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*International*

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**MARCH 1994**



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Golf Greenkeepers Association

# GREENKEEPER

## International

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magazine:

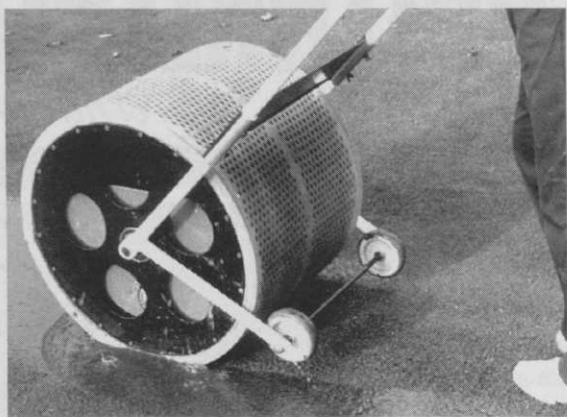
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## Abcon director found dead

The director of top-dress suppliers Abcon North-East Ltd has been found shot dead at his Gateshead home. The bodies of Alan Taylor's wife Joan and 28-year-old son Grant were also found at the gas-filled detached bungalow. A note was found and police are not looking for anyone else in connection with the killings.

Mr Taylor, 62, his 58-year-old wife and son all worked in the Blaydon-based family business which has been trading since the early '60s. The firm's main business was supplying the construction industry but it had been diversifying into top dressings. It supplied many golf courses in Scotland and northern England.

# NEWS

## Big plans for Leasowe

Extensive improvements are being planned for Leasowe Golf Club, Moreton, Wirral, and a new head greenkeeper has been appointed to take care of the project. Edward O'Neill, 24, joins the 18-hole links course from the County Kildare Hotel and Country Club (The K Club). He has also worked at Portal Golf and Country Club. Improvements to the course being planned by architect John Morgan are believed to include new greens, bunkers and mounds, and fairway extensions.



A group of Swiss greenkeepers try out the latest machinery from Ransomes during a demonstration at Woodbridge Golf Course. The greenkeepers were accompanied by their wives and representatives from Ransomes in Germany during the visit to the UK.

## TV plunges the knife in

Following the Cutting Edge TV documentary which put the knife into Northwood Golf Club, Bob Lupton, course manager at Wolstanton GC, Newcastle under Lyme, received this letter from local lad James Cooper:

*"I am interested in the position of YTS greenkeeper advertised in the Sentinel. However I have been told that your golf club is like that one shown on TV. Is that true?"*

Interestingly, only one of the staff shown working while a member of the greens committee was being carpeted by (now ex-) chairman Bryan Lund and who were complaining about the lack of course etiquette among members, is a member of BIGGA. And that's Linda Exley, whose late husband Norman was the South East's regional administrator.

## Golfer's praise for the unsung heroes

**Shock! Horror! Hold the front page – a golfer on a municipal course is singing the praises of the groundstaff! The greenkeepers at Portsmouth Golf Club have been praised as "golf's unsung heroes". In a letter in the March issue of Golf World, club member Paul Fletcher, asks: where would we be without the valiant efforts of the greenkeepers?**

**His course is inside a housing estate and suffers from "more than its fair share of mindless, after-dark vandalism. Flagsticks are stolen or broken, and on one occasion someone engraved a game of noughts and crosses (crosses won) on the 6th green.**

**"Newly-laid turf has been used as frisbees and wooden shelters have been burnt to the ground... The situation gets worse in the summer, especially during school holidays, but still the groundstaff work extremely hard to ensure the course is returned to the high standard most golfers take for granted."**

## FLYING DIVOTS

### New education chief wanted

■ The search is on for an excellent communicator, with initiative and an outgoing personality, to become BIGGA's new education officer.

The position, based at Aldwark Manor, is vacant because of a move to the south of England by the previous post-holder, Debbie Savage.

BIGGA is committed to a progressive education policy and is looking for an education and training professional, ideally with a background or knowledge in golf greenkeeping and the game of golf.

More details are in the job advertisement on Page 68 of this issue.

■ TONY BOURKE, 52, is the new managing director of Spellbrook-based Hayter.



A chartered engineer, he has worked for Philips, Granada TV Rentals and TI Domestic Appliances. Prior to joining the grass cutting machine manufacturer, he operated his own franchise business supplying office stationery and business hardware and software.

■ GRAEME FLETT, 30, IS moving from Thornton GC, Fife, at the end of the month to take up the head greenkeeper's post at Newtonmore GC, a privately-owned 18-hole course in the Highlands. He replaces IP MacDonald who has retired after 22 and a half years' service.

■ RUFFORD Topdress Supplies have appointed Nigel Tyler as their central area representative.



■ A MAJOR NEW LEISURE complex planned for Edmondsley, near Chester-le-Street, County Durham, will include an 18-hole golf course, nine-hole par-3 course, driving range and golf academy.



# A BIGGA Thank you



*...to the following  
companies, in recognition of  
their continued support for  
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# An industry

In reflecting on the wholly unwarranted attack by the EGU on BIGGA through the pages of 'Amateur Golf' magazine and wondering still on the motivation for which no explanation has yet been given, the statement that "BIGGA... have the support of grants and gifts from the turf grass industry, though not without certain 'strings'", merits further comment. Traditionally greenkeeping has always enjoyed the support of companies within the industry and for many years this was at a local level and was reflected particularly in backing for section seminar programmes and prizes for golf tournaments. With the advent of BIGGA, it was inevitable that the nature of this support would change. In just a few years, companies found that they were now working closely with a large, professionally run Association which operated nationally and regionally as well as on a section basis. Companies continued to wish to support greenkeepers and the development of their profession but found there were now conflicting pressures at the respective levels of BIGGA. The Association for its part had no wish to see companies pressurised in this way and saw a need for consistency and fairness in its relations with companies working in the industry. After careful consideration, BIGGA's Education and Development Fund was established in January 1992.

This fund enables those companies so wishing to join either the Golden or Silver Key circles, thereby enabling the development of BIGGA's education and training programmes at national level.

Whilst eleven companies are currently taking this route, the Association is mindful of those companies who wish to continue with longstanding support at regional and section level, rather than nationally. This support continues to be much valued. The benefit of the Education and Development Fund to companies is that it provides equal recognition to all and that companies can



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

clearly identify the educational and training projects on which their contributions are being spent. A meeting of Golden Key supporters was held at Aldwark Manor last October and set guidelines for the utilisation of company contributions. It was agreed that BIGGA's Education Sub-Committee should determine spending priorities which would then be communicated to Golden/Silver Key supporters at two meetings each year. All Golden/Silver Key supporters are to be acknowledged for each and every spending programme whether or not they are specifically funding a particular programme. The com-

## BIGGA Staff Profile

### LOUISE LUNN Sales and Marketing Assistant



Louise was one of the driving forces behind this year's BTME and had a chance to compare her role with her American counterpart when she went with the BIGGA delegation to the GCSAA show in Dallas. She says she loves working on the Exhibition – and work has already begun on the 1995 event. Louise moved to the Association from a family business, to further her career in sales and marketing. She has a degree in hotel management and institutional catering and

worked in Switzerland for seven months as part of the course. Hobbies include travel and cooking and up to the age of 13, Louise was a keen ice skater. If things had turned out differently, maybe Great Britain might have picked up a gold at Lillehammer...



# partnership

panies agreed that they were anxious to avoid overt commercialism whilst their contributions to the fund would continue to be acknowledged and their companies to be profiled.

The fund then is established on a sound basis. Last year saw the production of the first training video – 'Setting the Standard – In Spray Application' and the recent BTME saw the launching of the video 'Keeper of the Green – A Career in Golf Course Management'. Shortly BIGGA members will be provided with a pocket booklet on weeds, pests and diseases and plans are in hand for an environmental project during 1994. None of these developments would have been possible without the fund or, importantly, without company support of the fund. BIGGA enjoys a friendly, business-like relationship with all these companies, membership of the Golden/Silver Key circle brings practical benefits whilst the spending priorities of the fund are the subject of open discussion. It all seems a far cry from "gifts... though not without certain strings".

Another area of industry support which may not be commonly known is the BTME Steering Committee. This committee meets three times a year and fifteen companies are currently represented on it. The Committee over the last few years has been of inestimable value in planning and improving the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition, the success of which is due in no small measure not just to companies taking space at the exhibition but to the giving of time and effort by their personnel to attend meetings and actively promote the exhibition. The Association greatly appreciates this commitment and indeed the continuing support within the industry both for BIGGA and for the BTME whose development and growth the Association considers is dependent on a continuing partnership with companies working in the industry.

I will conclude this month with reference to another industry event, the recent GCSAA Conference and Show this year held in Dallas, Texas. This continues to be the major exhibition in the industry with the BTME in hot pursuit! This year's show was bigger than ever but what was surprising was the large number of UK based companies represented there

either directly or indirectly. Again our members were there in good numbers particularly from Europe and importantly the sporting of BIGGA blazers and ties made an excellent impression. It continues to surprise me that GCSAA members do not wear blazers or ties whilst the GCSAA staff similarly do their own thing as far as dress is concerned. The GCSAA has been through a traumatic year losing not only its Chief Executive Officer but two of its senior staff directors who have been replaced by Steve Mona as Chief Executive Officer, Joe O'Brien as Chief Operations Officer and Julian Arredondo as Chief Financial Officer. In discussion with all three, it became clear that their Association is going through a period of reappraisal and reassessment no more so than in considering their future international role. With their new management team in place I see a further strengthening of our relationship as well as a future presence at the BTME. Our stand was exceptionally busy with enquiries for membership, Master Greenkeeper enrolment, magazine advertising and the BTME. Perhaps the abiding impression was the international respect for BIGGA, for our position as the second largest greenkeeping association worldwide, for our professionalism and for our development and progress in such a short timespan. Viewed from afar we are seen to be going places. And finally if you are thinking of going to Dallas, my simple advice is don't – it should be removed from all travel brochures!

## Open invitation

Members wishing to be considered for the greenkeeping support team at the 123rd Open Championship at Turnberry, July 14-17, should forward their name and address to Samantha Collins (Sami) at BIGGA HQ as soon as possible. Preference will be given to members who will be able to attend from Wednesday July 13-Sunday July 17 inclusive.

The players will be competing for a purse of £1.1million – that's £100,000 more than last year. First prize is up by £10,000 to £110,000.

Radio 5 will be broadcasting special preview programmes and phone-ins as well as live commentary from all four days.



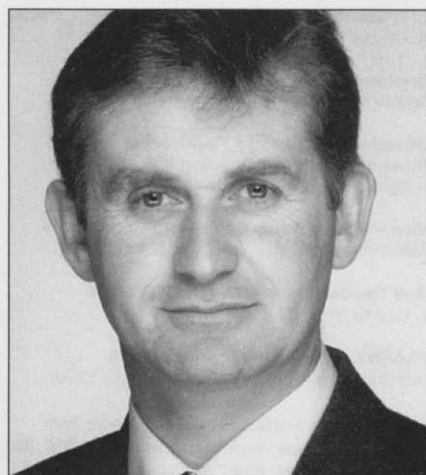
**Golf and Turf**  
Equipment's managing director, Tom Scanlon (above), collects his award as Hayter's top UK dealer.

## Moving in

Trevor Manning has taken up his new post as head greenkeeper at Ellesmere Golf Club near Manchester. The 29-year-old replaces Andy Peel who has gone to Bull Bay GC after three and a half years at Ellesmere. The category one golfer takes over there from Deric Carter who has retired after 28 years at the Anglesey course.

## Stalwart dies

Doris Plain, a familiar face at many regional tournaments, has died after a short illness. She accompanied her husband of 47 years, Bob (ex-head greenkeeper at Beaconsfield GC and before his retirement at Hazlemere GC) to many BGGGA and latterly BIGGA events. Our sympathy goes to him, daughter Heather and all the family.



## Sales post

Roy Auld, 37, has taken up the position of sales manager product development with Scottish Grass Machinery, dealers for Ransomes, Cushman, Ryan, Massey Ferguson, Victa and Hardi.

# NEWS

## Road route would alter golf course 'beyond recognition'

Hill Barn golf course in Worthing, Sussex, will be changed beyond recognition if the Department of Transport's preferred route for new dual carriageway is adopted, a public inquiry was told.

Bryan Griffiths, a director of Golfconsult International, said the 60-year-old municipal course would become harder and slower to play and more expensive to maintain.

Appearing as a witness for Worthing Borough Council, Mr Griffiths said the most critical effect of the change would be to reduce the net revenue by 90 percent or about £180,000, even when the replacement was fully operational after three years. Before that, the effect would be much worse.

Once the course reopened for limited play in July 1997 there would have to be strict control on the total rounds played annually. There would be steeper gradients in some places which would not encourage older golfers. This was a factor which had lost a number of senior members to nearby West Hove Golf Club when that was altered to accommodate a new road.

To them, golf stopped being a pleasure. A similar situation could be expected at Hill Barn.





## National Education Conference

8-10 April 1994  
University of Warwick  
Warwickshire

For the sixth consecutive year, BIGGA's National Education Conference in the spring will feature a programme of international speakers.

### Topics and speakers are:

#### Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper - What's In A Name?

Duncan McGilvray, Course Manager, Letchworth Golf Club

#### Top Dressing Successfully

Professor Paul E Rieke, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University, USA

#### Everything You Will Ever Need To Know About Annual Meadow Grass Control

Kevin Munt, Course Manager, Buckinghamshire Golf Club

#### The Role Of Higher Education In Greenkeeper Training

Nick Rigden, Head of Horticulture, Cannington College

#### Looking At A Bad Year In A Good Light

David A Oatis, Director, Green Section, Northeastern Region, USGA

#### The Restoration And Conservation Of A Links Golf Course

Philip Baldock, Head Greenkeeper, Royal Portrush Golf Club

#### The Selection, Planting And Management Of Trees For Golf Courses

Dr Ian Campbell, Long Ashton Horticultural Consultants

#### Where Does All The Money Go? - A Review Of Maintenance Costs At Collingtree Park

Peter Jones, Course Manager, Collingtree Park Golf Course

#### Golf Course Management Now And In The Future

Joseph G Baidy CGCS, President, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

#### Soil Analysis: Why, How And What For?

Dr Bill A Adams, The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth

#### Golf Euro Disney - A Case Study

Anthony Black, Golf Course Manager

#### Under Pressure

Barrie Gregson, Course Supervisor, Mottram Hall Hotel

#### From Farmland To Golf Course In 1993

Alan Mitchell, Course Manager, The Hampshire Golf Club

#### Fitting Cultivation Programs To Your Needs

Professor Paul E Rieke, Department of Crop and Soil Science, Michigan State University, USA

#### Concept To Completion - A Case Study Of The Wisley Golf Club

David Whitaker MG, Course Manager, The Wisley Golf Club

#### Conservation And The Golf Course Working Together

Guy H Woods, Course Manager, Lansdown Golf Club

#### Winners And Losers: How US Turf Fared In 1993

David A Oatis, Director, Green Section, Northeastern Region, USGA

Copies of the programme and application form are available from  
BIGGA HQ, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York, North Yorkshire YO6 2NF.  
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Barrie  
Gregson



Alan  
Mitchell



Peter  
Jones



Bill  
Adams



David  
Whitaker

# Lifting the lid on pressure

A greenkeeper who counts the Bahraini royal family among his former employers is set to lift the lid on pressure.

At the National Education Conference at the University of Warwick, April 8-10, Barrie Gregson - course manager at Mottram Hall Hotel in Cheshire - will discuss all the various types of pressure involved in greenkeeping. This not only includes the pressure exerted on playing surfaces by players, methods of maintenance, weather conditions and construction methods and materials, but also pressure from owners, committees, salesmen, golfers, the media, and agronomists.

"Although I hope some of this will be humorous, it will all be based on things that have happened to me over the years but will be introduced to the audience as a fictitious golf club and fictitious greenkeepers," reveals Barrie, whose career started in 1968 as an apprentice at the Hesketh Golf Club in Southport. Following a car accident in 1973, Barrie became a hotel manager for three years, returning to greenkeeping at Hillside GC where George Lloyd was head greenkeeper.

In 1978 he became head greenkeeper at Haydock Park where he enjoyed three years before succumbing to the lure of foreign climes (and salaries). From 1981 to 86 he worked in Bahrain, in the Persian Gulf, managing various grass projects, including an 18-hole golf course, a double track horse racing course and parade rings, five football pitches and many other projects, mainly for the Bahraini royal family.

After a spell in Europe working for golf course architect Dave Thomas, Barrie, who is married with two children, returned to England and took up the job at De Vere Hotel's Mottram Hall.

Barrie is just one of 17 - yes, 17 - experts lined up for this year's National Education Conference.

Speakers include top greenkeepers from both sides of the

Atlantic as well as leading consultants.

They will cover a wide variety of subjects. Alan Mitchell will talk about the construction of The Hampshire, an 18-hole pay and play with membership development near Andover. He will cover the problems encountered and overcome considering the limited budget available and compare this with his experiences as a greenkeeper at Test Valley and Botley Park.

Philip Baldock, who started greenkeeping despite his father's advice (he's also a greenkeeper), will discuss the 'Restoration and Conservation of a Links Golf Course'. A former chairman of the Surrey Section of BIGGA, he is now the head greenkeeper at Royal Portrush GC in Co Antrim.

"Where does all the money go?" is the title of Peter Jones' talk. Peter has been involved in golf course construction and grow-in for 20 years, starting with the Dukes Course at Woburn and subsequently the in-house construction of the Duchess Course by the greenstaff.

He left Woburn in 1987 and moved to the Collingtree Park development at the start of construction. Peter stayed with Collingtree Park throughout receivership and now works for the new joint owners, the European Tour and IMG. In his talk he will review the maintenance costs at the course.

As well as fascinating talks, there is also some great entertainment planned, including a quiz night and a banquet with an after-dinner speech by Stan Taylor, a former submariner and Life President of the Comedians' Golf Society.

The price for BIGGA greenkeeper members is £188 including VAT, £164.50 for spouses. This includes accommodation and meals.

For further information speak to Samantha Flint at BIGGA HQ on 0347 838581.



# NEWS

## Pesticides schedules: putting the record straight

Rumours abound that there will be changes in the pesticides test schedules this year – here are the facts according to Jon Allbutt:

“At the end of last year the NPTC (National Proficiency Tests Council) was asked by MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture etc) to conduct a review of the pesticides test schedules. A draft revised schedule was produced by a working party with minimum consultation. Following critical comment a further revised schedule has recently been submitted to MAFF.

“The document does not contain proposals for change. The most important change that affects the amenity sector is to discontinue the current arrangement whereby those who take and pass the PA2A test will also be qualified to use any hand-held applicator. If accepted by MAFF, this means additional training and testing for those who wish to use different types of sprayer. However, the change will not be retrospective.

“A decision by MAFF is expected this month (March) but there will need to be a period for instructors, training material, examiners and standard setters to be updated.”

Anybody wanting more information can call Jon on 0959 575575.

## Unusual features

Golf course superintendents at a course being planned in South Carolina, USA, will have an extra set of tees to tend.

And, if we tell you that the design team includes big-hitting pro John Daly, you can imagine where they'll be – yes, behind the championship tees.

Called the 'Daly Signature Tees', they're expected to be just one of the many unusual features of this 7,000-yard Myrtle Beach course being designed by Daly and architect Clyde Johnston.



## Wetting agent on test

Royal Liverpool Golf Club's links manager, Derek Green, has been testing a new long-term wetting agent, Ultraflo, in a bid to cure the course's dry patch problems.

Ultraflo is a once-a-year treatment, say the manufacturers Vitax. A low-foam, non-ionic wetter, Ultraflo can be mixed in cold water and at low temperatures and according to the sales bumpf “provides deep and rapid penetration through thatch and dry patch affected turf”.

## New man for Goodwood

Goodwood Park Golf Club in West Sussex has a course manager again. Twenty-four-year-old Stephen Norton takes over the job left vacant last April when Raymond Hunt, who'd been there six years, joined the geese and deer at another Whitbread site, Forest of Arden.

Eleven-handicapper Norton, whose father and grandfather were greenkeepers, was previously assistant course manager at yet another Whitbread club, Tewkesbury Park, Gloucestershire.

## Arena in deal with Moneystone

Arena Sports Turf Services have taken over the sales and marketing of Moneystone Ltd products, including sand for bunkers, top dressing and green construction. According to Jim Burrows, chairman of Moneystone, the new arrangement promises “lower prices and faster delivery”. ASTS's chairman, Paul Hutton,

says the new deal will enable them to offer golf course developers a complete service from course construction, supplying all drainage and rootzone materials to turfing or seeding of greens, tree planting, pathway materials as well as accessories such as holecutters, tee markers and flags.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ CHRIS HALE, FORMERLY with wholesale seed merchants DLF Trifolium UK and Ireland Ltd, has set up her own company, Napier Richards Ltd. She plans to expand her interest in natural grasses, wildflowers, herbs and garden flowers, as well as representing the Finn Corporation, manufacturers of hydroseeding equipment and WRI producers of recycled wood fibre. Tel: 0453 890706.

■ COMPACT TRACTOR specialists Kubota (UK) Ltd has appointed two new dealers in the south – Premier Groundcare in Arborfield, Reading, and Hewitts Agricultural and Garden Machinery who have bases in Cranleigh, Surrey, and Newport on the Isle of Wight.

■ RICHARD LONG Engineering Ltd, of Alfreton, Derbyshire are now marketing their own range of products under the name Long-Equip. The range includes the new RL2004 Hi-Tip Flail/Scarifier collector, the new RL Flexis-preed Top Dresser, the RL1502 Versatile Collector and the 60in Finishing Mower. Tel: 0773 520301 for more details.

■ DANNY GODFREY has joined Boughton Loam Ltd as technical manager, so if you've got a question about seeds, soils or dressings, he's the man to ask. Tel: 0536 510515.



■ ARTHUR KING, THE ex-chairman of greens at Brockenhurst Manor GC and a well known figure on the seminar/workshop circuit, had a heart attack while on holiday in Bermuda. He spent 10 of his 14-day vacation in intensive care before being flown to a UK hospital. We wish him a speedy recovery.

