



Ayrshire

The section held a joint seminar with the West at the Inverclyde Sports Centre, Largs recently. It proved a successful venture and the question sessions were very stimulating.

The morning talk was provided by Billy Lockie, professional at Kilmarnock Barassie GC, and Robert McLaren, who represented the Ayrshire Golf Union. Our own Harry Diamond and Cecil George joined the panel for questions and all have to be thanked for their contributions.

A film presentation and a display of products formed the afternoon session by a team from Century Oils by arrangement with D.G. Allan Oils, our local distributor.

We would like to thank Don Hamilton for his assistance in setting up the day. D.G. Allan Oils also put on display the trophy they have provided for the best student at Woodburn House. It should prove a big incentive for students to work hard.

Thornhill GC at Dumfries proved to be a good choice for the section's spring golf outing. The course was in excellent order and we thank Harry Kerr and his staff for the hard work they put in and the club committee for the courtesy of the course.

We had 50 at the outing - among the number was the SIGGA president and we thank Walter for taking the trouble to travel so far. We also welcomed seven greenkeeping friends from Northern Ireland and their company was greatly enjoyed by everyone, especially when it came to harmonising and storytelling!

Congratulations to all prize-winners and thanks to our friends from the South-West who turned out in excellent numbers.

Scratch C. White (Largs CG) 78, 1st-Class D. Wilson (Turnberry Hotel) 83-7-76, Runner-Up R. Burke (Irvine CG) 86-9-77.

2nd-Class M. Power (Troon

Darley) 86-14-72, Runner-Up B. Semple (Dalbeattie GC) 86-10-76.

3rd-Class G. Heron (Turnberry Hotel) 92-22-70, Runner-Up T. Parker (West Kilbride GC) 94-18-76.

Visitor F. Ainsworth (Northern Ireland), Senior H. Diamond (Ayr Belleisle), New Member K. McCarty, (Dumfries and Galloway), Trade R. Bruce.

Two-Ball Foursomes C. White and A. Anderson (Largs GC).

Tickets for the Open prize draw should be with you by the time this magazine is distributed. Please work hard at selling the tickets as this has proved a great success in boosting the section's funds and the SIGGA education fund.

For the first prize, we are giving a weekend in Paris, by arrangement with A.T. Mays (Travel Agents). This is a tremendous prize and well worthy of a 50p ticket. Second prize is a pair of composite tickets for next year's Open Championship at Muirfield. Third prize is a more instant package of composite tickets, for two, for the Glasgow Open at Hags Castle in August.

Other prizes will also be provided in relation to the amount taken in ticket money to satisfy the Lotteries Act. If any members not in SIGGA (Ayrshire) wish to take part in the draw, please contact me by letter and I will send them tickets.

You will have had an application form for bunker-raking at the Open. This again provides an opportunity for greenkeepers to obtain access to the Open and gives the possibility this year of following one match for a round. You could be drawn with Ballesteros or Lyle, so please send the forms back quickly!

Recently, we had corres-

Obituary

It was with deep regret that we learned of the death of Stevie Donnachie on Saturday May 10. Stevie, a past president of SIGGA, had recently retired as head greenkeeper of Royal Deeside Golf Club, Aberdeen.

A fully obituary will appear in the next issue.

pondence with the Californian branch of the USGA regarding twinning with them. This started when Harry Diamond, our chairman, met the president of the California Course Superintendents at St Andrews and we will keep the section informed of further progress.

J. Paton, Section Secretary, Glenhaven, 1 North Road, West Kilbride, Ayrshire KA23 9AQ. Tel: West Kilbride 823210.

East

The East section held its annual spring tournament at North Berwick, CG - 54 members, guests and trade attended on a cold and windy day.

Despite the weather, everyone enjoyed themselves and we are very grateful to the captain and council of North Berwick for the courtesy of the course and clubhouse, head greenkeeper Willie White and his staff for the condition of the course and Mr and Mrs Turnbull for the excellent catering.

We were honoured to have with us SIGGA president Walter Woods, past president Jimmy Neilson and general secretary Joe McKean. It was also a delight to see life member David Brown completing 18 holes, despite the conditions, and we hope to see him at many more outings.

Joe McKean presented prizes to the following: Scratch J. Paton (Turnhouse GC), 1st-class R. Bullock (Seahouses GC), Runner-Up I. Menzies (Thornton GC), 2nd-class D. Flynn (North Berwick GC), Runner-Up C. Yeaman (Turnhouse GC), 3rd-class R. Blair (Thornton GC), Runner-Up E. Holt (Dunakeir Park GC), Veteran J. Neilson (Murrayfield GC), New Member S. Pearson (Shawpark GC), Trade M. Dennis (S.T.S.).

It was certainly a nice gesture of Jimmy Neilson to fill his trophy with whisky - of course, the whisky didn't belong to him! I am sure young Chris Yeaman will have it replaced by Jim in the near future.

It was gratifying to see so many happy faces on the day. I am sure that the troubles of last year are

Continued on page 13...



