

## Chairman's Message

When greenkeepers amalgamated into one association earlier this year, they adopted a theme for change.

Over the last 20 years, our associations had remained dormant. What had been accomplished? One or two golf outings, a national tournament, a non-existent educational system and, as a result, lowly paid jobs with little or no recognition from anyone.

Fortunately throughout Britain, we do have people with foresight and imagination who realise that opportunities exist to make the greenkeeping profession powerful and respected.

In the last year, with many hours spent round the meeting table, the new association's guidelines and objectives have been hammered out, pointing us in a more progressive direction.

To assist further in this task, an executive director, Neil Thomas, has been appointed and I am confident that the board of management's selection will have an immediate impact on the association. We wish Neil a warm welcome.

To communicate and, most importantly, to carry the message that the course manager/greenkeeper is vital to the game of golf, this magazine has been selected as the association's official journal. And, from next month, it takes a new title - the *Golf Course*.

The *Golf Course* will contain news and features to inform, educate and entertain the membership,

while keeping the golf-related community in touch with what is happening in the industry. It is thought that the new title will have a wider appeal than that of its predecessor, *Greenkeeper*.

My tenure as chairman has reached its latter stages and I feel proud to be in the company of honest, hard-working board members, who have assisted me in the decisions that needed to be taken in the formation of what I believe will be a great association.

*Walter Woods, Chairman, British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association.*

## OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Gerry Coley. Gerry was for many years Course Manager at the Wentworth Club and as such was one of the characters within the industry. He handled, every year, more big tournaments and televised events than any other course manager in the United Kingdom. As a result he was well used to pressure and it is therefore doubly sad that his death comes less than two months after a well earned retirement. Gerry will be missed by family, friends and those in all areas of golf who knew him.

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## People, Places, Products

Richard Walne, former technical field representative at TORO UK, has been appointed international product development manager and is now based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Educated in Ipswich and Felixstowe, Richard is married to Annette with daughters Karen and Rebecca. Prior to his appointment with TORO in 1979, he worked for Ransomes.



Richard Walne.

The new general manager of Mowing Machine Maintenance of Wath on Dearne is Roy Stinton. He moves from Ransomes, who recently acquired the South Yorkshire-based company.

Roy started his career with Ransomes in the laboratory where he subsequently became chief metallurgist. For the past ten years, he was general works manager and had previously

been manager of the forge and press shop.

Roy, 54, and wife Josephine will be living in Mexborough.

An Atco gangmower used to prepare the Muirfield fairways for the Open brought this praise from head greenkeeper David Kirkcaldy.

"The Gangmaster provided a



Roy Stinton.

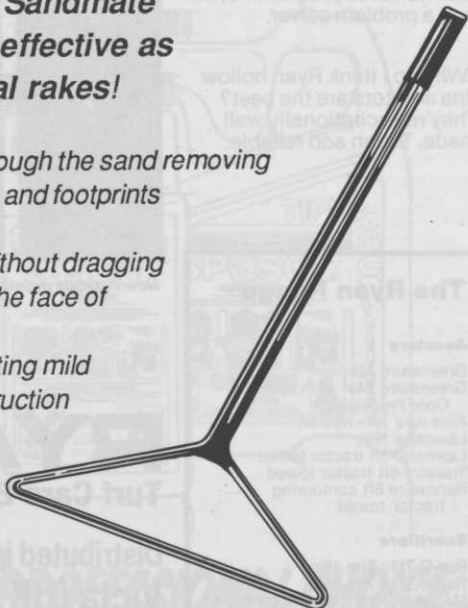
first-class finish, even on high undulating ground and under wet conditions. I particularly like the front and rear rollers and the calibrated height of cut adjustment. The unit is also simple to maintain and adjust and easy to store and transport."

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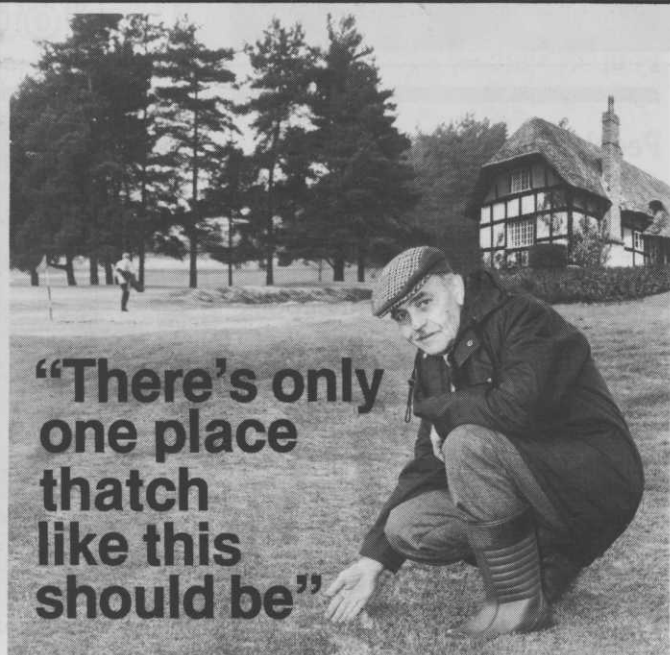
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"There's only one place thatch like this should be"