■ THE NEW DEPUTY HEAD greenkeeper at North Middlesex Golf Club, Whetstone, London, is Mark Tunstall, 28. He takes over Mathew Conarty's job in April after being a foreman in charge of three nine-hole public courses.





Putting in the effort to make a success of a new course: Hirst Priory opens in the spring

# NEWS

## New course Hirst Priory gears up for spring opening

**T**he new golf course at Hirst Priory, Crowle (between Doncaster and Scunthorpe) has a new team in place ready for its opening this spring.

The full compliment of six staff have now been appointed with Paul Wylie (Southport Old Links) joining as deputy to head green-keeper Jim Sargeant, who's been there since construction began. Allen Walker (Petercutter, Aberdeen) has been appointed as

# STRENGTHEN



L3250



the general manager.

The 18-hole, 6130-yard course is set in a 147-acre park containing much mature woodland and an impressive Georgian house. It will have a small membership of 300-350 plus "upmarket" pay and play and society facilities.

During 1992 an original design by David Baxter was modified and construction began under the supervision of one of the directors. Before any work commenced, experienced head greenkeeper Jim Sargeant (Royal Dublin, Royal Porthcawl) was appointed to oversee the green and fairway construction. Extensive land drainage was carried out, together with the excavation of four small lakes. A Rainbird tee and green irrigation system was installed and seeding was completed by October 1992. Further tree planting was then carried out.

According to one of the directors, Mr P Fitzgerald, "The course has since been maturing well and despite the wettest autumn/winter any local can remember, there is no evidence of any standing water problems.

"The new team, with advice from the STRI, is now looking forward to an early spring to show their mettle and deliver a much needed course to the area."

## Ken wins scrum for new job

Former local rugby player Ken Robson, 32, is getting set to tackle a new job – that of head greenkeeper at Hawick Golf Club in Scotland. He moves up the ladder from assistant following the retirement of Ralph Henderson.

## Compound is back

Remember the Keep Keen Lawn Mower Sharpening Compound? Well, after an absence of seven years it is back. The Cutting Composites Corporation is reintroducing it.

Ernest Patchett invented the product about 20 years ago. He

was cutting his lawn, wishing he could keep his lawn mower blades sharp (keen) all the time. So he ground a sharpening stone into dust and added it to a grease mixture so it would stay on the blades long enough to sharpen them. The product, which is said to work on any cutting tool where the action of cutting is metal on metal, was developed over the years and word spread far and wide thanks to the BBC World Service broadcasting news of this innovative method of sharpening lawn mower blades in seven different languages. Golf courses using it included Troon in Scotland. Then, due to a devastating fire seven years ago and other commitments, the product disappeared from the market.

Now it is back with RG Trading of Otley, West Yorkshire, handling the distribution. Telephone 0943 462380/461390.

## July seminars

Two days of seminars and a small trade exhibition are lined up for Newmarket Racecourse on July 12 and 13. The first day's topics will relate to general groundsmanship. The following day will be directed at greenkeepers. Speakers include Derek Ganning of The Belfry, Martin Jones, Myerscough College and John Philp, Carnoustie. For an invitation call Lynn Hilton at SISIS on 0625 503030.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ EAST SUSSEX NATIONAL Golf Club has launched a junior scholars' golf club membership to groom home-grown talent.

Members are being asked to help budding champions, aged 12-18, by sponsoring and introducing them into the club. Students will have to pay £150 plus VAT, with members picking up the tabs for tuition, entrance fees for tournaments "and other extras".

■ THORPE HALL'S HEAD greenkeeper, Doug Smith, has been seeing to a new development – his first child, a daughter called Jena Sharon.

■ GRASS cutting equipment supplier Etesia UK have promoted Robin Taylor to UK sales manager. He is looking to appoint new outlets in selected areas.



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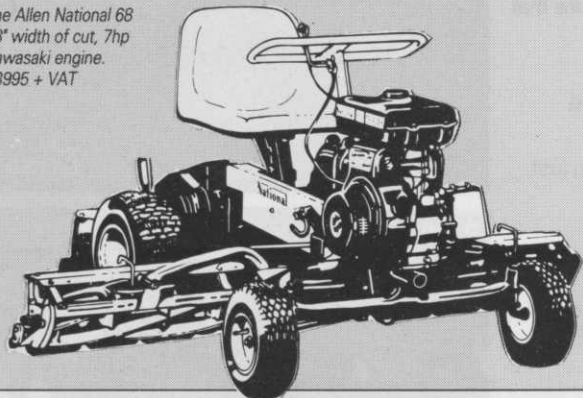
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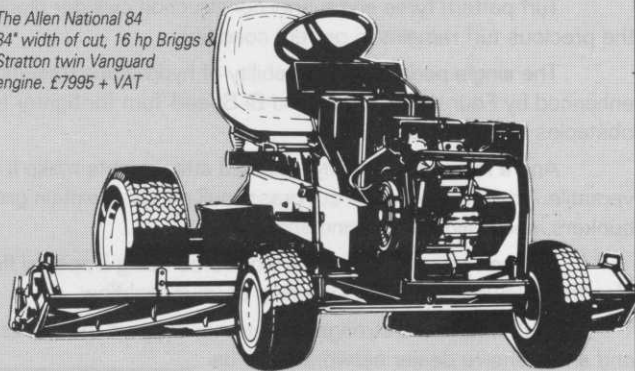
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# Wall for one

Heswall Golf Club greets another spring with hope and enthusiasm – and optimism that a certain wall will still keep back the water.

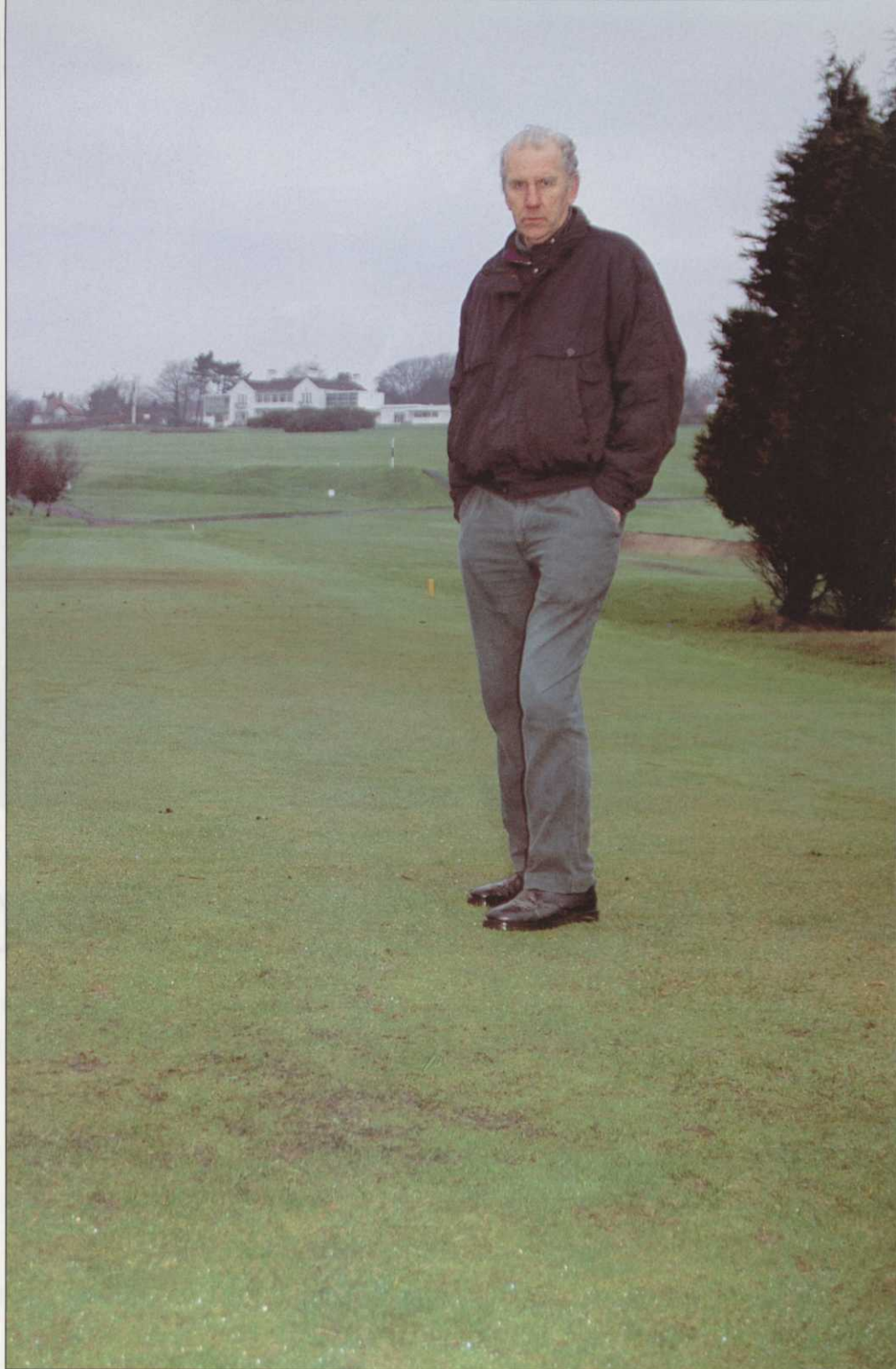
Chris Boiling reports.

**I**f I were to die tomorrow, there'd be a queue a mile long for my job," says 60-year-old Bill Lawson, course manager at Heswall Golf Club, a 6,472-yard par 72 course on the Wirral between North Wales and Liverpool.

The 900-member club may not be as famous as its neighbour – Royal Liverpool – but Bill, who's been there since 1965, wouldn't swap it.

"I love it here. I enjoy working on this site, always have done. It's not famous and it will never hold anything other than county matches but if you see it dressed up with all the summer gear on the tees etc. and all the fairways striped, every green looking good, it's a very nice course to work on.

"It's a lovely site and it's a nice area. And I've had nothing but help from the committee and the members from day one. All right, you have some seasons when they don't go well and members lean on you a bit, but that's natural – you can't expect anything else because they



■ Have you seen a longer tee than this? Bill Lawson stands on the 83-yard long 12th tee – "It's difficult to maintain because everyone wants to play from the middle to go through the gap in the trees."

■ This wall is 42ft high, but only 4ft 6in remain visible because of the silting up of the estuary. When it disappears, so may a couple of holes!





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# 'A difficult course to manage at this time of the year'

don't understand your job."

One of the best things about the course is the view across 40 sq miles of marshes – a haven for wild ducks and geese – to the Irish Sea. But this location means it is a difficult course to manage at this time of year.

The biggest problem is the wind. It causes havoc with spraying, with the sprinklers, it can fry the grass and burn the trees (so much so that they can look like they're dying).

"It's very difficult to put an even cover of water on if you've got a gale force wind blowing across the Irish Sea – you end up with a bunker with plenty of water, the back of the green over-watered and the front with none on at all. And they dry off quickly," explains Bill.

If he starts watering the greens too early, he can have problems with weeds that most greenkeepers have never heard of – the seeds being blown from marsh plants onto his greens. Sometimes the wind is very cold, even in early spring, stopping growth and sometimes frying away the tops.

"If the cold winds blow, what grass you've already got on the greens will stop dead and very nearly fry away off the tops and leave you with very little growth at the end of March/beginning of April.

"You've got to greenkeep on a site like this – Derek Green at Royal Liverpool is the same – you really have to look at your golf course day by day. Don't make any decisions like I'll fer-



The third lake takes shape between the 12th and 17th fairways

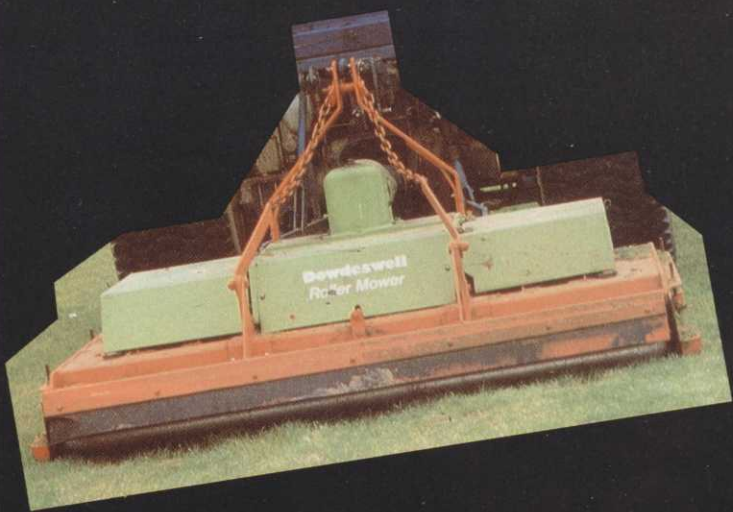
tilise a week on Wednesday because it won't work out. It's the same with when you want any spraying done. You've got to do it very early in the day because come 9 o'clock the wind will get up and you won't be able to spray. There'll be no room on the golf course anyway."

Early spring is a very difficult and hectic

time of the year. Heswall is very rarely closed (one morning and two afternoons last year and then the weather was so awful no-one would want to go out) and there are no temporary greens (just a hole cut in the apron for when the greens are being worked on). Since the late 60s, when Jim Arthur was advising on the golf course, they have been carrying out a

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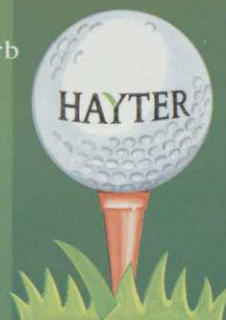
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# 'Most of the time we cut fairways twice a week and they hold'



The 18th green. Paraquat and industrial cleaning fluid sprayed on 15 greens caused a little headache. But they hollow-cored them, slit them, washed them, and brushed in a lot of chitted seed. Just as it broke they brushed in lots of top-dressing. It took about a year to get it right again

rigorous programme of vertidrainage and slitting. This has enabled members to play on the course all year round and meant that, come spring, Bill and his team have got a good surface with which to start the season.

## Cutting

The greens are held down to 3/16ths until the end of April/beginning of May depending on the growth and then they ease just under that for the summer. "All through the summer we verticut the greens once a week, twice if we've got something special on in addition to cutting them every day. Come late October we vertidrain the greens and start slitting them. We also vertidrain the greens around Christmas and February – and, if we need to, we verticut them to clean them off. Following that, every Monday we slit down to 8in with a Sisis Hydromain slitting machine all through the winter to the first or second week in March. At least once a fortnight we put a 6ft brush behind the Hydromain and drag the greens with it to keep them open and dry and disease free. We hollow-core last week of March/first week of April, get the top dressing worked into the hollow and away they go.

"We don't slit if it's frosty but we don't like to miss a week and we certainly want them vertidrainage three times a year.

"This keeps them disease free and very, very dry. We like to start the season with a good playing surface and we like to have something to work with in March and April."

The tees, apron and surrounds of the greens are held down to 1/4in right through the summer after vertidrainage and slitting.

The fairways are cut just below 1/2in. After starting the season with two cuts using a set of old Ransomes sportscutters, the team go on to use Ransome Hydraulic 5s. "We'll give them a

nice striped effect and we'll cut them once or twice a week.

"If we've got something on they may be cut during the days of the event but most of the time we can cut them twice a week and they'll hold because they're quality grasses and they don't grow fast.

"It's easy to maintain quality grass providing you don't spoil it by adding too much fertiliser or too much water."

## Dressing

As soon as he sees a little bit of growth (hopefully at the end of March), he'll very lightly top-dress the greens using a very sandy top-dress mix. "Then I'll watch day by day, end of March, first week of April, for the first sign that we've got a little bit of movement on the grass. I'll dress them with a fertiliser with just 8 percent nitrogen and no more and I'll wait to see what that does to the turf. If it starts to

move within two or three weeks then all I'll keep doing is lightly top-dressing. I may go all the way through April and into May before I put any more fertiliser on them. We don't use a lot of fertiliser and we don't get a lot of disease on the greens today.

"If we can get some growth started by the end of March/beginning of April then I'm quite happy to hold them down until the middle or end of May. And then, depending what we've got on them, I'll lightly dress them again. And it really is nitrogen only or nitrogen and iron. It's a case of looking all the time and seeing what your greens are doing. It's the same with fairways.

"The fairways are heavily vertidrainage so they'll grow all the grass we need and we've got quality fairways. The one thing we can't afford to do is to over-fertilise them so we will spray them with a liquid fertiliser about the end of April when it's picked up very easily and that's all they'll have and they'll be good quality fairways from the middle of April right until well, well into the autumn months, perhaps even November." (They looked pretty good to me in February after some heavy rain.)

"They'll never be over-fed. Same with the tees. We will liquid fertilise the tees with the same fertilisers as the fairways and hold them back as much as we possibly can. The one thing we don't want to do is turn Heswall into a parkland, so it's very little fertiliser when we think we need it and no more.

"The rough we let go to about 3ins and semi-rough to about 1 1/2ins. And great areas we leave uncut. Unless the trees are close to the green and we have to cut in between them, we leave them. The whole business about Heswall Golf Club is leaving it so that it looks like you're playing a piece of natural

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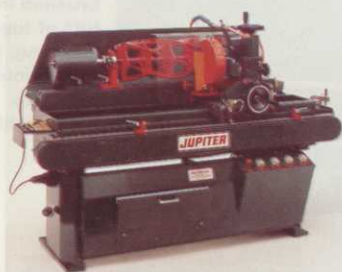




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- Whitecraigs Golf Club

## 'Two of the holes are new'

land that's been there for a long, long time and not suddenly developed into a golf course. It's not a difficult course when the wind isn't blowing – it isn't long enough and it probably isn't tight enough – but when the wind is blowing and the weather is good, it's a delight to play and work on."

A founder member of BIGGA and a former vice chairman, he has a team of five to help him, including head greenkeeper Guy Cannings, and he makes sure they get properly trained. "I don't believe in taking someone on and using them as a labourer – you don't get enough from him. You get more from trained staff although you may only have them four or five years," says Bill, a member of the liaison committee at Reaseheath College. Ten Heswall-trained greenkeepers now have their own courses, including Raymond Hunt at the Forest of Arden. Mark Lewis has joined the European Tour as a junior agronomist.

### Changes

Every hole has changed in some way during Bill's 28 years as the keeper of the greens. Two of the holes – the 12th and 13th – are brand new. The 18th has changed completely. The bunkering on most holes has changed to take account of the modern game. "We hope within the next two-three years that most of the old bunkering will be changed and there'll be more modern bunkers on the golf course than there are now. Some of them we'll never change even though they're old because they look right. We don't stop, we move gently on."

As well as regular spring maintenance, they plan to build three tees and change two bunkers – if the weather's kind to them.

They're also planning to plant 2,500 mixed pine and 2,000 gorse plants to thicken up the areas that already have trees (3,000 trees have been planted there since 1965). These areas are mainly at the top of the course, leaving the bottom part bare so that nothing blocks the superb views across the marshes to the River Dee.

Nearly 10 of the 148 acres are left alone, apart from a bit of tidying up. There is certainly no spraying. This is to bring in more wildlife.

A new lake is also being built, between the 12th and 17th fairways, to encourage the wild ducks and geese to breed on the golf course. "When the thousands of

duck and geese we have on the marsh decide to move inland for the mating season, we still want some of them to be on the golf course." The clover-shaped lake is about 50-yards wide, and brings to three the number of lakes built during Bill's reign.

"We decided a very long time ago that we did not want a pretty-pretty golf course. We did not want lots of flowering shrubs, flowering trees, anything that looks pretty-pretty because when you look out from the clubhouse we like to see out onto the marsh and it would not look right as a pretty-pretty golf course.

"When the wind blows it has a great effect on the golf. It does not want to look like a public park." If the wind blows the 151-yard 16th isn't reachable with a driver.

### Irrigation

They have just had a bore hole put in by British Gypsum at the bottom of the car park. The £8,000 investment will give them 2,600 gallons an hour – "far in excess of anything I'll want," says Bill. The water goes into a 1,600-gallon tank from which it feeds a Watermation system using 3 – 1 1/4in pipes. This system was installed in 1970 and has been updated slowly as Watermation bring out better quality heads. The controller has been changed for a TW2. Bill says impact systems are better for this course because he believes he gets better coverage in windy conditions. The bore hole means they can now water all the tees and three fairways that are downwind and have very hard approaches.

### Headache

Bill's biggest headache will come in a few years time when the river starts to encroach on the course. Once, the wall at the bottom of the course was 42ft high and in 1938 the sand yachting championships were held there on pure white sand. Now only 4ft 6in is visible because of the silting up and the sand has become 40 sq miles of marsh. Bill has seen the marsh built up 4ft 6in in his lifetime. And now when there's a high tide and the wind gets behind it, the water comes up to the top of the wall.

When the wall disappears, the course will undergo its most dramatic change and the flat area everyone loves may disappear. The course manager who does eventually take over from Bill had better bring his waders.



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# Tyres: the basics

**David Stokes treads through the theory and the leading suppliers.**

When the subject of tyres for greenkeeping equipment is brought up, the main concern of greenkeepers is the effect that any tyre will have on their precious grass. Ever more complex and

sophisticated equipment means more weighty equipment, so the main contact the plant has with the turf is through its tyres.

As in most things in life, there are conflicts and compromises and tyres for greenkeeping equipment are no exception. The advances in recent years in low ground pressure (lgp) tyres have

made it possible to drive a tractor across some turf without too much damage to either the soil or the grass. For a tractor to move across some turf there are many forces at work, including weight. A machine shod with ordinary agricultural tyres will compact the soil and cause ruts. With wide wheels and low pressure tyres the weight is spread out over a large 'footprint', one aims for a pounds per square inch in single figures.

Also the tractive forces caused by the driving wheels could scuff and smear the surface so the large 'footprint' is important to combat damage in a wheel that revolves in line with the machine. The wheels that steer the tractor, however, exert an entirely different force and with the wrong tyres can cause tearing, scuffing and smearing. Just because a wheel has no part in the tractive effort doesn't mean it has an unimportant effect on the turf.