Kent

At the recent AGM, several interesting points were raised – one such was that all events seem to be held in the eastern part of the county.

This is perfectly true, but the fact is that, at the moment, the vast majority of members are resident there and it is felt only right to hold meetings central to the largest membership area.

In a county as big as Kent, it will not be easy to please everyone all time, but we hope to please everyone sometimes and some people all the time!

The situation will, however, be monitored and when we get a few more members in the western part of the county, we can hold more meetings in that area.

A committee was press-ganged (sorry, elected!), with Peter Wisbey re-elected chairman and myself secretary. New to the committee are John Millen of Canterbury, Chris Mardon of West Malling, Steve Richardson of Cobtree Manor and Steve Suttle of Sene Valley.

This is the first time for a long while that we have been able to get so many people to volunteer their services. With a growing membership and a full committee, we will be able to organise some good events for the future.

In these Kent notes, we would like to publish any interesting happenings at your club or anything out of the ordinary that you greenkeepers get up to! "What interesting things do greenkeepers get up to?" I hear you ask.

Well, how about running in the London Marathon as Steve Suttle did in April. Steve raised money for Leukaemia Research, which he did to the tune of over £200. His time was 2hr 52min 29sec, which sounds to me a pretty good time to run 26 miles, but Steve said that he was hoping for ten minutes better! His final placing was 1,422. Well done, Steve.

Peter Wisbey managed to top

up all his bunkers recently with a few hundred tonnes of sand and then, a few days later, we suffered the highest winds on record for this area. Need I say more? Hard luck, Peter.

John Millen spent a week or so building a reinforced concrete road from the club entrance 300 metres along to the greenkeeping shed. This was built to full specification and saved his club some £6,000 over a contractor doing the work.

If you have any items of news like these, please contact me at the address below or John Millen.

Many Kent members attended the national EIGGA conference and all report that it was, once again, really excellent, with good speakers and a good atmosphere. Our thanks go to Danielle Jones and everyone else who put such a lot of hard work into making it a real success.

Talking of success, no prizes for guessing who won the conference team quiz – yes, it was the 'B Team' from Kent. Well done, lads.

*John Atkins, Branch Secretary,
134 Swalecliffe Road, Whitstable,
Kent CT5 2QA.*

South Wales

The branch will hold its summer golf tournament at Royal Porthcawl on July 29. To follow the day's golf, there will be a three-course dinner and a lecture by Mark Black, a top golf-course superintendent from Florida.

By now, members will have received their entry forms for this event, which should be returned, together with the correct remittance, to Mike Wilson, Golf Administrator, 18 Randall Square, Pembrey, Dyfed – all cheques should be made payable to 'EIGGA South Wales.' To ease the strain on branch funds, members are asked to donate prizes.

Congratulations and best wishes go to Robin Bryson, first assistant at Ashburnham GC, who is leaving the area to become head greenkeeper at The Warren, South Devon.

Raymond Hunt.

Surrey

As you may or may not know, April 19 was the Surrey dinner-dance date. Due to such a poor response from the membership at the Drift, it will probably be the last. I thank those who did attend and I'm sure you all enjoyed yourselves. I should like to convey my thanks to the committee for a superb job in organising the event.

To all members, I would like to say that if you will not support the committee in all the hard work that goes into organising seminars, lectures and socials, I can see the Surrey branch becoming just a golf society and that would be a shame.

Surrey used to be very active, but now it is embarrassing to attend functions as so many are made up of the trade and not greenkeepers.

And, finally, if you want to improve your image in golf clubs, when you turn up to play don't arrive wearing jeans and without a jacket and tie. Dress smartly, be well-behaved and proud to be greenkeepers. Let the club members see that you are responsible. Otherwise, you will always be looked upon as 'just grass cutters.'

Bert Watson

One of Surrey's longest serving members, H. Emery, died recently. His career included 20 years at Chipstead GC and 18 at Walton Heath. The sympathies of the branch go to his wife and family.

All members should have received entry forms for the Cresta Cup, McMillan Tankard and the MacGillivray Shield, as well as a fixture card for the year. If anyone has not, they should contact me.

The first-round draw for the Huxley Bowl is shown here. 'Home' pairings should arrange the matches, which are to be played by June 15. R. Morton and N. Roe or H. Brown and D. Wall v P. Smith and N. Damper, R. Johnson and D. Johnson v P. King and J. Jennings, K. McNiven and G. McNiven v I. McNiven and C. McMillan, I. Jennings and B. Tomlin v A. Davey and M. Lower,

R. Thompson and A. Lomax v A. Armitage and P. Weston, A. Watson and I. Huggett v A. Bradshaw and P. Jordan, K. Munt and Partner v S. McMillan and P. Pearse, W. Martin and J. Noble v B. Turner and D. Shaw.

Belated congratulations go to Cameron McMillan for winning The Golfer Of The Year Trophy for 1985.

Finally, the subject of this winter's series of lectures was raised at the last committee. It's hoped that we can have an evening when the 'branch entertains the branch.' If any Surrey member would like to give a half-hour talk or has any ideas for suitable lectures, please contact me as soon as possible.