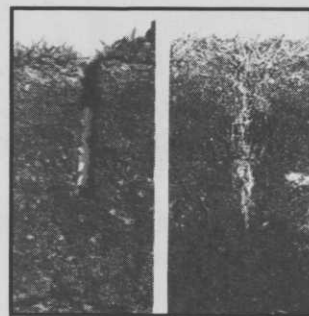
"When you think how weather-tight a thatched roof is, you can see how a build up of thatch will block out air, light and water from reaching the roots. Of course, a little bit of thatch is normal and helps turf to wear better. But, if it builds up too much, you will soon have problems.

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**People, Places, Products - Continued...**

Jacobsen Turf Equipment's Racine, Wisconsin headquarters recently launched a new triplex. The Tri-King 1471 riding reel

mower is designed to provide efficient mowing of formal turf areas in an economical machine. Hydraulic drive, aircraft yoke-type steering, a foot-operated hydraulic reel lift with automatic start/stop and a 71in cutting width are the main features.

The 1471 from Jacobsen.



A new nine-strong range of lawn and amenity grass seed mixtures has been introduced by Hunters of Chester.

Topping the range is Supreme, a 70-30 blend of Waldorf chewings fescue and Highland brown top bent, which has been designed to produce 'county' standard golf and bowling greens and cricket squares. For the same purpose, there's Sovereign, a mixture of Barfalla chewings fescue, Boreal creeping red fescue, Poa pratensis and Highland brown top bent.

For use on golf tees, the Sports mixture contains smooth stalk meadow grass, Waldorf chewings fescue, Ensylva creeping red fescue and Highland brown top bent.

The sports section of the new range is completed by Outfields, a general purpose playing fields mixture containing Sprinter perennial ryegrass, Cascade chewings fescue, Boreal creeping red fescue and Highland brown top bent, and two cost effective outfields mixtures.

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# MACHINERY REVIEW

John Campbell Assesses The Ransomes Verticut 214

Bob Moreton was impressed by the Verticut 214.



MODERN golfers are more critical of turf conditions than their predecessors ever were. At one time, they were content just to have the greens in good condition, but now they insist on the same high level of upkeep on the fairways, giving a good lie for every shot.

The trend for higher standards on fairways encouraged Ransomes to develop the Verticut 214, which is capable of improving large grassed areas, especially golf course fairways. This machine is designed to control lateral surface growth by verticutting to prevent the build-up of excessive fibre or thatch. Vigorous new growth is encouraged and playing surfaces presented in peak condition.

Ransomes Verticut 214 is a compact, three-unit machine that can be hitched or unhitched easily from most popular makes of tractor. Hydraulic drive verticut reels with spiral cutting action provide efficient operation. Depth adjustment is controlled by front and rear full length rollers and the floating head action of the units allows them to follow ground contours without damaging the turf.

Hydraulically powered verticut reels comprise 18 discs, each fit-

ted with three reversible steel blades spaced  $1\frac{1}{4}$ in apart and revolving at 1,200rpm. Hydraulic control is by means of a single lever, located behind the tractor seat, putting the verticut reels in drive, neutral or reverse.

Linking the verticutting unit to the tractor's three point linkage and connecting the pto shaft can be completed in a few minutes and is just as easily detached by the operator alone. The machine is lifted by tractor hydraulics for easy transport.

Evaluation tests of the Verticut 214 were undertaken at Sunningdale by Jack McMillan and at The Berkshire by Bob Moreton. After using the machine extensively, both agreed the Verticut 214 performed verticutting work on the fairways smoothly and efficiently. The normal working speed of 4mph was ideally suited for doing the job over reasonably undulating ground.

An experienced operator is necessary to obtain the best results - setting the height of the verticut reels is simple, but choosing the right penetration depth to do the work properly requires the expertise of a good greenkeeper. Floating head action of the verticut units allows

them to cope with the severest undulations and the front and rear rollers prevent damage to turf.

One problem they foresaw in initial verticutting work on densely matted fairways was coping with the vast amount of fibre and thatch displaced by the machine. Sweeping up afterwards was necessary to remove residue and leave fairways trim and tidy for play. If verticutting work is done at regular intervals, there is usually little fibre removed to present problems afterwards, for it soon decomposes.

