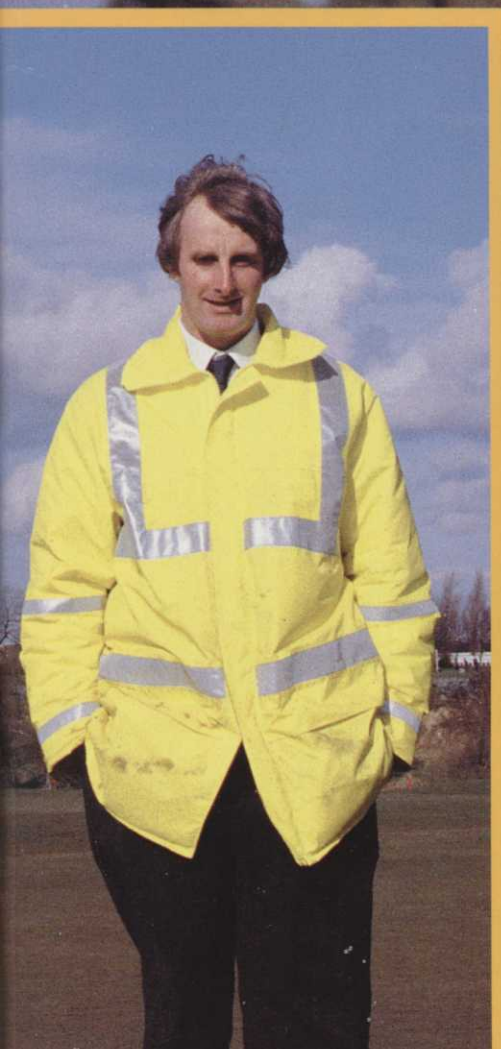


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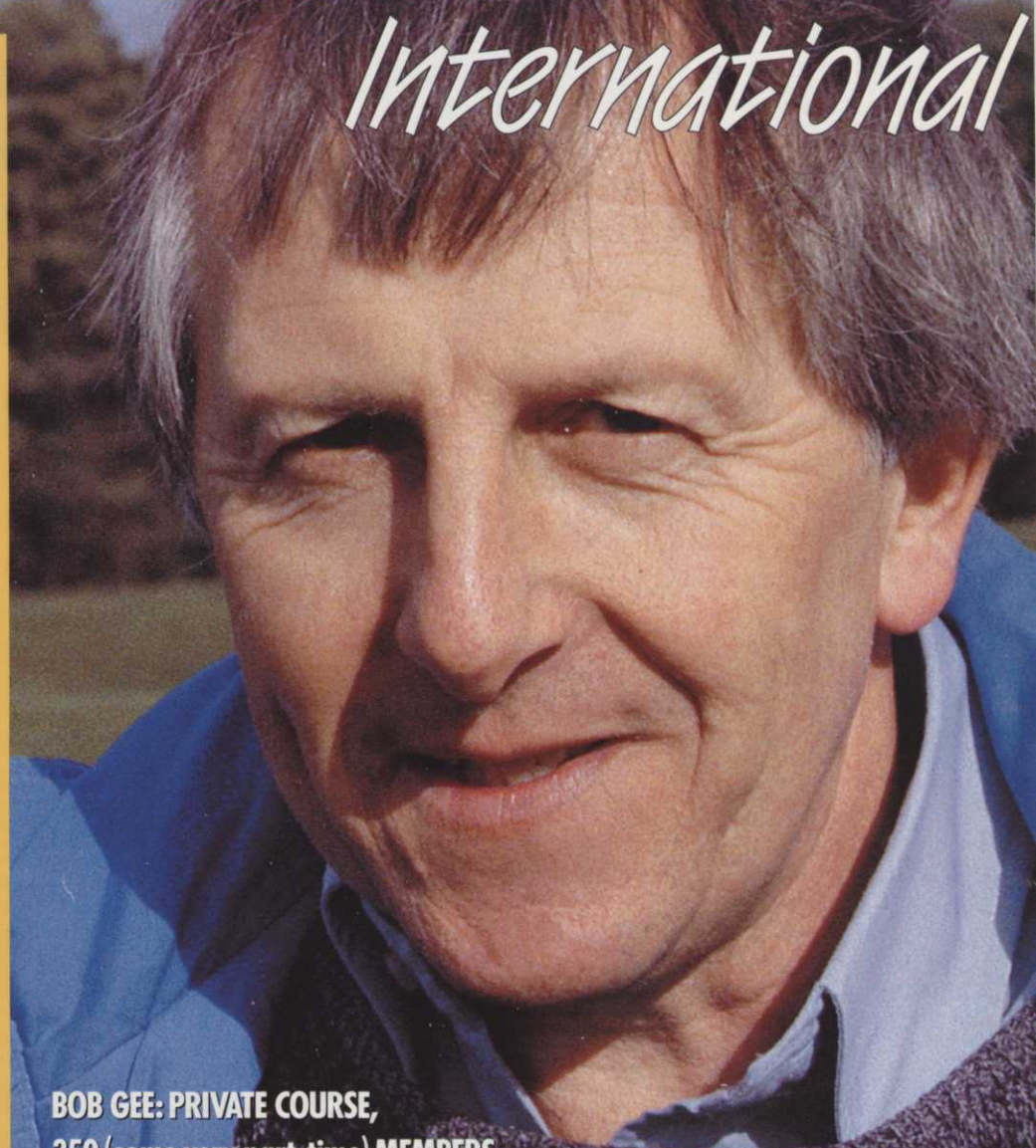
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# GREENKEEPER

*International*

APRIL 1995

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# A question of standards

Amongst the dictionary definitions of standards are a measure to which others (should) conform or against which others are judged and a required degree of excellence. Where therefore stands the profession of greenkeeping and indeed our Association in this regard? As a positive statement, the lead from your Board of Management and Headquarters staff is one aimed at professionalism in all we do and in those instances where we are found wanting every effort is made to remedy situations with a degree of urgency. That having been said I suspect that within the profession we are daily surrounded by much complacency and at times a lackadaisical approach.

A recent letter of complaint I received from a golf club concerned interviews conducted for a new head greenkeeper following advertisement in *Greenkeeper International*. The letter informed me of the discourteous manner in which two applicants invited to attend failed to advise that they were not going to attend the interview. Both had been given adequate time to advise the club of a change of heart.

The letter went on to say that the two applicants had completely failed to extend to the club and a panel of five the common courtesy of a telephone call and that consequently five very busy persons wasted their time through the thoughtlessness of our members. The letter concluded that it does not put greenkeepers in a very good light. I would find it difficult to argue with that conclusion although I did point out to the club that the individuals concerned had not in fact renewed their membership for 1995 – perhaps a comment in itself. In fairness it must be said that golf clubs as potential employers often leave much to be desired as far as standards are concerned and many are the complaints I receive of the lack of courtesy extended to our members in terms of acknowledgement of their applications for posts or in the sending of formal letters of rejection.

The incident related above would seem to immediately render the two individuals concerned, should they wish to renew their membership, culpable in



## BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

terms of the first stipulation of our Code of Ethics. What Code of Ethics I hear many of you say for often there seems a lack of awareness that we operate under such a code? As a first consideration a member pledges himself to 'Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management'. I make no apologies therefore for republishing the Code on this page for in this day and age it becomes ever more important that our members abide by a Code to which they pledge themselves on joining the Association. Look carefully at the ten points for the standards set

are high ones and be self-critical in your own assessment of where you as an individual fall short of those standards.

Certain standards are set in the use of the membership card by our greenkeeper members to enjoy courtesy of the course. How many abide by the criteria set out on the reverse side of the card? Permission to visit a course should be sought in advance, correct dress should be observed on and off the course and the club should be thanked for their courtesy. Unfortunately not all members treat courtesy of the course as a privilege and I worry about the seeming increase in the number of clubs no longer prepared to extend the courtesy to our members. The warning signs are there and any known instances of abuse of the privilege should be reported to Headquarters in an effort to ensure that the failings of a few do not penalise the majority who recognise and implement their obligations in this regard.

One other area for consideration. Working out on the golf course in all sorts of weather means that workwear must be practical. That may be stating the obvious but again are standards important?

I think so. The inclusion in budgets of appropriate workwear for greenkeeping staff is important – workwear which will be smart and suitable for the tasks in hand whilst remaining essentially practical. Importantly it assists club members in their identification of the greenkeeping crew and helps create the right image. The 'any old thing will do' syndrome will not help the profession's cause and this is an area where, in many instances, an immediate improvement at low cost can be implemented.

What of personal presentation whether it be in terms of arguing a case at the green committee meeting or appearing at an event appropriately dressed. As an individual are you always setting the highest of standards? Now there is a view within the Association that BIGGA members project an image above their station and that ultimately this may not achieve job satisfaction or even the respect of others. It is not a view with which I agree but it is pertinent to the issues on which I have touched in this article. I know the way in which your Board wishes to take the Association in this regard in terms of setting the highest of standards and I believe that this is the prevalent view amongst the membership. What really is the alternative – an acceptance that greenkeepers should know their place with all the implications that will hold for wages, conditions of service, training and indeed job satisfaction?

By and large since the advent of BIGGA in 1987, huge steps forward have been taken in the professional development of greenkeepers and consequently in the game's perception of the profession and the esteem in which the practitioners of greenkeeping are now held. Yet it will only take a minority to undo much of the achievement and here I have outlined some worrying trends. If golf as a game has a great deal to do to put its house in order, we as a profession and an Association must strive to ensure that we do not leave ourselves open to unnecessary criticism by an acceptance of standards that may have prevailed a decade ago but are outmoded and unacceptable in 1995.

## BIGGA Code of Ethics

This Code is established to promote and maintain the highest professional standards of service and conduct among the membership of BIGGA. Through adherence to this Code, members will gain for themselves recognition of individual integrity, responsibility and professionalism whilst enhancing generally the respect and good will for both their profession and Association. As a member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, I accept this Code and pledge myself to:

1. Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management.
2. At all times carry out my duties and responsibilities in such a manner as to reflect favourably on the profession and Association.
3. Seek to use every opportunity to broaden my professional expertise for both self-improvement and the good of the profession.
4. Follow, as a basic tenet, sound business and turf management principles in exercising the responsibilities of my post.
5. Observe the highest standards of personal integrity in my relationship with

- fellow greenkeepers as well as other associated individuals and at all times, as far as I am able, assist my fellow greenkeepers as required of me.
6. Pursue job advancement only where vacancies arise and not at the expense of a fellow greenkeeper and abstain from any action, comment or communication not founded on truth which is likely to harm the professional reputation or practice of another greenkeeper.
  7. Give endorsements of any kind only upon satisfactory personal experiences of the item identified.
  8. Refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or Profession.
  9. Support at every opportunity the Association, its Regions and Sections in seeking to improve the public understanding and recognition of the profession of golf course management.
  10. Report to the Association any evidence likely to be in violation of this Code of Ethics.



## Magazine wins top award – again

For the second year running your magazine, *Greenkeeper International*, has won a top award.

It scooped a Certificate of Merit in the Magazine of the Year category in the Editing for Industry Awards, organised by the British Association of Industrial Editors.