Paul Pearse

North-West

The North-West was very well represented at Warwick for the EIGGA conference.

All of those in attendance would like to express their thanks to the board of management, especially Danielle Jones, for all the hard work and excellent organisation that went into the conference.

Among the many good papers delivered were two excellent ones by Derek Green of Royal Liverpool GC and Dave Lucas of

Macclesfield GC, both of whom we all thought did the North-West proud.

The committee has arranged an evening at Watmore's Turfland on Tuesday June 24 at 6.30 pm. A tour of the turf-nursery, a demonstration of machinery and slideshow should make an enjoyable and interesting evening.

All members are invited and they should contact Terry Adamson (administrator) on 0978 83 2908 or Rick Fletcher (chairman) on 051-625 9898 for further details. *Guy Cannings.*

The Chairman's View Of Warwick

A resounding success is the only way to describe the recent EIGGA conference at Warwick. This can only be due to the superb organisation of EIGGA's general administrator Danielle Jones.

Having attended the previous conferences at Brighton, Cambridge and at Warwick in 1985, some things have struck me. First, the enthusiasm of the first year has not diminished.

My background is a green-keeping one and, as far as I remember, there was not a lot of sharing of knowledge previously. The answer to a question regarding fertiliser or top-dressing was usually "a bit of this and a bit of

that." But during these residential conferences, and this is where the biggest step forward has taken place, greenkeepers have communicated more openly with each other - even mistakes are admitted.

Papers presented in the lecture theatre spark off discussion over a meal or a drink, sometimes into the "wee small hours."

One point of note is that greenkeepers themselves are delivering well-presented papers and not only the senior members of the profession.

The session that involved the three younger members, namely David Merills, Cameron McMillan and Raymond Hunt, was an eye-opener. Nervous they no doubt were and, as the chairman of the first session of conference, I certainly know what they were going through, but the preparation was obvious.

The quiz, sponsored by Rigby Taylor, was a chance to show that we are knowledgeable about general subjects, too.

At the end of this, and previous conferences, I have returned to Hartsbourne rejuvenated. The club realises that attendance at an event like this is to their benefit, as well as mine, and I am extremely grateful for their support.

What do I look forward to now? the 1987 EIGGA conference - see you there!

David Low, EIGGA chairman.

SIGGA NEWS & VIEWS - CONTINUED...

forgotten and that the section will be stronger than ever. There are still some subscriptions to come in - if you have not paid, please do so now or your name will be deleted from the mailing list.

There are three dates for your diaries - Wednesday June 4, an outing to Prestonfield starting at noon; the Scottish outing at Downfield on Thursday June 19 and Wednesday September 24, an outing to Royal Musselburgh.

Bunker-rakers are required for the Open Championship at Turnberry from Thursday to Sunday, July 17-20. If you would like to help, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Free lunches will be available, plus an admission ticket. It is expected that demand for this will be high, so don't delay.

W. Blair.

Central

The section's golfing season began with the spring outing at Lundin Links and, once again, the weather was against us.

Undaunted, some 40 members and guests turned up and those who braved the elements to play should all have been given an award. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed themselves and the prize-winners were: Best Nett J. Kidd 83-11-72, Best Scratch W. Woods 77, First-class 1st Handicap D. Mackinson 81-3-78, 2nd Handicap C. Stewart 84-4-80, Second-class 1st Handicap G. Blyth 114-24-90 (best inward half), 2nd Handicap J. Park 109-19-90, Visitors' prize A. Jack 87-7-80, Trade prize G. Brown 95-9-86, Two-Ball Foursomes D. Peddie

and F. McNeil 48-16½-31½.

Our thanks go to George Suttie and his staff for having the course in such excellent condition, Mr and Mrs Stewart for the excellent meals and service and to the council and members of Lundin GC for the courtesy they extended to us.

Membership of the section now stands at 92, which is an increase of 17 over last year. To all members of the section who have taken up new posts over the past few months, we offer our congratulations and wish them every success for the future.

Would any members who have moved recently, please inform me - failure to do so will result in no mail or magazine.

John Crawford

PARKLAND PROBLEMS

By Martin Jones, head greenkeeper at Saffron Walden Golf Club, Essex

IN Britain today, there are more parkland golf courses than links, heath and moorland put together. Nearly all new courses will, of necessity, be termed parkland.

But, in 1898, one Garden G. Smith wrote: 'It is quite certain that, had the ground on which ordinary inland golf is played today been the only available ground for the purpose, the game would never have been invented at all.'

I'm grateful to Garden G. Smith for providing me with an ideal introduction and to F.W. Hawtree for including this quotation in his excellent book *The Golf Course*.

'Golf was born on the links of Scotland, and this is the true game, the Royal game, the Ancient game. Around the turn of the century one or two far sighted men saw possibilities in open heathland and began the trend toward inland golf. True parkland courses followed a little later, and between the wars there was an inland golfing boom which has continued to this day.'