If the steering wheels of a tractor are non-powered most of the operators fit a ribbed tyre, this gives a lot of sideways grip without tearing the turf. However, if the tractor is a four-wheel drive then the same sort of tread will need to be fitted to the front wheels as are fitted to the rear. If the tractor is four-wheel drive, care must be taken in choosing the correct size of wheel and tyre so not to upset the gear ratios. Failure to do so will result in the wheels turning at different speeds causing damage to both turf and the tractor.

The fact that a trailer is a passive piece of equipment doesn't mean it has no effect on the turf. A loaded trailer can cause a lot of damage, so the lgp tyres are

**'Tractive forces caused by the driving wheels could scuff and smear the surface so the large 'footprint' is important to combat damage in a wheel that revolves in line with the machine'**

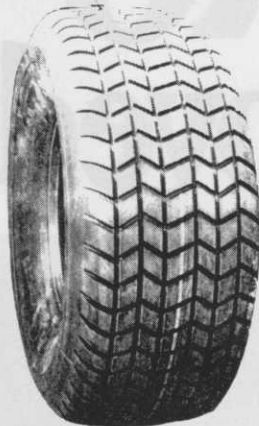
essential. This consideration must also apply to other pieces of greenkeeping equipment, even the jockey wheel on a trailer should be suitable so it doesn't damage the turf and lead to upset from the members.

One of the main players in the tyres for greenkeepers is Undergear. This company is the exclusive agent for Goodyear Terra-Tires, a low ground pressure tyre for the amenity industry. They maintain a stock in excess of £1million worth of tyres, wheels and axle components at their warehouses in West Bromwich.

Trelleborg market their Gentle Giants and offer their Twin 404 for the amenity market, their boast is that they sell tyres for trailer jockey wheels to the driving wheels for 100hp tractors, all for greenkeepers.

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# Royal Birkdale bounces back

by CHRIS BOILING



The £300,000 green rebuilding programme at Royal Birkdale is now complete.

Greenkeeper International went along to have a look and to talk to head greenkeeper Tom O'Brien who's preparing for his retirement after 16 years at the club.

**R**oyal Birkdale is on course to host the 1998 British Open. All the greens, heavily criticised during the '91 Open, have been dug up and remodelled. Five of them – 1, 2, 10, 15 and 17 – opened to much acclaim from members last year and the other 13 are due to come into play this spring.

Interviews for a new head greenkeeper are due to take place later this month. The new man will replace Tom O'Brien when he retires in October. Tom was the one unfairly blamed for the poor state of the greens in 1991. The flak still haunts him...

After spending the afternoon with Tom O'Brien, my mind drifted back to the entertainment at this year's BTME and in particular a line from a *Les Miserables* tune sung at the banquet dinner by the group West End Nights: *"There's a grief that can't be spoken, there's a pain goes on and on..."*

Tom O'Brien knows that pain. It's been hurting him since the '91 Open when several top golfers (but, interestingly, not the winner) publicly lambasted him for the state of his greens.

Normally, if you've got a pain you see a doctor. But, for Tom, there's no relief for his

suffering. "I've never got over it. I try to put it at the back of my mind but I don't think there's a day that goes by that I don't think on it," he told me.

Tom knows that on a world scale the fact that the greens weren't right for one competition isn't that important. But it doesn't ease the pain. "If you look at what's going on in the world today with the war in Yugoslavia – last night I saw a young girl whose arms had been blown off – and old ladies not feeling safe in their own homes, it doesn't matter. I know

# Starting over



you should put things in perspective, but it still doesn't stop me thinking about it. It's still with me, it won't go away.

"The next Open I think I'll want to go away on holiday because it'll come up again, they'll show some photos on the television and they'll repeat all the criticism and bring it all back. I find it difficult to watch golf on telly because I wanted mine to be so nice, to be so good. And I worked damn hard too.

"When you put the effort in and see the results, that's fine. But when the effort goes in and you don't see the results... We all worked hard to get it right and it was a big disappointment to us all."

Tom has been at the Southport course for 16 years and a head greenkeeper since he was 23. He joined the profession 49 years ago when he went to his local club for a job. He stayed at Glasgow's Mount Ellen course for 17 years working his way up to head greenkeeper. Spells in France, Menorca and other courses in his native Scotland followed.

He knew things weren't going right at Birkdale as the '91 season unfolded. Various agronomists came in to advise him, including Jim Arthur and David Stansfield. He says he followed their advice "to the letter". And, at first, he thought they were right. "In the beginning the impression I formed was that if I tined, tined, tined, tined and cut down on the fertiliser that I would win the greens

round. No way! When we dug them up we realised that was the only answer."

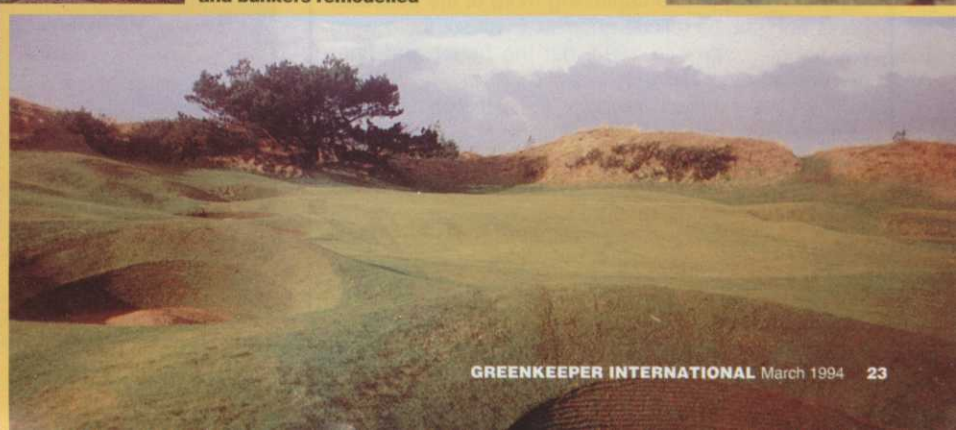
Now he is disillusioned with agronomists, except Jeff Perris, the STRI's advisor on the new greens.

"One agronomist came and said 'the greens need tining' – the green he was standing on had been vertidraind nine times. One says don't mention lime, another says put it on. One says sand causes root break, the other says it doesn't." But he followed what they said.

"All this advice, all those agronomists, people considered authorities, but when it all goes wrong it's the greenkeeper's fault 110 percent."



Main picture: the 5th green, with rootzone layer  
Left: the stage before – digging it up  
Below: how it looks today, with the green finished and bunkers remodelled





# Major success

ROYAL BIRKDALE started by replacing what Jeff Perris of the STRI calls "the most troublesome and the worst examples of an inhospitable and most inappropriate growing medium in which the grass was expected to thrive and present a good playing surface."

"This inhospitable growing medium comprised a very organic, moisture-retentive, fine, sandy medium which was reluctant to support a good quality, well-rooted sward."

So the decision was made to reconstruct the greens, replacing the inhospitable rootzone with a better material and at the same time taking the opportunity to redesign and recontour the greens where it was felt appropriate.

Work on the first five greens started in September 1992 and was completed by late October. These greens opened for play last spring. The reconstruction work and redesign was considered so successful that the club decided quite quickly that the remaining greens and the practice putting green should be done in 1993. Work started in late August and finished a few days before Christmas. The weather will dictate when they open in spring.

The same team has been involved in the work from the outset: Martin Hawtree (assisted by Ken Moodie) did the redesign while the technicalities were sorted out by the Sports Turf Research Institute (whose principle agronomists involved were Jeff Perris and James Westwood); John Greasley Ltd was the golf course contractor.

The reconstruction programme to the new designs went like this:

1. The turf was cut thinly and removed and stored on adjacent areas to the green and surrounds.
2. The layer of inhospitable, undesirable organic soil which often prevailed to a depth of about 5in was removed and disposed of.
3. The underlying 4in or so of more suitable sandy soil was removed and stockpiled.
4. The exposed underlying pure sand was then reshaped. Where additional material was needed a local Southport sand was imported (very similar to the natural Birkdale sand).
5. The stockpiled sandy soil taken from the green was then mixed with a specific imported medium-fine sand (often in the ratio of equal amounts by volume) and the resultant mixture replaced on the greens to provide the actual rootzone.
6. A proper turf bed was prepared and any necessary fertilising undertaken prior to replacement of the original turf. The STRI hopes that the more suitable growing medium on the greens will eventually improve the original quality of the annual meadow grass Birkdale turf to eventually include some bentgrass and maybe even fescue.

During the 1993 growing season the management of the first five greens took a little getting used to, according to Jeff Perris, the much sandier and freer rootzone clearly needs a little more fertilising and irrigation. "Hopefully, with the experience of 1993 behind us, it will prove possible to make significant improvements to the greens this year and in the coming years. It will, however, take some time to amend the turf from annual meadow grass to one containing more of the desirable bents and maybe fescue grasses. Even so, there were encouraging signs in 1993 that the better and finer grasses were beginning to establish.

"From the technical viewpoint, the club has been fully justified in remaking the greens and replacing the inhospitable, inappropriate black organic rootzone with a medium-fine sandy soil that most connoisseurs of true links courses would recognise as the ideal material. Whilst there was some slight variation in the sandy soil preserved from each green for further mixing with imported sand, the resultant mix shows a remarkable consistency."



The 6th before, during and after.

Top picture shows the way it used to be.

The middle picture shows returfing in progress following the remodelling of the green.

The third picture shows the finished green before the right hand bunker was remodelled. Far right: the freshly revetted right-hand bunkers.



# comes just a little too late

He would probably have got away with the greens being soft and slow, except for one big mistake...

"I had been called to the office about the greens dropping in pace from 9 to 6 and they asked 'What can you do about it?' Well, what can you do about it when a tournament starts?"

"They asked 'What can you do to increase the pace?' I couldn't put the machines down because the greens were soft. I knew that. I said the only thing I can do is put the grimmers down a 1/16th and it might increase the speed. All the lads knew I'd been called to the office, they knew what had been discussed. They knew the greens were slow, they knew we were going to put the grimmers down, so I think they went out and thought this is right, this is what he wants. But, of course, it wasn't"

Instead of 1/16th, the grimmers had been put down to a 1/4.

"The words I used were '1/16th, just a 1/16th, just enough to kiss the grass.'" The words are etched on his mind, along with the thought: "If only I'd looked, if only I'd checked."

But, with everything going on, with meetings about scaffolding and TV towers to attend, he never did get around to checking the machines. An oversight that has devastated him.

"I'm the head greenkeeper, I must take the blame," he says.

The severe drop in mowing height killed much of the annual meadow grass which dominates this 105-year-old course's greens so – sin of all sins – they didn't look good on TV. "Imagine the armchair viewer listening to all the criticism. If he sees them looking nice and green and striped, he says 'I don't know what they're moaning about.' But if he sees them all discoloured, he says 'Well, they're right enough, something's wrong there.'"

Although Tom accepts responsibility for not checking the grimmers, this was not the problem, it just highlighted it. As Tom says: "They didn't spend a lot of money digging up 18 greens because I cut them too short."

"Immediately after the Open I'd have looked quite smart if I'd stood up and said 'It wasn't my fault, we adjusted the machines wrong' or something. But that wasn't the issue. That let the agronomists off the hook. What was really the issue was the greens were too soft. I know that, they were too soft. But I also came in for a lot of criticism that wasn't justified. I thought at the time the course was also too much for some of the pros. If someone came up to you during the Open and you weren't playing well and asked you what you thought of the course, what're you going to say? There were also some comments from them that they were thatchy, they were this and they were that. I'm not trying to be funny or smart but do you think they'd be interested in a golf lesson from me?"

Apart from the greens, the course was in

good condition but, as Tom points out, "You can't have a good golf course if it doesn't have good greens."

Now, as the Royal Birkdale Golf Club prepares to host its eighth Open Championship before the turn of the century, it has the greens to match. "We've got the best layout and now we've got the best greens," says club secretary Norman Crewe.

## Time for a change

"Immediately after the Open we started to think what could we do to get them right," says Tom. They'd tried most things in the build-up to the Open but nothing had worked. Then, when the £300,000 greens renovation programme began, they realised why.

"When we dug them up they were worse than we thought," explained Tom. There was a black layer about five inches thick and three of the greens had a clay base. "You could see all the tine marks in them, but they'd done nothing. It was like slicing or vertidrainage into tablet."



Newly revetted bunkers on the 6th. "Tom's a master at revetting," says club secretary Norman Crewe

Because Southport sand is very fine, the early contractors had mixed it with agricultural soil "which seemed to be the popular thing then – there was mushroom compost and all sorts of things in it," says Tom. Over the years this completely sealed the soil to form a solidified humus with the consistency of plasticine. "Once the operation had started, everyone realised it was the sensible thing to do and it should have been done a long time ago."

For a long time there had been a joke about selling Royal Birkdale's greens for fertiliser. It seems they could also have been sold as breeze blocks.

## Tougher greens

While they were digging up the greens, designer Martin Hawtree, whose grandfather Fred designed the present layout in 1932 (when it became a championship standard course) and whose father Fred Jnr laid out the new holes when the course was modified after the 1961 Open, took the opportunity to remodel them.

"We were looking to improve water surface run-off, to increase putting surface interest, and to harmonise green and green surround,

all of these matters to be attended to in the context of championship golf – neither making the approach to greens any easier or more receptive than they have been, nor eliminating the deceptive breaks and slopes in the present putting surfaces, nor making distances from fairway to green any easier to judge," Martin says was his brief.

Tom reckons the new greens will add two to three strokes to an average golfer's round.

Three of the greens – 3, 7 and 18 – have had major facelifts since they have been raised by 0.25-0.5m for drainage and salinity reasons. This means the bunkers on the 7th have become much deeper. The 3rd was also extended by four metres at the front to increase pin placement options.

Commenting on the new greens, Jeff Perris, of the STRI, says visitors will "note a tremendous change in the architecture of the greens as well as the firmness of the surface. The anticipated improvement in textural composition of the turf will no doubt take a little longer to achieve but already the redevelopment is being claimed a major success."

This "major success" has come a little late in the day for Tom O'Brien. "At least I have one season with them. It would have been worse if I'd have finished at the time of the Open, which I gave serious thought to. But I was unhappy going into the Open. Very, very, very unhappy. The greens weren't going right and there was no way I could correct it."

If you were preparing for the 1998 Open what would you do different, I wondered. "I wouldn't change my methods, but now I've got new greens the results would be different. I'd do the usual maintenance. Obviously I'd want to see it look its best. I'd think twice about some of the advice I got, that's for sure."

## Life after Birkdale

Tom is uncertain about what life after Birkdale has to offer. When I asked him what he'd like to do when he retires, he said: "God knows, I'd like to get something part-time. I don't want to sit around doing nothing." (His wife won't be retiring just yet.)

He's told some people he might return to Scotland, but he told me: "I don't think I'll move back. I've been really happy here. Southport is a great place to live."

He used to play a lot of golf, getting down to a nine handicap although it was "18 at the last count, 81 now". He may take it up again in his retirement. "I'd like to become a member of a club but it's difficult to get in," says the father of two grown-up sons.

Whatever he does, he'll never forget the '91 Open. The only thing that might erase that nightmare is hosting a successful Championship. But that responsibility will fall to one of the 60 applicants who applied for his job. Tom will have to content himself with the next best thing – the North West section are holding their autumn tournament there in September.





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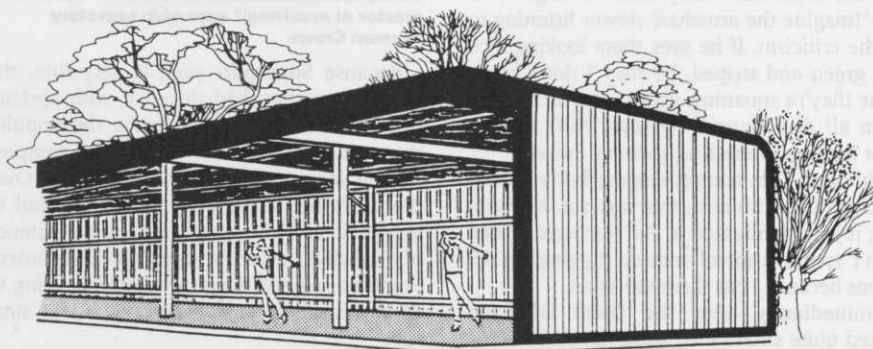
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# Taking control

## Irrigation consultant Philip York looks at irrigation controllers and control systems.

**T**here is now a plethora of irrigation controllers on the market utilising either conventional electrical control or electronic encoder/decoder systems.

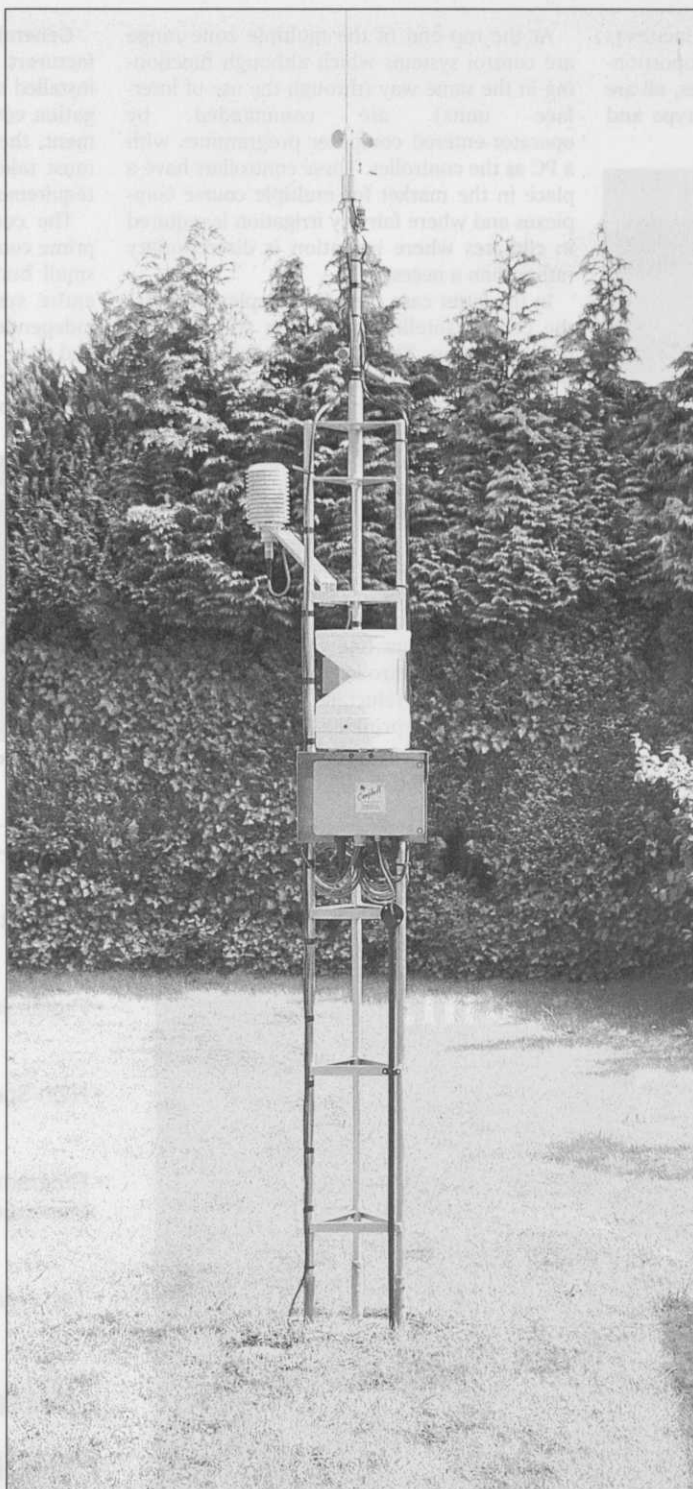
Whereas a little more than ten years ago virtually all controllers were of US origin from the major sprinkler manufacturers, and provided similar functions; today's range is much greater, the major sprinkler manufacturers have significantly increased their range and types of control systems on offer, added to which there are a number of manufacturers in the European Community who may, or may not, have other interests in the irrigation market.

Although the traditional type of controller still has its place in the market for the smaller landscape type systems, for the most part those controllers employed in golf have, to a greater or lesser extent, incorporated electronics with varying degrees of flexibility and sophistication.

Nowadays most of the controllers are electronic and operate the solenoids by sending an encoded signal to decoders located at the valves, this system enables the entire scheme to be controlled from one cable with 2 or 3 cores whereas the older electro-mechanical controller requires a minimum of a common wire to all valves and one cable to each valve.

The simplest form of controller is a single zone unit controlling a number of stations in sequence for operator set times, these can only be used where the total operating time to apply the required amount of water at each location is within the period of time allocated to complete the cycle, normally 10 hours, typically therefore being utilised where only 18 greens and tees require irrigation.

These single zone units will have varying degrees of flexibility,



**The Toro Weatherstation for connection to the Toro HW8000 and LTC computer controller**

Picture courtesy of Toro

eg 24 hour, 7 or 14 day time clocks, with 4 or more start times per day, station timing will be typically from 0-30 minutes (or more) in small or large increments, some will incorporate the provision to operate alternative pre-selected programmes eg greens only, tees only or greens and tees.

If the scope of the irrigation sys-

tem is larger, either incorporating additional areas, or maybe 27 or 36 holes, then, as there will be insufficient time to accomplish the irrigation programme, the number of zones will require to be increased in order that two or more stations can be operated independently but concurrently. The range of controllers in the market widens considerably with

## IRRIGATION INFORMATION

■ Got a problem? Talk to the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association (BTLIA). "Anybody contemplating investing large sums in irrigation should, if they have doubts about design specifications or cost factors, talk to us," says BTLIA chairman Paul de Rham. "We are actively concerned that customers should obtain value for their money. That's why the Association's members drew up a detailed list of design and installation standards some years ago." If you would like a second opinion or advice, contact Paul through John Shildrick at the Association's Bingley office. Tel: 0535 273188.