Up against big budget publications from the likes of British Gas, BP and Shell, the judges said: "Greenkeeper International continues to be a thoroughly worthwhile publication. This pleasing magazine is well presented, professional and must fulfil its target of informing and promoting all aspects of greenkeeping."

Some 1,439 entries – an all-time high – were put forward in the prestigious competition which attracts magazine and newspaper entries from trade associations, local government, industry and commerce across Europe.

MP and media celebrity Ken Livingstone will present the award at an Oscars-style ceremony in Harrogate next month.

# NEWS



■ Never a club to do things by halves, Wisley has bought 14 Kawasaki Mule 2500s for carrying staff and equipment around the course. Two of the Mules, supplied by R Hunt of Stockbridge, are fitted with Amazon topdressers powered by hydraulic PTOs. These are pre-production versions of a hydraulic powerpack that Kawasaki plan to launch in the near future.

## Greenkeepers under fire: from sub-machine guns

Greenkeepers at Ireland's Balla club in Co Mayo have to take great care when going between the second green and third tee.

This is where the gardai are to be found blasting away with sub-machine guns at a bank of earth. They stop when people pass, but members are, understandably, still concerned.

The course has been used inter-

mittently as an impromptu rifle range for at least 20 years, according to Dick Roche, a member of Balla town park committee, which owns the 18-hole course. But greater use has been made of the practice facility since an officer accidentally shot himself in the leg recently while preparing to go on patrol.

A gardai spokesperson said:

"Obviously we can't set up designated firing ranges all over the country. We've come to an arrangement with the golf course, and we do our best not to inconvenience golfers."

Mr Roche admitted that members found the gunfire a bit unusual. "But we wouldn't like to lose them. The gardai are paying rent."

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Edd Hall, 25, has moved from the London Golf Club, where he was deputy head greenkeeper, to The Buckinghamshire to take over as head greenkeeper. "With his experience at the London Golf Club and his four-year degree in horticulture and soil science, he will be a valuable asset to our operation," says Phillip Chiverton, who was promoted from head greenkeeper to course manager last July. Edd joins a team of 11 greenstaff at the 18-hole private members course which opened in September 1992. This workforce is topped up by six casual staff in the summer.

Steven Hook has been promoted to first assistant after three years at the club.

■ Graham Waller has been appointed head greekeeper/course manager at Crockett's Manor Golf and Country Club, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire. Set in over 200 acres, the 18-hole par 73 course and 9-hole par 3 academy course opened last June. "I previously worked at Crockett's Manor as assistant greenkeeper but moved just after it opened to Oakridge Golf Club, Ansley, Warwickshire, where I was appointed head greenkeeper," Graham tells us. He returned to Crockett's and took over from Adrian Porter on March 27.

■ The former head greenkeeper of North Manchester Golf Club, Fred Johnson, has died, aged 91.



■ Derek Walder BEM, sportsground manager at the Richardson Evans Playing Fields in south London, was

installed as the chairman of the Institute of Groundsmanship at its AGM in Edinburgh this month.

■ Steve Mason beat 50 other applicants to get the head greenkeeper job at 9-hole Mount Pleasant Golf Course in Bedfordshire. The former deputy head greenkeeper at Welwyn Garden City is now building new tees to give the course 18 sets of tees.

## Clearing out

Sisis land clearers, all tractor operated, are now available for hire direct from the manufacturers, for short or extended periods. Rates start at £525 per week. The Macclesfield company has also informed us of a new distributor for the Republic of Ireland – Turfand Enterprise Ltd of Blackrock, Co Dublin.







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# NEWS

## Golf course, superstore for Grimsby

A new driving range and golf superstore have opened in Grimsby. The accompanying golf course will follow in a few months. The Swingtime Golf Centre features a 27-bay floodlit driving range and a 9-hole 2,400-yard course created to USGA specification.

"I was genuinely impressed with the quality, design and variety of the course," said Stephen Bennett, the PGA European Tour professional with an academy at the range.

## MGC credits

Attendance at the 'Greens' part of 'Grounds and Greens' seminars at Lancashire County Cricket Ground on June 21 will earn three credits towards the BIGGA Master Greenkeeper Certificate. Speakers include George Brown (Turnberry), Derek Ganning (The Belfry), Stuart Stenhouse (Glenaeles) and Anthony Davies (Prestbury).



**Turfgrass scientist Robert Laycock has set up a new agronomy consultancy. During his 20-year career working with turf, his clients and employers have included the STRI, Rolawn, English Heritage and the National Trust. Two years ago Ping makers Karsten (UK) Ltd took over his first consultancy, Turfgrass Science. Laycock will continue to work as a consultant for Karsten on its two golf courses at Gainsborough and to interpret the results of soil and tissue analysis for Karsten Turf Science, the analysis and fertiliser company run until recently by Laycock.**



## Tractor order

Eight new tractors line up at Haynes of Maidstone, ready for delivery to turf supplier Tip-Top Turf. The seven 51hp model Ford 3930s and one 75hp model Ford 5640 are fitted with 30.5x600x600 low ground pressure tyres and will be used for mowing, vacuuming clippings, spraying and rolling. Mowing is carried out on a three-day cycle with the tractors working up to 16 hours a day. Pictured is Tip-Top Turf director Charlie Wood (centre) receiving the keys from Peter Innis (left) and Eric Highstead of Haynes.

## Langton Hall sold and could become 18-hole course

Langton Hall and its Hawtree-designed 9-hole golf course in Leicestershire have been sold to a private South African buyer. He paid close to the guide price of £1million to the receivers, KPMG Peat Marwick. Harborough District Council have indicated that they would favourably consider a change of use for the conversion of the hall to a 21-bedroom hotel, the

9-hole course into an 18-hole course with a clubhouse, and a residential scheme. Nigel Talbot-Ponsonby, chairman of surveyors Humberts Leisure, says: "Langton Hall's overseas buyer is particularly interested in the residential element of the scheme. It could provide over 15 houses in a superb setting, and will be developed over the next few years."

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Following the success of its first Greenkeeper's Information Day, the Cambridgeshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture is looking for sponsors for next year's event. Local greenkeepers, secretaries and members of greens committees were invited to the Milton Centre to listen to a variety of talks and see machinery demonstrations on the college lawn. They were joined by students from the second year NVQ course. It is hoped that next year's event will be bigger. Tel: Martin Crimmins 01223 860701.

■ The Greenkeeping Supply Company has appointed Tony Oldell to represent it in London, the south-east and East Anglia while Liam Galway has had his area increased to cover Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Cleveland.

■ Neil McCarthy-Primett, deputy head greenkeeper at Huntercombe GC, Nuffield, Henley-on-Thames, has passed the TDLB D32 and D33 assessor award at Oaklands College, St Albans. This means he is now qualified to assess his own staff at NVQ levels 1 and 2.

■ Hugh Soden has set up a new business - Jubilee Seeds & Turf (JST) - to market the range of turf grown by Q-Lawns in south-east England. Tel: 01797 320536.

■ Terravent Ltd has appointed distributors for its new range of soil aerators and decompactors. A&F Warehouse will distribute in Sussex (01428 661676); Surrey Power Machines in Surrey (0181 9741001); Haynes Agricultural (Kent) Ltd in Kent (01622 755726); BS Mowers in Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset (01272 353588); Keith Morgan Mowers in Dyfed, South Powys, Glamorgan and Gwent (01873 880244); and Risboro Turf in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire (01844 274127).



# Fascinating glimpse behind the scenes

Having just returned from a Secretary and Regional Administrators meeting at Aldwark Manor, I would like to take this opportunity to say what an education it was for me. I'm sure everybody else who was in attendance would thoroughly agree.

Our meeting started with Neil Thomas making the necessary introductions followed by Ken Richardson giving an education update and Chris Boiling talking about *Greenkeeper International*. Finally we were entertained by the lively talk of Bill Lynch on sales and marketing.

The evening session was filled by Fenchurch Insurance who made us more aware of our membership rights and benefits, and where part of our subscription goes. We were informed of our 24-hour direct line service. This was followed by a relaxing evening talking to fellow secretaries on how everybody's section operates.

The next morning we were introduced to Brin Bendon who has been involved in the management courses at Aldwark Manor. Brin conducted a very good session on public speaking and presenting ourselves in committees. The morning finished with Brin giving us the task of making a presentation to a committee, which created some nerves when everybody's case had to be read out by themselves.

The afternoon session was a tour of the BIGGA HQ by John Pemberton who showed us how things operate and introduced us to all the staff. The day finished with an open forum for everybody to put their ideas forward.

To summarise, I would like to inform fellow members what a dedicated team we have working for us at BIGGA HQ and I would like to see more members actively involve themselves in the Association. We have come a long way since 1987 but can still proceed further with everybody's help.

**Antony Bindley, East Midlands Section Secretary**

## A dog with a bone

With reference to two of your articles in the February edition of *Greenkeeper International*, I would, if I may, make certain observations. Firstly, "Com-

8 GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL April 1995

## A gap does exist between our profession in UK and Germany

In reply to the two letters in the February edition, under the heading 'Jerry Bashing'.

Firstly, in reply to Mr Walton at the Sennelager Golf Club. I am sorry if you got the impression we were, as you call it, "Jerry bashing." The point was more than anything aimed at the profession and the vastly different practices between the English and German greenkeeper, and was not particularly aimed at the race. Also, if you would like to visit your local Arbeitsamt (unemployment centre), you will see there is no such 'beruf' (occupation, trade, profession) as greenkeeper. In the event of becoming unemployed, which I hope you never do, you would be registered as a Landwirtschaft worker which is 'farmer or agriculturalist' or even Landschaftsgartner (landscape gardener). Let's hope this will all change as golf becomes more popular.

Secondly, I would like to reply to Mr Seve Schmitz. You're quite right, in any work you must earn respect from the people you work with and for. The former has been no problem, whether it be a German or

Japanese worker. The problem we had was the golf course owner was an architect who would overrule many decisions made by Mr Bishop. Mr Bishop would explain why the owner's suggestion would not work etc, only to be told: "Yes, I understand - now do it." To cut a long story short, the so-called fight you referred to took place in court which, due to Mr Bishop's professionalism, which should not have been questioned in the first place, we won.

We cannot understand why many German golf clubs seek British greenkeepers because "they are the best", only then to question decisions made by the head greenkeepers.

Lastly, I would like to thank the response from readers and would be grateful and curious to hear from anyone else living in Germany with regard to any aspects of the profession. We can gain much from these opinions, so it's about time you all put pen to paper.

**Elaine Holland**

● Elaine's partner, Stuart Bishop, is now head greenkeeper of 27-hole Domane Niederreutin Golf Club, due to open in July.

paction - the fight goes on" by Philip Shaw. I would most certainly agree that aeration is of utmost importance to any played grass area summer and winter alike. (Committee members and agronomists please take note.) To this end I would suggest that any golf club official reading this article actively encourage this procedure as often as is possible, it is in everyone's interest. As for any greenkeeper that is having trouble persuading his or her club of this point, consider two possibilities. Firstly, are you sure that you have effectively "sold" the idea to your committee? (Some really do take a lot of persuading.) Be like a dog with a bone - don't let go. I have had the same problem myself. Secondly, if you are cer-

tain there is nothing more you can do to persuade them to make the correct choice, leave! Yes, leave. Vote with your feet, go elsewhere, as that club does not deserve a conscientious qualified course manager. Take heart, it's not all doom and gloom. Some clubs have woken up. The others think we do it for our own good, not theirs!