There were a few very early parkland courses, e.g. Royal Blackheath in the 17th century. Such places were largely unrecognised as golf courses - overgrown, lush, worm-infested and only playable for a few months a year.

I make no apologies if these words sound familiar - they have been used repeatedly to describe courses in the 1980s. These very early courses were cursed with the same parkland problems we find today. Fortunately, we have, or should have, the knowledge and technology to solve them.

The key to successful golf-course management lies in the imitation of nature. This applies to architecture and greenkeeping or, if you like, terrain and turf.

The terrain - or land - of the original Scottish courses was gently undulating linksland. Many heathland sites had similar

terrain and were fashioned into excellent courses. But parkland varies from the mountainous to the billiard table flat. It is the skill of the architect that extracts the best from these usually non-ideal sites.

Recently, at a place called Loxahatchee, Jack Nicklaus has built an undulating links-like course on a piece of totally flat Florida land. Over one million cubic yards of soil were moved in the process. This is obviously an extreme case. In practical terms, the aim should be to provide interest and variety with the minimum of earth moving. This applies particularly to changes made to established courses. It often rests with the greenkeeper to keep everyone's feet, literally, on the ground.

One obvious feature of parkland courses, virtually absent on their links ancestors, are trees. Early architects immediately saw the possibilities of trees and with only a little opposition, perhaps too little, they were quickly incorporated into the framework of golf.

Trees perform three functions on a golf course - strategy, penal-

ty and aesthetics. Discussion on the relative merits of strategic and penal architecture I'll leave to the architects and the 'Spike Bar Experts'.

It is in aesthetics, the quest for beauty, that the course manager must be most careful. At no stage can he afford to lose sight of the fact that he is employed to provide a turf surface upon which to play golf.

Trees cast shadows and restrict the flow of air over turf. Damp, thin, diseased fairways are too high a price to pay for a few autumnal weeks of attractive foliage. In addition to the direct effects of trees on turf, there is an indirect one. The management of trees is labour intensive. Leaf sweeping, debris collecting, pruning and, ultimately, felling are all time-consuming tasks, time that could be better spent tending the turf on which the game is played.

For new planting, indigenous species are obviously best, but they should be restricted, bearing in mind the needs of the turf.

Also, unwanted seedling trees must be controlled. At Saffron



Not a pretty picture - unsightly scrub.



Poa Annuu devastated by Basal Rot - the 2nd at Saffron Walden.

Walden, heavy rough areas are high mown once or twice a year to prevent them turning to scrub and, ultimately, woodland. Isolated, self-sown specimens are marked for protection, but they are well-spaced and remain solely for aesthetic reasons.

Originally, parkland was for looking at and possibly the grazing of deer. The large estates had sufficient money and cheap labour to maintain their trees. Today, those parks are golf courses and with many clubs already lacking the resources to maintain their turf to the highest standard, we can ill-afford unnecessary trees.

I'm not suggesting that all trees should be felled, merely that they be put in perspective. Some trees contribute directly to the way the game is played, either strategically or penally. Some trees enhance the appearance of the course. But overplanting, or lack of seedling control, detracts from the open aspect of a golf course, which is fundamental to the production of quality golfing turf.

On the subject of turf, the greenkeeper's job is to manage a surface on which to play golf. A sound management plan is essential for any enterprise. Many basic management textbooks include the following:

Objectives - these are the aims of the organisation. In the case of golf-course management, these would be the ultimate standards desired, given the constrictions of site, climate and resources.

Policy - management actions to achieve the objectives.

Feedback - problems met in the implementation of policy,

which may suggest changes to policy, but not to objectives.

Setting objectives in the business world is the province of top management of a golf club is not qualified to establish objectives for the course, so the not qualified to establish objectives for the course, so the greenkeeper/course manager should offer help and advice. The objectives can be as brief or extensive as you like and this can be best illustrated by an extract from the long-term objectives at Saffron Walden:

'The surface of the tees should be dry, firm and, above all, level. The total teeing area at each hole should be sufficient for year-round use. The sward should be composed of mainly *Agrostis* and *Festuca* grass species and as free as possible from *Poa Annuu*, weeds, coarse grasses and moss.'

Once the course manager knows what is required of him, his job becomes much easier. But it must be made clear that objectives do not change with the committee chairman.

Now it is known what is required, policy can be set. This is best done with the guidance of an agronomist - obviously, an advisor sympathetic to the objectives should be selected. Policy is essentially a basic management programme to achieve the objectives.

Referring again to my course, the policy is one of maximum aeration of all areas, with minimum use of fertilisers and water. It is set out to achieve the long-term objectives and will produce a certain kind of course. The top management of the club

must be prepared for the type of turf you are striving for. Without such a system, nobody knows whether you are winning or losing.

So, objectives and policy have been set and agreed. The resources have been made available and the implementation of policy can begin. This is where we meet the parkland problems and we find ourselves back with those very early courses - overgrown, lush, worm-infested and only playable for a few months a year.