■ Childwall Golf Club in Liverpool is using the clarified water overflow from the local sewage works, purifying it, then storing it in its irrigation holding tank.

■ Myerscough College in Bilsborrow, Preston, is running a turf irrigation course, starting April 11. The course runs over four separate week-long modules and the college says: "Many course attenders find they can quickly recoup the course fees as a result of subsequent maintenance, water and energy savings." Furthermore, completion of the course gains 'unit credits' towards the BIGGA Master Greenkeepers Certificate. For further details call David Halford on 0995 640611.

■ Clubs using a non-Toro system are being invited to replace old sprinklers around a green with examples of the latest Toro 700 Series pop-ups – free of charge. This offer from TIL Irrigation of Ringwood is limited to the first 50 applying. Tel: 0425 476261.

■ Hunter's UK and Ireland importers, Sports Ground Irrigation Co, are warning potential buyers that they will only honour five-year warranties if the goods were bought from an authorised dealer or installer. A list of these is available from the Market Harborough-based company, tel: 0858 463153.



# Taking control

multi-zone controllers. Most manufacturers are offering them and they have proportionately more in-built or optional features, all are of the electronic encoder/decoder type and the price varies significantly.



**A Watermation TW2 4-zone controller with remote radio activation**  
Picture courtesy of Watermation

At the top end of the multiple zone range are control systems which although functioning in the same way (through the use of interface units) are commanded by operator-entered computer programmes with a PC as the controller. These controllers have a place in the market for multiple course complexes and where fairway irrigation is required in climates where irrigation is discretionary rather than a necessity.

In the latter case (and for complex projects) the central/satellite concept is still the preferred solution. These range in sophistication from electro-mechanical systems easily understood and maintained through to computer run systems linked to a weather station with electronic satellites which can be programmed from the central, or in the field, and with two way communication and many optional features.

It is important to understand the way the UK market (and some EC countries) is structured, contractors being allied to one particular manufacturer's product line may not be able to offer the right controller for the project; similarly the trade is reluctant to incorporate one manufacturer's sprinklers and valves with another's controller, although technically this can be done, and is in some cases.

Generally, sprinklers from reputable manufacturers with a properly designed and installed system will provide the accurate irrigation coverage required by today's management, therefore the choice of control system must take greater priority in evaluating the requirements of the project.

The cost of a controller should not be a prime consideration as it is only one relatively small but very important component of the entire system, what it must do is offer the independent designer and the operator flexible and easy programming with the features necessary for the technical aspects of the project at the appropriate management levels.



**A Rainbird Master II multizone controller with printer**  
Picture courtesy of Wright Rain Ltd

## Reliable Irrigation A Pipe Dream?



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# The write approach

**What do you do when you need a new watering system but the club says it can't afford it? That was the problem facing 29-year-old Alastair Cale when he joined Iffield Golf and Country Club last year as head greenkeeper after five years as assistant at another Sussex course, Ham Manor.**

When I arrived here, it was clear that the watering system had been causing problems for some time. It was based on a triangular system of three pop-ups per green and the coverage they were giving was very poor. Also, the pump wasn't producing the right pressure. There was almost no tee watering – what there was had been cannibalised to keep the greens going – and no approach watering either.

As the season unrolled, the watering system was giving me more and more problems, so it was obvious that something needed to be done. What had happened in the past, according to the committee, was that they'd only ever been given quotes for a brand new system. Now it doesn't take a genius to work out what a club with very tight financial restraints will say when told that they need to spend £65,000-£70,000 on a complete new watering system. The quotes basically went to the committee who said they can't afford it and the idea went out the window.

I took the experience I gained at Ham Manor where we had the same sort of problems with an inadequate watering system, but what we did there was put a proposal forward to phase in the system over a number of years with the main priority being the greens.

So I set about doing my own report, which the committee seemed quite receptive to. One of the greens committee members is an engineer, so he understood the principles of hydraulics, pumping and pressure. So the two of us set about writing a report on the failings of our watering system and the route we should take in upgrading it – but very much based on the idea of phasing it in over a period of time.

To compile the report we got a couple of the leading irrigation companies to come and give us

their opinions of our watering system and to brief the committee member about irrigation systems in general. We also went down to Ham Manor, so I could show the committee member what we'd done and he talked to the secretary. I also asked a lot of greenkeepers I knew in the area who had parkland courses what sort of pop-ups they were using (impact or gear driven?). I got demonstrations on different types of pop-ups and over a period of about three months we began to form the basis of the report.

The report contains:

1. An introduction
2. Observations on the current system, pointing out the poor coverage, poor pumping, the fact that our water storage tank, although it has a few small leaks and should ideally be larger, should cope for the foreseeable future. The control system was very old and the wires kept breaking down and this gave me a lot of grief during the summer – it got to the stage where I had to go out every night and turn it on manually because I couldn't trust it to come on on its own. It highlighted the poor piping round the greens and the spurs and it basically set out what was right and wrong with our system. One point was: "The greens staff have spent 100 hours between March and August repairing faults in the irrigation system. This time would be better spent on other jobs around the course."

3. Ideal system objectives. This looked at the pumping capacity we'd need, the amount of pop-ups we'd need around the greens, the ideal ring main size, and said that tees and approaches should be incorporated.

4. Proposed approach. We looked at our pumping system. We had a spare pump and we found we could install that in parallel with our existing pump. We had the pump serviced and installed to increase the flow rate as well as the pressure. Then we looked at the control system. A new control system would need a complete new cabling network. This was a priority so it came in in phase 1. Also proposed for phase 1 were the eight first priority greens. More greens would be done in phase 2 while phase 3 included

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# 'We'd gone about it in a way the club could afford'

the rest of the greens, approaches and tees. It was decided that a new ring main was not urgent.

We got one of the main companies to give us a rough breakdown of prices so we could put approximate costs alongside these jobs.

5. Suggested programme of implementation. This showed clearly how the system would be phased in over three years and how much it would cost each year.

6/7. The easy-to-read report also had some interesting facts about watering systems and a proposed priority of greens.

8. There was also a table showing the current spacing of the pop-ups around greens. This varied from 17 to 26 yards (the recommended maximum being 18).

We presented the ten-page report to the committee and it went through without any problems because we'd gone about it in a way that the club could afford. I knew from the start the club couldn't afford a complete new system and if I kept pushing for that I would not get a thing.

It was decided we would do 12 greens this year, the remainder and a few tees next year, and the following year we'd finish off the tees and do the approaches. We'd do the cabling this year; we've already put our pump in so we've got the pressure and the flow rate to cope with the extra sprinklers on the greens. We've also decided to split-valve the greens, so two of the four pop-ups come up at a time (we're restricted by a 2in ring main).

## Spending the money

Once I'd got the money approved,



Alastair Cale in his 'pump room'

I had to decide what to spend it on. The main choice was whether I went impact drive or gear driven for the greens. There's a big debate raging about that. I was a confirmed impact man but I decided I must look at everything from an objective point of view. So I got demonstrations of both, I asked around – both greenkeepers and installation companies. And here gear-driven models had the edge.

I still hadn't made up my mind when I went on holiday to South Africa where I played a lot of golf. They'd all got gear-driven systems. And a company I'd only heard about over here recently – Hunter – I saw in action at the Royal Cape Golf Club. I had a long chat with the course manager and he told me they gave a full five-year warranty, which

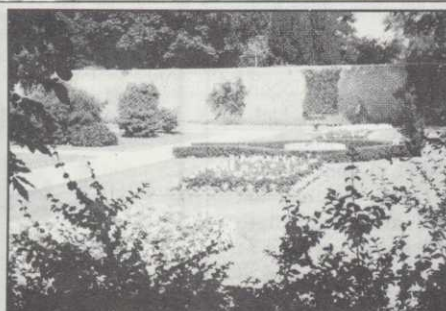
began to sway me because one of my initial concerns about gear-driven systems was that some people had said the gears wear out after a couple of years. Well, perhaps the early ones did.

I came back from my holiday and did a bit more research on the Hunters, on the warranties they give and so on, and this is the route I went down.

The other big debate was controllers. I decided to get four of the leading companies in – Toro, Wright Rain, Watermation, and Prime Watermen and a small local installer, Flanderblade, who was recommended by a ex-head greenkeeper. I got them to quote for roughly the same thing, but I asked them to go out on the course and send me a report and diagrams. I said I was looking at Hunter sprinklers, but I'd also like

a quote on the impacts as well. So, apart from Toro, they were all quoting for both. When the reports came in they were all completely different. Some were recommending 1 1/4in pipe round the greens, some were recommending 1/2in. Some were recommending five sprinklers on one green, some were recommending four. Obviously they all recommended their own controllers, except for the independent guy who said he would install whatever I wanted.

So I asked other greenkeepers what they had and set out my own spec and got the companies whose specs differed to re-quote. So now everyone was quoting on the same thing. But there was a difference in price of nearly £6,000 – from £19,000 from one of the 'big' companies to around



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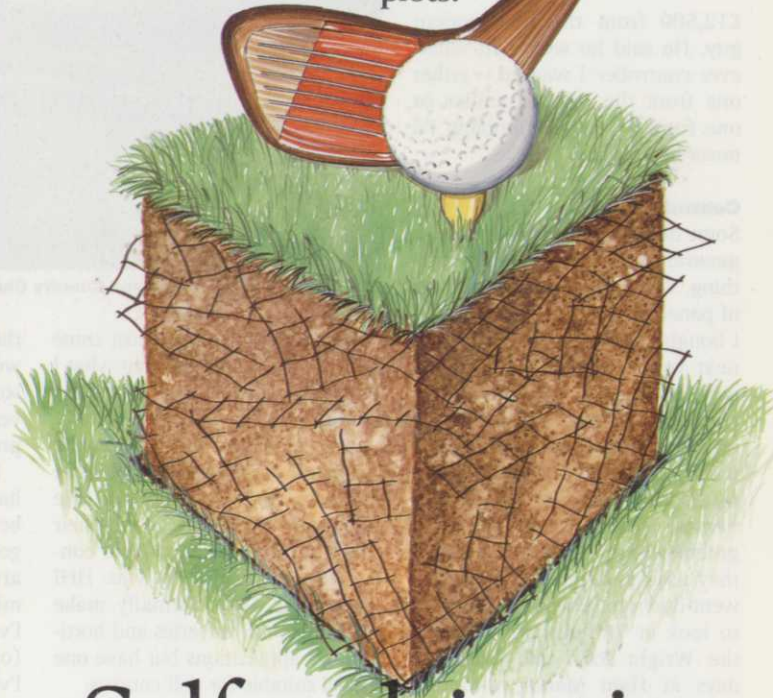
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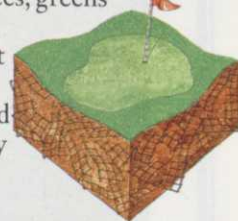
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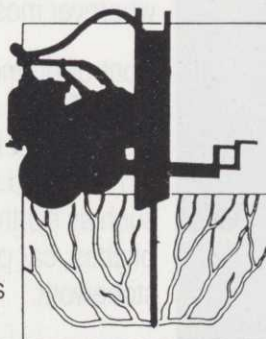
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## 'Some did more than others'

£12,500 from the independent guy. He said he would fit whatever controller I wanted – either one from the big companies or one from a smaller company I'd never heard of.

### Control panels

Some did more than others, but in general they all did the same thing. With the constant updating of panels, I realised that whatever I bought would be out of date by next year. The fact that a company had produced a brand-new control panel tended to put me off because although they were a big name, that panel was no more tested than some of the smaller names. I did a phone round of greenkeepers to find out what they used and what they knew. I went down to Worthing Golf Club to look at Watermation, I knew the Wright Rain one from my days at Ham Manor, although they had just brought out a new one that is completely different. I had a friend who had a Toro system, although not the one I was



The 3rd hole at Ifield Golf and Country Club

interested in. And then cost came into it. I had to balance up what I felt was giving us best value for money.

The installer then pointed me in the direction of another little company in Littlehampton. He said he'd only fitted one of their units but it's a superb little controller. The company was HHI Electronics, who normally make controllers for nurseries and horticultural applications but have one model suitable for golf courses.

I hadn't heard of this company before so I got a few references and went down and spoke to them. I got the man who designed

the controller to show me how it works. It's a no-frills unit with some great little features, very versatile and they haven't had any problems with the decoders.

So, in four years time, we'll have a watering system that will be functional for a small 18-hole golf course. It won't be state of art, it won't have all the gimmicks, but it should do the job. I've researched it thoroughly (over six months), but whether I've made the right decisions or not, only time will tell. I'm waiting for the weather to break to start installing the system. Since the course is on clay, I don't want

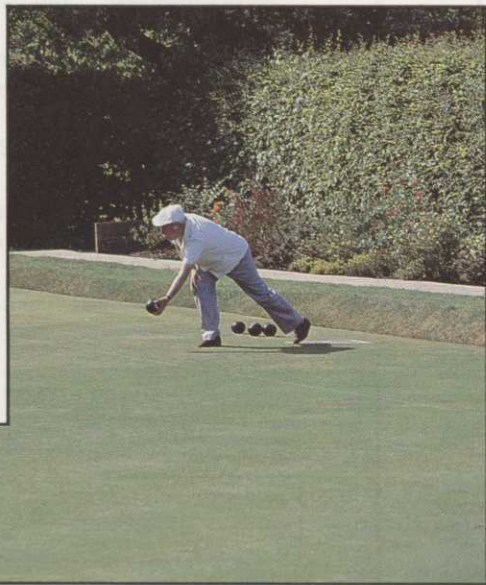
heavy plant driving around when it's wet.

In fact, it hasn't stopped raining since we got our proposals passed!

■ Ifield Golf and Country Club is a fairly standard 18-hole parkland course with a membership of 800-900. It is two and a half miles from Gatwick Airport so, with a large number of shift workers in the area, play on the course is quite heavy. Built on solid clay, the course has changed little during its 60-year history.

■ Four more head greenkeepers talk about irrigation, amongst other things, on Pages 47-48.

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# Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

## MIDLANDS

I would like to start by thanking ET Breakwell for their kind sponsorship of the Rose Bowl and to congratulate them on becoming Gold Key members for 1994. Well done, Len!

It was nice to see so many of our members at Harrogate, with many of them staying for the whole show. The show continues to grow both in size and support, which makes us all, I'm sure, proud to be members. Many thanks to our staff at HQ for their hard work and commitment in producing the show. While at the show I met our new editor, Chris Boiling, who seemed full of enthusiasm for the job in hand.

Our first lecture of the winter – in February – attracted 25 members, who heard two speakers: one from Dowlenco and another from the NRA. Our thanks to David and John.



Dates to remember: March 25 – Lecture on Hardi sprayers and Bob Pilsbury on diesel engines, Telford GC, starting 2pm; April 6 – Spring Tournament, Trentham Park GC.  
DEAN CLEAVER

## NORTH EAST

Once again the BTME at Harrogate was a huge success and it was good to see quite a lot of greenkeepers ranging from YTS to head greenkeepers from the North East. Pity only one of them attended any of the workshops – well done Mal Latham, at least he is trying. Believe me, they are well worth the money.

Bumped into Tony Chambers of Shorts of Whitburn on behalf of the section – get well soon, Tony.

Golf dates: April 14 – Spring Competition, South Moor GC; July 20 N/E v Secretaries, Seaham GC; September – Autumn Comp, TBA; October 6 – N/E v East Lothian, Westerhope GC; Match v Cleveland TBA..  
JIMMY RICHARDSON



## EVENTS DIARY

**April 8-10: National Education Conference, University of Warwick**  
**April 27: Westurf, Turf Care Trade Exhibition, Long Ashton Golf Club, Bristol**  
**June 8-9: BALI Trade Show, Stoneleigh**  
**June 29: Southurf, Turf Care Trade Exhibition, Motspur Park, south west London**  
**July 14-17: Open Championship, Turnberry**  
**August 1-3: National Tournament, Dartmouth Golf Club, Devon**  
**September 6-8: Saltex (previously loG) Trade Exhibition, Royal Windsor Racecourse, Berkshire.**  
**September 22: Hayter Challenge Final, Pannal Golf Club, Harrogate**  
**November (to be confirmed): Scotsturf**  
**January 25-27, 1995: BTME '95, Harrogate International Centre**

## SHEFFIELD

Firstly, this month I would like to, on behalf of the section, congratulate Barry Heaney on becoming vice chairman of BIGGA. Barry takes over on April 8 at the National Conference, and he becomes chairman of the Association next year. This is a great honour for Barry and for the Sheffield Section, and I hope we can give Barry all the support he needs.

Our winter lecture in February was given by John Souter of Souter's Sportsturf. John delivered his lecture to a packed meeting which was good to see, I hope we can keep the numbers up. John's lecture was superb and one of the best we've had, we thank him for his time and his interesting, informative and sometimes lighthearted lecture.

Two of our golf fixtures have now been arranged for 1994, they are at Worksoy Golf Club on April 26, which will also be the Hayter Qualifier. Our Annual Tournament (27 holes) will be at Tankersley Park GC on July 14. This brings me on to wishing Ron Graham of

Tankersley a speedy recovery after his accident at work and also to Ian Lilley of Lindrick GC who is recovering after an operation.

Congratulations go to Ian Whitehead on becoming deputy head greenkeeper at Hillsborough GC and also to Mike Coultas who has now joined Dave Chappel at Boundhay Golf and Country Club as Dave's deputy. I understand from David that construction at Boundhay has got off to a slow start but things are now in full swing. I'm sure we all look forward to playing it in the future.

On February 16, 24 members of the section went on a trip to the John Deere factory at Langar near Nottingham. We would like to thank Steve Jeffcock, Paul Beckett and Peter Chambers of Mitchells for organising the visit and to Howard Storey, Richard Charlton and Ivan Miller of John Deere for looking after us so well with an interesting insight into the workings of John Deere and an excellent lunch – thank you once again.

Finally, I would like to welcome John Coleman, James Hall, Paul Smith, Ryan Binns, Andrew Chapman, Andrew Hadin, Paul Green, Jonathan Shaw and David Sulley who are all new members to our section. I'm sure you all will be made welcome and we look forward to seeing you all at our winter lectures and golf meetings.



IAN COLLETT

## EAST MIDLANDS

Congratulations go to David Sankey on his appointment as head greenkeeper at Grimsby GC. David was formerly assistant at the Leicestershire GC.

This year's golf tournament dates have been arranged:

April 29 – Spring Outing and Hayter Qualifier, Sherwood Forest GC; September 28 – Autumn Outing, Wellingborough GC, Northamptonshire; November 16 – AGM Tournament, Ullesthorpe Court GC, Leicestershire; December 14 – Christmas Tournament, Birstall GC, Leicestershire. All members should be receiving their entry forms shortly, please try to return them to me as soon as possible.

This month we welcome the following new members to our section: Mark Reeves, Charnwood Forest GC; Nick Howe, student, Brackenhurst College; David James, student; Nick Danvers, associate/company, Hewitt's Sportsturf; Garry Jukes, Lutterworth GC; Peter Walker, Lacey Manor.

With the National Education Conference not too far away, let's hope to see as many members as possible from our section supporting this important event.

ANTHONY BINDLEY

## SOUTH WEST

Who'd manage sportsturf? That question must have been on many people's minds after the

**The countdown to Westurf has begun. The south west's premier trade show takes place at Long Ashton Golf Club, Bristol, on Wednesday April 27. Westurf is RAC signposted from the motorway and when you arrive parking and admission are free. Most of the main local and national dealers will be there to answer your questions, you will also be able to see the latest machinery being demonstrated on the large demo area which includes a golf green.**





rainfall we have been blessed with over the winter. Several inches of rain over short periods has disrupted many winter course programmes and restricted playing. Filton was no exception with large areas of instant water features appearing overnight. It pleased only the local seagulls who on numerous occasions could be seen paddling around the 16th fairway.

On a brighter note, the Spring Tournament which is the regional qualifier for the Hayter Challenge Tournament will be held on Thursday April 21 at Chippenham GC. Application forms will soon be dropping through your letter boxes to register for this and other events. I look forward to meeting you then and throughout the season.

The following week it's Westurf. Its success in the last few years has been quite outstanding but it needs your support to continue to do this, so make the effort and bring someone interested in turfcare with you. We will also need some assistance in its organisation, particularly in the car park and on the entrance, so if you can spare some time please contact me at home on 0272 793127.

Anyone interested in playing in the match on June 28 at Clevedon GC against the secretaries, please contact me and I will pass your name on to our team captain, Dave Neale, for possible selection.

The two-day chainsaw maintenance course recently held at Long Ashton once again proved very successful. Our thanks go to Ivor Scoones and the club itself for allowing us to use the greenkeeping sheds for instruction. Please maintain an interest in this and the other educational courses and services avail-

## Around the Green



able. For the experience and qualifications gained they are extremely good value for money besides the fact that some are legal requirements.

KEVIN GREEN

### LONDON

The BTME once again proved to be a great success and it was encouraging to see a good turnout from our section. It was also nice to see an increase in trade stand numbers and this is a reflection of a well organised event.

The evening entertainment was very enjoyable and well worth the late nights.

Our first golf event of the year is April 18 at Porters Park GC. The Hayter qualifier will be the main event but various prizes will be up for grabs. Entry forms will be with you this month but do not hesitate to call me if you have not received one. Finally, will anyone interested in becoming an NVQ assessor for the industry please contact David Golding at the GTC headquarters.



TONY DUNSTAN

### NORTH SCOTLAND

Only ten months until BTME '95, Yes, this

year's was that good. The whole week was excellent. The 'Evening Gang' is growing bigger each year. Soon there will not be a restaurant big enough to accommodate us all at once!

What a place Harrogate is for pubs with 12-hour Happy Hours and a pizza restaurant letting you eat as much as you can for £2.25! Entertainment was first class, if you missed the Paterson and White trick involving a jacket, an overhead fan and a pint of lager, then I feel sorry for you, although not as sorry as the poor bloke who finished up wearing the pint.

