

Shutting down the system for winter

With tongue lodged firmly in cheek, Jack Wheeler, director of Watermation Maintenance Limited, suggested to editor White that the best possible tip he could give would be to provide his telephone number, thus saving readers the problems he describes as 'an endless list of pitfalls.' However, Jack insists that if you are going to undertake the shut-down task, the following are a few MUSTS.

- Start with the water supply. If you have a storage tank fed from the Water Authority main, turn off the stopcock and remove the plug from the base of the water meter. This item is often overlooked and an expensive error if replaced.
- The riser feeding the ball valve needs to be drained, and the arm and float removed. If this is not removed, when the tank freezes the float is forced upwards, causing damage to the valve seat or breaking the arm.
- Leave the tank full with water. If emptied, strong winds have been known to blow tanks off their concrete base. With a stream or lake as the water supply, remove the suction float and pipework.
- Pump House. Ensure that water cannot enter the pump house by shutting the suction valve. If this is inside the house and not underground, ensure that it is properly lagged, otherwise it will split and discharge the tank full of water. Remove both top and bottom plugs from the pump. There is a fair chance that corrosion or muck will block these, so rod them out. The pressure vessel needs draining of both water and air pressure. If the air remains in the vessel, undue strain will occur at the top and bottom flanges. Open all remaining pump house drain cocks. Obviously the pump must not run when drained, so remove pump fuses or open circuit breakers.
- On the course. Frost damage to pipework buried on the golf course in this country is rare. Manual hydrants should be opened at all the low greens and ditch crossings. Other than this, leaving the controller operating for a programmed one minute each week will ensure any water left in the pipes will be expelled through the pop-ups or auto drain valves. Furthermore, this will keep the solenoid pins from seizing up.

With all of the above completed, you should be able to relax for winter and enjoy Christmas.

Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

BIGGA IN EUROPE - HOLLAND

On 28 October, ten BIGGA members met for their first official meeting, staged at De Hilversumsche, a club offering us a most hospitable welcome and the use of their board-room.

According to the agenda of about eight points, the meeting began with an explanation of the present situation within BIGGA, and of course the future, especially the Association's desire to become more active internationally.

A 'Master Plan' for Europe was brought forward and a proposal was made urging members to travel to Harrogate for BTME '94 in order to attend the next European Forum, where all kinds of ideas and good intentions will be discussed. Hopefully, some of these will be put into practice within a reasonable time-span.

On the subject of raising 'live' matters amongst members, one significant question was posed: 'what kind of relationship will there be between BIGGA Holland and the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association (NGA)'?

It must be made clear that this must be one of a positive and constructive nature. An invitation will be sent to the secretary of the NGA to meet and discuss such matters, whilst at the same time the Netherlands Golf Federation will be invited to meet BIGGA Holland members. Members will be kept up to date on these activities. We have agreed that our next meeting will take place in February 1994.

Further points discussed posed questions of 'how and where the Association might be of assistance to its members here. 1) The position of the course manager/head greenkeeper. 2) The level of maintenance of Dutch courses. It became clear that on education and training, we in Holland might benefit from UK programmes which have already proved their value in Britain.

At the time scheduled the first meeting came to an end, though with many things requiring further thought and planning. In the bar we enjoyed a few drinks, sandwiches etc. BIGGA Holland has been lucky to find local sponsorship so quickly, provided by Pro-Grass (Professionals in Grass service). Pro-Grass managing director, Jan van Mondfrans, (a BIGGA member), will support this foreign section in the immediate future and we are most grateful for his kind gesture.



My personal thanks to Rob Judels, who has provided me with the notes taken by him, vitally necessary if I am to make a full report, which will most certainly find its way onto Neil Thomas's desk at Aldwark Manor.

FREDERICK ten HAGE

KENT

September 15 saw our Autumn Tournament at Langley Park, a day blessed by a fine morning, though a dull afternoon, and all a welcome change from the very wet weather we seem to have had of late. The morning Stableford competition was a hotly contested affair, with Rob Lucas coming out on top with 33 points, just in front of Peter Biscoe and Neal Carter on 32. Peter, just second on back nine score, held up English pride and prevented a Welsh whitewash.