The inherent fertility of parkland soils - especially when compared to links and heaths - produces a huge 'crop' of grass annually. The inland spread of golf was only made possible by the development of the mower. Virtually every square yard of a parkland course requires some form of mowing. Modern machines enable us to carry out the job fairly quickly, but the operation is enormously expensive in terms of men and equipment.

However, it is not necessary to carry out wall-to-wall close gang mowing - usually proposed in the name of 'speeding up play' or 'keeping the place tidy.' An attractive and, in summer, penal grassland can be maintained by infrequent mowing. Even then, the mowing operation merely controls seedling trees and woody weeds. On some sites, occasional weedkilling may be necessary in isolated areas. Clovers can be particularly troublesome in the rough. Here, expenditure, and especially labour, must be minimised to enable the main playing areas to receive the most attention.

Steep banks should be avoided wherever possible, for they look unnatural and are difficult to mow. Where such banks are present, or unavoidable, growth retardants are becoming more popular. There are three types available, each having advantages and disadvantages. If bank mowing is a problem, these chemicals are certainly worth trying.

Routine mowing occupies most of the summer months and a parkland course manager is well aware of the need for efficient, well-maintained mowers, replaced to a planned schedule. Without mowing, a parkland

Continued overleaf...



Contrasting healthy *Agrostis* and sick *Poa Annua* - the 3rd at Saffron Walden.

course would be unplayable by the end of May.

The long-term solution to this particular parkland problem lies with the grass breeders. Cultivars that grow only to a specific height will soon be available. If machinery and labour costs continue to rise at the present rate, it may prove economical to spray off grass in the rough and re-sow with 'non growing' cultivars but, for now, that is just science fiction.

Parkland courses were, and still are, built on a wide variety of soil types, but at least two problems - earthworms and less than ideal drainage - are usually found.

Casting worms spoil the turf surface and should not be tolerated, even if the soil naturally favours worms or their presence is a result of previous faulty management. Fortunately for the time being, we have a most-effective wormkiller in Chlor-dane. This gives long-lasting worm control, but its other effects are unknown. It certainly controls insect pests, deters moles and birds and, if a suitable warning sign is posted, keeps a few golfers off the course.

Control of worms reduces weed problems, but on a fertile parkland soil, the course manager needs to be ever-prepared to deal with heavy infestations. Plantains and daisies are particularly undesirable in any great number.

Drainage, however, is a subject in itself and one I'll leave to the experts. One thing is certain - aeration helps. My motto is: 'If you are stuck for a job, go out and put a few holes in some turf.'

There is a wide range of machines available for this work. Hollow, solid or slit tines all have their applications. With aeration machinery getting quicker and wider, hand-forking is often the only way to treat small inaccessible areas, e.g. narrow paths between bunkers.

The old parkland courses were only playable for a few months - many present-day parkland courses are only fit for play for a few months. In over two hundred years, all we have managed to do is to persuade golfers to play under poor conditions. The reasons for this are well-known - *Poa Annua*, excessive thatch and a lack of aeration. While these are not unique to parkland courses, they are real or, at best, potential problems on all parkland sites. They are found on all areas of the course, but it is the greens that illustrate them best.

My objectives for putting greens (a much better phrase, with the emphasis on *putting*) are that they be in use for as much of the year as possible, firm, fast and true and composed of *Agrostis* and *Festuca* grass species as much as possible. No mention is made of turf density, colour or holding properties.

All management practices are geared towards achieving these aims. That the policy of maximum aeration, minimum water and fertiliser will ultimately achieve these ends is not in doubt, but there are problems in doing so. Many many think they are insurmountable, but this has not been the case at many courses up and down the country.

The first problem is the

psychological barrier of assessing quality. The first converts must be the greenstaff. You can have the very best intentions, but if you judge a green by its appearance from fifty yards, then disappointment is inevitable. Colour is irrelevant and as long as the ball rolls fairly smoothly, then some bare patches are nothing to worry about. After all, bare ground is a potential site for the desirable grasses to colonise. I'm often being told by members, usually the older members who play every day of the year, that the greens look awful... But putt really well.

It is a good 'political' move to use temporary greens as little as possible - the harder turf will stand it better anyway. This gives the members one of the benefits of *Festuca/Agrostis* turf, before they really have it. Besides, play in frosty weather appears to damage *Poa Annua* most.

There are many difficulties in presenting thin *Poa Annua* dominated turf for play. You cannot reasonably expect it to be easy if you are trying to kill it. But *Poa Annua* in turf, like any plant community, will try hard to survive. With lush, rapid growth and seedhead production, it rises like a phoenix from the ashes. Frequent verti-cutting, mowers fitted with combs and always boxing off cuttings, all help to remove as many seeds to the dump as possible. It can also present an acceptable putting surface.

I have had some early success using Aqua Gro wetting agent to suppress seedhead formation. Two half-rate applications made around the time of seeding appear to prevent the flowers developing fully. Whether these seeds are still viable, I do not know - they certainly are less obtrusive - and it gives a short-lived improvement in putting quality.