The second thing I'd like to comment on is Paul Bishop's letter, "Bad and the good". Well, Paul, you are not on your own, (you may have noticed a reference to agronomists above). You state in your letter that you parted company from one golf club - be positive, be glad you are no longer there. I have met good guys but fortunately only one of

the other kind. Having given much thought to this gentleman over the years, I cannot decide if it was his fault or not. Think about the following. A number of years ago I took over a golf club which, in the early 1980s, had run into problems and called for help. They were sent an agronomist who was a specialist in a different field of sports turf. So I would ask, who is at fault? The agronomist could have said he could not help for obvious reasons, but surely he should not have been sent in the first place.

Do we need agronomists? I, for one, would say at certain times; a problem can arise which you or your colleagues haven't encountered before. Then a true golf course agronomist could be invaluable. Do not be discouraged by one or two unwitting people.

For any one who is interested, I am a qualified head greenkeeper of some 30 years, and in charge for over 20. I have been in Germany now eight months and have thus far not regretted the move. If anyone is thinking of the move out here, go for it, it is different to the UK but not as bad as some would have you believe.

**Ray Jackson, head greenkeeper, Sennelager (British Army) Golf Club**

## Not an ideal world

In reply to my earlier letter regarding hard hats, Martin Petherick (*Letters, March*) states that, rather than greenkeepers wearing hard hats, it would be better to educate golfers not to hit golf balls when greenkeepers are in the vicinity.

This, of course, is the ideal. Unfortunately it is not an ideal world. Many golfers, regrettably, hold greenkeepers in contempt, the attitude "if they will cut the greens when I want to play my ball they deserve to be hit" is, sadly, not uncommon. Given this attitude, and that greenkeepers frequently use highly dangerous machinery, I believe they should use both hard hats and education, and any other method of protection available, and that golf course management should support and encourage them to do so.

**James Smith, Ollerton, Nottinghamshire**



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# The

**Eddie Connaughton continues his article on annual meadowgrass by looking at ways of managing it**

**W**hen it is realised that annual meadowgrass is no longer just an annual plant, then it is possible to manage strategies to either eradicate it or live with it. The very nature of classifying plants such as *Poa annua* var *annua* and *Poa annua* var *reptans* is recognising that it is no longer just plain annual meadowgrass we are dealing with. Therefore it is necessary to manage the turf to the condition that prevails.

As an example, when new greens are sown out with fescue and bent grass, the first invading grass is *Poa annua* var *annua*, which is coarse in texture, shallow rooting and bunch type. Conversely, established greens will usually have a fine-leaved, low-growing, deeper-rooting grass, with stolons present which will most likely be the perennial biotype. Therefore, either for control or management of meadowgrass, it is necessary to determine what variety is present in your turf.

In my opinion, there are different classifications for the way meadowgrass is managed and all are applicable to individual situations. The three main categories of management are:

## 1: NEW GREENS

These are invariably built on free-draining sandy rootzones and are sown with predominantly fescue/bentgrass or, in more recent times, creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*) of American design. Whether it is fescue/bent or creeping bentgrass, the same challenges exist in preventing the meadowgrass from encroaching the new surfaces. If a good density of whatever grass is sown is established, then the encroachment of meadowgrass is reduced. However, in all fine turf surfaces the real challenge occurs when the height of cut is reduced to produce the speed on the greens that is invariably dictated by television coverage, and in turn good surfaces are subjected to undue early stress.

It is at times like this that the

grass thins out, algae appears and the next step is meadowgrass. The 'traditional' way of encouraging the fescues and bents is through aeration and depletion of nutrients, because the meadowgrass are 'opportunistic' grasses and always invade an over-fertile area, thus suggesting that poverty will eliminate meadowgrass. This 'theory' is probably the most misleading of all the management policies that have been discussed over the past few years.

Of course, once a perennial grass like fescue or bent has declined and meadowgrass has appeared, the battle is on for which one will survive. In our climate, once the fescue/bent has declined, the meadowgrass will tolerate the practical conditions, ie:

- Continuous close mowing on a regular basis;
- Frequent bad weather including cloudy days;
- Year-round play;
- Compacted soils.

Having said all this, the fescue/bent and indeed the pure creeping bentgrass greens can compete with annual meadowgrass once they are healthy enough to prevent the invasion of the annual strain from establishing. Therefore to prevent encroachment on new greens, the turf sown (ie fescue/bent or a combination of both or creeping bent) should be kept in a healthy condition with good fertility management. This does not mean over-fertilising which has been attributed to meadowgrass invasion in the past, but more keeping the desirable grasses healthy to fight off the 'weed' grasses.

The other main advantage of meadowgrass encroaching new greens is that it is invariably the *Poa annua* var *annua* species. This strain is possible to manage through cultural methods such as scarifying, verti-cutting and top-dressing to reduce its impact. Certain chemicals have an inhibiting effect on the annual strain of meadowgrass in this country but



# management



# of *Poa annua*

there are no labels for such applications. The most effective way of controlling annual meadowgrass at this stage is through hand-weeding out the invasive plants as they appear. All other methods risk invasion and if the ultimate desire is to prevent meadowgrass, then cultural control such as hand-weeding is the most effective. This coupled with an actively growing healthy sward of fescue/bent or pure bent is the way to ensure meadowgrass-free greens. It is also important to remember that as greens are cut lower for the desire of faster greens, then the risks are increased proportionately for meadowgrass invasion.

## **2: LINKS/HEATHLAND GREENS**

Traditionally these greens are associated with free-draining rootzones and sub-bases (ie sand

on links, gravel outwash on heathland) and therefore fescue/bent management should be possible. However, the reality is not so simple and these types of courses go through the same problems of controlling annual meadowgrass. By their very nature and length of time established, the majority of these courses have meadowgrass in the greens. This meadowgrass is most likely the perennial biotype because it will have gone through many years of cultural management and it is surviving because of its ability to adapt to the surrounding environment.

The reasons why meadowgrass would populate a links/heathland green are many and there was a period in the 1970s when fertilising and watering became popular, thus increasing the opportunity for meadowgrass to establish in such swards. Realising the errors

of our ways, the 1980s brought about policies of starvation and low water consumption with added aeration to eradicate the meadowgrass established in the 1970s. Perhaps this was too much too late because putting surfaces went through a bad period for smoothness and desirability. Great patience was required by golfers while the meadowgrass died and the fescues/bents were to fill in all the bare spaces created. This did not happen to any great degree of success and invariably meadowgrass colonised these areas again when some fertiliser was applied.

The reasons for the lack of success are many but in my opinion there are two factors that are rarely mentioned in this debate: a) height of cut and b) traffic.

The continual pressure to cut greens low for greater speed has stressed in particular the fescue

plants to the point where the meadowgrass becomes competitive and take-over occurs. The high volume of traffic that is so evident on our courses today compared to 25 years ago has an effect also. This is particularly true about winter and spring golf when bents and fescues are susceptible to wear and meadowgrass can easily invade surfaces in early spring. It is known that meadowgrass can grow at soil temperatures of 45°F while bentgrass needs 55°F to grow actively. These wear patterns also extend through the season. How often have you seen a green in late winter/early spring with the centre, where all the wear is, dominated with sickly-looking meadowgrass and the outer edges or contours, where the holes would not be placed, having fine fescues and bents present?

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# The management of *Poa annua*

many courses and the dilemma facing the golf course manager is 'Do I fight it or live with it?' I think that decision should be based on the amount of meadowgrass present and the biotype present. There are many different strains of *Poa annua* var *reptans* and if the fine-leaved types are present in the greens it will be almost impossible to eradicate them through cultural methods, ie low fertility, low irrigation and continuous aeration. In such situations, meadowgrass can be stressed to the point of death and if this choice is taken then a few useful tips would be:

- Aerate greens through hollow-tining to remove any excess fibre built up by meadowgrass;
- Overseed the greens in these bare areas with a seed mix dominated by bentgrass but with fescues present;
- Have soil tests taken and fertilise to establish the new grasses with a balanced fertiliser containing nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and trace elements;
- Keep wear away from weak areas by using the edges of greens until establishment is complete;
- Keep height of cut at 1/4in minimum while recovery is taking place.

In managing the greens to reduce meadowgrass, I think it is important to maintain good density of the fine grasses so that they compete for existence. It is also important to carry out renovation programmes based on good greenkeeping principles of aeration, topdressing, overseeding, prevention of insect and disease damage and adequate fertility based on soil and/or tissue analysis. Even with all the above, if putting surfaces are desired during a renovation programme, the approach should be gradual reduction of meadowgrass over several years. Therefore an element of meadowgrass management is required while striving to get rid of the plant longterm.

### 3: PARKLAND GREENS

Traditionally shaped from the end of the fairway or built up with existing soil with no real subsurface drainage present. Invariably these greens retain water during periods of high rainfall and most times temporary greens are required for winter play. Without generalising too much, and everyone can make their own individual assessment, these types of

greens will be dominated with the *Poa* species. As outlined in the first part of this article, there are two different types of meadowgrass. Old parkland courses will be populated by the perennial biotype of meadowgrass which, as discussed earlier, can be very difficult to eradicate.

These fine-leaved meadowgrasses when managed properly can produce a good, firm, fast putting surface. They are rarely in 100% complete dominance and often will have bentgrass mixed through the sward. The combination of these species can be managed to provide the necessary quality of surface desired. Control of meadowgrass on parkland greens would follow the same guidelines as that on the links/heathland condition described above. The meadowgrass is very competitive in parkland greens because of the water retentive qualities of soil-based greens. The amount of meadowgrass that tends to be around a parkland course other than on greens is vast, therefore the seeds are always blowing and populating fertile areas where other grass species fail.

It is possible to try to reduce meadowgrass on heavy parkland greens but to try and manage for complete eradication can be very challenging to say the least. I feel it is not sufficient to state that all meadowgrass should be eradicated no matter what the individual situations are and fescue/bent should be colonised. To achieve this on parkland courses where the fine-leaved meadowgrass is dominating is impossible culturally and the only way would be spraying out with a total weed-killer and resowing with fescue/bent.

It is important to state that many course managers throughout Great Britain and Ireland manage their greens with meadowgrass present and produce excellent putting surfaces. The very thought of stressing that meadowgrass to the point of death with the obvious resulting bare and bumpy greens would not be attractive, in my opinion, to either the course manager or their memberships. It has been well documented over many years why this option of managing meadowgrass to form part of the green's surface should not be followed

and I will not go over it again. However, I will discuss methods of management that favour fine-leaved meadowgrass forming part of the putting surface on greens.

In managing meadowgrass, like any other grass, root structure is essential and therefore aeration is central to any management programme. The primary problem with meadowgrass is its ability to produce thatch and if this is not controlled, problems will always occur, from shallow rooting to excess disease like fusarium, and rapid drying out during drought conditions. To have any success with meadowgrass management, thatch must be controlled either through aggressive hollow-tining if it's present and/or aggressive scarifying/verti-cutting/grooming to help prevent its build-up. Aeration in the form of deep slit-tining and verti-draining is important in those soils that have hard pans or have water restrictions down to 300mm in the soil profiles. Unfortunately, on those greens that have deeper drainage problems it would be necessary to rebuild to modern drainage and sand-based rootzones to ensure year-round playability.