A Stableford was again the format after lunch, the Sta-Brite Shield this time, bringing out the best in the Scots. The head and shoulders winner (in more ways than one), clear above the field was Malcolm Arthur with 35 points, whilst keeping it in the family in second place came Andy Arthur with 30 points. Sneaking into third was Langley Park's very own Derek Gould. The best trade score was that of Brian Willmot, whilst nearest the pin prize, kindly donated by Derek Gould, was won by Russell Judd. We all had a very enjoyable day and express thanks to our gracious hosts at Langley Park for looking after us so well. The catering staff put on a fine spread and those of us who took the hearty breakfast at 7.45 am certainly appreciate the stamina

exhibited in providing us with such a fine evening roast dinner. Many thanks to Derek and his hard working green staff. I think we can all appreciate it was a rather odd late summer period, although not too hot and sunny, very dry and then into early autumn and lashings of rain. Thanks to Langley's captain, Ian Russell, for presenting the prizes and to our trade friends for again supporting our events, especially Chris Sharp and Sta-Brite for donating the splendid afternoon prizes.

Let me recount some freak events of the day. On the first hole in the morning Andy Arthur managed to wrap a seven iron round a tree, snapping the shaft in two. If that wasn't enough to cause a major twinge in a Scotsman's pocket, on the same hole in the afternoon his tee shot saw not only the ball go flying up the fairway, but also the driver head, this time the shaft having snapped at the socket. This would not have normally been such a financial disaster, but it was one of those £100 carbon shafted jobs!

Pattison's Brian Willmot appeared to be on a bit of a 'small game shoot' in the afternoon: not content with almost knocking seven bells out of a duck as his ball plummeted into the pond at the 18th hole (our 6th), his topped tee shot at the next nearly decapitated a squirrel. The poor creature was somewhat startled, one minute playing with his nuts, the next almost a trophy attached to his bag. Brian suggested he could have quite adequately hung both the squirrel and the duck on his bag, only this might have provoked an anti-golf stand from those opposed to blood sports, also it made me thankful we were not playing at Knole Park. Just imagine, a deer would take some attaching to a golf bag, certainly some carrying.

Apologies were received from the depleted Mid Kent contingent, this from their absent, love struck young hot-shot, Ian Rawlins. It appears he had to take his young sweetheart, who was flying away on her holidays, to the airport. I seem to remember at the Spring Tournament Ian was eagerly awaiting her return from a foreign holiday. Then someone queried why she takes so many holidays and why she appears always to go without Ian?

To round-off, I must apologise for not reporting the event when a small group played an informal afternoon of golf, courtesy of Mike Smith, at the new Moatlands course. I understand numbers were slightly depleted, as many of us were snowed under with work at the time. Stories of sand, sand, and still more sand have filtered back to me from those trapped by Moatlands' bunkers (or was it the northerly extremes of the Sahara Desert?). Bernard Didthams said that it generally took five full shots to reach from one end of a bunker to another. Perhaps he spent so much time in the bunkers he forgot to tell me about the curious placement of the trees.



PAUL COPSEY

CLEVELAND

At the time of writing (23 Sept), greenkeeping students on C&G block release courses have not received results from their previous year of work. This is unreasonable for students and I hope to see considerable improvements next year. Students should enrol without delay for new courses. This means pressure on colleges.

A wet September meant irrigation finished earlier than usual here in Cleveland - and the swallows all disappeared by 10 September.

Acting as an assessor for candidates in the north east who entered for the ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year award, I must tell you what a great pleasure it was to visit their golf courses. The interesting variations and superb conditions presented - from the north east to Cheshire and North Wales - indicated that applicants had worked hard on presentation, also on keeping records regarding pesticides, safety requirements and COSHH. Final decisions were made at the sheds, both