The workshop I attended on health and safety will keep me busy all year. Thanks to Jon Allbutt for a very informative two days. The show was so big this year, I just wish more Scottish firms were in attendance; I'm sure it would be worthwhile. The seminar programme was first class and congratulations to all the speakers. The new BIGGA staff were all very friendly and helpful and I wish them a long association with us.

Congratulations to Colin Mackay of Cruden Bay for winning the BTME competition in the magazine, I am sure he enjoyed his week. To anyone who has not been to BTME yet, I advise you to get yourself there next year, combine some work with a lot of fun and a great opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. I am sure the National Conference next month will be just as good and there is always Turnberry in July.

No new members to welcome this month so come on - get recruiting, you could win airline tickets for a holiday. All you need for the chance to win is to recruit two new members and get them to say that you recommended them. It is as easy as that.

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Have you sent your 200 Club money yet?



Finally, some advance warning – the Scottish Region North Section one-day conference will take place in Aberdeen on December 1.  
IAIN MacLEOD

## NORTH WALES

For those of you who attended BTME, I trust you enjoyed yourselves and those that stayed for the week have recovered from any excesses. It was encouraging to see so many section members in attendance and I hope to see you all at the National Education Conference in April.

The first golf competition of 1994 will be the match versus the North West section on April 14 at Oaklands GC. Anyone interested in taking part should contact either myself or Terry Adamson.

On April 26 we will be holding the Spring Competition at Carden Park near Chester. The cost is a little higher than normal but access to the driving range and nine-hole academy course is included together with coffee on arrival and a meal after the game. Tee off time is from 8am and the fee is £17 to members and £22 to guests. As an additional feature, John Garner, the ex Ryder Cup player will be presenting his golf show in aid of the Fight Leukaemia in Chester charity. All entries to be in by April 14. Members will be sent further details shortly.

Congratulations go to Peter Gabriel (Carden Park) and Zoe on the birth of their first baby, a boy called Jacob weighing 6lb 6oz. A future apprentice greenkeeper no doubt seeing as I have been given the responsibility of godfather!

The committee wish a speedy recovery after her operation to our chairman Brian Anderson's wife.

Welcome to the area Andy Peel, who has moved from Ellesmere GC, Manchester, to take up the head greenkeeper position at Bull Bay GC on Anglesey.

That man Bronco (Gareth Williams, Porthmadog GC) has been on his travels again with his dog, this time finishing fourth in the National Sheepdog Trials. I wonder if he has trained it to recover errant tee shots?

ANDY CAMPBELL

## NORTH WEST

How have your courses stood up to the wettest winter for years? I have spoken to many greenkeepers, the fortunate ones having understanding members and committees, who have had their courses closed for weeks at a time, and these courses will obviously benefit from the rest, even though normal winter work has not been completed due to the wet conditions.

I have also spoken to greenkeepers who have to put up with members who insist that they pay subscriptions for 12 months and want their money's worth. I only hope the greens committee will back the greenkeeper when, in the spring, the complaints start coming in because the course is not as good as they would like. Many courses in the south have been completely flooded, but at least they had a rest from tramping feet and buggies.

The golfing calendar has now been completed, so please make a note in your diaries of the dates, even though you will be reminded each month in your section notes.

Thursday April 14 – N/W v N/Wales, Oaklands GC (team required); Tuesday May 24 – Spring Tournament, Sale GC (Hayter qualifier) Mon-

# Around the Green



day July 25 – Summer Meeting, Stockport GC; Wednesday August 10 – Roses Match, Mottram Hall (team required); Monday September 12 – Autumn Tournament, Royal Birkdale; TBA – Stewards Match (team required).



If you would like to be in the team of 16 to play North Wales, give me a ring on 051 7245412  
BERT CROSS

## DEVON AND CORNWALL

Over 65 members attended our February meeting which was held at Trevoise GC by kind permission of Peter Gammon. Members who had travelled from the east of our section were pleasantly surprised to see that there was no covering of snow over the championship links course as they had to battle with that fluffy stuff to start with. The morning's bogey golf competition saw some 40 members compete for the Avoncrop Trophy. After an excellent lunch John Palfrey of Avoncrop presented the prizes to: 1, Cary Rawlings (Padbrook) +1; 2, David Manley (Mullion) -1; 3, Richard Hall (Padbrook) -2 on back nine.

The section would like to thank Trevor Bennett and his staff who had the course in such fine condition, and everyone else at Trevoise who made our day so successful.

Our afternoon educational talk was presented by John Bradley of Barenburg Seeds. It was on the development of seeds from start to finish with a lively question time making our day very interesting and enlightening. The section would like to thank John for his presentation.

Congratulations go to Richard Hall who has taken a greenkeeping position in Germany. Many thanks for your support over the years and the section would like to wish you every success in your new position.

This year the section will be replacing its Guest Day meeting with an afternoon summer meeting to be held on Wednesday June 22 at Yelverton GC. The section is hoping to provide a workshop for non-golfing members with golfing and raffle prizes being of educational value. The afternoon will be sponsored by Jacobsen & MST.

RICHARD WHYMAN

## WEST SCOTLAND

After 38 years a head greenkeeper at Whitecraig GC, Bob Fitzpatrick has decided to retire. The section wishes him all the best. With Bob leaving, the position of head greenkeeper was soon filled by Peter Hall, previously of Hamilton GC.

But surely the biggest story of the month has to go to Roy Auld, in a sensational move from Toro (AM Russel) to Ransomes (Scottish Grass Machinery). This will surely test his qualities as a salesman. Good luck, Roy!

The Claremont Bowling Club was the venue for the West of Scotland section games night. The competition was fierce with darts, dominoes, bowls, pool and snooker being the pro-

gramme of events, and as the dust finally settled on the green baize, there was only one pairing left undefeated from the evening: Scott Ballantyne (Cowglen GC) and David Mowatt (Killermont GC). Second place went to Steven McGeachie and Jim Dunne, both newcomers to the games night and both from Pollock GC.

Thanks must go to John Scott and Drew McKechnie for organising another great night!

The spring outing will be held at Dougalston GC on April 28. Numbers will be restricted to around 50, therefore applications will be dealt with on a first come, first served basis. Under no circumstances will entry fees be accepted on the day of the competition.

Lastly, Richard Cuthbert, assistant at Cowglen GC, is now on the road after an above average number of attempts at passing his test, so beware Glasgow residents.

SCOTT BALLANTYNE

## SOUTH COAST

Our January winter lecture – "Communication Within a Golf Club" by Ed McCabe and Arthur King of Brockenhurst Manor Golf Club – should have been a must for all golf club committee members and greenstaff. Unfortunately, only 15 members attended. What has been achieved at Brockenhurst in communication is a lesson for us all. Our thanks to Ed and Arthur.

It was good to see a few more South Coast members at BTME this year. We ran a minibus to Bristol to connect with the main coach to Harrogate. Nine South Coast members travelled on the regional coach – five more than last year, but still leaving room for more. What about a coach from the South Coast next year! BTME is a great show and super social event so make a note in your diaries for next year.

Our thanks go to Gordon and Marion Child who do so much of the organising work. Without them our region would not be in the position it is.

It is hoped there will be a coach to Westurf this year paid for by section funds. This is the most important event of the year for the South West and South Wales region and helps keep us financially secure so that we can offer such a good deal on the trip to BTME. All bookings to your chairman, Ken Lodge (tel: 0329 282362).

April 21 is the date of our spring tournament at Test Valley GC. Call the organiser, Bob Cully on 0489 782976.

ALAN MITCHELL

## MID ANGLIA

The section's first lecture of the year, at the Family Golf Centre, Stevenage, featured Guy Longshaw of Symbio. He spoke in some depth about a new product called Green Circle, which is applied to greens. It's basically a mineral with micro-organisms attached to it which are so voracious they break down thatchy, fibrous material and make the resulting nutrient available to the plant. The benefits in the short term are less incidence of disease and good colour and, in the long term, a reduction in fertiliser needs.

For those who were unable to attend (almost everybody judging by the poor turnout), Guy's phone number is 081 669011.

The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition has been and gone once more, and was once again an undoubted success. It was pleasing to see so many section members attending. Harrogate is an excellent venue for such an event and I hope it will stay there in the future.

Next month – April 27 – sees our first golf



fixture at Harpenden Golf Club. This will be a qualifying event for the Hayter Challenge. Entry forms should be with you by now for all upcoming events, and please note that the cost is £20. As the cost was £17 for the last three years, the committee felt a rise was due, so the day can pay for itself without the need for subsidisation. Entry forms should be sent to Chris



Brook with a cheque by Wednesday April 13. If anyone has any queries, call me on 0582 490746 (work) or 0525 402550 (home)

PAUL LOCKETT

## CLEVELAND

Envirogreen provide a service for the collection and disposal of empty pesticide containers, in a legal manner. This protects the greenkeeper who will be finable (from April 1) and also his club. I recommend this service.

I have completed 30 years service as head greenkeeper at Eaglescliffe GC. During all these years our agronomists have been STRI whom I would not like to be without. This is a wonderful service for our benefit. We get an annual visit followed with a detailed report of findings for us to follow. They will also do soil tests, pH tests and if we need top dressing, root zone or sand testing for particle sizes this can also be done. Diseased turf can be examined and identified so we can use the right treatment. Subscription to the STRI is good value.

Gary Munro, our secretary, is working on future events including the Spring Tournament/Hayter Qualifier on May 19 at Dinsdale Spa GC.



Members will be visiting the new Gem Top Dressing base in South Yorkshire and to Jacobsen in Kettering.

BRUCE BURNELL

## SURREY

Our Spring Meeting at Malden GC is not far off – April 20. After that it's the Cresta Cup at Laleham GC on June 1. We may even see some new faces.

Please make sure all entries are in on time and remember, entry forms are only available from the section secretary.

Congratulations to David Paterson, formerly of Abridge GC in Essex, upon his appointment as deputy head at Woodcote Park GC under Eric Green. Welcome to Surrey.

DAVID GIBBS

## SOUTH WALES

Firstly, I'd like to thank Richard Minton of ICI (or is it Zeneca?) for presenting last month's evening lecture/slide show at Pencoed College. The subject was the history and use of chemicals on sports turf.

We were indeed lucky to have Richard, let alone the 20 or so in attendance taking into consideration the weather conditions. But the evening was enjoyable and indeed educational and I thank all of those who were present.

Our first GTC-approved, newly-formed liaison meeting held at Pencoed College was deemed a success by all those in attendance and is definitely a step in the right direction for greenkeeper education in South Wales. On a personal note, I look forward to developing a closer working relationship with the WGU, GTC and the secretaries in the very near future.

The seventh BTME and seminar programme was again seen as a total success for the greenkeeping industry as a whole. Many of the

# Around the Green



exhibitors that I spoke with were busy for the whole three days with no let up at all and had no doubt that the show was busier than last year.

The seminar subjects were varied with topics ranging from the humorous 'How to get your way at work' to the hilarious 'Light at the end of the tunnel', to the more serious educational 'The history of golf and greenkeeping'.

Gordon and Marion Child must again be congratulated for their efforts in organising the Westurf-sponsored trip for it was thoroughly enjoyable and extremely well organised.

Colin Murphy has asked me to pass on his sincere thanks to all those who not only attended the funeral of his late wife but to all those who sent cards, flowers and kind regards. Dates for your diary: April 13 – South Wales Seminar; April 20 – Hayter Qualifier, Newport GC; April 27 – Westurf, Long Ashton GC, Bristol.

## CENTRAL SCOTLAND

Hopefully the worst of the winter is behind us now and we can look forward to better weather as the days lengthen. We 'tee off' this season's events with the Spring Tournament at Monifieth Links on Tuesday April 26. This is also the section qualifier for the Hayter Challenge Tournament and a large entry is anticipated, please return your forms (with the correct remittance) in plenty of time. No form, no fee = no play.

Another social night is being arranged for the G-X Superbowl in Falkirk. Entry forms should reach you soon. This is a great night if you enjoy a laugh as there are no 'experts', so bring along your partner or just come yourself and meet other members away from work.

Are you interested in attending courses on health and safety, first aid, chainsaws, COSHH Regulations etc, if your committee organises them for you? If so, please complete the form enclosed with your golf tournament entry form and if enough members are interested courses will be arranged for later in the year.

Having attended the BTME at Harrogate, it was pleasing to see so many Central Section members there, everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves with those who were there for the first time attending the seminars during the day and then being 'educated' on Harrogate's nightlife by the 'Auld Hands' in the evening. Who's booked up for next year?

Best wishes from everyone in the section go to the Association's former education officer, Debbie Savage, who has moved to Cambridgeshire. Here's wishing you every success and happiness. Keep in touch!



JOHN CRAWFORD

## BERKS, BUCKS & OXON

Many thanks to Mark Chesman for organising our winter lecture programme – they were very much appreciated by all.

Mark is currently getting to grips with next year's programme and would be only too

pleased to hear any of your ideas. Please contact me on 0628 829208 and I will put you in touch with him.

Another big thank you to Mark Barthelmie of Risborough Turf Supplies who generously sponsored all the trainees for the section coach trip to Harrogate. In all, 18 members of the section travelled to Harrogate and although it

was a long day they all enjoyed it.



Forthcoming events: March 16 – Gentlemen's dinner, Beaconsfield GC; May – Spring Tournament and Hayter Qualifier, Mill Ride GC.

RAY CLARK

## EAST OF ENGLAND

For the first time, the section's AGM was held in conjunction with a golf competition, which was sponsored by John Deere and took place at Sleaford GC.

A thoroughly enjoyable day's golf was had, with 20 players venturing out on a remarkably dry day and superbly presented course. The format of the day was greensomes with a draw for partners. The worthy winners were Mike Feeney and Ted Lake. My thanks go to Ted, chairman of the greens at Sleaford, for expertly guiding us round the last three holes in darkness!

Out thanks to John Scotney and all his staff, the course was a treat to play, especially after all the rain we had during December. Thanks also go to the captain and vice-captain who joined both for the golf and evening meal.

Next followed the AGM where there were a few changes made to the section committee due to members standing down.

Our chairman, Graeme Patrick, handed over the chair to Dave Walden. Our thanks go to Graeme for all the hard work he has done for the section. After the AGM, your committee is as follows: Chairman – Dave Walden; Vice-chairman – Graeme MacDonald; Secretary – Mike Finney; Treasurer – John Scotney; members – Barry Anderson, Ian Morton, Mike Wood.

Finally, it was good to see a few section members at BTME and I would suggest that any member who has not been to the exhibition make an effort to attend in '95 because it is by far the best show for greenkeepers.

MIKE FEENEY

## No names, no pack drill

■ So you missed Harrogate this year, but you're thinking of going in '95. Want to know what a trip to the BTME is really like? A south-west greenkeeper reveals all (except for the names, to protect the guilty)...

6.30am: A dark grey morning but spirits light and sunny as the car speeds on towards our first destination. "Left, right, right at the roundabout," the driver needs very explicit instructions or we will end up taking the scenic route.

First stop – a large cholesterol breakfast, a few cups of coffee and a lot of conjecture over the trip. Back into the car, more instructions to the driver, and on to the coach pick-up point.

First ones there for a change. Other greenkeepers arrive in dribs and drabs from all points of the compass. Banter and greetings. The coach arrives on time, another first, we all load suitcases and climb aboard. We greet the other travellers and settle down for the next stage of the journey.

With talk of the AGM and reps' fat wallets,



the time passes quickly as we speed on to our next stop. "45 minutes break," shouts the driver so we rush en masse to the toilets. More coffee and cakes then we meet up with the last lot of travellers to board the coach. ("That chap from Wales has brought his wife and the ex chairman has brought his too.") We are accustomed to one female on our trip, but this is stretching greenkeepers' hospitality too far! But who am I to complain? Would I? Moi?

A desperate situation – we are one short. Count again. One person is meeting us at journeys end. No, we are still one short. Wait a minute, we forgot to count the driver. Onwards ever onwards we travel, banter, boiled sweets and fun.

One more stop for toilets and coffee, then into the "Father-Land". Cooling towers, coal mines and slag heaps.

We arrive on time with no mishaps and pile into the hotel. Nice hot shower, a change of clothes and down to the bar.

Talk and drink, drink and talk ("Look, there's the new rep on the trip, looks very smart in his suit and shiny shoes.") We lighten his wallet with profuse thanks for his hospitality.

Out into the damp and drizzle, 15 hungry people in search of food. We sit around one big table and eat, drink and laugh. On again to find a bar. More drinks, more chat. Back to the hotel to meet up with all the others, some go to bed and some have a nightcap or two.

#### The show

Fortified with breakfast, we stroll to the show. *What a show!* Bigger, better, more people, the best yet. Congratulations to all concerned with the organisation. This must be the best show of its kind in the UK. With lectures as well, what

## Around the Green



more do you need? The National Conference maybe?

Machines from all over the world. The large and small. The good and not so good. All vying to get your custom. The chemicals and fertilisers. When will one of the manufacturers come up with a survival kit for this week's entertainment?

A good evening meal with 20-ish in the party. Plenty of drinks to wash down some good steaks. Some go off dancing and some return to the hotel for more meaningful dialogue and the odd drink.

The next morning produces some funny heads and funny eyes. Breakfast is taken by some but not others, then off to the show again.

We move around to see the reps on various stands and listen to talks on all manner of subjects. The last talk of the day was the highlight of the week. When he asked if anyone had tried to find an underground drain with a bent coat hanger, I thought, "I've been there". You could say I was hooked. What a talk, excellent.

Back to the hotel to wash and change then off to the banquet for some of us. Well I enjoyed myself and, despite having to ask people to be quiet during the entertainment, had a very pleasant evening. Then it was back to the

hotel where some fool told jokes and drank too much.

Breakfast was a fragile affair for quite a few. Some did not even make it. Bags packed and loaded onto the coach. A steady walk to the show, gently does it. But looking around, I'm not the only one.

"Be on the coach outside the halls by 12 noon" was the instruction. So, zombie-like, we did as we were told. But there is always one – we had a right one. By 12.15, he who must be obeyed is telling the driver to move off. But she who will be obeyed overruled this and went in search of the lost soul. Needless to say, it was the tall rep of a firm near Bristol who got shepherded onto the coach amid catcalls and jeers.

A stop at Tamworth was much needed, by me anyway, and after some food I felt my usual self again. She who will be obeyed was thanked at this point for all her hard work and was presented with a bunch of flowers by our Welsh friend.

Our next stop was just outside Bristol. Here we deposited some of our fellow travellers, and said our goodbyes and vowed to meet again next year. More tea, then on once more.

We dropped one chap at another services. He was the one who stayed up for two nights drinking and never used his bed thinking he could get a discount on his bill.

The next stop is where I get out with my lift. We say goodbye and walk to our cars only to find that two of them have been broken into, thankfully nothing has been taken.

More explicit instructions for the driver and we are on the right road for home. A final stop for a big roast meal at a transport cafe. We count up how much we have spent. *How much?! Roll on next year.*

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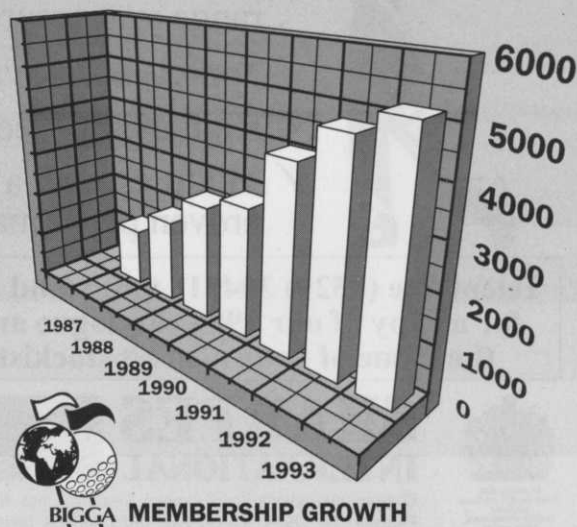
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# Seeds of success

**Michel Mulder, managing director of Barenbrug, explains why you should pay more and buy better quality mixtures of seeds.**

**M**any greenkeepers make the mistake of selecting grass seed mixtures on the basis of price. This is not surprising when you consider the budgets that most greenkeepers are working with and the pressures put on them by their golf clubs. Yes, even with things that are as essential as grass seed.

The trouble is a cheap grass seed mixture leads to a bad sward, more maintenance (and



**Quality varieties like Barkoel pay for themselves because they require less maintenance**

associated costs), it requires more water and fertiliser and earlier overseeding – which shows that, in the end, quality pays off and

can actually save money.

The 1994 turfgrass seed booklet from the Sports Turf Research Institute shows that the difference in quality between the top varieties and the average of each major list is huge. (Figure 1).

This means that you can increase the quality of the sward by over 30 per cent by using varieties which are proven to be better.

More and more greenkeepers are realising this, as there has been a significant increase recently in the demand in the UK for quality varieties (and British Seed Houses says there may well be a shortage of the better cultivars of perennial ryegrass by the end of the year). This increasing demand for better quality seed mixtures is not just coming from greenkeepers renovating/over-sowing their greens, tees and fairways, but also from turf producers who are being asked by greenkeepers for ever higher quality turf.

Higher quality varieties are needed as greenkeepers are con-

fronted with more complicated influences: heavily polluted soils, low maintenance requirements, environmental laws, saline conditions and extreme wear conditions for greens and tees. All of these problems highlight the need for accurate information in order to match specification to demand.

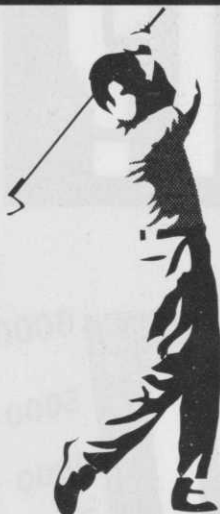
Therefore, ongoing discussions between the leading breeders and greenkeepers, architects, and agronomists is essential and enables breeders to collect and breed varieties which are tailor-made for golf courses.

One example of this is a new species that has entered the world of turfgrasses recently and is being hailed as a breakthrough in breeding. The species is crested hair-grass (koelera cristata). At Barenbrug we are calling our variety Barkoel.

