

ment with a very promising future and I was keen to be part of it."

What did he think the main problems were on new courses? "Very often it's drainage - drainage should be done properly before construction work is started," Jim said. "Compaction is also another problem common to new courses - very often it occurs around greens. Experience has taught me to try and keep the movement of soil, materials and heavy machinery well away from playing areas to eliminate the danger of compaction in the early construction stages.

"If it has not been possible to use stone separating machinery in the construction work, due to weather and other factors, stones coming to the surface may cause a few headaches for the first 18



Scottish pro Harry Bannerman with Jim Grainger.

months after the course is opened. Golfers are annoyed when they damage an expensive club on a partially concealed stone near the surface.

"I found a good way to tackle the problem was to enlist a squad of enthusiastic ladies to systematically deal with the worst spots on fairways by prising out surface stones with a screwdriver. This was highly successful, but time consuming.

"We have a situation here where private houses are being built around the perimeter of the course as part of the development and it may necessitate access for mains services, such as water and electricity, over parts of the course. Naturally, we are expected to reinstate the ground after the work has been done, but these are minor matters we take in our stride."

What advice did he have for greenkeepers working on new courses? "Try to be patient and remember it takes time and a lot of hard work to bring a course to maturity. Mowing height is very important and don't cut too close for the first couple of seasons until there is a good amount of fibre in the turf to act as a cushion.

"I would also recommend starting off with old machinery for the first season until the course has settled down, after which it is generally possible to use new equipment without fear of damaging blades on stones or other debris.

"As for running the course, I

deal with Ken Smith, the developer, on a weekly basis and this is a good arrangement. We have a golf club committee representing the membership and I occasionally attend their meetings as an advisor. I think it is important to keep in touch with the golfers to let them know what's happening on the course - it also gives them the opportunity to air their views.

"When I came to the club the only equipment was a set of Ransomes Magna gangmowers, which did all the initial mowing while the course was in a semi-rough state. We used a couple of old pedestrian motor mowers for the greens until we were satisfied that new machines would bring

Continued on page 28...



Letham Grange developer Ken Smith.

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Jim points to the house he built for himself beside the golf course.

Mowing down Ballesteros

Golf: DONALD STEEL

SEVERIANO BALLESTEROS was largely preaching to the converted last Sunday when he delivered his sermon on firm, fast greens, even if he thought his was a lone voice crying in the wilderness.

The difference between fast and slow greens is roughly the equivalent of playing tennis on grass and clay, or trying to bowl leg-spinners on a wicket with bounce.

Margins for error are less. Touch, judgment and nerve have to be finely-tuned, but the false premise on which Ballesteros' based his argument was

that he was applying a principle regardless of circumstance. The more apt question is should the presence of professionals for one week in the year override what happens on the other 51? Greenkeepers don't offer tips to professionals on how to play, and so they should return the compliment. Preparing courses for tournaments in Britain in May is not the same as preparing courses in the southern states of America or even northern Spain.

Conditions rarely co-operate at this time of year in allowing greenkeepers to provide the fast greens that they would like and which most know is right. How often have we seen greenkeepers act against their better judgment, cut too low in a cold April and then face the wrath of tournament players because there is no grass?

Ballesteros will find that greens will get faster as the summer progresses, although I doubt anything in Europe will be as quick as the greens for the US Open or Ryder Cup at Muirfield Village.

Regular close cutting conforms very much with Peter Thomson's long-held belief that the art of greenkeeping consists not so much in knowing how to get the grass to grow as knowing how to keep it down. But whatever the complaints of Ballesteros and Bernhard Langer at St. Pierre, which last Sunday celebrated its 25th anniversary, Jeff Hawkes found no problem.

In his defeat of Ballesteros, he had a total of only 19 putts on 15 greens, so no wonder Ballesteros was quick to add that he wasn't blaming the greens for his defeat. Nevertheless, he would have been better advised to have kept his mouth shut.

At best, he stood to be misunderstood; at worst, he ran the risk of upsetting those who work their hardest for the welfare of the players for a tiny fraction of the reward.



Ballesteros... better to keep quiet

● REPRODUCED FROM THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, MAY 17, 1987.

During the Epson Grand Prix, Severiano Ballesteros criticised your greens. Why? And what did he say?