## OTHER KEY AREAS IN MANAGING MEADOWGRASS ON PARKLAND GREENS

**Fertility** Proper applications of fertiliser to sustain growth and prevent die back of the plant. If the plant weakens due to poor fertility, it will invariably get anthracnose disease which hastens the decline of the plant. Base fertilisations on soil analysis but a little phosphorous is important in a spring feed and nitrogen and potassium can be utilised throughout the season to sustain growth. I am a convert of using seaweed liquid and meal type products for their conditioning of the soil and their benefits to root structure. Also, they can be used year-round to prevent meadowgrass from dying off and therefore good surfaces can be prepared early in the growing season. This is not over-fertilisation but rather spoon-feeding the grass to achieve the desired results without any harmful side effects.

**Topdressing** This is crucial to producing a consistent level surface and I favour frequent light sand topdressings to achieve this. Whatever topdressing material is to be selected for your

course, stay with it and do not chop and change as this can result in layering and eventually root restrictions.

**Aeration** This is discussed above and I would stress the importance of carrying out the correct type of aeration for your individual situation, ie there is not much point slit-tining and verti-draining if 2ins of thatch must be reduced – use hollow-tining.

**Overseeding** Even when managing meadowgrass, it is important to overseed with the fescues and bents to encourage these species to establish. In meadowgrass dominated greens, I see greater success with bent dominated seed mixes rather than fescue.

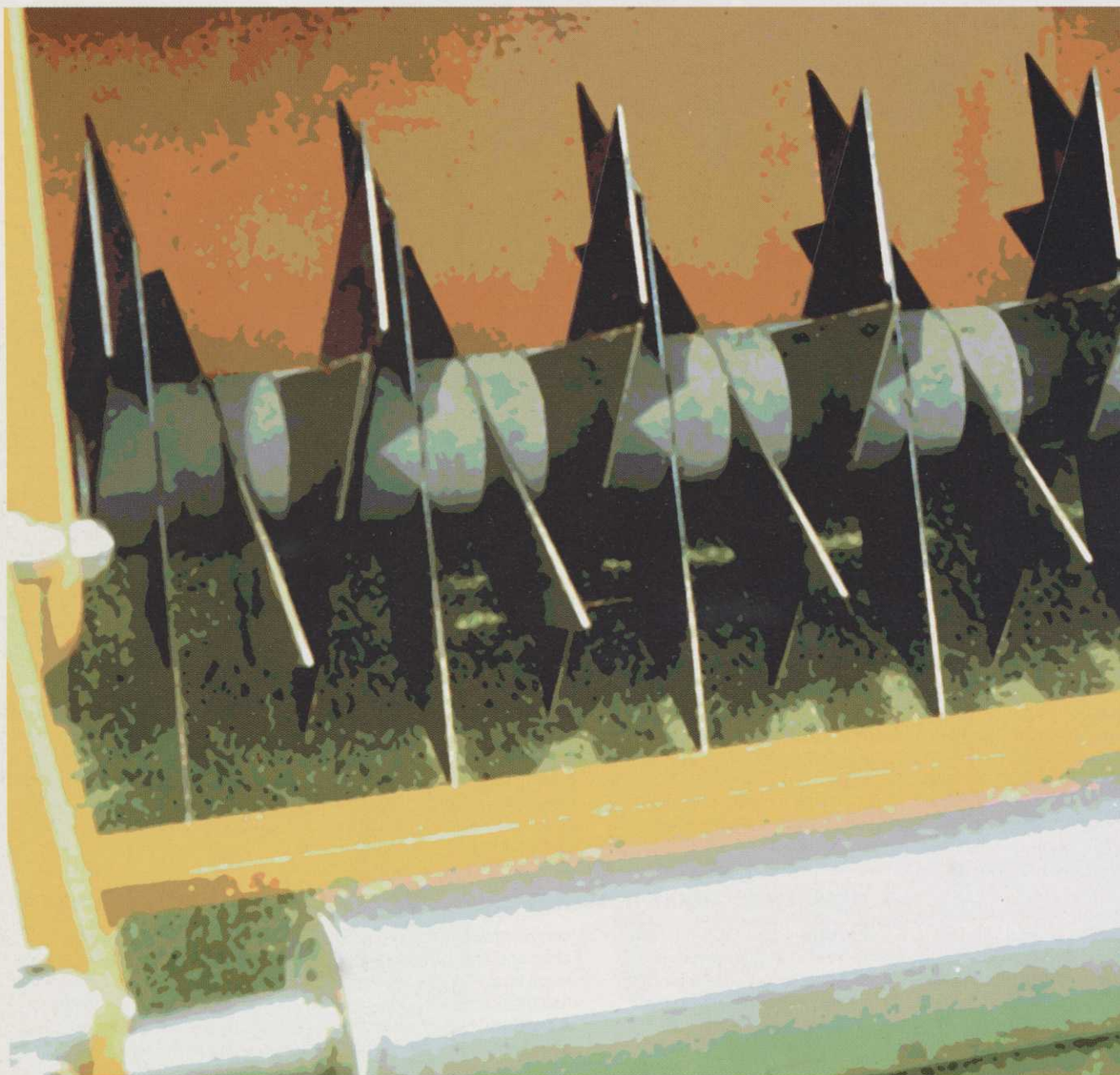
**Pesticides** Meadowgrass management needs careful monitoring for fusarium disease and the autumn of 1994 was a good example of greens growing late and disease attacking. Use of iron can be a big help in hardening off the grass but if the environmental conditions are such that fusarium outbreaks are common, then preventative

spraying is essential. I have witnessed two courses only three miles apart with almost identical soil and grass types and one is susceptible while the other rarely gets affected. The purists amongst us will say that fertilising after mid-August causes all the fusarium problems, but if the meadowgrass dies back in September/October, the greens are bumpy for the winter. Therefore maintain the growth and prevent the disease for good winter greens conditions.

**Irrigation** Use only as determined by the weather conditions. Meadowgrass does not have to be over-watered, but a little when the plant is drying out will keep it alive.

■ In conclusion, each golf course is individual and I do not intend this article to challenge anybody's personal management policies. I hope I have put across that there are alternative methods of management and indeed I have only scratched the surface, but hopefully this will generate discussion which ultimately leads to solutions.





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Hard life or easy life? Municipal course or exclusive private golf club? Greenkeeper International explores the working practices of two greenkeepers at each end of the course maintenance scale. We start with Ian Holoran at Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre



Ian Holoran near the par 3 6th. All the greenstaff are issued with high-visibility jackets, safety shoes and crash helmets

# For greenkeeper, read entertainer

**“W**e actually class ourselves as entertainers, rather than greenkeepers,” says Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre’s Ian Holoran. “We entertain 80,000 people a year, which isn’t bad going.”

His employers don’t call him a greenkeeper either. His official job title is foreman, although his job description would apply to most course managers and head greenkeep-

ers. And his team of three permanent staff are labelled ‘craftsmen/gardeners’, although they are all qualified in greenkeeping and horticulture, and all have spraying certificates.

This is just one of the differences I discovered during my visit to this municipal course.

Many golfers view municipal courses as “scruffy, badly-maintained eyesores,” according to BBC Golf. But, as the magazine goes on

to point out, many of Britain’s public courses offer “challenging golf, great scenery, good facilities and deliciously low green fees”.

Middlesbrough Municipal is one of these. Opened in 1978 on farmland three miles from the town centre, it is among BBC Golf’s list of the 18 finest public courses in the country.

Writer Mike Cable says it has been designed to cope efficiently with heavy traffic. “The



## 'When you come to tender for your own job every three years you know exactly how much you spend on materials, machinery and labour'

front nine holes are wide open, with broad fairways and big greens to help keep play moving on steadily, while the back nine holes are much more of a challenge, requiring shots into and across the prevailing wind and over becks."

### Different

Ian, 39, says working on a municipal course is no worse or better than working on a private course, it's just different. In some ways the municipal course can teach top private clubs a thing or two, especially when it comes to health and safety, training and looking after staff. For example, Ian has monthly meetings regarding health and safety. He recently went to one to discuss the dangers of needlestick injury. Many greenkeepers should be aware of the dangers of catching Hepatitis B and C and HIV from hypodermic needles discarded in woods and copses.

They also have verbal/physical abuse forms to fill in if club members have a go at them. They simply fill in the pink form and the club committee deal with the member. "They only do it once. Troublesome members are slung out," says Ian, chairman of BIGGA's Northern Region. They also have an impressive internal training programme. Among the courses on offer through Middlesbrough Borough Council are: time management, stress awareness, effective report writing, dealing with aggression, skills in communication, computer literacy, fire extinguishers, Health and Safety at Work Act, manual handling, identifying hazards, preparing for retirement and first aid. First-aid training is especially important because about 40% of the people playing the John Hamilton-Stutt course are retired.

This high standard of training and attention to detail has helped Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre achieve registration under BS5750, a coveted quality assurance standard. It means the golf course promises to deliver a certain standard of service, ie, that on any given day a certain number of staff will be on site and that at least one of them will be qualified in first-aid, that the clubhouse will be open for specified hours (8am-11.30pm), that the greens will be cut by a certain time (10.30am), that bunkers will be raked three or four times a week, and members will be told in advance that the course will be sprayed on such and such day with such and such chemical if the weather conditions prevail. In other words, there has to be good communication with the golfers.

If members have a problem or a question, they fill in a 'feedback card' and Ian has to have a written answer back to them within seven working days. The questions and answers are also displayed on a noticeboard in the clubhouse.

"It's worth everyone going for BS5750 registration because it means you're accepting a minimum standard," says Ian. "You have to



set a standard you can achieve rather than a vague wish. You have to set out everything, for example your criteria for closing the course." (see panel on Page 19).

Inspectors can come and check that standards are being maintained anytime without warning.

### Budgeting

Another major difference between Middlesbrough Municipal and private courses is the budgeting system. Everything – yes, everything – has a price. Moving the tee markers 156 times a year costs £2,987 and transplanting 681 trees took 93.3 hours and cost £536 in labour.

"You soon get used to this way of doing things," says Ian. "And when you come to tender for your own job every three years you know exactly how much you spend on materials, machinery and labour."

This system came into operation in 1989 with the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CTT). Ian, who has been in the greenkeeping and horticulture business for 22 years and started at the municipal golf course in 1986 as first assistant, is now employed by the Direct Service Organisation, which is contracted by the Client Section (the paymasters) who are answerable to the local council.

This change not only had a big impact on the organisation and admin of the greenstaff but also their maintenance practices.

"One thing Compulsory Competitive Tendering has done is focus councillors to look at the products being used and to question – especially with chemicals – whether it's the right thing to use, if it's environmentally friendly, if it's safe for the user and the customer and what are its effects? They also look at machinery and say 'You don't need two greens machines, one will do – it will just take you that little bit longer to do the job. Once you've cut all 18 greens you've finished with the machine and it's stood there doing nothing most of the day.'"