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**Figure 1**

	TOLERANCE CLOSE MOWING/SHOOT DENSITY	
	Average variety	Top variety
Browntop bent	Highland 4.8	Heliot/Bardot 7.1
Slender creeping red fescue	Average 6.4	Barcrown 8.9
Chewings fescue	Average 6.4	Baruba/Barqueen 7.1



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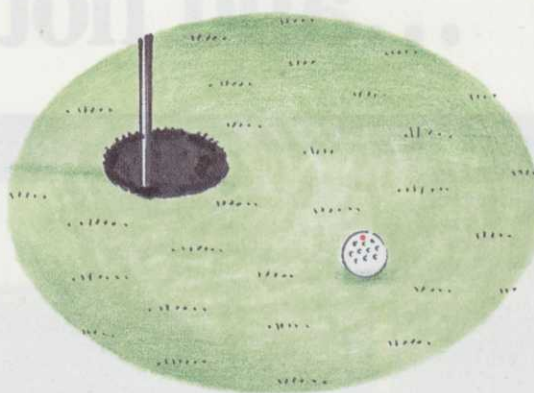


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\* Average of the most important criteria as selected by the STRI 1994 list (tolerance of close mowing and shoot density).

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## A wide-angle photograph of a golf course. In the foreground, a large, flat green fairway stretches across the bottom. Beyond it, a green fairway leads to a putting green, which is bordered by a dense line of trees. A small, dark, rounded bush is visible on the left side of the fairway. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

In the short term, choosing quality varieties will pay for themselves. In the long term, they will be more resistant to disease and, generally, make the greenkeeper's life a little easier because they require less maintenance. They will also enable him to achieve the result he wants.

A man in a red shirt is operating a white Toro riding lawn mower on a golf course. The mower is equipped with a mulch blade attachment, which is a long, horizontal metal bar with multiple blades. The background shows a green lawn and trees.



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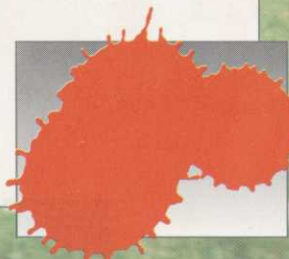
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**M**idlands-based dealer ET Breakwell is the latest company to join BIGGA's Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund as a member of the Golden Key Circle.

"Like BIGGA, we're committed to education and training," explained managing director Len Breakwell.

"The way things are we're going to have more and more reliance on the golf industry. We can see we've got to get more and more of our business from golf and we believe if we're seen by the greenkeepers to be supporting their association that they in turn will support us. It's a commercial decision, it's not that we give money up willy-nilly.

We've looked at it carefully; we like what the BIGGA do. In the amenity industry there isn't anybody that's doing what BIGGA are doing for their members. So full credit to them and we'd like to be associated with them as we think we're very good at what we do. We're very professional. It's only right that we should be alongside the professional Association."

As with the Association, 1994 promises to be a big year for ET Breakwell Ltd. Well known to most greenkeepers in and around



## Breakwell joins the Golden Key Circle

the Birmingham area, the company was appointed one of the main dealers to the new Massey Ferguson grass equipment franchise. At the same time, it announced an expansion of territory for its long running Ransomes franchise.

These moves coincide with the news that Massey Ferguson's grass equipment division has been appointed as the exclusive distributor for Iseki products in

the UK and Ireland. This agreement will add the Iseki branded range of compact tractors to MF's grass equipment portfolio which also includes exclusive distribution rights for the professional grass and grounds maintenance machines made by Swiss manufacturer Bucher.

So, in one swift move, ET Breakwell have added Massey Ferguson, Iseki and Bucher products to its range. But, before they

start stocking the tractors and mowers, they buy in the spare parts.

"We will put the fast moving parts like blades, belts and bearings on the shelf before we get the new machines in the showroom. I believe you sell the next machine by the way you look after the first one," says Mr Breakwell.

As a further sign of Breakwell's growth, mower manufacturer Ransomes has extended the dealer's sales territory from the West Midlands, Warwickshire and Hereford and Worcester to include Oxfordshire, Bucks and

Milton Keynes.

"It's been a hectic start to the new year," confesses Mr Breakwell. "These

new sales responsibilities have seen us take on extra staff and complete the construction of a further 14,000 sq ft of warehouse space to accommodate new parts and stock." This takes the total warehouse space up to 40,000 sq ft.

In the parts area, Breakwells have made large investments in computer technology which allows instant ordering and efficient stock updating from manufacturers. More than 27,000 of the fastest moving product lines



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# Family-run concern is a one stop shop for groundscape maintenance

(worth about £300,000) are stocked while the computer gives details of a further 300,000 lines that are only a phone call away.

Using its own vehicle fleet, Breakwells makes regular spare parts deliveries in its area (roughly a 70-mile radius from its Shirley headquarters) and parts ordered by 4pm can be with the greenkeeper the next day.

"The turf care equipment market has changed radically over the last five years," comments Mr Breakwell. "Customers are far more discerning. They are looking for a quality product that matches their needs, plus a reliable dealer to provide a high level of support. Money saved on a discounted sale is quickly forgotten when a machine is lying idle and there is work to be done preparing a golf course for an important tournament. With over half a century of experience behind us, Breakwells are well aware of the extra pressures placed on greenkeepers today, but customers can be confident that we will be backing them all the way."

Employing 54 people and with a turnover of £6million, Breakwells is a family-run business – Len's father who founded the business in 1940 is still the chairman. They supply grass maintenance equipment and sports turf treatments to a wide variety of customers including golf courses, local authorities and contractors. Among these are The Belfry and Warwickshire and Oxfordshire golf courses. One of the dealer's first customers for the new MF 1200 compact tractors was Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

The business has been set up as a one stop shop for groundscape maintenance. As well as machinery, Breakwells supplies chemicals

and fertilisers, grass seed and a whole host of ancillary golf course equipment. Brand names include Amazone, Cushman, Hayter, Honda, Sisis, ICI, Fisons, and Rhone-Poulenc.

Machinery is also available for hire. This includes tractors, greens machines, fairway machines, machines for cutting the rough, plus specialist machines – ride-on aerating machines, core harvesters, vertidrains.

"We do this for two reasons: we've got to have demonstration kit and if we sell a club a major piece of equipment then we need to be able to back it up, because when it goes wrong, as any machine may do, we don't want to leave the greenkeeper in the lurch. This way we can loan him something if we can't repair it quickly," explains Mr Breakwell.

If this wasn't enough, the com-

pany is also a wholesaler and retailer for domestic mowers and garden machinery. But whether they're supplying a Qualcast mower to a little old lady or a Ransomes machine to a golf course, they pride themselves on the back-up they give.

"Success in the supply of turf care equipment hinges on the quality of your support services," remarks Mr Breakwell. "Machinery demands substantial investment and in the event of a problem, it has to be back up and running as quickly as possible." The company was the first grass equipment, fertiliser and chemical specialist to achieve ISO 9002:1987 (BS5750) quality standard which assures consistently high levels of customer service.

Eight fully-qualified, factory trained engineers are employed in the purpose-built workshop while

a well equipped mobile service unit – pictured below – is available for on-site repairs. There is also a service vehicle based in Oxfordshire to provide a speedy response to the southern part of its area.

The workshop boasts all the latest equipment and specialist tools together with extensive facilities for grinding.

After hearing about all the care and attention Breakwells give to golf courses it was surprising to hear that Len is not a golfer. "I like to watch the golf but I'm not a player – I don't have time," he says honestly. "And we don't have any members of staff who are keen golfers either."

So, Midlands greenkeepers, the next time a mechanic drops by to mend your machines, do the decent thing and convert him to this royal and ancient game.



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# Our way

## The Ridge Golf Club

The Ridge Golf Club is a new parkland course near Maidstone in Kent. It was built on a fruit farm, so there are many old trees which give it a very established look although it is less than two years old. Course manager is Peter James Gee.

### Irrigation system

The irrigation system used at the Ridge is a computer controlled satellite system. The system that runs the programs is the Cintech system. The computer used is an Amstrad PC 1640 HD20. The sprinklers are all Hunter gear driven, with Golf 400 used around greens and on approaches, Golf 500s and 550 on fairways and the tees are irrigated using Hunter I 21-ads. The pumping system was put together by CCD and features a three pump configuration with equalising chamber which keeps the system continually under pressure during the summer.

### Comments about the system

"This system gives me excellent control over the amount of water applied to the course," says Pete. "I like the down-to-earth second timing and the ease of programming. The gear driven sprinklers require very little maintenance and are very reliable. Having the system continuously under pressure during the summer gives instant water to the course if needed. 50 hand watering points enable me to hand water any point of the course.

"My only dislike of the system is the fact that it was installed by inexperienced contractors, so I have been left with lots of pipe near the surface and not very well backfilled trenches which have sunk."

### Spring cutting regime

Winter heights are maintained until strong summer growth is established. In spring, cutting is as regular as growth and weather conditions dictate.



## Harpenden Golf Club

Harpenden Golf Club celebrates its centenary this year. It is a well established private members club on the outskirts of Harpenden in Hertfordshire. The general soil type is London clay which makes for a very dry course in the summer and a very wet one in winter. Stewart Boyes is the course manager.

### Irrigation system

The irrigation system at Harpenden Golf Club is a Toro 170 series Monitor 2 control system with 650 series gear driven rotary sprinklers on greens (four per green) and 320 series gear driven rotary sprinklers on the tees. Each of the greens heads give a flow rate of 124.5 ltrs per minute while each of the tee heads produce 16.7 ltrs per minute.

The system was installed in April 1980 at a total cost, including drinking fountains, of £23,603. The water supply is from the mains with a storage tank capacity of 12,000 gallons.

### Comments about the system

"When I joined the club in 1987 it was felt that the system would soon be in need of updating," says Stewart. "The main reason for this was that the wiring system was showing signs of deterioration and many of the sprinkler heads, especially on tees were not working to 100 per cent capacity. However, due to the economic climate at the time it was not possible to finance the required work and we have therefore had to soldier on making any necessary repairs to keep the system operational.

"While I have no special likes or dislikes concerning the system I am at present seeking quotes to modernise the control system and complete a re-wiring of the entire system."

### Spring cutting regime

"We enjoy very good growth throughout the year and in fact we are still having to cut all areas of the course on a regular basis," says Stewart. "I feel that regular rather than excessively short cutting is the answer to achieving and maintaining good grass surfaces and it is with this in mind that our cutting regime is planned.

"Greens are cut every day using Paladins set at a height of not less than 5mm, tees are mown at least two times per week with Jacobsen Tri kings set at 10mm, fairways likewise using a Ransomes 350D set at 15mm with the semi and rough areas also cut twice a week using Ransomes trailed gangs. All aprons and approaches are cut three times per week with the Tri king set at 10mm.

■ Pictured left: the team at Harpenden

## Thorpe Hall Golf Club

Thorpe Hall GC in Thorpe Bay, Southend, is a typical parkland course on Essex clay, although only half a mile on some holes from the Thames estuary. Looking after the 84-acre site is head greenkeeper Douglas Smith.

### Irrigation system

The irrigation system at Thorpe Hall GC is a Wright Rain with Rainbird pop-ups and Master II computerised control panel. The pipework is 20 years old and the electrics and control board are two months old. "So we haven't had a good trial yet," says Douglas.

### Comments about the system

"I find the pop-ups, control boxes and pipework easy to use and well documented, so they are easy to trace when trouble occurs, and easy to maintain," says Douglas. "Also the Master II is easy to understand and operate for someone who is not used to computers. I've also found the company very helpful and efficient. The negatives were not enough isolation valves when things went wrong, but we hope to have rectified that with the work just finished."

### Spring cutting regime

Thorpe Hall use this spring cutting regime:

Greens - 5mm, 2-3 times a week in March building up to 5-6 times per week in the height of the season using Triplex mowers.

Tees/aprons - 10mm, twice per week, sometimes three times per week in a heavy growing period. Again using Triplex mowers.

Fairways - 12mm, three times a week with ride-on fairway mowers.

Rough - 30mm, once a week with gang mowers.

"With the greens I try not to cut them every day as it only encourages compaction around the edges. With the fairway ride-on mowers being out almost every day it has cut down the amount of divot filling required because of the quick re-establishment of grass in the divot," says Douglas.

### ■ The 13th at Thorpe Hall





## Castle Royle Golf and Country Club

Construction of the Neil Coles-designed Castle Royle Golf and Country Club, Knowl Hill, Reading, began in the spring of 1992. It is 6,828 yards long and covers an area of 180 acres. The site was flat agricultural grade 3 land with virtually no mature trees. Coles' design required moving 300,000 tonnes of soil and the formation of six lakes. All the holes are galleried style with mounding and long American-style bunkers shaping the holes. Allan Collis is the course manager.

### Irrigation system

"When I took up my position in April 1993," says Allan, "one of my initial tasks was the purchase of an irrigation system. With the greens and tees of a sand-based design, a weekly precipitation of 25mm was needed for the greens and 20mm for the tees with 18mm for the aprons. Because of the exposed nature of the site the majority of the greens needed five heads and the smaller greens four heads. Regarding fairway irrigation, it was decided that the cost of automatic fairway irrigation would be too much and that we would irrigate fairways using two to three mobile irrigators such as the Micro 44, as I had used the system at my previous club with great success. To operate these irrigators we required manual take off points half down the side of 14 fairways with a flow rate of 100gpm.

"The most important factor to take into



account was the water supply. We had applied to the NRA for an abstraction licence on the basis that it would be for a limited amount during the summer and the bulk in winter. We would therefore use the six lakes as one large reservoir. The only natural water coming in the lakes were via two storm water ditches into two of them. So a pipework system was installed connecting all of the lakes and two transfer pumps installed to enable moving water around the lakes and down to the main irrigation lake."

### Comments about the system

"After consultation with several companies the decision was made to purchase a Water-mation system. I liked the fact that the majority of the components are British made and the fact that they are a local company with a good service back-up. The remote controller has been very useful in the growing in period, this device enables the operator to action any station in the system and is very useful for correcting any dry areas or identifying any problems while out on the

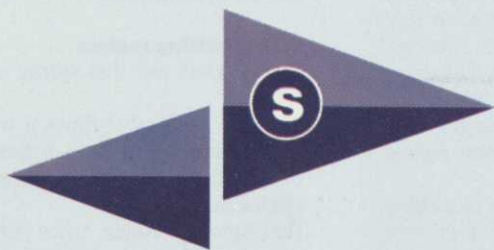
course. The water supply is drawn from the main lake and pumped around the system with two Grunofos CR16-60 and one CR8-80 jockey pump. The ring main starts in a 4" pipe then reducing to 3" and 2".

### Spring cutting regime

"As we are a new course and not in play yet plus the fact that we are still in the growing in period my mowing regime will be slightly different to an established course," says Allan. "We are due to open at the end of June, with this in mind my main priorities are to achieve full cover on the greens, tees and aprons, having already achieved a good surface on the fairways and roughs in 1993 season. We also want to get to a reasonable playing height of cut by the opening date. The greens having been sown with a traditional mix of fescues and bent with addition of smooth stalked meadow grass in the tees.

"Throughout the winter we have been mowing at 10mm. I expect to carry on mowing at this height through March and April. Then hopefully with the advent of some warmer weather reduce the mowing height through April and by the end of May be mowing at 5mm on the greens. Tees have been cut at 25mm through winter as have the fairways. By opening the tees will be at 10mm and the fairways at 15-20mm."

■ Pictured: the team at Castle Royle



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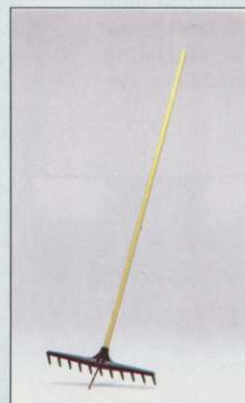
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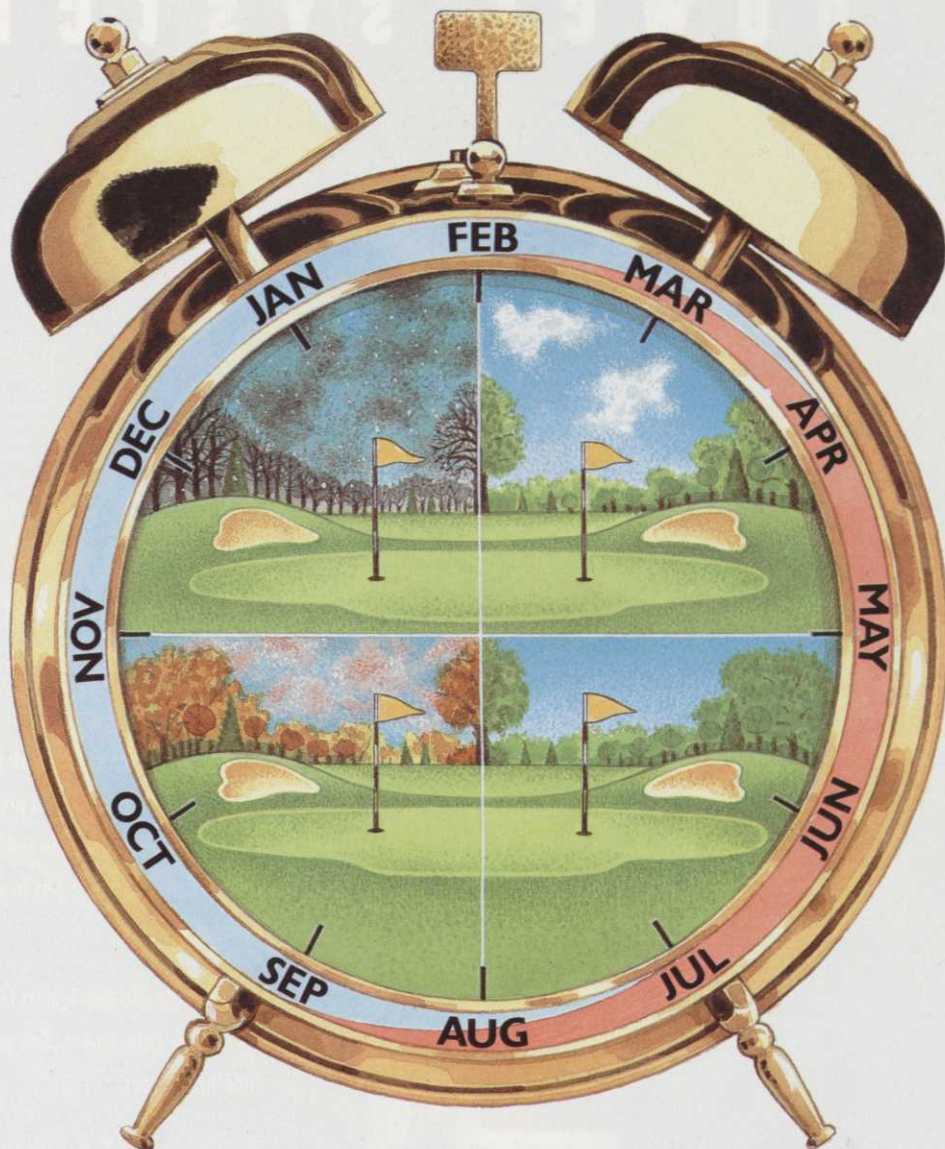


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**Large grants are now available to golf courses undertaking tree planting when using economical woodland establishment techniques. Andrew Vaughan outlines the grants, design considerations and techniques involved.**

**T**rees are a welcome component of any landscape and can bring many advantages to a golf course.

Although shelter is their most obvious benefit, they can also be used to provide security to players/passers-by/neighbours, to divide the course in a natural way, to make certain playing aspects more difficult (or more easy), and, above all, to provide an attractive and pleasant 'backcloth' to the course.

However, expectations of an 'instant' woodland are quickly evaporated when the cost of installing and maintaining very large trees becomes apparent. (They may weigh up to four tonnes each.) Similarly, 'standard' sized trees (2.7-3m tall), whilst being more economical, are still expensive to plant in any number



# Trees

Planting new trees at Canmore Golf Club in Dunfermline

and, with a bulky stake and tree-tie, are often unsightly.

Planting smaller-sized trees at greater density is not only cheaper still, but allows for more options in the long-term development of a golf course. For instance, if five small trees in a large group are found to be in the wrong place, they can easily be moved elsewhere. Larger specimens will need to be untied, and

the stake dug up with no guarantee that the tree will survive the transplant shock.

## Planting grants

Planting smaller forestry type trees at the appropriate stocking will very often attract substantial grant aid.

The Forestry Authority (tel: 031 334 0303) administer the Woodland Grant Scheme, which pro-

vides grants for woodland establishment. Up to £2175 per hectare (£880 per acre) is available on receipt of a suitably detailed design and grant application. The grants are paid out over a ten-year period up to 80 percent in year 1, 15 percent in year 5 and 5 percent in year 10. The application form is complicated, requiring some technical competence, and you will have to state what

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Typical of many golf courses, previous plantings are haphazard and do not divide the course in an adequate manner

# Trees

you plan to do, where and how you plan to do it, how you will maintain it and supply an accurate map. This information can be incorporated in a design plan.

## Design plan

After agreeing the general principles of establishment, perhaps after consulting an expert, the design can be drawn up with input from greenkeeping staff and club committee. The most obvious sites will lie between fairways, green/tee, or indeed any piece of 'dead' ground. What is less obvious is the siting of individual trees/clumps in the 'in play' areas, where a detailed examination of the course would be required.

Once sited, the overall shape of each block (or indeed tree) is pegged out and mapped to decide the species plan.

## Species

If claiming grant aid, native species are preferred to more exotic, garden-type trees. This does make sense, as native species will not only grow well but will attract the huge variety of wildlife associated with trees and woodlands.

By their very location, most proposed blocks of trees will be long and thin in shape, which makes good landscaping difficult. However, a moderately scalloped (wavy) edge can be further emphasised by siting different sized species in an appropriate manner. Even more texture and shape can be added by varying the species selection both along and through the woodland. Up to 10 percent of woody shrubs are

allowable for grant aid purposes, which are a great help in landscape design, and which promote long-term shelter.

