

Greenkeeper dies in mower accident

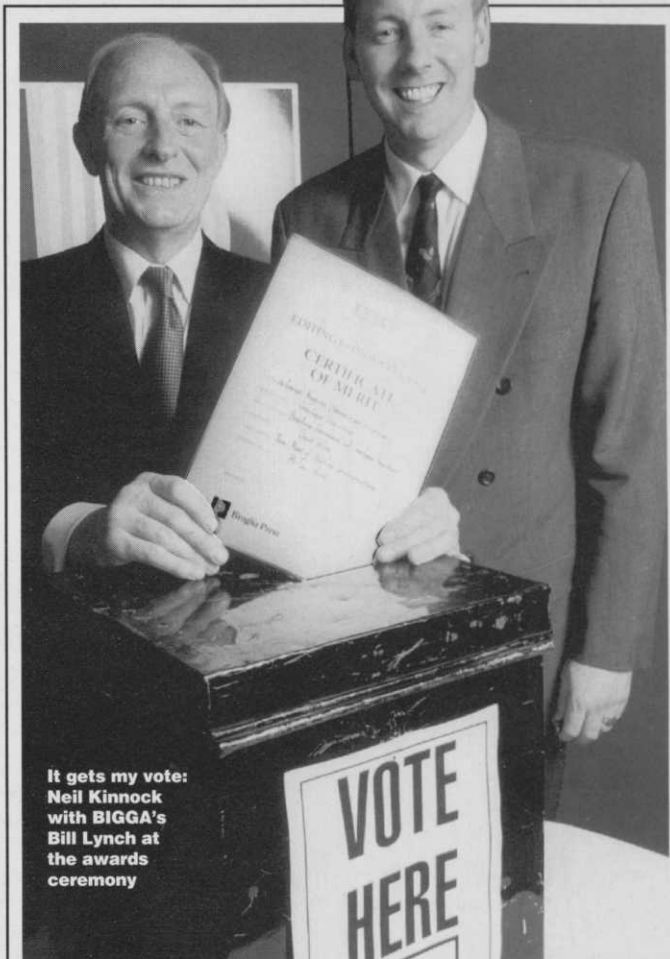
A part-time greenkeeper has died in a horrific accident involving a mower.

It is believed that 60 year old Ronnie Mitchell's anorak drawstring became entangled in the ride-on mower's driveshaft, dragging him into the machine. Although the blades missed him, his head and chest were crushed in the narrow gap between the blade arms and the wheels.

The engine was still running when a colleague at the Bradley Hall Golf Club, Greetland, near Halifax, found him.

A single man, Mr Mitchell had been the head greenkeeper there for 30 years until he retired two years ago.

NEWS



It gets my vote: Neil Kinnock with BIGGA's Bill Lynch at the awards ceremony

Highest praise for BIGGA magazine

Your magazine, Greenkeeper International, is "superb". We're not blowing our own trumpet, it's official. Judges in the prestigious Editing for Industry Awards, which are organised by the British Association of Industrial Editors, called it "a remarkable magazine", "which hits the mark spot on".

Competing against publications backed by mega-rich companies, Greenkeeper International won a Certificate of Merit alongside Esso's "Update". The winner was "Aspect" from British Gas.

At a presentation in Edinburgh, former Labour leader Neil Kinnock presented the certificate to BIGGA's sales and marketing manager Bill Lynch. Mr Kinnock commented that he had seen the magazine before at a golf course in his Welsh constituency – and was able to recall an article in it from three years ago!

The judges took our description of the magazine – "Self-supporting through its advertising content and recognised as an industry leader" – and added: "Therein lies the perfect appraisal of this remarkable magazine. Jam-packed with full colour ads and till-jangling small ad section providing a healthy platform for well-written, informative and genuinely interesting features that guarantee appeal even wider than the captive audience of greenkeepers. It is very difficult to fault such a superb magazine which hits the mark spot on in a specialist market."