After peering inside what many greenkeepers would call a "lack of" equipment shed, I saw for myself how much Ian had been forced to streamline his machinery. There was a Jacobsen Greens King, a Ransomes GT, a Ransomes multi-mower, a Hydromain with topdresser and other accessories, an International tractor, a trailer and two sets of gang mowers.

"It's not a lot, but it's all we need," said Ian dismissively. "We have a better back-up service than most golf courses. We can borrow equipment from the parks department. They have nine tractors and six sets of gangs."

With three permanent staff, three extra summer workers and this arsenal, Ian has to counteract the effect of more than 80,000 pairs of feet trampling around the 6,333-yard par 71 course. Demand is high because the course is within a five iron of two housing estates, within a drive of another, and many



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# 'Yes, it would be nice to have sand-based greens but as someone said, you can't grow grass in a desert'

of the big local employers, including British Steel and ICI, have been creating more 'leisure time' for the local workforce. Also, as BBC Golf said, the green fees are "deliciously low". Rounds cost £7.75 weekdays and £9.75 at weekends. Season ticket charges are £240 for adults, £160 for senior citizens and £95 for juniors

## Clay soil

Middlesbrough Municipal doesn't even have the luxury of sand greens to cope with this traffic. The 18 greens are based on clay soil and were built in the early '70s when 30,000 rounds a year seemed a lot.

No wonder the greens are 100% annual meadowgrass, while the tees, fairways and rough are ryegrass.

Ian's maintenance programme is similar to that used by many parkland course managers. He aims to fertilise the greens at the end of April – the exact timing is dependent on a rise in soil temperature. His staff will hollow-tine, followed by a fairly heavy topdressing with two tons per green brushed in.

Ian would like to have fast greens but it's not possible. He never cuts lower than 3/16ths and for some of the summer he raises the height of cut. "When we get more play, usually in and around British Open time, we raise the height of cut to 1/4 to protect the greens and we also feed three weeks prior to the championship."

During the 1989 Ryder Cup they raised the height of cut to 5/16ths to save the greens from the sudden upsurge in demand from people who "weren't really golfers," Ian said, choosing his words very carefully.

The greens are cut daily during the growing season and scarified once a week during the summer to keep the speed up and to maintain growth through the whole year.

The holes are changed at least three times a week during the winter and four or five times a week during the summer.

They are played all year except when it's frosty, but as an insurance the winter greens are maintained all year, treating them the same as tees by cutting them at 1/4, topdressing them three times a year, fertilising them frequently and spiking regularly.

As at most golf clubs, a tee extension programme is in operation to cope with the increased levels of play. But with only three winter staff and a lot of trees to tidy up in the winter, only one or two new tees are constructed each year, using turf from the golf centre's own 2,000sq m turf nursery. "With such a small staff we have to set ourselves targets we know we can achieve."

New tees are built to the same spec as the old ones, so they are not out of character with the rest of the course. Ian admits not all his colleagues agree with him over this, but he

## Middlesbrough Municipal's report on golf course closure due to inclement weather

### INTRODUCTION

The most contentious issue during severe weather conditions is the closure of the course, from a Leisure Management stance because of lost income and from season ticket holding players because of reduced leisure pursuits. This in turn has the effect of placing greenkeeping staff under considerable pressure and often in an impossible position.

### BACKGROUND

In recent years figures from the National Environmental Research Council show that from the end of 1988, for a four year period, partial drought conditions prevailed, allowing almost uninterrupted winter play. Poor weather during the autumn/winter of 1992/3 further deteriorated throughout the year culminating in the wettest autumn for 30 years. This has now continued into 1995 giving record monthly rainfalls.

### CURRENT SITUATION

Subsequent monitoring and site inspections by Landscape Management staff in recent weeks has confirmed that the closure of the course by greenkeeping staff has been justified. Due to standing water, waterlogged ground or frost and snow conditions, any attempt to play under these conditions would be very short sighted as considerable damage will occur even if used for only a very short period.

The current problems associated with high rainfall are magnified to a large extent by poor drainage and ground compaction. Because these are known problems, all short- and long-term improvements are aimed at improving soil-water dispersal, but

if play were to continue unabated all this would be for nothing.

Allowing play when the grass sward is waterlogged will lead to further compaction, further preventing water penetrating the soil surface. Player traffic – normal movement or trailed trolleys – moving over saturated turf will lead to:

- a) further soil compaction – compression of soil structure;
- b) loss of grass cover – mud smeared on greens will quickly lead to die out, increasing weed invasion and the likelihood of disease;
- c) exaggerated wear and tear;
- d) disrupted levels;
- e) deterioration of playing quality

A prime example of deteriorating play quality can be observed at the driving range. Conditions have rapidly declined along with income and the operator is now making claims for lost income. In my opinion, open play on the course would result very quickly in a similar situation.

Play during frost or snow conditions also causes damage to the grass sward. When plants are under stress, normal walking action can damage the cell structure, resulting in death or die back, and at the same time break off surface vegetation from the root mass. This is a particular problem with fine grass species associated with tees, aprons and greens.

### CONCLUSION

Continue with the proposed short- and long-term improvements, increase spiking or introduce verti-draining when ground conditions allow but, most of all, resist pressure to play when conditions are unsuitable.

replies: "We can't change

165 acres into a championship course, we've got to manage the course as it is."

This goes for the greens, too. "If we made one sand green there would not be the consistent playing surface of the other 17. Yes, it would be nice to have sand-based greens but as someone else said, 'You can't grow grass in a desert'. So you need the water, and in years to come water will be more scarce, and you need to feed them more, so the maintenance will be more costly."

### Fairways

Fairways are cut once a week in the growing season at 1/4in. "It usually takes two days to get round," says Ian. The rough, which has been likened to a cricket outfield, is also cut once a week to keep it down to a ball-finding 1in. That takes one man about four days.

As well as maintaining the 18-hole parkland course, the Middlesbrough greenstaff also look after a driving range and two spring meadows.

Nature Conser-

vancy, who make two visits a year, advise them on the maintenance of these meadows. Ian also takes advice from British Seed Houses and the Sports Turf Research Institute.

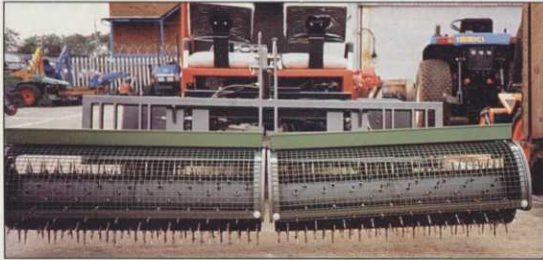
One of the biggest problems with the course is the drainage. Some localised drainage has been installed in the worst areas, and more work is planned but there isn't the budget to do the whole course. Regular spiking of the fairways, hiring a Verti-drain once a year (in the spring), and laying pathways is the answer in the meantime.

"We believe that the expected improvements will further enhance the facilities," says golf centre manager Maurice Gormley.

The trouble is, if they make it more appealing, they will attract even more golfers. Being busy from dawn to dusk most days of the year should be enough for any course – and certainly for any greenkeeper, foreman, entertainer or whatever he's called.



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Lovely atmosphere, no great hassle... and according to one league table, the best nine hole course in the world. Bob Gee of Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club explains why he thinks he's got the best job in greenkeeping



Royal Worlington's Martin Law, left and Bob Gee: they plan to stay at the course all their working lives

# The only way we'll leave is by being carried out in a box

**T**hese men admit they've got the easiest job in greenkeeping. There are only two of them maintaining one of the world's top 100 courses, but they wouldn't swap it for any other position. They wouldn't swap it for a course with an irrigation system, or one with USGA-spec greens.

Bob Gee, 52, has been the head greenkeeper at the Royal Worlington and Newmarket Golf Club, eight miles north-east of Newmarket, for 36 years and Martin Law, 46, has been assisting him for 27 years. They both joined the club from school and plan to stay there for the rest of their working lives, just as the previous team of Harry Rutter and Claude Rutherford did.

"No one leaves, they carry you out in a box. No one wants to leave, it's got a lovely atmosphere and there's no great hassle," says Bob, summing up the appeal of the club, which was founded in 1893, three years after the course came into existence.

You can tell Royal Worlington is special



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## 'Colour is secondary. Greens should be firm and fast. We're growing a putting surface, not a crop'

as soon as you drive up and find the course virtually empty, yet there is a notice on the first tee stating 'No three or four balls permitted'.

Royal Worlington is the only nine-hole course in Golf World magazine's top 100 courses, and it has been decribed by The New Yorker magazine as "far and away the best nine-hole course in the world". Much of its prominence is due to the fact that it is home of the Cambridge University golf team whose ranks have been filled with such influential characters as Bernard Darwin, who used to refer to it as "the sacred nine", Harry Colt, Henry Longhurst and Donald Steel.

Money alone will not buy you membership of this exclusive club. You have to know someone or be a Cambridge Blue to get in. This has led to accusations of it being snobby, but we saw no evidence of this during our visit to the club. The atmosphere was very relaxed and friendly and one member bought a round of drinks for the greenstaff and me.

The 102-year-old club has just 350 members and many of these only play once or twice a year. One member was playing his first round there for 30 years. This is one reason why Bob and Martin think they have it easy – Royal Worlington must be one of the few courses in the country that is under-played. Another reason why they are lucky is that the club was built on a superb parcel of land. It's in the middle of Suffolk, 55 miles from the sea, but the soil is a sandy loam that many links courses would love to own. "It's a fluke of nature. It's perfect for a golf course but not much good for anything else," says Bob.

The original plan in 1890 was to build 18 holes, but some of the acreage was rather marshy, so on the advice of Captain AM Ross, an experienced local golfer, the founders of the club chose to lay out nine holes on the sandy soil at the southern end of the plot and let it go at that. Captain Ross is credited with designing the original nine holes on the 60-acre site. A few changes were made in 1906 by an up-and-coming architect called Harry Colt. Over the last 89 years, no alterations of any consequence have been made.

Members appreciate that. In a



One of the toughest greens in golf: the 5th at Royal Worlington

fast-changing word it is a refreshing constant. As you drive down the road to the clubhouse, an old brick farmhouse painted cream, it is like entering a time warp.

I could just as easily have been meeting Harry and Claude as Bob and Martin. In fact, I would have liked to have talked to Harry who, during his long reign, set the standard of maintenance for the course. Rutter's secret was a minimum of watering, no fertiliser, and plenty of common sense.

Rutter had some unconventional but effective means of taking care of the course. One was the use of a squareboard rake, an implement whose head is a thin slab of wood through which nails have been driven so that their points protrude. Each March, employing these rude rakes, he tore the famous greens to pieces. A fortnight later, fresh young fescue grass of the finest texture would begin to establish itself. The rake may have gone but many of Rutter's principles are still being followed today.

### Original greens

As far as anyone knows, the greens are those laid out by Ross

or Colt, and have no drainage system. Yet they drain superbly. One minute they could be flooded, half an hour later they will be dry. "It's nothing we do, it's nature," says Bob appreciatively. He has hollow-cored them once and verti-drained them twice in the last ten years. But they are spiked a lot.