Time of the year is an important consideration for verticutting operations - spring and late summer are probably best. Verticutting can be done at any time during the growing period, provided that weather conditions are favourable - not during drought - and it only needs the verticutting reels properly set for moderate depth penetration.

Jack and Bob agreed that using the Ransomes Verticut 214 would lead to a vast improvement in the condition of fairways, for it is a fast, effective way to control the build-up of thatch. They were impressed by the robustness of the machine and simplicity of operation and control.

# EDUCATION - WHO NEEDS IT?

A personal view by Eddie Park

WE HAVE listened for years to people talking about the need for better greenkeeper training and patently it is a disgrace that golf has done so little to provide the training for those to whom clubs entrust their most valuable asset. The usual woolly belief that somehow individual clubs should manage training themselves has made it possible for national bodies to evade their responsibilities for far too long.

Of late, we have seen the Greenkeeper Training Committee grappling with this thorny problem and slowly producing a scheme that must, at least, have a fair trial. If I do not sound altogether convinced, it is because I have my doubts as to whether it all goes far enough.

Better training for today's greenkeepers has a strong appeal for those directly involved, as they feel that their status will thereby be enhanced, but we should recognise that it also has a strong appeal for those in authority. They reason that it would get them off the hook of being held partly responsible for the poor state of so many courses!

In recent years, greenkeeping has been seen by an ever-increasing number of perceptive young men as a desirable career and many of them are now coming through into positions of responsibility. They have found their own ways of improving promotion chances. I sat at table recently with three young course managers and was impressed with their knowledge and commitment, but even they had worries.

So, I come to the crux of this article. If I am right in my belief that the problems of maintaining golf courses are really very complex (in human terms, as well as technical), are there not other people who need education, not just the greenkeeper? And if we confine education to the greenkeeper, will the situation on our golf courses ever improve?

Now that I have time to travel, I see more golf courses and the message that comes back loud

and clear, certainly from those at the sharp end, is that the major problems arise from the ignorance of the customers! I deliberately use that word because I believe that all those who work in a service industry (with greater job security than in manufacturing) must recognise that, in today's consumer orientated society, the customer really must come first, which is not to say that he can have his own way, however daft his demands!

We have to educate him and channel his golfing desires so that he wants, and is willing to pay for, the best possible golf course that is viable on his particular site. And to stop him interfering with the implementation of sound long-term policy.

This process of educating the consumer is, I believe, the factor that is too often neglected in golf course maintenance. I will not pretend that it is easy - for too long the British golfer has been fed with the belief that he can have whatever he demands. If he likes the look of Augusta on TV, then he should ask for it on his own course - be it on London clay or on a Scottish moor or on a potato field in the Midlands.

Always, too, there is somebody with a chemical or a machine or a construction outfit who says he can make these dreams come true. No wonder the green committee and the head greenkeeper are under almost constant pressure.

Now, I know that the natural reaction to all this pressure is to play the game with the cards held closely against the chest - in a word, secrecy - but I am for the promotion of education, for the very good reason that it is much more likely to work.

The recent regrettable happenings at St Pierre, when one of the world's great golfers, Seve Ballesteros, let off steam about slow greens, lends point to my case. The subsequent behaviour of most (but not all) of the golfing Press was unthinking, ignorant and uncaring. It was just another story.

As on similar occasions in the past, the PGA European Tour does not seem to be geared up to dealing adequately with this kind of situation. It was left to David Jones to tell the story (*Greenkeeper*, June) and tell it very well, but I am afraid he was preaching to the converted, many of whom have suffered in the same way.

I think many people would benefit from some basic education in the maintenance of golf courses. The term 'golfer' actually covers them all and, generalising further, it is those who are, or have been, good golfers who most need to be disabused of the idea that playing skills equate to expertise on courses.

Club golfers and committees are the first target - it is a fallacy for greenkeepers to want to be rid of committees, although I can understand why. But just reason it out. If you buy an electrical appliance and it proves to be faulty, you expect the firm to have a customer relations department to deal with your complaints. The golf customer expects no less and that is, or should be, the function of golf committees. Both customers and committeemen need education in what they are talking about.

I can best illustrate my thinking from personal experience. The idea that you can explain golf courses to golfers in half an hour over a drink dies hard. It is just not that simple. It means demonstrations on the course and it is too time consuming to hit enough people to have any significant effect. I am quite frequently asked by individuals to "see what you think of our course, old boy," which is even less productive.