Why he criticised them only Seve can say. But from what I later heard, he felt the greens should have been faster if the European team is to stand any chance against the USA in the next Ryder Cup match. He said they had too much grass on them and he thought they should have been scalped. The fact that he was having a problem surprised me somewhat, as it was only three days before that I was told Seve liked the greens, but he thought that, if the dry weather continued, they might need watering to stop them from becoming too hard, or was it "firm?"

What was your answer?

His comments were made to me via a third party, Tony Gray of the PGA European Tour, and I replied that they were being cut at 1/8th of an inch, which is the lowest I would mow my greens and this conforms to the PGA European Tour guidelines for tournament play.

Did any member of the Press ask for your side of the story?

Only one, Michael Williams of the *Daily Telegraph*. Donald Steel, the architect and golf writer, was visiting the course on business and, from his comments in *The Sunday Telegraph*, he knows enough about greenkeeping to give an opinion.

Can a tournament professional compare United States conditions with United Kingdom conditions?

They can't be compared. However, professionals do make their own comparisons. Why, I will never know. I wouldn't compare conditions in North Yorkshire to those on the South Coast and expect them to be the same in early May, let alone compare courses in Augusta to those in South Wales.

What were the PGA European Tour instructions? Did you carry them out and did they support you when you came under such criticism?

Tony Gray inspected the course on the Monday evening. He was happy with its condition - putting surfaces were firmer and

SEVE, ARE YOU SURE?

Here we go again! This time, probably the world's greatest golfer, respected throughout our profession for his playing prowess, has decided to speak out on another aspect of the game. Fine. Seve is entitled - and better qualified than many - to his opinion, but, on this occasion, some of his comments appear to be misplaced. *Greenkeeper* interviews the course manager Seve 'challenged', David Jones of St Pierre.

smoother than last year. Any instructions were limited to where pins had to be sited and he knew that the Tour's guidelines on heights of cut were being followed. Yes, I think they were supportive, inasmuch as they accepted that to cut any lower would not have been good for the turf.

Would you ever consider mowing your greens lower than 1/8th of an inch?

As you know, St Pierre is the flagship of the Country Club Hotels group of courses. My main concern is to ensure that, for the many thousands of guests and societies that use our courses and stay at the hotel throughout the year, the courses are presented in the finest condition possible. I would not be able to be sure of this if we mowed the greens at less than 1/8th in early May. Under normal circumstances, we don't mow less than 5/32 and this height would not be set until the end of May/early June.

All my greenkeepers take a pride in their work. They all know that the course was presented in better condition this year than last and that it will be even better next year and the year after. Greens will become

firmer and faster not by scalping, but by good long-term management and by obtaining the right grass species to give less resistance to the ball as it rolls. This must be the aim of every golf course manager.

What do you think of professionals when they make this type of comment?

To give Seve the benefit of the doubt, perhaps he meant that, compared to Augusta, St Pierre's greens were slower. True! If Europe hopes to win the Ryder Cup, it needs to practise on greens of the same pace as the ones it is to play on. True! But don't look for fast greens in this country in early May, except perhaps on links courses.

What was Jim Arthur's view when he walked the course the following day?

Jim said the course was in the best possible condition for the time of year, with the grass species we have on the greens at the moment, which is the plague of most golf greens in our country, Poa Annua.

What are your long-term aims for St Pierre's greens?

These will be achieved through sound greenkeeping principles to bring about the change required in the grass content of the greens, which will give faster putting surfaces. Surely, it must be commonsense to realise that, if firm, fast greens were possible by merely scalping all the grass off, then every golf course in the country would have tournament standard putting surfaces all the year round?

What reason do you give for the Poa Annua problem on most greens in the UK?

I hope that, at long last, greenkeepers now know the reasons - too much water, the application of NPK fertilisers and compaction due to frequent play. Water can be cut down to a minimum, fertiliser applied sensibly in the form of nitrogen only and play can be counteracted by an increase in aeration through a regular slitting of greens programme.

It is all too easy to 'peak' up greens by feeding, watering and then scalping down for a four-



David Jones - few sought his side of the story...

day tournament. Any amateur lawn expert can do that.

You sound as if you are a firm believer in what Jim Arthur advocates.

Yes, I am. I have known Jim for some time now. I have listened and followed his advice and seen the results. There is no doubt that, if the principles he has advocated for many years had previously been followed at St Pierre and on other courses he advises, they would not have Poa Annua dominated greens. Too many greenkeepers don't follow 'traditional greenkeeping policy' and yet say they do. Unfortunately, the proof is in the pudding their members have to play on in winter.

