-date and improve the education system for greenkeeper trainees through the Greenkeeper Training Committee, I would like to look at what we are trying to achieve with the standard of golf greenkeepers in the future and, primarily, at what sort of people we should now be looking to attract into the profession at trainee level in order to achieve our objectives.

Golf-course management is a highly skilled profession resulting in the need for a highly skilled greenkeeping staff, with a professional image and outlook from course management level down through the various grades of assistants.

In order to produce a golf-course manager, head greenkeeper, assistant greenkeeper, all highly skilled and with a professional image and manner at whatever level of responsibility, we need three basic ingredients.

First, we need a modern training scheme aimed specifically at golf greenkeeping and course management with a strong sense of continuity, adequately financed and incorporating fully competent lecturers with a sound and up-to-date knowledge of all aspects of golf-course management.

Second, we need a knowledgeable and enthusiastic course manager/head greenkeeper to motivate and encourage the young trainee and to supervise the implementation of all greenkeeping practices and policies actually on the golf course in a working environment. He should also point the young trainee in the right direction so far as public relations are concerned with golf club members and officials, placing great importance on tact and diplomacy.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, we need the raw material—the greenkeeper trainee himself, from which we will create the course managers and head greenkeepers of the future.

So, let's take ingredient number one. As I have said, plans are now moving in the right direction to achieve a first-class education system.

On to ingredient number two. I would say that about half the senior members of greenkeeping staffs in this country could be described as knowledgeable and enthusiastic course managers/head greenkeepers. This is a situation that, hopefully, will improve in years to come through natural wastage counteracted by the introduction of highly trained young men through a revitalised education system.

This leads me on to the third ingredient—the trainee himself. Now that all the hard work has been done to provide a suitable education system, I feel it is now up to course managers and head greenkeepers to do their bit when recruiting trainees and to look seriously at what sort of standard of intake they should be looking for in order to provide the colleges with suitable material.

The lack of interest some youngsters express towards their job is typified by the difficulty some regional committees of EIGGA have experienced when trying to encourage people to attend an educational lecture in their spare time. Surely, when such lectures are set up the room should be bursting at the seams with eager young men chewing at the bit to improve their knowledge and carve out a career for themselves?

Sadly, it seems that some course managers/head greenkeepers simply employ the first chap that comes along who looks as if he can wield a spade and spend a day on a ride-on mowing machine.

So, what should we be looking for when recruiting trainees? I would like to suggest some simple guidelines for the prospective employer.

Due to the present unemployment situation, as far as the employer is concerned, it's a buyer's market when recruiting staff, so they can afford to shop around. Before recruiting trainees, they should decide what sort of person they want to employ, what qualifications they should possess and what personal characteristics they should have. Then plans to attract suitable candidates can be drawn up.

Prospective candidates for trainee

positions should be as young as possible, hopefully straight from school, therefore enabling the employer to direct the young trainee in whatever direction he requires without having to get the new employee out of someone else's bad habits.

Candidates should have reached a good level of academic qualification at school. Standards in desired subjects, such as botany, chemistry and physics and also practical subjects such as metalwork and woodwork, should be no lower than CSE grade 3—students who have reached this standard are usually capable of better grades but, due to a lack of application through immaturity and other distractions, fail to fulfil their full potential at school.

Candidates should possess a natural ability to present themselves in a clean, tidy and smart manner. This is very important as we must present ourselves in a professional manner when representing our club or profession. Candidates should be alert, have a pleasant personality, possess a good level of intelligence and have the desire to build a career.

Having decided what you are looking for as an employer, the next step is to set about attracting suitable applicants. 'Attract' is the key word. The average man in the street would probably think that the job of a golf greenkeeper consisted solely of grass cutting but, obviously, this is not the case.

We are talking about a very rewarding career, both mentally and financially, so this should be reflected in job advertisements for trainees, together with what qualifications and characteristics will be needed and what training will be given. The job must be sold properly in order to attract suitable applicants.

So hopefully, if we couple a high standard of trainee with an adequate educational system, we can produce a high standard of greenkeeping staff, resulting in better playing conditions for the golfing public of Great Britain which, in turn, will lead to greater respect and appreciation from the golfing fraternity. Hopefully, this will result in higher financial rewards for greenkeepers.