But this is merely an annual hiccup - for most of the year, you must maintain a turf composed partly of vigorous *Agrostis* areas and partly of thin, weak *Poa Annua*. This is most striking in early spring, when the bents start growth a couple of weeks earlier, while the *Poa* is still yellowish and semi-dormant.

With the one advantage of *Poa Annua* - the ability to quickly recover from wear and damage -

Continued on page 19...

COMPANY PERSONNEL PROFILE – DAVID CRAIG OF PATTISSON

David Craig, 63, represents Pattisson, suppliers of equipment for golf courses and sports grounds. He is married with one son.

"My parents came from Arbroath," David said. "Father was a foreman engineer with Shanks. We moved to London with the company in the early 1920s before my father started a mower repair business in 1928. After leaving school, I studied to be a purser on Royal Mail Lines, but my training was abandoned by the imminence of war."

David's tall, muscular frame endowed him with all the attributes of a first-class athlete and he competed for London as a hurdler and sprinter. Once again, the outbreak of war overshadowed ambition, as it did for most young men. After a short time in the fire service as a dispatch rider, he joined the RAF and spent five years overseas as a wireless operator.

With demob in 1946, he followed his father into the engineering business. "Just after the war, transport was at a premium and we hired vehicles to pick up equipment for repair or I travelled on buses with my bag of tools to service machinery on golf courses.

"The main items of equipment in use then were Ransomes Mark 1 and 2 gangmowers, which were brutes to service. Handmowers, such as the Certes, Golf Lynx and the Lloyds' range, were popular. At that time, motor mowers really had not become fashionable – the Overgreen was in vogue and I remember spending a lot of time overhauling this machine that was considered labour saving. One man could mow 18 greens in six hours using the Overgreen.

"After my father died in 1953, I carried on the business until 1976. I then joined Pattisson as van sales rep. I enjoy working for this famous firm, which is approaching its centenary in the business. In the early days, they also made tractors and power units specifically for golf courses and sports grounds. A director invented the first hydraulic gangmower, but the prototype was never developed, which was a pity for it would have been a



David Craig.

great innovation then.

"My territory, loosely called the Home Counties, covers the south coast, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Beds, Herts, Essex and London – seven counties in all with around 380 golf courses."

David is a popular figure at greenkeeping association meetings and tournaments. "I have a soft spot for the BGGGA, since my father was one of those instrumental in setting it up in the early '20s.

"I was disappointed that they never really progressed in the manner that the founders originally intended. This ultimately led to a split in the ranks and EIGGA was formed. I have nothing but admiration for the way this new association has organised itself."

With an extensive engineering background, did he have any predictions on machinery trends? "I think greenkeepers are well-served with all the sophisticated equipment now available, although I believe small tractors are going to play an increasing role in the upkeep of golf courses. The only thing I regret is our reliance on so much equipment from foreign countries.

"As I travel around, I am sometimes appalled by the dirty condition of machinery being put away at the end of a working day. Oil changes and lubrication are only luxuries that get done on wet days. During the cutting season,

you frequently see mowers badly abused, dumped in untidy sheds and left there with grass cuttings in the box.

"On the other hand, there are courses where the equipment is treated with care and respect. I maintain you can always tell how good a course is by looking in the machinery sheds to see how the equipment is cared for.

"Over the years, I have made many friends in greenkeeping, some were outstanding characters. Reluctantly, I'll single out two. Jock Glass (Thorpe Hall), who is now enjoying retirement, was the southern section chairman for many years. He did a lot at national level to raise the status of greenkeepers. He was an excellent chairman and, above all, a first-class greenkeeper.

"A completely different character was George Hitchcock, who looked after Coombe Hill. He was a perfectionist, yet a modest, humble man and one of the better greenkeepers of the post-war years. He was a great friend of Henry Cotton."

David recalled a final amusing story on the attitude of some earlier greenkeepers to the advent of labour-saving machinery. "I remember visiting a well-known club in the Wirral with my father to see a Ransomes Overgreen triplex mower being demonstrated. Quite a crowd of greenkeepers and club officials from neighbouring courses had been invited.

"On the green selected for the trial, the machine quickly came to grief with three damaged cylinder reels. After substituting a spare cutting unit and hasty repairs to the other two, the demonstration resumed. But the same thing happened again! I later learned that some of the greenstaff thought their jobs might be at risk through this new-fangled machine and had hatched a plot to put a spanner in the works. Nails had been dipped in green paint and then stuck in the turf to foul the mower blades!

"Greenkeepers today would never stoop to these tactics – they have come to accept progress and the industry has a bright future."

JACK LOOKS BACK!

Greenkeeper correspondent John Campbell spoke to Jack McMillan (Sunningdale) about the 'old days.'

WE often discuss the wisdom and methods of an older generation of Scottish greenkeepers - long experience of turf upkeep certainly taught them a lot. Those that I knew were very shrewd characters - overuse of fertiliser was something they studiously avoided.

They knew what it was like to push a 16 inch Certes mower over a green during vigorous growing conditions and for that reason they cunningly kept the use of turf stimulants to a minimum.