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Muirfield's course manager, Chris Whittle, is heading back to his roots to take over the head greenkeeper's job at Royal Birkdale. Chris hails from nearby Formby and started his greenkeeping career at Formby GC in the early '70s after a spell in a bank. He is looking forward to returning to Merseyside after nearly six years at Muirfield.

Twelve-handicapper Chris, who has just turned 40, will take over when Tom O'Brien retires in October. He beat nearly 60 candidates to the job of keeping 18 new greens on the Open Championship course.

■ Work has started on a new 18-hole parkland course at Walton, near Wakefield. Waterton Park Golf Club, set in 200 acres, is designed by the Simon Gidman/Chapman Warren partnership with input from Yorkshire's international touring pro Gordon J Brand. It will open for play in September '95 with membership restricted to investors.

■ Barry Neville, a former Student Greenkeeper of the Year, has been appointed deputy head greenkeeper at Stanmore Golf Club, Middlesex. He was previously first assistant at Whitehall Golf Centre.

■ John Houston, 37, has left Royal Blackheath GC to take over the course manager's position at Fulwell Golf Club, Hampton Hill, Middlesex. He takes over from the late Hugh MacGillivray.

■ Work on a full nine-hole, double tee course has started at Rustington Golf Centre, near Littlehampton, West Sussex. The centre, which is close to Ham Manor, already has a nine-hole par 3 course and a 30-bay driving range. Four greenkeepers will look after the site. Head man is 24-year-old Stephen Payne.

■ Bill Sibley has taken over as Sisis Equipment's area representative for Kent, Sussex and Surrey. He is married with a son of three and newborn twin boys.



Taking over



David Halford, a senior lecturer at Myerscough College near Preston, has taken over the late John

Shildrick's job as secretary of the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Association. David says it will be a hard act to follow: "John was, to all intents and purposes, the heart of the Association. I will endeavour to maintain the standards he set but it will be difficult."

He will administer BTLIA affairs from an office at Myerscough which has its own golf course equipped with virtually every example of sprinklers used on UK golf courses.

Waste not...

Wessex Water is selling bags of dried human sewage to golf courses as fertiliser. The odourless pellets are made from sludge that used to be pumped into the Bristol Channel. The company says that, unlike chemical fertilisers, it can be used quickly while the course is still in use and it does not make the grass grow too fast.

■ The East Sussex National Golf Club has started giving golfers information sheets which show pin positions and Stimpmeter readings before they tee off.

Constructor is given golf course in settlement of six-figure debt

Golf course constructor Brian D Pierson has opened his own course. Run by eldest son Mark, Hamptworth Golf and Country Club, on the edge of the New Forest, was given to the Piersons to settle a six-figure debt by the original developers, Hamptworth Park Leisure, who had a 125-year lease on the land.

The Piersons started building the course in 1991, then stopped halfway through when the developers' money ran out. Eighteen months of negotiations later the company which has built more than 180 golf courses worldwide took over the whole project, scaling down the plan for a grandiose clubhouse.

Laid out over 175 acres, running in and out of the 700-acre English Nature-managed Langley Wood, Hamptworth has the potential to become one of the best courses in the south-west.

Newly-appointed head greenkeeper Keith Hill-Jones says he wants to make it the best course in the area in the next couple of years.



Mark Pierson, Robert Key MP and Brian Pierson

Based on a Philip Sanders design, it measures 6,500 yards off the back tees and features several intimidating, tree-lined tee shots, some monster bunkers and a par 5 of 582 yards.

Water hazards are provided by the River Blackwater as it meanders through the course, which was opened last month by Salisbury MP Robert Key. Other hazards are natural too – plenty of trees and hedges and only 19 bunkers.

Greens are built to Jim Arthur specifications. The 9th and 18th holes finish on a double green guarded by a massive bunker which one over-enthusiastic writer described as being "as big as the Isle of Wight".