Would it have been possible, bearing in mind the good weather you have had, to have brought the course on more by such an early date?

If are you asking could I have produced more grass, the answer is 'yes' by the heavy use of fertilisers. But the problem for Seve was *too much* grass, not too little. We topdressed the greens twice before the tournament, the last dressing going on at the end of April.

This incorporated a small amount of sulphate of ammonia, hoof and horn and iron sulphate. We suspended our aeration programme at the start of April.

Seven days prior to the Epsom event, all the greens were sprayed with a seaweed extract, which incorporated iron to produce a pleasant picture for

television. We used iron to avoid producing any sort of fast-growing sward, which would have caused the pace of the greens to slow down. Seven days before the tournament, we were cutting at 5/32 coming down to 1/8 two days prior to the event. This height was then maintained for the tournament's duration. The last verti-cutting of the greens took place on the Tuesday before the tournament. Fairways and tees were also sprayed with iron sulphate to give good definition.

What would the course have played like if we had had a normal spring?

I don't think that, apart from not having as many leaves out on the trees, it would have looked, or played, any differently. We wintered well this year. I didn't have the scars on the greens from fusarium attack that I inherited when I was appointed in February 1986, so I was not desperate for fill-in growth. If anything, the early spring this year caused the meadowgrass to flower which, from a pace point of view, would have made the greens slower than the week before.

Perhaps it's time the golf professional prepared for the course and stopped expecting the course to be prepared for him. Then perhaps we might see some true professionalism in golf, based on sound judgement on the putting greens and not geared to some sort of robot-like putting stroke.

A problem shared...

Stephen Redman (pictured right) is head greenkeeper at Yelverton Golf Club, Devon. Stephen was prompted to relate his experiences after reading John Campbell's interview with Laurence Pithie of Minchinhampton GC (*Out On The Course*, January/February 1987).

YELVERTON is an 18-hole course, situated within the Dartmoor National Park on common land known as Roborough Down. It is approximately 700 feet above sea level on the south-western slopes of Dartmoor.

The common is grazed all-year-round by ponies and a few cattle and, during the summer, sheep and more cattle are also put out to graze, plus the ponies foal down, effectively doubling their numbers.

The course, in general, is quite free-draining and the acid topsoil ranges from 8in deep in some places to non-existent in others.

The course was constructed around old mine and quarry workings in one part and more open heathland in another and the disused Devonport Leat crosses the course in several places.

Heather and gorse-covered mounds and deep hollows make up the features around the old

mine workings and wide fairways bordered by heather and gorse in the more open areas, with clumps of thorn trees, scrub oak and various other indigenous trees, complete the picture.

The grass is predominantly fescue and remarkably resilient – it never ceases to amaze me how well it stands up to the pressure of all-year-round golf and grazing.

Animal damage

One of the main problems is, of course, animal damage. Apart from the hoof marks of ponies (they also nibble at the greens producing a very unsatisfactory putting surface), the mess on a green first thing in the morning, after 50 or so sheep have chosen to bed down, must be seen to be believed.

We do not erect any fencing around the greens. It was tried, but proved unsatisfactory,



because of the diversity of grazing animals. To make it strong enough to keep out cattle and ponies and secure enough to keep out sheep meant that golfers had difficulty in getting into the greens.

So some animal damage is considered inevitable. I find conservative use of fertiliser and frequent topdressing seem to be the best way of maintaining a reasonable putting surface.

Another problem is overgrazing. It is impossible for us to define fairways with a cut as the animals tend to crop everything at the same height, so it is necessary to mark the edges of fairways with a line.



The carry from the 10th tee to the fairway, which is dissected by a ridge known as the Devonport Leat.



The 16th green at Yelverton is approached by way of a dog-leg fairway to the right.

However, the biggest problem of all is the rough – because of overgrazing, we are reaching the stage where the rough is gradually being eaten away. During winter months, ponies think nothing of grazing on the gorse and heather and any young trees are instantly doomed. Then, with increased grazing in summer, any new growth is immediately eaten down.

We are, at present, in consultation with the Dartmoor National Park's ecologist in an attempt to find ways of regenerating the growth of heather and gorse. Only time will tell how successful we shall be.

Our maintenance consists of lots of aeration work, frequent topdressing, a little fertiliser and regular scarifying and mowing of greens and tees. During summer, the chain harrows are rarely still on fairways. There is no watering system, but then

Dartmoor is one of the wettest places in England. You don't always get the water quite when you want it, but you never have to wait too long.

