

# does it...

Hayes expressed the opinion that even setting aside the possibilities of restrictions being imposed on the exportation of soil, the sheer weight of large deliveries might be uneconomic. In his view, British turf suppliers would find it worthwhile establishing a link with a similar, existing company and grow turf on the Continent. Equally, the possibility of problems arising when British companies get involved in other European countries can be real enough, he suggests.

In Germany, specifications for golf course construction are very much allied to German based DIN standards – which differ from our own BSI requirements. This raises the question of Brussels style bureaucracy! Negotiations are already under way (with the Sports Council and the STRI battling for the UK) to endeavour to reach agreement on the new Franco-German driven CEN standards, which will set the specification for the construction of greens.

At present, standards for the construction of soccer and hockey pitches and tennis courts are being debated. As an example of what this entails, Dr Hayes tells me that Germans are seeking to establish a standard for soccer pitches – similar to the 'super' levels laid down for the Olympic Stadium at Munich.

One can imagine the reaction of UK Parish or Town Councils or other local authorities faced with the costs of providing 'park's pitches' equating to those standards of excellence! The STRI takes the view that providing a grass pitch is able of producing an even bounce of the ball, has sufficient traction (grip) and that drainage is good, the actual components used in its construction is of relatively no great import...

Golf courses? Dr Hayes is of the opinion that this important area will not be discussed and finalised for another two or three years.

As might be expected, that doyen of British greenkeeping practices and construction methods – Jim Arthur – has his own views on the subject. "Bureaucrats and politicians are meddling in matters which are beyond their comprehension," says Jim, referring to attempts by Brussels to standardise everything – never mind golf. He continued, "British architects and constructors, some of the most experienced people on the European scene, are apprehensive about the underlying implications of the Euro-CEN standards relative to golf course design and construction. There is no logic in Eurocrats wasting their time and our money trying to impose themselves by creating 'rule book' standards which will apply to both construction and the management of golf courses. Because they have no real experience or tradition of the game they are being blinded by the American way of doing things. They perceive target greens as the ultimate way that golf should be played this side of the Atlantic. Unless we dig our heels in, we British are in danger of selling our birthright down the river!"

Over-riding Brussels, CEN and all that, Jim is convinced that the game of golf as we know

it will be taken over by professionals. "Europe or not, it will all come down to money" says Jim. "The game will deteriorate into a professional lottery – run by and for professionals."

Greenkeeping? "There are some very good young people coming through" he says. "Hopefully, they will not be compromised by the dictats of commercially minded entrepreneurs motivated by the wrong reasons."

Talking of greenkeeping, David Whitaker, course manager at Wisley, made some pertinent comments related to his experience gained during a two and-a-half year stint at Golf du Domaine Imperial, an 18 hole Swiss course. In charge of a 9-hole in this country and keen to better himself, David jumped at the chance of going to Switzerland. "I didn't speak French and my support team of locals had never seen a golf course before – never mind worked on one!" he says.

Nevertheless, David soon got to grips with his dual problems and says that he soon developed his labour force into a working team – who wanted to learn more. Like so many young greenkeepers, David moved – in his case to Switzerland – to broaden his experience but not to stay indefinitely. "I always knew that I would return to home soil at some time" he says.

In David's opinion, countries such as France, Germany and Belgium are waking up to the needs of providing greenkeeper training. "Lots of chaps went for the money," says David. "Now, thanks to the efforts of BIGGA, salary levels in the UK are catching-up fast."

British greenkeepers eyeing EC countries should also bear in mind that many of the new developments are based on America practices – sand based greens, creeping bents and wall-to-wall irrigation. These types of courses call for a radically different approach compared to traditional UK turf management techniques.

In the final analysis, Europe is of course all about people, so the last word on the subject goes to BIGGA's Education Officer, David Golding. "Europe has come to us for greenkeepers" says David, "especially since we have raised the level of education to the point where many young greenkeepers are of outstanding management calibre. "In contrast", he continues, "little formal training is, or has been, available to young people in countries like Germany, Spain, France, Portugal or Holland".

Equally he confirmed that BIGGA approved colleges are increasingly aware of the potential importance of golf on the European continent. This autumn, Cannington College (Somerset) is introducing an HND educational programme linking European studies with greenkeeping courses. Elsewhere, other colleges have set out to encourage the use of a second language. Yes, the signs are good for those with a positive attitude, n'est pas!

■ The author, Cedric Johns, is an ex Fleet Street journalist who now runs his own marketing consultancy. He is also the editor of 'Pipelines'.

## New faces join BTME Steering Committee

Two new members have joined the 1993 BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition Steering Committee.

Lorna Tyson, from Lancashire College and Arthur Wood, from Iseki UK, were introduced at the Committee's first meeting for the 1993 event, at Aldwark Manor on May 21st.

The June 1st deadline for space allocation had prompted many exhibitors from 1992 to confirm their place for the 1993 event, the meeting heard. Together with new companies currently being allocated space, the Exhibition halls are rapidly filling up.

The Seminar Programme is now taking shape, together with the Social Programme, but details are still to be finalised. "Watch this space!" says Debbie Savage, BTME Exhibitions Officer.

Because of the big success in January, the Old Swan will once again be designated BIGGA's Exhibition and Conference Hotel. Rates have yet to be finalised, but price increases are expected to be modest and may not be increased at all.

A BTME newspaper is again to be produced for distribution to the trade. Companies planning to exhibit at the 1993 event are invited to submit information and photographs for publication.

For more information on the 1993 BTME, or for a copy of the Information Pack, contact Debbie Savage on 03473 581/2 or by fax on 03473 8864.

● BTME 1993 Steering Committee members are: Neil Thomas, Bill Lynch, Debbie Savage, BIGGA; Linda Manning, Arthur Wood, Iseki; Richard Bishop, Karen Smith, Ransomes Sims & Jefferies; Mike Coleman, Fuchsia Print & Publicity Services; Rachel Semlyen, Rolawn; David Palmer, Supaturf Products; David Boothby, Lely (UK) Ltd; Roger Mossop, ICI Professional Products; Jonathan Harmer, Farmura Environmental Products; Jonathan Gaunt, Golf Course Architect; Richard Manby, Joe Manby Ltd; Lorna Tyson, Lancashire College; Colin Gregory, Hardi Ltd.

## Modus 'T' set up machinery factory

The new management at Modus 'T' have been keeping a low profile while setting up their 10,000 sq.ft turf machinery factory at Wem in Shropshire.

"Having a 24 year old engineering company up our sleeves meant that we knew what to do, but I definitely had trouble separating my 'upmilling scarifiers' from my 'cast iron fish plates', says MD Adam Greaves. Design engineering work on redesigning the Powercore and Tri-Master products is completed, with the Powercore MkII prototype undergoing extensive field trials. Inherited quality shortcomings have now been remedied across the range and all parts are dispatched within 24 hours. Details, Tel: 0939 233213.