There are not too many greenkeepers around nowadays who know what it is like to physically shove a hand mower over six or nine greens three times a week. Keeping your machine properly set was an art that you had to become familiar with to do a good job. The secret was to keep the cylinder reels razor sharp so they would spin freely.

I recall some of my early days as a young assistant greenkeeper at East Renfrewshire Golf Club, where there were many open ditches. It was difficult to mow close to the edges with gangmowers, so the fringes of water hazards were kept tidy with a little Pennsylvania side-wheel mower. Steep bunker slopes and banks around tees were laboriously mowed this way.

It demanded sheer brute strength in your legs and arms to propel the machine through soft, heavy growth. The art of scything was something that every greenkeeper learned to keep down long grass in awkward corners of the course.

One of my jobs was to mow along the edges of what seemed miles of ditches with a side-wheel mower. It was a struggle to keep it delicately balanced on one wheel as you pushed the machine along the slippery edge. It was all very hard work, calling for a certain amount of

finesse and dexterity to skilfully avoid landing up with your mower in a deep ditch.

We mowed the greens twice weekly with a 16 inch hand mower. When there was a lot of growth, we used to cut them three times a week. Mowing six greens was considered a morning's work. In the afternoon, my job was to hand sieve and mix a barrow load of seed and soil for the repair of divot marks on fairways. We usually concentrated on the landing zones and tees were also done at the same time. We were expected to wheel the loaded barrow from the sheds to where the work was to be done.

The only powered mowers were two 18 inch Atcos - one with a kick start, the other a crank handle. It was my job to cut aprons and green surrounds with one of these machines every week. The tees were cut with the other machine - each of these tasks was usually considered a good day's work for a man.

We had no earthmoving

equipment for construction jobs and I can remember building a cut and fill tee at the 11th hole where it was all pick, shovel and wheelbarrow work. It involved digging into the face of a hill and using the spoil to build up a new tee.

Our methods were simple and the materials used were what was available to us on site. We built a number of tees and greens by these primitive methods and I'm pleased to say that they are among the best on the course, well able to cope with an ever-increasing amount of wear and tear.

Tractor-mounted equipment for excavating was unknown - drainage systems from main leaders down to laterals were all dug out by spade and shovel. Thousands of yards of field tiles were laboriously transported from the sheds in wheelbarrows to avoid tracking up the course with tractor and trailer wheels.

We always took vainglorious pride in proclaiming that golf was cheap in Scotland. Consequently, course budgets



Jack's family 'team' is headed by wife Rita.

were always fairly meagre, putting strict limits on the amount of cash we could spend on course upkeep. It was not until the 1960s with an increasing interest in the game created by the media and TV, that we found more money becoming available to allow a greater investment in staff, machinery and equipment.

Higher subscriptions, increased membership, more golf society play and one-armed-bandits all contributed to the growing affluence of many clubs and they found more money to spend on the course than before.

Coinciding with all this, we began to see the introduction of expensive, highly sophisticated labour-saving machinery. Those who for years had been accustomed to running courses on a shoestring, suddenly found themselves being swept along by the relentless tide of automation. Clubs were beginning to realise they had to spend on plant and machinery to maintain their courses at a higher standard and also to cope with all the problems created by the ever-increasing amount of play.

Looking back on my early career in greenkeeping, it was accepted that most of the work required a certain amount of sweat and toil. Manual labour was more plentiful and jobs were filled by convenience without particular regard for qualifications beyond the need for physical stamina.

Our knowledge was acquired by observation, asking questions, listening and gleaning what information we could from older and more experienced men. Job improvement evolved largely through ingenuity and the need for less laborious methods - there was little opportunity for educational improvement.

I am pleased that modern sophisticated machinery has taken so much of the drudgery and backache out of the work and has helped us to accomplish many jobs more efficiently and economically. The future is bright for young men now coming into the business. The job is more challenging and the rewards commensurate with the responsibility of running a first-class golf course. ●

PARKLAND PROBLEMS CONTINUED...

gone, greater care is necessary in all everyday greenkeeping tasks. Machinery must be maintained to high standards. Oil or petrol leaks can be disastrous on slow-growing, at times, near dormant, turf.

Cutting cylinders should be razor sharp for use on tender turf. Regular backlapping, even weekly on greens mowers, is most important. This is all made much easier if the equipment is maintained and replaced on a planned basis.

Obviously, low-density turf cannot absorb vast quantities of sandy top-dressing at one time. Several light dressings, spread through the season, are necessary. This treatment, with adequate staffing and mechanisation, can be achieved with little disturbance to play and further helps to smooth the putting surface. For example, this year I plan to give five or six dressings at half a tonne per green throughout the summer and a final double-rate dressing in the autumn.

The frequency of aeration usually recommended on our heavier inland soils, between weekly and fortnightly, presents some problems. On a thin turf, with inevitably some bare areas, frequent slitting will cause some surface disruption. But, with care, patience and well set up machinery it can be minimised. Disturbance decreases as time goes on.