Spraying of chemicals is something we have to be very careful about but, fortunately, we seldom need to use them.

There is a greenstaff of four

(including myself), which is kept pretty busy all year round. The majority of comment from visitors and members is praiseworthy, but I dream of the day when the fairy godmother of greenkeepers will come and spirit away all the animals. Then we'll give 'em a course to be proud of!



The par-three 12th from the teeing area. "On a clear day, you can see the moors in the background," Stephen promised!

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People, Places, Products



Tony Cundall.

SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield) now has Tony Cundall as sales rep for Greater Manchester, Cheshire and Staffordshire. Tony previously worked on the greens staff at Crewe Golf Club for seven years and became a landscaping contractor. He has lived in Holmes Chapel for 15 years.

Mark Mills is single and lives in Ashstead, Surrey. He will be working in the south-east as a demonstrator/salesman. Mark was formerly with SISIS distributor T. Parker and Sons, Surrey.



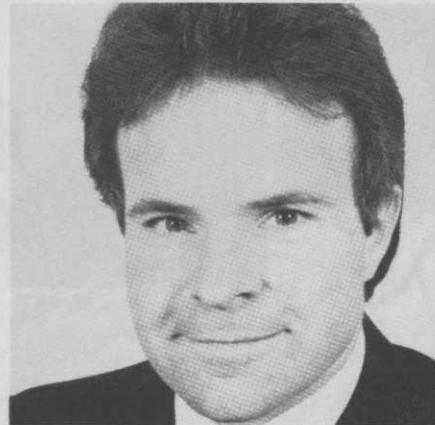
Mark Mills.

TORO has taken on two additional product managers. Barry Beckett lives in Ipswich and Bob Buckingham at Felixstowe.

A series of seminars has been held at TORO's head office, York, Evesham and Edinburgh. These covered TORO user product courses for the Greensmaster 300 and the Groundsmaster.

With a total dealer attendance of 65 and 170 users, TORO will continue these courses on its increasing range of professional

turf and lawn management equipment. For further details, contact Graham Dale, Lely (UK)



Barry Beckett.

The National Turfgrass Council has taken a major step to improve the database of independently published statistical information on the UK turfgrass industry.

It has brought out its Special Report No 2, giving the main contents and findings of a detailed research study of the amenity turfgrass market undertaken by Brian Symes in 1984 for BASF UK and now released in an edited version, with a new specially written section on domestic lawns.

A Research Study And Review Of Intensively Managed Amenity Turfgrass In The UK is the first published review of the subject since the NERC report of 1977.

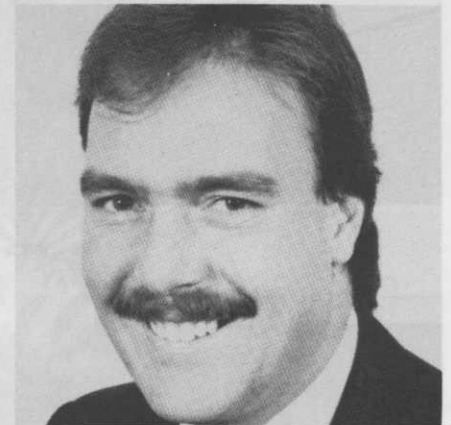
Symes' work does not cover semi-natural and open spaces, but gives data to compare with the NERC figures in the intensively managed and domestic lawn sectors and presents new comparisons of management intensity and likely market models.

The report is available at £8.50 (postage included) from The Secretary, NTC, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire BD16 1HZ.

Rolawn has announced further expansion plans with the opening of two distribution depots and new appointments.

Guy Longbottom, 29, Rolawn's unit manager at Fenton Barns, East Lothian has been made Scottish area manager to oversee and develop Rolawn's operations, which include a new depot beside the M8 in the centre of Glasgow, managed by Iain

TORO, Station Road, St Neots, Huntingdon, Cambs PE19 1QH. Tel: 0480 76971.



Bob Buckingham.

Campbell.

Kathryn Arter, 22, sales administrator from the company's head office at Elvington, York, has moved to Leeds to run a depot on the Cross Green Industrial Estate, serving South and West Yorkshire.

Rolawn has been chosen by the Glasgow Garden Festival '88 Company as exclusive supplier of turf for the 120 acre Clydeside site. Over 40,000 square metres of turf are being grown to specification, with a phased delivery. Rolawn is also contributing £18,500 in sponsorship to the festival.