The greens are one of the main reasons why people remember this course. They have some of the most wicked contours in the world. Donald Steel describes the green on the famous par 3 5th as being shaped like a vaulting horse. The narrow green falls away abruptly on both sides – on the right, to a stream and, on the left, to a basin of thatchy rough 20ft below the green. There are no bunkers on this 170-yard hole. None are needed. From either side it takes a very deft recovery to stop the ball on the putting surface and prevent it from slipping down the slope on the other side. Tales of good golfers "ping-ponging" their way to an 11 are common.

The greens are not just renowned for their undulations, they are also famed for their

speed. They are always fast (measuring 10-11ft most days on the stimpmeter) and they are in superb condition.

They do not always look green but Bob says: "Colour is secondary. Greens should be firm and fast. We're growing a putting surface, not a crop. It doesn't matter how it looks as long as it putts well."

The sward is 45% fescue, 45% bents and 10% rubbish (Yorkshire fog and annual meadowgrass). Last year they were overseeded for the first time in 100 years. Bob chose Barenbrug's Bar 1 mixture containing Baruba/Bargreen chewings fescue and Heriot/Bar-dot browntop bent.

The greens are hand-watered when necessary. There is no irrigation system. Bob believes this is an advantage: "We don't need it. It's ruined more greens than anything. Not through the greenkeeper's fault, through members. They say, 'We've paid all that money for that expensive watering system – turn it on', whether the greens need it or not. 'They're looking a bit dry, put the water on'."

Bob says it is much easier to



ruin a good green than to make a bad green good. And the easiest way to ruin a green is by overwatering it and overfeeding it. At Royal Worlington they will never overwater their putting surfaces. "We can't. No one's going to stand there with a hosepipe for too long at 6 in the morning. Too little is always better than too much."

Hand-watering also means they can see which areas need it most.

Neither Bob nor Martin have had any formal greenkeeper training. They use the techniques they picked up from their predecessors. Bob was taught by Claude Rutherford, the head greenkeeper for 20 years, who was, before that, Harry Rutter's assistant for many, many more years. The only thing that has really changed during Bob's 36 years at the club is the machinery that's used.

When he came as a boy he used one of the original Ransomes Overgreen walk-behind triples; now he uses a Jacobsen Greens King Mk4 "because members like the greens cut before they play on a Sunday and there's no way I'm getting up at 4am."

They are cut every day in summer (never lower than 3/16ths and never striped) and once a week in winter (1/4in).

There are no temporary greens and you get the feeling 'temporaries' are as alien a concept at Worlington as change. "There should not be temporary greens anywhere in this country," says Bob, without meaning to sound arrogant, "because the weather is not that bad. If you look after the greens in the summer, you will not need temporary greens in the winter."

The course only closes if there is snow or if they've had rain on top of frozen greens and the top 1/4in thaws. "If we close the course, they know it's for the good of the course and we're not just being Bolshie."

They no longer mix their own topdressing, they buy it in. But since they've been doing this, they've had dry patch problems. To combat this they are using a wetting agent twice a year on

advice from the STRI who have been making annual visits for the last six or seven years.

Four times a year (April, May, June, July) they mix a little sulphate of ammonia, potash and iron with the topdressing.

#### No trolley ban

Trolleys are allowed all year. "Trolleys are banned from 9am on January 1 to 9.01am on January 1," jokes Bob. "It's a con, they tell people to buy wide-wheeled trolleys and then as soon as there's an ounce of rain they say you can't use them on the course. That's ridiculous. There's as much weight on the bottom of the trolley as there is on the bottom of your feet. You can use markers. But there are a lot of old people who can't play golf without trolleys. There are no trolley bans here," adds Bob, who admitted he uses a narrow-wheeled trolley to cart the hole-cutter around while changing the holes.

Another reason Bob feels lucky is that he has a superb chairman of green. Derek Rains has been in his post for five years and often lends a hand on the course. "He gets out on the tractor and pulls a dragmat across the greens. But he's not very good with a shovel," says Bob with a smile. One of his farm workers, Brian Hobbs, helps out on the course too, bringing a JCB with him to construct tees.

New tees are one of the few signs of change at the course. While other courses move bunkers to take account of technological advances in the game, many bunkers at Worlington lie in wait in case anyone turns up with a gutta-percha golf ball. But Bob was quick to point out that not all the bunkers were as obsolete as they appear. The bunker by the putting green, which you're not allowed to practise out of, comes into play if they swap the 9th green and the putting green.

One of the most famous throwbacks to the olden days is the small hole in the wall of the clubhouse lounge. That's the bar!

Although they don't like change, one change is imminent for Bob - his first contract of employment is being drawn up!

#### TIP

"If you've got a patch of moss, put the pin there in the winter and let the golfers scratch it out for you"

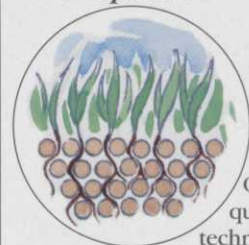
- Bob Gee



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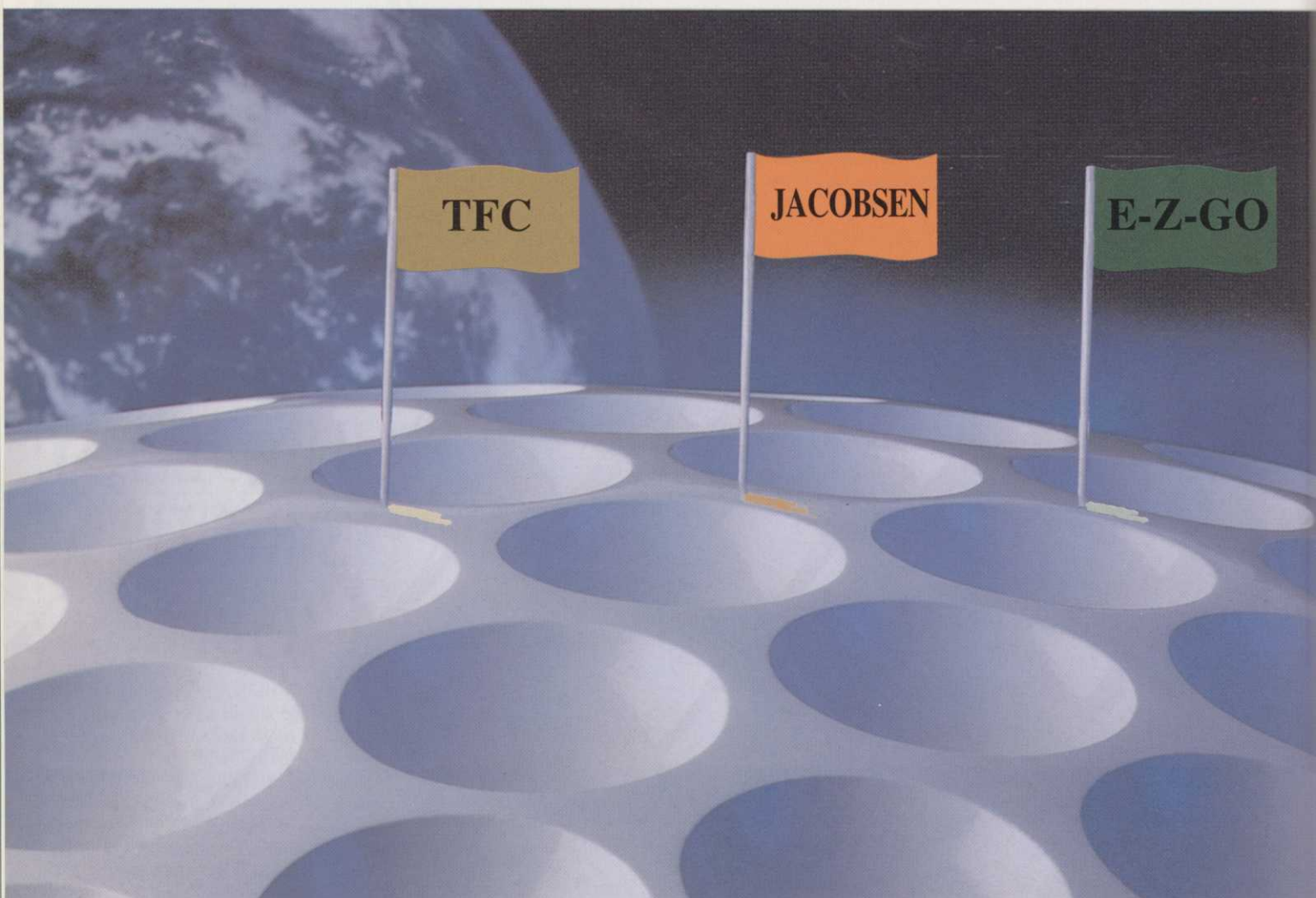
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# Bright future

**Jacobsen's René Orban, pictured right, has seen an industry once content to plod along change into something much more vital. It's great now, he tells Carol Dutton**

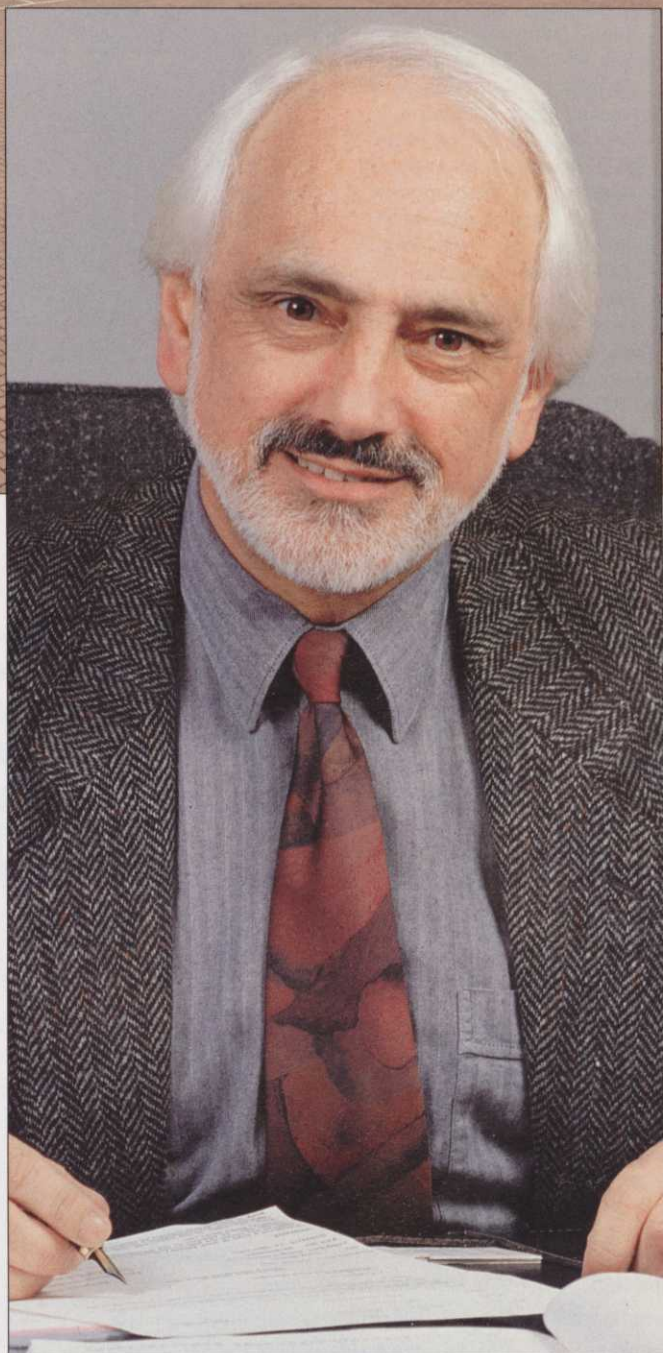
**J**acobsen/Textron, the American conglomerate worth approximately £6billion, is expanding its European operations with the help of a man who would never grab the limelight.