Commonsense would suggest that weak *Poa Annua* should be more disease-prone than healthy *Poa Annua*. In fact, it is less likely to suffer severe attacks of *Fusarium* patch. Fungicide use drops dramatically with lower applications of water and fertiliser. The money saved could be spent on top-dressing - quickly, before the club treasurer notices!

On the other hand, starved turf is susceptible to Basal Rot, caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum graminicola*. It attacks *Poa Annua* mainly, so chemical treatment is not required - even if it were possible. It starts innocuously enough with a slight yellowing of the leaves but, combined with starvation, it can devastate a *Poa Annua* dominated area.

The policy stated minimum use of fertiliser and water. But how much is minimum? Commonly recommended fertiliser mixtures are zero phosphate, zero potash, a little nitrogen, plus iron. The aim is to kill the *Poa Annua* over a number of years - not all in the first year. You cannot continue to supply the nutrients essential for healthy growth of *Poa Annua*.

The same applies to irrigation. I try to keep *Agrostis* thriving, while *Poa Annua* is continually under stress. Just how far you can push it depends on how well you have done your public relations, how committed the green chairman is and how thick skinned you are.

Golfer education is a good idea - try to get as many members on your side as you can. A folder of appropriate articles left in the clubhouse certainly helps. In the height of summer, I keep the greens dry and keep out of the bar! In the autumn, I reappear to remind the moaners that the greens are good in winter because they were dried out in summer.

These are some of the problems commonly found in the management of a parkland course. Some, such as excessive growth, can be solved with money and manpower. Weeds and worms can be treated with accurate and intelligent use of chemical technology. Lastly, the problem of the turf quality has to be tackled with guts, determination and not a little diplomacy.

To the golfing purist, parkland courses can never be ideal. But they are the most numerous and are usually conveniently sited. It is the course manager and his staff who allow golf to be played at all. The greater their skill and professionalism, the better the golf.

In conclusion, I believe that we should have good golf courses that happen to be on parkland and not parks where golf is sometimes played.

It is the golf that matters - not the park.

● *The above text formed an acclaimed paper delivered by Martin Jones at the recent EIGGA conference.*

Each year, if you had
98,532 shoes stomping over you,
24,384 golfcarts wheeled
 across you swards (nasty!)
54,368 balls hit directly at you.
 Stood out in the cold,
 drenched in the rain,
 bared to the wind,
 scorched in the sun,
 and constantly mown down.



Wouldn't you need a little help from SEAMAC

These famous courses do . . .

“ . . . I have been using Seamac for about nine years. Now that I have been using it for so long, I find that smaller maintenance doses, at regular intervals, maintain the thick sward all year round.”

Jim McDonald
 Royal Lytham & St. Annes

“ . . . I use it on all the greens, and on fairways at bottlenecks and other stress points. Seamac works by giving a better root system to turf thus growth is healthier and stronger.”

Walter Woods
 Royal and Ancient, St. Andrews

“ . . . I am using Seamac here as I did at Woburn and value it chiefly for the resistance it enables the grass to have to drought, also the quick powers of recovery.”

Derek Green
 Royal Liverpool Golf Club

Help is at hand with SEAMAC 600 for TURF

It improves sports turf on golf courses, bowling greens, tennis courts, football, rugby, hockey and cricket pitches, and amenity grass.

SEAMAC
 AGRICULTURAL LIMITED

Foundry Lane, Chippenham,
 Wiltshire SN15 1JB



available from

T. Dene and Son, The Mill, Maidstone Road, Ashford, Kent. Tel: 0233 25987

T. Parker and Sons, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 7NF. Tel: 01 337 7791

Maxwell Hart Limited, 612 Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berks. Tel: 0734 785655

Radnor Garden Supplies, Waterloo Road, Llandridod Wells, Powys, LD1 6BH. Tel: 0597 2266

E. T. Breakwell Limited, 814 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 4JB. Tel: 021 744 4477/8/9

Supaturf Products Limited, Osney Road, Peterborough, PE1 5YX. Tel: 0733 68384
 also at: 2 Ripley Close, Normanton Industrial Estate, Normanton, Nr. Wakefield, Yorkshire.
 also at: Unit 31 Hazelwell Road, Sturichley Trading Estate, Sturichley, Birmingham.

Rigby Taylor Limited, Victoria Works, Garside Street, Bolton, BL1 4AE. Tel: 0204 389888

also at: Unit 9a Warwick Industrial Estate, Budbrooke Road, Warwick. Tel: 0926 401444

Joseph Metcalf Limited, Brookside Lane, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, BB5 3NY. Tel: 0254 393321

Joseph Bently Limited, Barrow on Humber, South Humberston, DN19 7AQ. Tel: 0469 30501

Stewart and Co., Seedsmen Limited, Stronghold Works, Mayfield Industrial Estate, Dalkeith, EH22 4BZ. Tel: 031 663 6617

Richard Aitkin (Seedsmen) Ltd., 123 Harmony Row, Govan, Glasgow, G51 3NB. Tel: 041 440 0033

Sports Turf Surfaces, Newbridge Industrial Estate, Newbridge, Midlothian Tel: 031-333-2345