"We are particularly pleased to be associated with the Glasgow Garden Festival, as our roots are very much in Scotland, managing director Ken Dawson said: "The company started there 12 years ago and most of the turf will come from our production unit in East Lothian."



Guy Longbottom.



Terry Cullen, Bob Cave and Eddie Stilwell.



Russ Jordan with Ryan and Woodsman equipment.

Following the retirement of Dougie Wood after 15 years with Victa, Bob Cave has been appointed technical and service manager. Bob has been project engineer with Victa UK for four years, having previously spent 12 years on research and development with Victa in Australia.

Two new appointments are Eddie Stilwell (south) and Terry Cullen (north) as technical service representatives. Also under-

taking a new role is Russ Jordan, who has been with the company for nine years. He is now company demonstrator.

Fen Turf Dressings is now able to add Farmgran Seaweed Soil Conditioner and Improver to its composts. After talks with Farmura Environmental Products, Fen Turf Dressings is offering customers the service of having

the free flowing granulate added at manufacture, thus saving an extra task.

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EDUCATION CORNER

A consortium involving some of the most influential names in the sports and amenity turfgrass and landscape market has been formed with the objective of holding a national series of regional turf-care workshop seminars throughout the UK later this year. The companies include ICI,

SISIS, TORO, Lely, SAI and Famura. Each workshop will include practical demonstrations of machinery, as well as formal lectures from experts, such as the STRI. Each workshop will be chaired by Howard Swan, chairman of the National Turfgrass Council.

Keith Cleverly, ICI's professional products business manager, said: "this concept has brought together a group of non-competing major suppliers under the common theme of education through communication. It is right that they should be the leaders in this instance, a lead that will surely be followed by others in future." Further details of the turfcare

workshops, including dates and venues, will be announced in *Greenkeeper*.

The Health and Safety Executive has published a free leaflet explaining how the Health and Safety at Work Act is put into practice.

Working To Make Work Safer is an introduction to the Health and Safety Executive and Commission and fulfils the need for a basic guide to its organisation and functions. The leaflet describes those who are affected and outlines the legal requirements of the act.

HSE's national network of area offices is staffed by inspectors who visit and review work activities. They give advice and guidance and, when necessary, issue enforcement notices and prosecute. The inspectorates' duties and responsibilities are outlined briefly.

All area offices and information points are listed in the leaflet. *Working To Make Work Safer* is available from HSE enquiry points at London (01-221 0870); Bootle (051-951 4381) and Sheffield (0742 752539).

The Somerset College of Agriculture and Horticulture poses the question: *Spraying - Are You Legal?*

Legislation introduced last October states that pesticide users must have 'received adequate instruction and guidance in the safe, efficient and humane use of pesticides' and be 'competent for the duties which they are called

upon to perform.' Cannington College can provide this instruction and prepare operators for NPTC certificates of competence.

Further information from Miss E. Savigear, Somerset College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2LS. Tel: 0278 652226.

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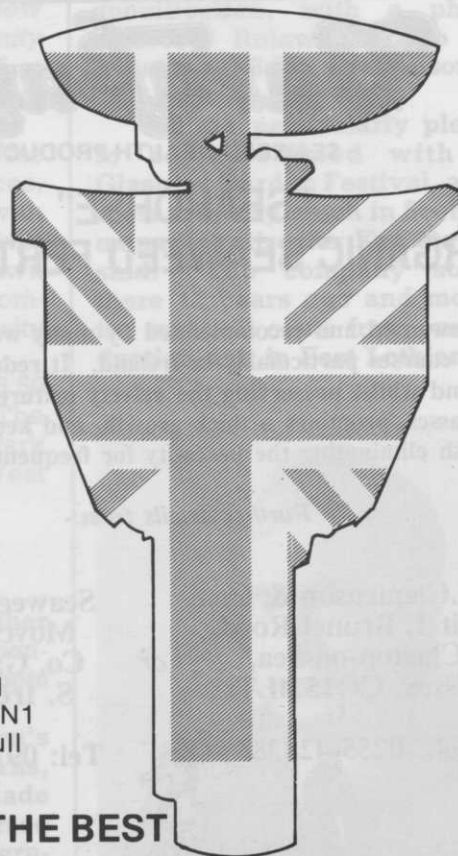
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