

Picking a winner for The Open

"I wish we could play The Open here tomorrow," said Turnberry's course manager, George Brown, when we phoned him just before we went to press.

Three weeks before the big day, he was very happy with the way the course was looking. After a very dry May, Ailsa had been blessed with enough rain during the early part of June to put a smile back on 55-year-old George's face. Although he has a fully-computerised irrigation system, he says: "You can't beat the real thing".

Are your greens going to be as fast as Oakmont, we teased him?

"Bloody hope not," was his typically honest response. He says he'll be aiming for a speed of 9.5-10. "If there's a strong wind you don't want it more than ten, otherwise they'll be there all day."

George, who backed Jose Maria Olazabal to win the US Masters this year and Ian Baker-Finch to win at Royal Birkdale in '91, reckons the conditions will suit US Open winner Ernie Els.

The rough isn't as dense as it was when The Open last visited Turnberry in 1986, and the fairways and semi roughs are more generous. "You don't have to be deadly accurate, so it will suit someone who hits it a long way but sprays it about a bit."

Greg Norman might also receive a flutter from four-handicapper George.

BIGGA's president, Viscount Whitelaw, favours Seve Ballesteros to add to his Benson and Hedges triumph at St Mellion while Greenkeeper International's editor, Chris Boiling, is backing Scotland's own Colin Montgomerie.



City of Ely Golf Club's Peter Reed won the Ufford Park Golf Day, sponsored by Sisis, RE Rushbrook & Son, Fisons, Rhone-Poulenc, and Lockwood Grass Machinery. Thirty-five greenkeepers and golf-playing groundsmen took part in the event. A raffle raised £60 for Save the Children.

Your chance to win award

Entry forms will soon be available for the Environmental Steward Award. Although this award is aimed mainly at US golf course superintendents, the organisers have told BIGGA "for the first time, we are considering entries from around the world". Awards created to recognise greenkeepers who care for and enhance their local environments are given in three categories: public, private and resort. Closing date for entries is October 31 and the forms are available from Ceres Communications, 421 W Travelers Trail, Brunsville, MN55337, USA. Tel: 0101 612 8942414. Fax: 0101 612 8942423.

Parker Hart acquired by Printsphere

Parker Hart has been acquired by the investment group Printsphere which also owns Rigby Taylor Ltd. But Printsphere's group chairman, Bernard Hedley, says: "We intend that Rigby Taylor and Parkers will continue to operate independently."

The new managing director of T Parker & Sons (Turf Management), which recently bought the business of Maxwell Hart, is Jon Ryan. Mr Ryan, who worked for Parkers for 15 years during the early stages of his career, told GI: "I am delighted to be working again with so many old friends and look forward to building on Parker's traditional strengths in the trade."

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Icelandic greenkeepers look towards Scotland



Hannes Porssteinsson and Carol Borthwick, at Elmwood College

That well-known land of golf, Iceland, is making progress on the greenkeeping front. They are setting up the Icelandic Golf Greenkeeping Association and a second Icelandic greenkeeper, Margeir Vilhjalmsson, has finished his year's course at Elmwood College, Cupar, Fife. The first Icelandic greenkeeping student, Olafur Agustsson, is now working at Leynir Golf Club in the south-west of the country. It is one of 45 clubs affiliated to the Icelandic Golf Union, six of which have 18 holes.

A driving force behind greenkeeper improvements in the country is Hannes Porssteinsson, who played golf for Iceland as a junior and for the last seven years has been on the board of the IGU. His role during this period was to look after the junior section of the Union and he captained the junior golf team, which included Agustsson until he went to Elmwood.

Hannes became more interested in the greenkeeping

aspects of the sport when he spent some time working in England. It was then that his interest in importing grass seed to Iceland first emerged. Greens there have traditionally been allowed to develop from natural grasses, but about four years ago Hannes set up seeding experiments with imported mixes and during his trip to Elmwood he learned from Carol Borthwick, greenkeeping section head, explanations of the different grass mixes being tried out on the training ground.

During the visit Hannes pointed out that people imagine Iceland to be bare and rocky, but in fact it is a very green island and he is hopeful that some of the new mixes will mean that the Icelandic courses of the future are nearer to the quality of Scottish greens.

While he was visiting Elmwood, he finalised details of Carol's forthcoming trip to Iceland, where she will be guest of honour at the inauguration ceremony of the Icelandic Golf Greenkeeping Association.

America honours 'Masters'

During last January's BTME those members who had the opportunity of meeting Terry Buchen following his Master Greenkeeper award, will recall the pride he took in joining the august company of those now titled 'Master Greenkeeper'. Terry is based at the exclusive Double Eagle club in Galena, Ohio - a 7,100 yard design by Tom Weiskopf and Jay Morrish which has only 102 members with just 35 of those being local members. Amongst the national members are Ray Floyd and Chi-Chi Rodriguez.

Writing from America, Terry has enclosed photocopies from eight magazine articles concerning his receiving the Master Greenkeeper Certificate in Harrogate. Amongst the magazines are such well known titles as 'Golf Digest' and 'Golf World' as well as the GCSAA's own 'Golf Course Management'. High-

lighted is the fact that only eight Master Greenkeeper awards have been earned worldwide. Terry says that he has received at least 50 telephone calls from his peers and some 75 cards and letters from other people within golf. He was recently honoured with a dinner and presentation.

I have been saying for some time that the award of Master Greenkeeper status is the ultimate pinnacle for a greenkeeper and accords the recipient the highest respect from his peer group and increasingly the game. The publicity given to the award in America is another major step forward in the worldwide recognition of BIGGA and we are indeed lucky to have three outstanding ambassadors in America in Terry, Bil Montague and Bob Maibusch - Master Greenkeepers all.

Neil Thomas