Where safety is an objective, a proportion of the trees should be evergreen conifers which will form an all-year-round dense canopy. These also give winter colour, shelter and add further diversity to the woodland. Scots pine with its orange bark is particularly suitable.

Generally, species are sited by prevailing soil and site conditions which, by happy accident, gives the woodland an even more natural appearance. Fine tuning of the design will involve matching foliage colour and texture both within and between blocks. Bark colour and texture should also taken into account (for winter months, eg willows).

## Planting

Trees are usually planted relatively closely. We often recommend using 60/90cm sized trees planted at 2,500-3,000 per hectare (about 1,000-1,200 per acre), if the site is at least moderately sheltered. This immediately gives a 'wooded' effect and creates the necessary conditions for good growth.

As golf courses are often free of rabbits, trees can be planted bare very economically (for not much more than the total grant aid). Where protective measures are required, either fencing or protective guards/tubes can be utilised. The former is often too intrusive and, in any event, is comparable in cost to the other protective measures. Planting and leaving to

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# Trees

Even at 3,000 trees per hectare, the initial results are barely noticeable before coming into leaf



chance is very risky, as receiving grant aid under contract requires proper maintenance procedures.

## Care and maintenance

Maintenance will involve chemical weeding for at least three seasons, and the replacing of dead trees (called beating up). A site inspection should be carried out in late summer to count losses for replacement in the following autumn. We usually expect 90 percent of broadleaved trees to survive when no replanting is necessary; the Forestry Authority expect an 85 percent stocking rate in year 10.

Longer term management will largely involve pruning, then perhaps thinning which both serve to remove/improve poorly formed, defensive trees and ensures that the remainder grow properly. If the long term plan is to grow good quality, well spaced trees, the close spacing at planting will help the trees develop naturally which, if carefully thinned, can then be progressively respaced to achieve the desired effect.

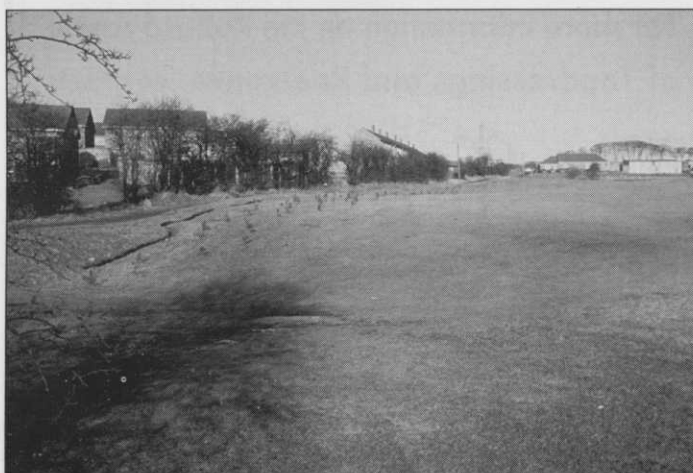
Management grants are available from year 10 onwards, and are intended as a contribution to

the net cost of the management operations necessary to maintain and improve woodlands in recognition of the resulting silvicultural, environmental and social benefits. These are modest grants of up to £45 per hectare (£18 per acre) per year.

Despite the best efforts of the designer, however, the club members are often the greatest handicap to growing young trees.

Any change to a favoured (or even loved) hole will result in criticism from at least some of the regular users. Even where the argument for planting trees is without question, it is a major change of land-use which once planted requires a determined resolve to protect and nurture from the non-believers. We strongly recommend placing newly planted woods out of bounds for at least four or five seasons. This may sound draconian, but just remember that each club member is carrying around 15 scythes!

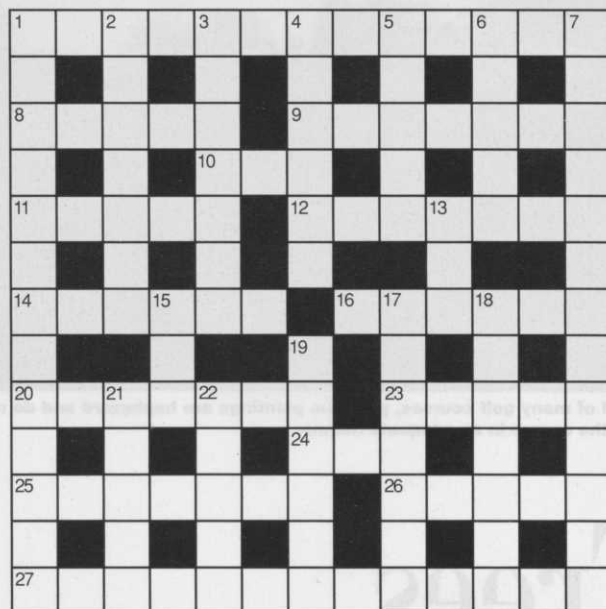
■ Andrew Vaughan is a woodland consultant with the woodland design and management firm Eamonn Wall & Co (tel: 0259 743212).



Note the position of the evergreen conifers which will eventually shelter the adjacent houses and right of way

## GREENKEEPER'S CROSSWORD

Compiled by Mark G Smith, first assistant at Frilford Heath GC



## WIN A BIGGA BLAZER OR £50 IN CASH!

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Australian winner of the 1991 Open Championship at Royal Birkdale (3,5-5)
- 8 A lie where the ball hugs the playing surface (5)
- 9 Surname of the winner of the 1947 USPGA Championship (7)
- 10 A hole in one (3)
- 11 Object of historic interest such as a 'feathery' ball (5)
- 12 Greenkeepers may live in a tied one (7)
- 14 Floral name of the 13th hole at Augusta National, part of the Rhododendron family (6)
- 16 Implement used to remove dew from a green (6)
- 20 Entomologists study them! (7)
- 23 Of what are Quercus Robur, Tilia Cordata and Fagus Sylvatica, the Latin names (5)
- 24 Temperature of a putter that holes everything (3)
- 25 L. .... Domestica, plant genus that lends its name to the 17th hole at Augusta National (7)
- 26 A negatively charged particle that sounds like a club (5)
- 27 How to kill a tree! (3,3,3,4)

### CLUES DOWN

- 1 The .....; USPGA tour event played under a modified Stableford system, held in 1993 at Castle Pines CC, Denver, Colorado (13)
- 2 "Devil in a Bush" (L ... Damascena) (7)
- 3 Case for the head greenkeeper's papers (7)
- 4 The result of a course manager's action (6)
- 5 346 yard hole at Cherry Hills CC, Denver, Colorado, with a plaque commemorating Arnold Palmer, driving the green on his way to winning the 1960 US Open (5)
- 6 Local currency in which the winner of the Nigerian Open may be paid (5)
- 7 ..... (L Aesculus Hippocastanum) (5,8)
- 13 Having two roots or branches; Bifurcated or ....-forked (3)
- 15 The sheltered side; of a tee or green perhaps (3)
- 17 Power rating of electrical items (7)
- 18 Surname of the golfer nicknamed "Supermex" (7)
- 19 Of what are hickory, steel and carbon examples (1,5)
- 21 Approximate time the greenkeepers commence work (3-2)
- 22 The ....-Chaff (L Phylloscopus Collybita), a small warbler (5)

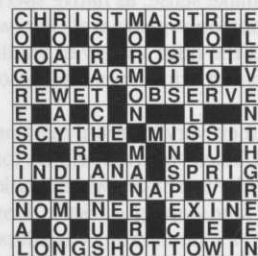
★ Solve the crossword puzzle and you could win either a BIGGA blazer (worth £87.95) or £50 in cash! Send completed entries to: Crossword Competition, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor,

Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF.

Closing date April 8, 1994. First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win the prize. Photocopy your entry if you don't want to cut up your magazine.

This is the solution to last month's crossword, and the winner, who has opted for a BIGGA blazer, is Mr A Frost, head greenkeeper at Kirkbymoorside Golf Club, North Yorkshire.

Winner of the March crossword will be announced in the May magazine.



Name: .....  
Address: .....

If I'm the winner, please send me ☐ £50 cash or ☐ BIGGA blazer, size .....



## Tackling pig problem

In reply to the article 'Wild boar wreaks havoc' in January's edition of Greenkeeper International, which featured Sennelager Golf Club, Germany, coming under attack from wild pigs. This is a typical problem we greenkeepers have over here that does not enter into greenkeeping in England.

The wild pigs peel the turf back with their snouts and dig deep holes looking for grubs, larva and the occasional tasty root. They generally disrupt ground that is very wet and peat based, the devastation they can cause in one night is amazing, a herd of four-six can make 6,000 qm totally unplayable and repair work takes up the whole day, only to return the next morning to find the same thing has happened again.

Sennelager GC chose to erect an electric fence to cure the problem, but there is a much cheaper way to stop these ravenous beasts without any detriment to other wildlife and to remain on the friendly side of the Natur Schutz and the green party who, might I add, think greenkeepers are just gardeners who put lots of chemicals and other things on the grass rather than just letting it grow naturally. So, back to the pigs, when I was confronted with the 18 tee, fairway and 17 green looking like a herd of wildebeest had stampeded across them every night, I chose to consult the old men of the local village. When I put my problem to them their answer was quite simply: "Harr mein Junge." (Hair my young one.) Further explanation revealed that I was to collect as much cut hair as possible from the local hairdressers, purchase some small net sacks then put a small quantity of hair in each sack and place the sacks 10 metres apart around the affected area.

The old men say that the scent of humans on the hair stops the pigs and they will not go anywhere near the sacks.

I did as instructed and sure enough no pigs. The problem has gone and has not returned. The old men say that to be effective the sacks must be changed once per year – we have had our sacks out for 10 months and we have not had one visit from a pig in that time. So it seems that the old methods still work the best.

Simple I suppose – when you know.  
Stuart Bishop, Havelweg, Germany

## A hidden agenda?

I refer to 'Greenkeepers Association Under Scrutiny', a recent diatribe published in the Jan/Feb issue of Amateur Golf and highlighted last month in Greenkeeper International.

It would appear that the English Golf Union are clearly misinformed concerning the health of BIGGA, our professional association. One wonders if the venom of their attack was designed to conceal some hidden agenda?

The snow is on the ground  
The golfers are frustrated  
The greenkeeper's in the shed  
Lying there sedated

The secretary's mad, the treasurer's sad  
And the chef's going off his head  
The greenkeeper sighs and wonders why  
Then decides to go home to his bed.

Walter Woods, links supervisor, St Andrews

Possibly the rationale is evident in only their minds?

The assertion that British greenkeepers have "not until recent years acquired a reputation for enhancing their image" is a gross distortion. The truth being that for a great number of years too many clubs, committees and employers denied the greenkeeper an opportunity to enhance his or her image.

Improved status, working conditions, training, education and image have evolved directly from the combined efforts of BIGGA and its membership. R&A funding and support in addition to other direct industry input has assisted our growth but, above all, it has been the Association membership's desire and commitment to professional excellence that has seen rapid improvement.

The EGU criticism of our expansion is an unfortunate example of ignorance raising its ugly head.

In industry, expansion indicates growth (no pun...), the speed of which reflects accordingly with positive support and not negative kneejerk reaction.

Expansion and growth also involves change (including editorial!). This is more than ever true in today's highly competitive marketplace. The process of handling change in a pro-active manner is an objective we all seek to achieve and the notion that the Greenkeeper Training Committee should function as a separate education medium, allied to BIGGA, is an example of progressive initiative. As is the move to partially fund training "through a levy on every club golfer". Not before time in my mind.

The offending EGU article certainly makes for sad reading – the old, nay jurassic, belief that we were ever 60 years behind our American counterparts is a complete fabrication. The fact that three recent Master Greenkeeper Certificates were gained by American superintendents supports the view that the highest qualification attainable in Britain is recognised as one of truly international stature.

I suspect that any professional image that may indeed have been many years behind the USA is that still perpetrated by certain clubs, committees, employers and allied associations in their attitude and disregard to the standing of greenkeepers in Britain.

It is hoped that sooner rather than later, the EGU will get up to speed with our role and achievements within golf course management,

because their current understanding seems barely peripheral.

And while Neil Thomas ponders the motivation not only for the attack but also the reasoning for Amateur Golf's publication of such vitriol – it may just be all down to the hack journalists search for a winter 'filler' – Jan/Feb being particularly slow news months.

Anthony Black, (golf course manager),  
Royston, Herts.

## Thanks for your help

I would like to use your journal to express my thanks to Nick Rigden of Cannington College, Geoff Yelland of Rigby Taylor and Ed McCabe, course manager at Brockenhurst Manor, for their help and advice in my preparation for a presentation evening at North Wilts Golf Club which was followed by a question and answer session.

The evening was a great success and the first of what, I hope, will become an annual event.

Jon Boorman, head greenkeeper  
North Wilts Golf Club, near Devizes

## BTME congratulations



To the Executive Director

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sheffield Section to thank you all at BIGGA HQ for the way in which you organised the BTME and seminars. Everyone I have spoken to in greenkeeping and the trade thinks the exhibition gets better every year. As we all know the hall is only booked until 1996 but we all hope it goes on for years to come.

R Ullathorne, Goole North, Humberside



To the Executive Director

Excellent BTME gets BIGGA every year, it also gets better. Congratulations to you and all staff.

Dennis Mortram, Course Development  
Manager, Reaseheath College, Cheshire




Through the pages of the magazine I would like to thank all the members of the Northern Regional team who were on duty at Harrogate this year (and especially the lads who helped out at the last minute when things became hectic).

Our staff were manning the doors, pre-registration desk, seminar door, roving microphone, Northern Regional stand and even chauffeuring VIPs! All were smart and efficient and helped to project a professional image for the Association as well as assisting in the smooth running of this exhibition.

Many thanks for your time and effort lads!

Bob Lupton, Northern Region  
Administrator, Madeley, Cheshire





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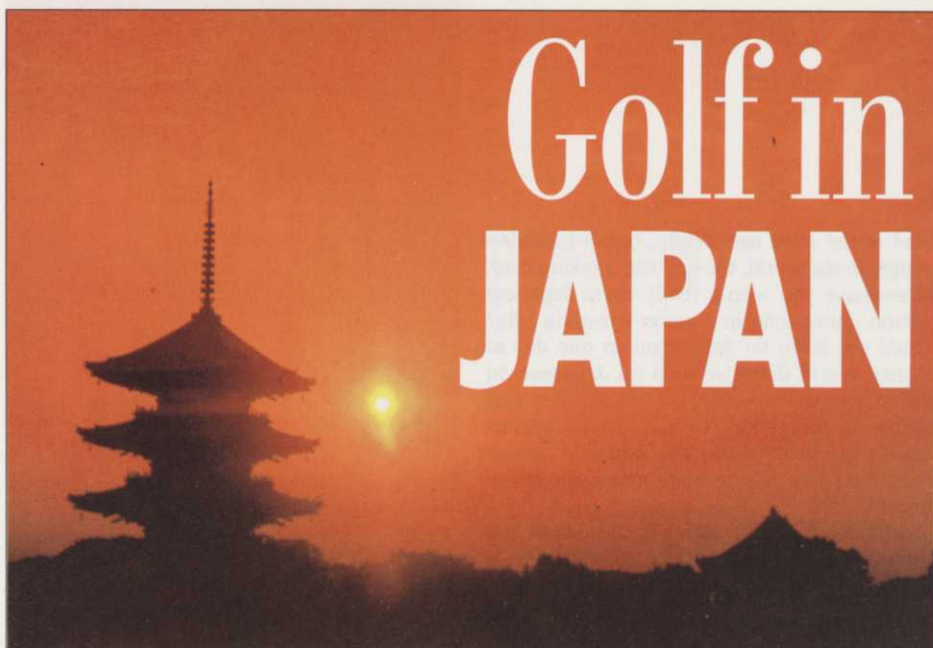
**What I like and don't like about Japanese golf, by Gary Wiren**

**Y**ou've probably read about the cost of Japanese golf; if you thought it was an exaggeration, don't, it is probably true.

Koganei Country Club on the outskirts of Tokyo at one point cost \$3.2 million to join (not to buy). The price is down right now to a more affordable \$1.7 million. That's the most costly. Golf membership at a more typical private club, however, runs closer to \$250,000... a real bargain. In both cases you still have to pay green fees.

For those people not members of a club, a day at a semi-private course or resort, or as a member's guest, may average \$250 per round, not counting the transportation to get there. That's one of the aspects about Japanese golf in the negative category, it's too darned expensive.

A practice that fuels this heavy price is the selling of memberships to non-golfers purely on a speculative basis. Hundreds of clubs in Japan have membership rolls filled with 'investors' who keep the price up, but may never have played their course. Since one can sell one's membership at any time, it becomes the same as playing the stock market. The good news is that developers commanding extremely high membership fees can afford to build world-class facilities. Some of the new clubhouses and courses are truly elegant. Though extravagance is not a practice I find necessary for the enjoyment of golf, one can't

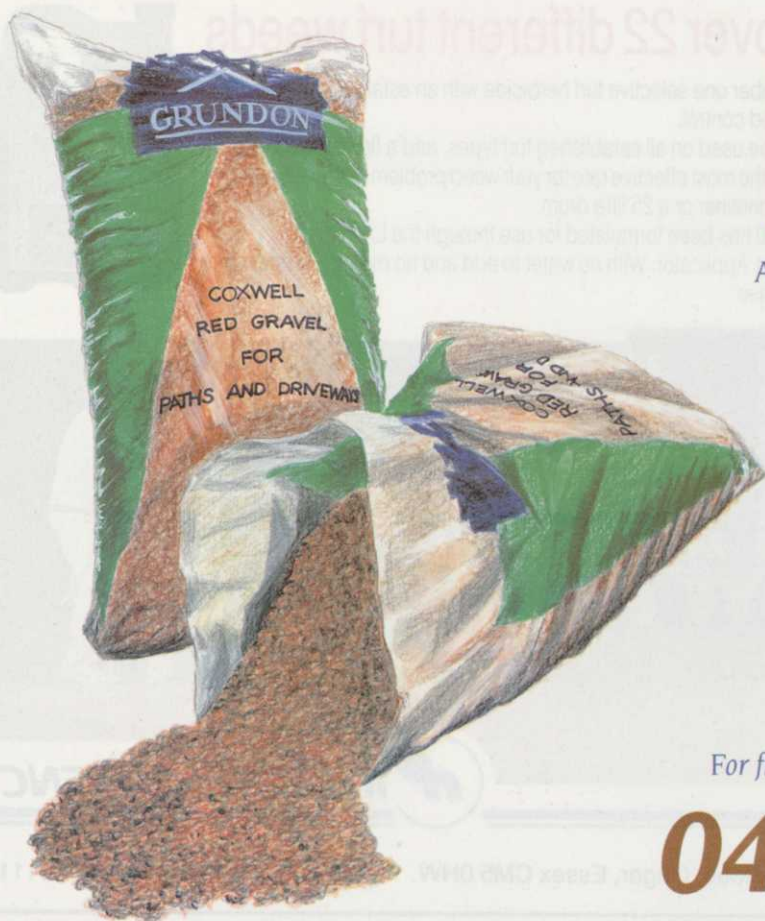


help appreciating some of their amenities, landscaping, and quality of the clubhouses.

One of the customs that makes Japanese golf a less rewarding experience for me is the starting and stopping for refreshments and lunch. During a recent round at a very up-scale course, we were offered coffee and juice before our 9am tee time, stopped after the third hole for refreshments at the 'Quarter Way House,' partook in an hour-long lunch after nine holes, stopped again at the 'Three-Quarter Way House' following the 12th hole, and finished with a nice light meal at the prize-giving following the round. I do under-

stand the reason: golf is an all-day experience to be savoured in Japan, and this they most certainly do. But if you are interested in your performance, it sure breaks up the rhythm of the game.

Some of the 'good news' for Japanese golf is that you get to walk off that food and drink. In 12 years of regularly going to Japan, I have never played a round of golf riding in a golf car, nor do I remember seeing anyone else do so. Golf in Japan, like golf in Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Europe and most other nations, is primarily a walking game. Yet in the US, the



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# Golf in JAPAN

land of the most overweight, out-of-condition people in the world, the golf car is taking over. When have you seen a really obese Japanese person, other than in a sumo wrestling ring? You'll see more fat Americans in one day at Disney World than I've seen fat Japanese on 22 visits to that country. It's not just diet that makes the difference, but also activity, and an activity like walking the hilly Japanese courses is perfect. The Japanese are smart enough to recognise this.

Golf course superintendents in Japan can drive me up the wall with pin placements. At one club, each time I played there, the flagsticks were in the same location on every green, ie. all front right, or all back left, etc. for the entire 18 holes. When I questioned the management about it, the response was "it's easier for workers to remember where to cut the cups." Compare that to a recent round at a US resort where on the score card for the day all the green depths and widely varied pin locations were printed on an extension of the card. Some flagsticks were located short left, some middle, some back right, etc., in a more interesting and challenging presentation.

More good news for Japanese golf is that if you are frustrated with the course set-up or how you played, there is the wonderful *ofuro* to wash away those anxieties. I've played some lousy rounds which upon completion left me

less than content with myself. But the *ofuro* lulled me into a peaceful relaxation, with its steaming waters from the Japanese king-sized version of a hot tub. It is a wonderful practice, and one I'd recommend to every cold weather golfing facility that can afford the hot water bill.

Speaking of being happy, Japanese golfers, almost to the letter, do not display anger on the course. That is most commendable. It is considered bad manners and a weakness in character to do so. I've never seen a Japanese throw a club. I've seen Americans throw their whole bag. It appears to me that Japanese enjoy their golf more because they appreciate all the game has to offer: a nature walk, sharing with friends, and time away from their life's routine. They don't measure the success or failure of the day simply on what they shot.

I don't like the Japanese double green system where one green is *Korai* (Korean Grass) for summer months, the other *Bento* (Bent Grass) for the cooler season. Jamming two greens into a landing area destroys some of the aesthetics and quality of design. In addition, *Korai* is a terribly stiff-bladed grass, grainier than the most severe Bermuda, frustrating as all heck to putt, and used too frequently when the *Bento* would work. Fortunately, this double green practice is dying out with the advent of new types of stronger heat-tolerant hybrid grasses.