As managing director of Jacobsen E-Z-Go UK Ltd, he is a marketer who puts sales promotion and advertising way down his list of priorities and whose image is as far removed from Saatchi and Saatchi as you can get.

Yet René Orban took Jacobsen/Textron successfully to Australia, developed the Irish market and has seen a 100% increase in UK sales since he took over six years ago. Textron has now given him their E-Z-Go golf car range for the UK and made Textron Finance Corporation (TFC) available for the first time outside the

US under René's control. He must be doing something right! I set out to discover the secret of his success.

In 1989, after 30 years in the business with Kubota, Yanmar and Massey Ferguson, René was head-hunted by Jacobsen/Textron to manage its operations in the UK. Formerly under the control of Orag, the company's European distributor, Jacobsen had gained a bad reputation for supplying spare parts and suffered from lack of financial support. The parent company created a UK subsidiary at King's Lynn, bypassing the European operation and pumped money into the enterprise, air freighting parts directly from the US. By the time René took over, the Jacobsen name had regained a place in the



UK golf market, but there was a desperate need to consolidate.

"My immediate task was to regain credibility by creating a professional operation and managing the UK sales. Up until 1989, sales had been haphazard, with a mixture of direct selling from the main office and indirect selling through dealers."

René created an exclusive dealer network of hand-picked individuals and cut out direct sales altogether. Research showed that UK customers liked local access to products and relied on a strong personal rapport. Up until this point, René admits that the reputation of Jacobsen dealers in the UK had



been poor. "They came bottom of the list, both for supply and service," he said.

The dealers immediately became "stocking dealers", receiving new machines on the premises, with regular training from Jacobsen UK. René's four business managers (deliberately not called sales managers), were appointed primarily to support their dealers and develop new business. René insists that Jacobsen dealers are not customers. "There is only one customer – the customer," he says. "Without wanting to sound too American, we look on all our dealers as business partners."

By 1990, as the business moved to new premises in Kettering and a full-scale distribution centre was set up, dealers could expect spare parts despatched the same day (if ordered by 3pm), regular training on preventative maintenance, fitting and operation, spe-

cially trained demonstrators ready to go anywhere in the country and support from their business managers, when approaching major clients. New product information was pro-

vided by *Turf Talk*, the company newsletter, which has grown from a four-page hand-out to a mini magazine.

This year has seen the launch of the customer service log book building on the success of the customer satisfaction survey. It's a form which evaluates every aspect of the customer's experience with Jacobsen from the "sales person's understanding of his needs" to the "overall rating of the product". All forms are fed into the computer with the results going back to the US for analysis before returning to the UK and René, the dealer and business manager. This vital information system which has been operating for over two years relies heavily on customer participation. Not everyone likes filling in forms, but the incentive – having bought your machine – is a free set of protective clothing.

René runs a tight ship. The entire Kettering operation, serving 22 UK dealers, carries just 20 staff, again, hand-picked. René chooses people he can work with. "It's important to exchange new ideas and concepts in order to develop," he said.

The head of Jacobsen Australia was also carefully chosen. Following his own marketing strategy of "research and information lead-

ing to the right decisions", René spent his first two weeks in Oz gathering information on golf courses before deciding on a direct selling approach, "But I also found the right man to run it," he said.

Looking back, René has seen a once conservative industry, content to plod along, change for something much more vital. "It's great now," he says, "Full of new ideas and concepts which just would not have existed ten years ago." These include the upgrading of greenkeepers, at last being recognised as professionals and not just someone who cuts grass.

Whether Jacobsen UK has been successful can be judged by the comments of one of our members who I talked to at Harrogate. Asked about the differences between grass cutting machinery on the market, he replied that there was nothing to choose between most of them but Jacobsen's service was the best.

#### Fundamentals

René will say that the fundamentals of business are the same, "A professional approach, creating the confidence to buy", but perhaps his secret lies in his personal system, evolved over the years which employs in his words, "The best use of our people resources and applying these to our products."

Considering the fierce possessiveness displayed towards his staff, the staunch back-up of his dealers/business partners, the commitment to training both within Jacobsen and BIGGA – René was one of the first to join the Golden Key Circle and the brains behind the Ecology Booklet out next month – perhaps it is the value and recognition of people which sets him apart.

As an employee or a Jacobsen dealer/business partner, a great deal will be expected of you in return for first-class support. As a customer, you can rest assured, for as the man says, "Selling is the ability to deliver."



Jacobsen has appointed two new dealers: Chelmsford Grass Machinery Ltd for the Essex and north-east London area and SCATS (Southern Counties Agricultural Trading Society) for East and West Sussex.

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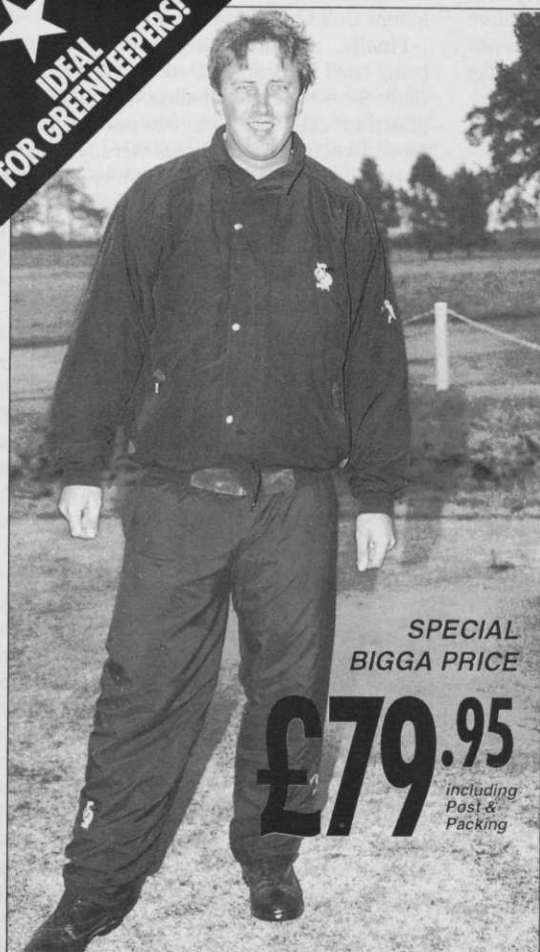
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# Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

## CLEVELAND

There was a good attendance for our February meeting at Darlington GC. Gerald Brady, regional manager for Rhone-Poulenc Environmental Products, talked about the new Guardian grass seed coating which prevents damping off and fusarium and the new selective weedkiller Spearhead.

Our membership is now 97. Congratulations, chaps! I hope to see many of you at Wearside GC on April 27 when our Spring Tournament gets under way at 1.30pm. Bring a friend or guest partner, it's a great opportunity to meet other greenkeepers and have a chat. Our two golf organisers are Bob Lawton and Chris Fiddel.

Saltburn GC has promoted Alan Reed to first assistant.

BRUCE BURNELL

## EAST SCOTLAND

It is with regret that after 17 years as secretary of the east section, I have to announce the resignation of Willie Blair. Willie has been a stalwart member of both SIGGA and BIGGA, giving both his maximum support and time.

I have extra reason to be sorry as without Willie's guidance I would not have been a greenkeeper. Through the past few years Willie has not had it easy, but has always had a smile and willingness to help other members. I am sure I speak for nearly all members who came into contact with him when I say I will miss the shout of "I'll have a vodka, lime and soda." Thanks for all the work, Willie, and please don't be a stranger.

However, BIGGA needs to move on, so a big welcome to Robert Hogarth, our new man at the helm. Please bear with us until we get things sorted out and normal service will be resumed.

PETER ORMISTON, Chairman

...Greenkeepers on the move in east Scotland: Stevie Dixon - Newbattle GC to Kingsknowe GC; Graham Hobbs - Torphin Hill GC to Bathgate GC; Stuart Cruikshanks - Bathgate GC to Deer Park GC; Billy Hudson moves from first assistant to head man at Newbattle GC; Rory Campbell, assistant at Muirfield, takes over as head man at Torphin Hill GC; and Michael Osbourne moves from Newbattle GC to Murrayfield GC as an assistant.

Dates for your diary: The spring outing at the Glen GC on Wednesday April 12 will soon be upon us. So let's see a big turnout as this is the second qualifier for the Hayter tournament. Another skittles night has been arranged for you at Right Wing, Willowbrae Road on Friday April 28. I hope to see some new faces at this one. Andy Hastie, course manager at Dalmahoy GC, would like some volunteers for bunker raking duties during the Scottish PGA Championships at Dalmahoy on May 17-21. Anyone interested should contact me on 0721 722832.

## EVENTS DIARY

April 26: Westurf, Long Ashton GC, Bristol

May 9: Drainage '95, Rockingham Castle Estate, Market Harborough, Leics. Tel: 01604 499662

June 21: South Turf, Motpur Park, South West London

July 20-23: The Open Championship, St Andrews

July 31-August 2: National Tournament, St Annes Old Links Golf Club, Lytham

September 13-14: Hayter Challenge Tournament Final, West Lancashire Golf Club, Blundellsands

Thanks go to Scottish Grass Machinery for an excellent tour of their premises and talk on the future of their company, with a super buffet thrown in too. The winner of the SGM quiz was Andy Forrest of Swanston GC. He will receive a sweatshirt and a bottle of whisky, presented by Roy Auld.

ROBERT HOGARTH

## EAST OF ENGLAND

As I sit here trying to think of something to write to all of you East of England section members (quite a difficult task because I do not get any information regarding appointments, retirements or any other gossip sent to me), it crossed my mind that our section chairman, David Walden (ICI Greenkeeper of the Year), was probably mid-air somewhere over the Atlantic on his way to the Superintendents' Show in San Francisco (lucky blighter). Maybe our section might find it easier to nominate someone for the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year award in 1996. Having seen what David has accomplished, we should be inundated with head greenkeepers proposing to follow in David's footsteps.

A new golf fixture which will take place this year is a match with our neighbours, East Midlands. The first match will take place on their turf. The date and time are to be confirmed.

Membership in our section seems to have taken off. In the last month I have had ten applications to process. This brings us close to 100 members and can only be good for the section and BIGGA. It is especially good to note that Kenwick Park have had five members join, so see if you others can get fellow greenkeepers also to join.

New members that I would like to welcome to our section are: Peter Tubey, Mason Appleby, Robert Vickers, Geoffrey Henderson and Stephen Dobbs of Kenwick Park GC, David Sankey of Grimsby GC, James North of Sandilands GC, David Williams of Southwell GC, Jim Fulton of Mommersteeg Seeds and Matthew Bishop of Belton Woods GC.