In the past, we have recommended the concept of a club meeting where all the silly ideas can be aired and answered. It will sound a risky scheme to many but, properly organised, it can be very effective and the course manager can find himself working in a much improved climate with golfers actually encouraging him to get on with, hitherto, unpopular measures such as a regular programme of aeration.



Some years ago, I realised the value of colour slides, especially of close-ups of turf and, for my own interest, I developed the necessary expertise and a large collection, some of which have appeared in *Greenkeeper*. An invaluable aid!

It probably is not enough for the green committee and greenkeeper to try to do this on their own, simply because of the universal adage that 'no man is a prophet in his own country.' (Or, as it is usually expressed, 'well he would say that wouldn't he').

In fact, if I am right and there is a need for this service, it is too big for individuals to run. However, it could be just one of the items we could expect to be organised by the national and county unions.

Perhaps the first stage would be to put the unions themselves on the list for this particular type of education. It must be at least ten years since Peter Thomson remarked that the essence of good golf is ball control and that you can't learn that on soft,



Augusta - often desired by UK golfers.

holding greens. Yet, these national and county bodies persist in selecting as venues so many courses providing such greens.

The modern greenkeeper has developed a streak of independence and that must be for the good. It should not, however, lead him into the mistaken belief that he should do everything for himself. The Public Relations work that is so clearly needed (another name for the education of others!) could well be organised, when it can draw breath, by BIGGA, but it may not be possible for greenkeepers themselves to do the speaking-out. There are times when hard things need to be said!

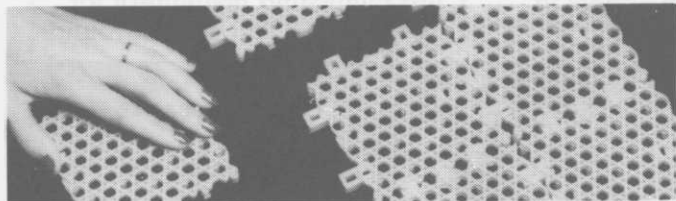
Maybe under its new name, the *Golf Course*, this publication can reach a wider golfing readership to pass on the message.

Most improvements in golf course maintenance have originated from the greenkeeper and now is the time to do something about these 'human' situations, which are at the root of many of today's problems.

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## COMPANY PROFILE - PARKERS



An historic farmhouse (right) and oak tree (left) stand at the entrance to Parkers.



John Campbell gets it straight from the horse's mouth while Jim Parker (left) and Peter Simpson look on.

PARKERS of Worcester Park, Surrey are well-known to most greenkeepers and golf club officials in the south, as well as further afield - hardly surprising since the company have been in the sports turf industry for many decades, writes *John Campbell*.

There are three divisions - turf management, Parkers' mower repairs and horses. The Parker family have long been associated with equestrian events and they maintain a large indoor riding school and a stable block within the grounds. The present headquarters includes a 500-year-old farmhouse and the remains of an oak tree of similar vintage at the entrance.

Company chairman George Parker has been involved with the business since 1927. Nephew Jim Parker is managing director and Peter Simpson sales director.

The company are well placed to cater for the needs of London and the south-east, where there is a high concentration of outdoor sports facilities, and about 70 are employed with

seven full-time reps covering the territory.

They have a large number of special haulage vehicles for the transport of fertilisers, compost bulk deliveries, grass seed, machinery, etc, and a fleet of service and repair vans manned by skilled mechanics are always on call to deal with machinery breakdowns during the busy growing season.

Parkers have always been a friendly family business and have maintained a close association with the industry, arranging regular educational seminars on the upkeep of sports turf and artificial surfaces, and they sponsor popular golf days for club secretaries and golf course managers at first-class venues.

The firm have a modern compost mixing plant with extensive undercover storage space to meet the needs of a wide variety of sports turf requirements. Parkers fertiliser mixtures for fine turf and outfield areas are used extensively.

They are the main agents in the south-east for Notts Sport

Grass Reinforcement, a synthetic fabric that's as flexible and easy to lay as carpet and allows grass to grow through it, providing anchorage and protection for the roots. It's a boon for paths, banks and worn-out walks and can be used on cliff faces, river sides and eroded roadsides.

Parkers have established an enviable reputation for reliable and efficient service and have an impressive list of regular customers, including Sunningdale and Walton Heath, the All-England Lawn Tennis Club, Hurlingham and Twickenham.

Many company products go to Europe and the United Arab Emirates and they also import a number of items from the USA, including the popular Parker spreader.

Since 1951, they have been the sole distributors of the SISIS range of equipment for London and the southern counties. They are also dealers for Iseki tractors and supply most of the main manufacturers grass mowing and turf cultivating machinery for golf courses and sportsgrounds.



Inside the compost mixing shed.



Compost in the course of preparation.