In Japan, the quality of play, agronomy and management are all improving rapidly. In large part this is due to their national penchant for observing the best of other countries, then adopting and modifying to fit their conditions. The rest of the golf world could take some equally beneficial lessons from Japan.

■ The author, Dr Gary Wiren, is a golf educator and former national (US) PGA staff director. Wiren, a PGA Master Professional, has written or co-authored more than 160 magazine articles and seven books, including the *PGA Teaching Manual* and the *PGA Manual of Golf*.

This article first appeared in *Japan Golf Report*, the English language magazine which serves to inform the western world of Japanese golfing activities: sporting, business and architectural. It is reproduced here with due acknowledgement to the publisher, Masaki Takemori, and the editor, Jillian Yorke.

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Judges' decision is final. Not open to BIGGA staff.

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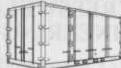


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## RECRUITMENT

### Aldwickbury Park Golf Club

(new 27 hole course nearing completion)

require a

### DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

Only qualified and experienced greenkeepers need apply.

This is a good opportunity for a young motivated team member  
who wishes to rapidly advance his career.

No accommodation. Salary negotiable.

Please apply in writing with full CV to:

**Robert Smith, Aldwickbury Park Golf Club,  
c/o Redbourn Golf Club, Kinsbourne, Green Lane,  
Redbourn, St Albans, Herts.**

PREVIOUS APPLICANTS NEED NOT APPLY.

### Formby Hall Golf Club

requires a

### HEAD GREENKEEPER

An unusual opportunity to be involved in the  
construction and eventual running of a new 18 hole  
golf course in West Lancashire.  
Energy and experience essential.

Write with full CV to:

**Formby Hall Golf Club**  
**4-6 St Johns Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 9QG**

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All machinery in excellent working  
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Cowal View, Gourrock PA19 6HD  
Tel: 0475 631001

**Whaton Turf Harvester,  
fitted to MF 220 Tractor  
with cab.**

**Excellent condition.  
£10,000 plus VAT ono  
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1992 130hrs since new. Complete with  
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**RYAN GA30 Ride on Aerator  
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- Ransomes Trailed Gang Mower, Set of 3 Sports
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- 5 Jacobsen Blitzter Trailed Gang Mowers, as new

**LGM** Unit 17, Greenwich Close, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0DD  
Tel: (0473) 289158 Fax: 0473 289161





## St Andrews Links

The historic St Andrews Links is seeking additional experienced staff as part of its Development Programme. The recent opening of our 18-hole Strathtyrum Course, the re-designed 9-hole Balgove Course and a 24 bay practice area with pitch and putting facilities has meant a reorganisation of responsibilities.

With five-and-a-half golf courses including the famous Old Course, venue for the 1995 Open Championship, it is now the largest golfing complex in Europe. The following positions are sought:

### 1. Deputy Head Greenkeepers

All applicants must be fully experienced on Links courses with appropriate qualifications and have good organisational and management skills.

### 2. Senior Greenstaff

required to work on the Old Course up to and including the Open Championship in July 1995.

Please apply to Walter Woods, Links Supervisor, St Andrews Links, Pilmour Cottage, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9SF in the first instance.

Interviews will take place during March for the positions to commence in April. These positions are also being advertised internally.



## Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club

requires a

# HEAD GREENKEEPER

The Club is looking to employ a fully qualified and experienced Head Greenkeeper to manage its 27 hole complex in **Germany**. This position gives the chance to live and work in a foreign country and yet reside within a British community. It is best suited to a single man or a married couple without young children. Accommodation is provided and the salary is negotiable.

Applications, with two references plus CV, to

The Secretary

Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club

BFPO 16

Tel: (from UK) 01049 5252 53794

Fax: (from UK) 01049 5252 53811

## Cleethorpes Golf Club

(in its centenary year)

require a

# WORKING COURSE MANAGER

for its 18 hole private members' course

Applicants should have the recognised qualifications, a mechanical aptitude and knowledge of computerised irrigation systems.

An attractive salary package based on BIGGA rates is negotiable.

Please apply with CV to:

Secretary

Cleethorpes Golf Club

Kings Road, Cleethorpes

South Humberside DN35 0PN

by 31 May 1994



## Briggens House Hotel

Golf Course & Estate

require

# HEAD GREENKEEPER/GARDENER & ASSISTANTS

The estate at Briggens House is one steeped in history, dating as far back as the 17th Century. The landscape design is attributed to the famous Royal Gardener, Charles Bridgman, around 1720. Today the grounds comprise some 80 acres including a challenging 9 hole golf course and practice ground, an arboretum, formal gardens and lawns. At present the grounds are maintained under contract, this contract is shortly to finish and a grounds maintenance programme is to be formed.

This department shall be responsible for maintaining and presenting the golf course and grounds to a high standard. The Head Greenkeeper/Gardener post shall be responsible directly to the General Manager and involve budget compilation and control. The Assistants' posts are suited to enthusiastic applicants with gardens and fine turf/golf course experience.

Salaries are negotiable, no accommodation is available. Applications shall be treated in the strictest confidence. Please send written applications with full CV to:

General Manager, Briggens House Hotel, Stanstead Road, Stanstead Abbots, Herts SG12 8LD.

Applications should be received no later than 28th March 1994.





## Sudbury Golf Club QUALIFIED GREENKEEPER and TRAINEE GREENKEEPER

required for 18 Hole Golf Course

Applications in writing to:

**General Manager  
Sudbury Golf Club  
Bridgewater Road  
Wembley HA0 1AL**



## KINGS NORTON GOLF CLUB

invite applications for the position of

### **COURSE MANAGER/ HEAD GREENKEEPER**

for a 27 hole parkland course situated in attractive rural surroundings nine miles south of Birmingham in the county of Worcestershire.

Applicants must be fully experienced in all aspects of modern course management and maintenance techniques. The successful applicant must have the skills to lead and motivate staff and will be expected to demonstrate abilities to maintain a quality course to a high standard exercising firm budgeting controls.

Accommodation available. Salary negotiable.

Application in writing with full CV to:

**Secretary/Manager, Kings Norton Golf Club,  
Brockhill Lane, Weatheroak, Alvechurch,  
Birmingham B48 7ED**



## SPORTS AND AMENITY PRODUCTS SALESMAN

A highly motivated salesman is required to promote the quality range of sportsturf and amenity products manufactured and distributed by Roffey Brothers Ltd. The area to be covered will be in the South West, excluding Devon and Cornwall. Salary commensurate with experience.

Please apply in writing with CV to:

**David Roffey, Roffey Brothers Ltd, Throop Road,  
Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 0DF**



requires a

### **DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER**

Minimum age 25. Technical and practical qualifications. Pesticide certificates. Sound knowledge of modern irrigation and machinery. Capable of controlling and motivating staff.

Salary negotiable. No accommodation.

Apply in writing with CV to:

**Mr K Skinner, Course Manager, Cottesmore Country Club,  
Buchen Hill, Pease Pottage, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9AT**

## Canford Magna Golf Club

Wimborne, Dorset  
requires

### **DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER**

For new 36 hole Golf Complex which will be completed by Autumn 1995. (Phase 1, 9 holes, opens May 1994). Greens are to USGA specification and full Toro Irrigation System installed.

Applicants must be experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping and have a practical knowledge of modern machinery and irrigation systems and good organisational skills.

Salary negotiable according to experience.

Apply in writing with CV to:

**Mr T Smith, Course Manager, ERM Ltd, Woodlands Manor  
Farm, Woodlands, Nr Wimborne, Dorset BH21 8ND  
Closing date 25th March 1994**

## Pontefract and District Golf Club

require immediately applications for the position of:

### **HEAD GREENKEEPER**

Applicants must be experienced in course management, machinery maintenance and have the ability to lead and motivate staff.

Competitive salary, pension contribution  
and rent-free three bedroom accommodation.

Application form and further details from:

**The Secretary, c/o 24 Fair View, Carleton, Pontefract,  
West Yorkshire WF8 3NU**



# RECRUITMENT



## GOLF COURSE DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION OPPORTUNITIES BASED IN GERMANY

We are a young and exclusive Golf Course construction company, building high quality golf courses worldwide. For our new forthcoming projects in 1994 we are looking for professional and motivated staff to join our team in the following capacities:

1. **Contracts Manager**
2. **Site Manager**
3. **Management Assistants**
4. **Head Greenkeeper/Greenkeeper**
5. **Golf Course Shaper**
6. **Heavy Machine Operator/Tractor Driver**

In the first instance please contact:

**Mr Andreas Doring**  
Tel: 010 49 9181 43568

Please send your application to the following address:

## EGI-EURO GOLF GmbH

International Golf Contractors and Construction Consultants  
Offenbau 256  
D-91177 THALMÄSSING  
Germany  
Tel: 09173/7966-0  
Fax: 09173/7966-20



## The Blue Mountain Golf Centre

has a vacancy for a

## FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

The successful applicant will have the ability to motivate and direct a team of four under the direction of the Head Greenkeeper. His professional knowledge and appreciation of golf will enable him to assist in the preparation and maintenance of our excellent facility and the training of his staff. He is likely to have had some three years experience at more than one centre, will be engaged in Phase Two of his studies and must possess a spraying certificate. Salary will be commensurate with BIGGA rates.

Candidates should forward a current CV for the attention of:

**The Personnel Department**  
**Blue Mountain Golf Centre**  
**Wood Lane, Binfield, Bracknell RG12 5EY**



## Cumberwell Park Golf Club

requires a

## FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants are invited for the above position at this new golf course due to open June 1994.

The successful applicant will be part of a team of about five with the aim of maintaining what will be one of the best golf courses in the South West.

Candidates must be experienced and qualified and able to assume responsibility in the Head Greenkeeper's absence.

Please apply in confidence with full CV to:

**The Head Greenkeeper, Cumberwell Park Golf Club, Little Cumberwell, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2PQ**



## Fraserburgh Golf Club

is seeking a

## COURSE MANAGER

We are creating a new position of Course Manager and invite applications for this post.

The successful applicant must be fully qualified, having a sound knowledge and practical experience in all aspects of good greenkeeping.

He must demonstrate the ability to motivate and lead the current greenkeeping team.

An attractive salary, in line with ability, is offered to the successful candidate.

**Written applications with full CV to the Secretary, Fraserburgh Golf Club, Philorth, Fraserburgh AB43 5TL by 8th April 1994**

## RUXLEY PARK GOLF CENTRE

have a vacancy for

## HEAD GREENKEEPER

Busy 27 hole golf course and driving range.

Applicants must have the necessary qualifications and experience to fill the above post.

Apply in writing to:

**Paul Davis, Ruxley Park Golf Centre,  
Sandy Lane, St Pauls Cray, Orpington BR5 3HY**



## Harwood Golf Club (Bolton)

require a

## HEAD GREENKEEPER

for this well established, highly regarded 9 hole course. Experience in all aspects of greenkeeping and a practical knowledge of modern machinery required.

Accommodation not available.

Salary negotiable according to experience.

**Please apply in writing with full CV to:  
The Secretary, Harwood Golf Club,  
Roading Brook Road, Harwood, Bolton.**

Applications are required within 10 days of the appearance of this advertisement.



# RECRUITMENT

## Pachesham Golf Centre TWO ASSISTANT GREENKEEPERS

required for a nine hole parkland course.

Applications are invited from persons aged 18–30 years. Twelve months previous experience would be useful but not essential as full training will be given.

Salary negotiable.

Please apply in writing to:

**Paul Harley, Head Greenkeeper, Pachesham Golf Centre,  
Oaklawn Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0BT. Tel: 0372 843453**

## Stanmore Golf Club



## DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applicants must have suitable qualifications in all aspects of greenkeeping and have the ability to motivate and direct staff. PA1 & PA2 required.

Salary according to experience.

Applications in writing with full CV should be sent to:  
**The Secretary, Stanmore Golf Club, Gordon Avenue,  
Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 2RL**

## The Botley Park Hotel and Country Club

require a

## DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER

and a

## FIRST ASSISTANT

Applicants must have suitable qualifications and experience in all aspects of course management. A thorough knowledge of machinery maintenance is essential together with the ability to motivate and direct staff.

Preference will be given to a golfer with some experience in construction.

No accommodation. Salary negotiable.

Please reply in writing with full CV to:

**Mike Yorston, The Botley Park Hotel and Country Club,  
Winchester Road, Boorley Green, Botley, Hants SO32 2UA**

*Please state position applied for.*

## Martin Brothers

**Martin Brothers**, one of the leading suppliers of top dressing and sand in England and Wales, is expanding into the North East of England and requires a

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Only people with experience need apply.

Please apply in writing with CV to:

**Mr N Gray, Managing Director, Martin Brothers (UK) Ltd,  
18 George Street, Alderley Edge SK9 7EJ**



## BURY ST. EDMUNDS GOLF CLUB

require a

## DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

The Club, founded in 1924, has two courses (27 holes) and needs to appoint a Deputy Head Greenkeeper. Applicants must be fully experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping, with the appropriate qualifications, and have practical knowledge of modern machinery and irrigation systems. The successful applicant will also be able to motivate and direct staff and demonstrate good organisational and management skills.

A competitive salary is offered – accommodation is not available.

Please reply in writing with full CV to:

**J. C. Sayer, Secretary, Bury St Edmunds Golf Club,  
Tut Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 6LG**

## Brampton Heath Golf Centre

Church Brampton – Northampton

requires a

## HEAD GREENKEEPER

Only experienced greenkeepers need apply.  
Experience growing in a new course an advantage.

Please apply in writing with full CV to:

**B. B. Rice, Haselbech Grange,  
Northampton NN6 9LF**



## Askham Bryan College

## LECTURER

(Horticulture)

Applications are invited for the post of Lecturer in Horticulture at our College from 1st September 1994.

Salary scale: Lecturer 1 – £11,163–£20,235 per annum.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from:  
**Senior Manager, Human Resources and Project Management  
or by telephoning 0904 702121 Ext. 208.**

Completed application forms to be returned to Askham Bryan College, Askham Bryan, York YO2 3PR no later than Friday 1st April 1994.

## Stourbridge Golf Club

require an

## ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants should be experienced in golf courses and handling machinery.

Please apply in writing giving full details to:

**Secretary, Stourbridge Golf Club Ltd,  
Worcester Lane, Pedmore, Stourbridge,  
West Midlands DY8 2RB**



## Pannal Golf Club, Harrogate

requires a

# HEAD GREENKEEPER

Applications are invited for the above position which will become vacant from 1 July 1994 on the retirement of the present Head Greenkeeper.

Applicants should be qualified Greenkeepers with experience in course and man management, modern greenkeeping methods and the maintenance of greenkeeping machinery.

A competitive remuneration package is offered including pension scheme and generous relocation expenses.

Letters of application, which will be treated in the strictest confidence, should be sent together with a CV to:

**The Secretary, Pannal Golf Club (Harrogate) Limited, Follifoot Road, Pannal, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG3 1ES**

## Stonebridge Golf Centre

are currently seeking applicants for the position of

# HEAD GREENKEEPER

Stonebridge Golf Centre is a new 18 hole pay-as-you-play golf complex. Located at Meriden, near Coventry on the A45 between Birmingham and Coventry.

★ Currently under construction ★

It is intended to open the course, clubhouse and driving range in Spring 1995.

Applicants for the position of Head Greenkeeper should ideally have experience of course construction and have worked during the growing-in phase of a new course.

Remuneration according to experience.

1st May 1994 start.

Applicants should apply in writing enclosing a copy of their current CV to:

**N P Barlow Esq  
Packington Estate Enterprises Limited  
Packington Hall  
Meriden, Warwickshire CV7 7HF**



## The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

...is the professional organisation which exists to enhance, develop and educate its growing greenkeeper membership of over 5,000. The Association receives the active support of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club and is one of golf's major bodies. The Association is seeking to appoint an education and training professional ideally with a background in or knowledge of golf greenkeeping and the game of golf. The successful candidate will assume responsibilities for the whole range of BIGGA's educational programmes.

# EDUCATION OFFICER

Organisational and administrative abilities will be a prime requirement whilst key areas of responsibility encompass organisation of the National Education Conference, the annual BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition Education Programme, management and in-house training courses, as well as the administration of sponsored award schemes and the Association's major award, the Master Greenkeeper Certificate.

The successful applicant will need to be an excellent communicator and liaise closely with the Greenkeepers Training Committee as well as with the Home Golf Unions and golf clubs on all matters relevant to greenkeeper education. An important aspect of the position will be the organisation and implementation of training programmes at regional and section level. The successful candidate will need to demonstrate initiative, resourcefulness, an outgoing personality and be able to respond informatively and sensitively to members' queries and concerns. He/She will be joining a team dedicated to the advancement of the greenkeeping profession and enhancing the education and training opportunities available to greenkeepers.

For further details and job description please contact Mr Neil Thomas, Executive Director, BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF (tel 0347 838581).



# TALKING HEADS

**Arne van Amerongen says head greenkeepers and course managers should be appointed during the early stages of a golf course project as they're the ones who have to correct them!**



**'I consider the end product in any new course project would undoubtedly benefit from the course manager's input from the very earliest stages through to completion'**

**T**he golf course manager often complains about the aspects of construction or design on his course which cause maintenance problems. In the past I have tended to blame the contractor, but while working for Brian Pierson Contractors I have formed a very different opinion. I think the majority of mistakes in the construction of a golf course come about as a direct result of lack of communication between all parties concerned.

It is still the case however, for whatever reason, that agreed specifications are not always met and the quality of the end product – the golf course – suffers in consequence. Such problems often do not become apparent until after the new owners have 'taken delivery' of the course and 'the baby' is placed in the hands of their 'nanny', more commonly known as the course manager. It is he who is left to bring the course into maturity, one of the most mis-used phrases relating to golf courses up and down the country, incredibly often applied to courses more than five years old!

In reality, reconstruction using correct materials and relevant specifications is more often than not the only way forward to realise expectations for what then becomes a very expensive 'baby' indeed.

Let's look at a typical development. If a company or individual wants to build a golf course they contact an architect and a golf course contractor. The architect draws the plans and may also arrange for all specifications, as well as appointing a contractor. Alternatively an independent body may be consulted for the critical aspect of project specifications. The appointed contractor commences construction of the course, working from the architect's plans and following the relative material specifications. A course manager has in many cases not been considered at this stage, leave alone appointed. Some architects unfortunately fail to realise a course design, (any course design), has to result in a layout which is playable and affords enjoyment and satisfaction to the average golfer – not just the tiger – as well as be maintainable cost effectively, especially in view of the current economic climate. Granted, the construction people build the

course, but all the decisions are made by the owner and/or architect.

Where does the modern course manager fit into the overall scenario in the development of a new course? Many people in the golf industry still perceive the head greenkeeper or course manager as the man who tends the course or 'he who cuts the greens'. Clearly they fail to recognise the wide-ranging skills, capabilities and responsibilities required of today's course manager. I consider the end product in any new course project would

undoubtedly benefit from the course manager's input from the very earliest stages through to completion.

Not only will he have first hand knowledge of underground installations and materials used but he can identify aspects of the design which may lead to maintenance problems, ie too sharp contouring, steep banks, traffic concentration; especially around greens, required green and tee areas to accommodate intended levels of play on the site, tree planting schemes which may not allow for adequate airflow in the future, particularly around greens and tees etc. The list goes on.

By being involved from the very beginning he will be in a far more informed position as to the necessary machinery and equipment requirements for course maintenance, as well as staffing levels.

Some people may not accept that today's highly trained course manager should have an influence on the design and construction of the golf course for which he is responsible. I consider this to be folly on their part, if only for the very reasons I have highlighted. If indeed a man appointed to such a position had no valuable input towards the end product, I would suspect his suitability for the job!

In conclusion, I am of the opinion that it is as important as ever to make the most of limited resources. It follows therefore that the owner, architect, contractor and course manager all have to be involved in any new project from the beginning, so that all interests can be voiced, explained and agreed before construction gets under way.

The so common mistakes can then be avoided, instead of having to be corrected (at great inconvenience and cost), more often than not by the man who inherited them. Who is he, this trouble-shooter? He's the course manager, the one whose services are so often deemed superfluous by the powers that be at a time when they would have proved most beneficial.

■ Arne van Amerongen has just taken over as course manager at Paultons Golf Centre near Romsey, Hampshire. This Brian D Pierson constructed centre offers an 18-hole par 72 parkland course, a nine-hole par 3 course and teaching academy. There is also a 30-bay driving range.

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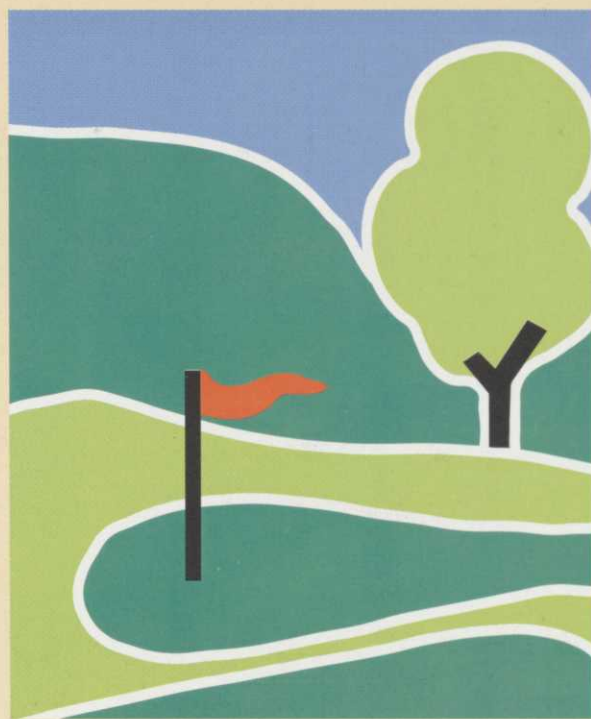
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