One of the most daunting holes is the 360-yard 14th which doglegs slightly to the right once you have driven through an avenue of trees that may make even the best players consider using a 4 iron.

Construction of a 6,500 sq ft clubhouse is planned for next year.



Hamptworth's double green – the 9th and 18th

FLYING DIVOTS

■ If you want to see an Etesia UK Ltd product in action, for example the new RKE pedestrian rotary mower with grass collection, then Spencer Southall is the man to contact. The 24-year-old table tennis champion has been appointed demonstrator for the Ross-on-Wye company. Tel: 0462 490190



■ More than 220 companies are booked in at the Landscape Industries show June 8/9 at the National Agricultural Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

■ The Greenkeeping Supply Company has been set up by Liam Galway. He will be supplying course furniture from Tacit, Pattissons and Standard Golf, as well as clothing and tools. Tel/fax: 0245 248880.

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Where quality matters.

Grass seed shortage is on the cards, warns supplier

There could be a shortage of some types of amenity grass seed and a firmer price pattern during the next few months, warns Derek Whelbourn, wholesale director of Johnsons Seeds.

The situation, he claims, has arisen through a combination of factors. "The weather has meant that

this year's spring trade has been later, causing trading over a longer period," he says. "This has helped to clear what initially was an apparent surplus and now replacement stocks of seed are urgently needed for filling empty spaces in merchants' premises."

Additional factors which have contributed to the stock shortage are: considerable exports of seed from Europe to the USA; and lower seed production acreage in Europe and the UK than in previous years.

"The combination of factors has occurred at a time of the year when replacement stocks are not easily available," said Mr Whelbourn. "New crop seed will not be available until the autumn trading is well under way, meaning that the balance of the spring trade and the coming autumn trade will have to be supplied out of current stock. During the late spring and early summer it is almost certain there will be a shortage of certain types of grass seed, leading to an inevitable hardening of prices."

New courses to open near Gatwick Airport

Two new golf courses are being built near Gatwick Airport. The 18-hole Duxhurst Estate course, on a mature parkland site south of Reigate, is to be laid out as a 6,250-yard par 71 course with comprehensive practice and teaching facilities.

Architect Howard Swan says it will feature modest remodelling of the natural terrain and have some water features on the lower parts of the land. Work began mid-May with full play scheduled for late spring '96.

The Horne Park Golf Academy at nearby Horley, also designed by Swan, is a 2,700-yard nine-hole par 34 course with range, chipping and bunker areas. Continental Landscapes are constructing the academy and ISS are supplying the Toro irrigation equipment. Horne Park is likely to open its doors later this year, with the course in play mid-'95.

Castle Combe bought

Castle Combe Golf Club in Wiltshire has been bought by the son of a local hotelier. Danny Pecorelli, whose father Guiseppi owns the nearby Manor House Hotel, is believed to have paid £2.5million for the course which cost £8million to build in 1991. Pecorelli plans to run the Peter Alliss/Clive Clark-designed course in the same way as his other club - Mannings Heath in West Sussex where a second 18 holes is under construction.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Arcot Hall Golf Club's Ian Duncan, 32, is off to Germany to take over the head greenkeeper's job at Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club.

■ McNab Sports Supplies of Kinross have appointed Neil Mitchell as area representative to cover golf clubs in Fife,



Tayside, Grampian and Highland regions. Neil previously worked for Perth and Kinross District Council as a greenkeeper, looking after golf courses, bowling greens and cricket squares. In 1989 he was awarded the title of Young Groundsman of the Year. Tel: 0577 864198.

■ The Whitbread Group of Hotels, whose golf courses include Forest of Arden, St Pierre, Dalmahoy, Meon Valley, and Tewkesbury Park, has been renamed the Country Club Hotel Group.

?Is Yours an Obstacle Course?

Walker makes Rings Round Other 3.T.R.'s

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