Finally, you will all be receiving a fixture card of golf events and seminars in our region. This is with the help of Howard Storey and John Deere Limited. Many thanks to them.

Anything of interest please contact me on 0733 260297.

GRAEME MACDONALD

## MIDLANDS

When I went up to Harrogate for BTME, it snowed heavily, and I thought it was great - as long as it did not come south. Having had so much rain in February, I was beginning to wish for 4ins of snow, to give the greens a break from the constant golf! Mind you, I have heard those two favourite comments over the last few weeks: "Why isn't the course open, we've had no rain?" and "The course should be closed, it's far too wet!"

I hope Midland Section members have entered the Zeneca Premier Greenkeeper Award, if not, ring HQ for details.

I would like to welcome all our new members, including: Roland Broadley, Andrew Minshall, Scott Whale, Ian Turley, Kevin Tregartha, Craig Roberts, Robert Rowson, Ray Harvey, Mark Shaw, Andrew Davies, Paul Dawson, Richard Erratt, Craig Tidmarsh, S Palethorpe, Ian Hughes, Paul Sewell and Mark Kite.

New trade association members are: Nick Bennett, George Attwood-Harris and Ivan Toon.

If anybody did not receive a fixture list and entry sheet, contact Sue or me, and we will send you copies in the post.

I hear Adrian Porter is moving back to Leicestershire to a new job from Crockett's Manor Golf Club. We wish him well.

Finally, an interesting new technique is being tried by Sean McDade of Harborne Golf Club. Sean is learning ballroom dancing in an effort to cut down on compaction on the greens when changing holes etc. I will keep in touch with Sean and let you know if the technique is working. Seriously, though, good luck with this new hobby.

KIM BLAKE

## NORTH SCOTLAND

I wish I had kept my big mouth shut about the weather! Yes, it has still been very mild, but we have had more rain in the north this winter than I can ever remember, especially in the last few weeks. Even here at Tain on sand we have had to open up and rebuild drains long forgotten as they never had to do much. I fear for greenkeepers on inland clay-based courses. Let's hope for a good early spring.

New memberships are beginning to roll in now; here are the latest: Alastair Ross, Royal Dornoch; George Aitken, Peterculter; James Morrison from Turriff who actually works on a course in the Arabian Gulf; and Roderick Ogilvie, the proprietor of Broughty Landscapes. Keep them coming.

In the February magazine you would have read about Royal Dornoch head greenkeeper Robert Patterson's eventful winter with winning a set of golf clubs followed by breaking his ankle playing squash. Well, what they didn't mention was his amazing hole in one earlier in the winter at the 8th hole of his home course, which even off the winter tee measures 350 yards! Can any greenkeeper



claim a longer hole in one, I wonder.

In response to repeated requests for a section dinner/disco, the committee in the guise of Hugh Maclatchie and Dougal Duguid have arranged it for Friday November 24 1995 at the Westhill Hotel near Aberdeen. The cost will be £12 per head and a good deal for anyone wishing to stay over is bed and breakfast for £20 per head. Tickets go on sale at the spring outing at Newmarcher next month. This may seem early but we need to know if there is a demand for this night as if we have to cancel, the earlier we do it the less it will cost the section. If you want to go, you can book your ticket in May and pay sometime over the summer, at least we will have an idea about the numbers early on.

Hopefully this will become an annual event, it is up to you. We are currently looking into the possibility of holding our AGM in the afternoon of the 24th at Westhill Golf Club, with golf before, details to follow.

Finally, have you sold your 200 Club ticket yet? Remember, the first draw is next month and all tickets have to be sold prior to that. This is the major fundraiser for the section with proceeds used to keep the costs of outings down and subsidising the dinner/disco.



IAIN MACLEOD

#### SURREY

Congratulations go to Chris Keen upon his appointment as course manager at Reigate Hill GC, to Douglas Brand, formerly of Braintree GC in Essex, upon his appointment as course manager at Betchworth Park GC and to James Watson who is moving from Wisley GC to take up the head greenkeeper position at Clandon Regis.

Hopefully by now you will have received a full list of events for the coming season. I hope they will be well supported. If by any chance you have not received a fixture list, please contact Derek Walder on 01737 246088.

If you wish to enter the Huxley Bowl this year, please return slips as soon as possible so that the competition can get under way, thus avoiding finishing late in the year.

Forthcoming dates: May 4 – Spring Tournament and Hayter qualifier, Blackmoor GC; June 6 – The Cresta Cup at Kingswood Golf & Country Club; June 21 – Southturf Exhibition, Motspur Park. Those of you interested in the dinner-dance at Reigate Manor Hotel will be pleased to hear that it has been booked again for November after last year's success.

DAVID GIBBS

#### WEST SCOTLAND

Spring is upon us with the sun shining and grass growing non-stop. Who's kidding who? Well, you never know, maybe next year.

The recent games night arranged at the Claremont Bowling Club once again proved a successful evening. The winners on the night

were D Mowatt (once again!) and S Taylor, with runners-up S Ballantyne and S McGeachy. Our thanks for this good night go to John Scott (Nairn Brown) who organised everything including those tasty pies. Thanks also go to the Claremont members for allowing us the use of their club.

The recent trip organised to St Andrews proved very successful although the golf museum closure was somewhat disappointing. A good day was had by all, with a break away from the constant rainfall on this side of the country. Our thanks go to tour guides Gordon Moir, Eddie Adams and Mark Brunton. Thirty-five people turned up for the event, it just goes to show people are interested in what's happening elsewhere.

The spring outing has been arranged for April 25 at Lanark GC. This was at short notice, so thanks indeed to Lanark and their head greenkeeper for responding so well.

On a sad note, Tommy Young of Kilmalcolm passed away in December. Tommy was head greenkeeper there for ten years, and a past chairman of the West Section. He was an honorary member at the club and a past champion in 1949 and 1959. Our thoughts are with his family.

Finally, I'd like to wish Alistair Connel of Cawder GC every success in his new position at Collingtree Park. Alistair has proved a valuable member of the section over a long time and he will be greatly missed, not for his football skills, I might add.

If anybody has any information to pass on, then please call me on 041 9425554.

STUART TAYLOR

#### BUCKS, BERKS & OXON

I hope, by the time this report is printed, the rain has stopped and the golf courses are dry enough to put machinery on.

Once again the section has been fairly quiet with very little news to report. This gives me the opportunity to thank several active members of the committee who recently resigned. Firstly, Simon Edwards for balancing the books over the last year as treasurer, and also Bernie Wall and Lachlan Morrison for carrying out all golf administration duties.

Over the past four years it has become very difficult to obtain golf courses for our events, because clubs are reluctant to give up a valuable business day. It's down to time and effort from Bernie and Lachlan that we've had some splendid venues.

Due to public demand, there will be a five-a-side football tournament on Sunday April 30 at Wycombe Sports Centre. Entry will be £10 per team. It is hoped this will be well represented – the more teams, the better the event. If you are struggling to make up a team of greenkeepers, then persuade some of your friends to join in. If this event proves to be successful, then a league will be formed next winter.

On the education side, we are putting

together a seminar to be held soon and details will be posted in due course.

Before signing off, congratulations to Dave Goodchild and Katie on the birth of baby 'Augusta' in December.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

#### SOUTH WEST

Welcome to several new members who have joined the ever growing section over recent months, amongst them Neil Taylor from Mendip Springs Golf Club, and Michael Fawcett of Marlborough Golf Club.

Whilst on the membership theme, it was pleasing to see so many new faces at Lansdown Golf Club when we held our winter competition and lecture. Support for section events is slowly increasing, so for those who haven't got involved yet an open invitation is extended to all. If you don't play and would like to participate in the day, ring me prior to the event and I could possibly arrange a course walk with a member of staff from the respective club.

It is always difficult to arrange a winter competition during February. After all, who wants dozens of greenkeepers scrutinising their course during periods of bad weather? A call from course manager Guy Woods the night before the Lansdown event highlighted the problem. He reported that it was snowing heavily but at worst there would be 18 temporaries. The day's weather though proved somewhat better with a strong breeze and virtually no snow left. Considering this and previous months' weather, the course was in excellent condition, with fairways, tees and greens all cut. Thanks to Guy and his staff for the time spent in preparation, to Lansdown for allowing us course courtesy and to the caterers for a tasty lunch. The results were: 1, M Newman 35 pts (back 9); 2, S Frankcom 35 pts (back 6); 3, S Sage 35 pts; 4, N Perkins 34 pts; 5, P Godwin 32 pts (another back 9); 6, C Tozer 32 pts. Thanks to Avoncrop and BS Mowers for their generous prize donations. The day was rounded off with a talk by Andrew Venables of Fairways on wildlife management of a golf course.

Nominations are now being taken for this year's Zeneca Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. This extremely worthwhile competition aims, in Zeneca's words, "to find the greenkeeper who gets the best from his or her course with the facilities available." First prize is a visit to the GCSAA Conference in the USA. The closing date for applications is May 31 1995. If you are interested, give me a ring on 0117 9793127 for an application form.

Finally, another reminder that Westurf takes place at Long Ashton GC on April 26. Your full support should guarantee another successful year.

KEVIN GREEN

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weather from snow to warm sunshine during the morning's round of golf at our February meeting at Wrangaton GC. Numbers for the day were disappointing but those who were able to attend enjoyed the hospitality shown by the club with excellent food and the course made playable after all the recent rain by head greenkeeper Gerald Ayliffe and his staff. Congratulations, lads!

After an excellent lunch, John Palfrey of Avoncrop presented the golf prizes and Avoncrop Trophy for the morning's bogey competition.

Result: 1, Tony Gooch (Torrington) -1; 2, Brian Ridgeway (Fingle Glen) -2; 3, Nigel Tyler (Ruffords) -3.

The grapevine has reported that Richard Minton of Zeneca has been ousted from top spot of the order of merit for touring trade members by Nigel Tyler. We await Richard's response!

To conclude a most successful day, our afternoon educational talk on 'preparing your case for capital expenditure' was presented by Keith Janes of ING farm finance.

The section thanks Wrangaton GC and all their staff for making our day so successful, Keith Janes who made the long trip to be with us, and John Palfrey and Avoncrop.

Finally, I look forward to meeting you all at Westurf. It's the best in the West and it's free. It will be held once again at Long Ashton GC, Bristol, on Wednesday April 26. All your 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 demonstration area which includes a golf green. With all the latest turf care products on show, you can't afford to miss Westurf '95. It is RAC signposted and parking and admission are free.  
RICHARD WHYMAN

#### CENTRAL SCOTLAND

Following last issue's sad news about the death of our only life member, John Henderson, this month's report also begins on a sombre note. David Cameron, head greenkeeper at Ladybank GC, Fife, has died at the age of 32. David was also a long-standing member of the section and a dedicated greenkeeper who could always be found on his beloved Ladybank.

I am sure I can speak for every member of the section in extending our sincerest condolences to his family.

On a happier note, it's a big welcome to the section's first female greenkeeper, Sharon Lawrie of Elie GC, Fife. We wish her every success in the future. Not to be outdone, male membership is showing a big increase and it is a pleasure to extend a welcome to Gordon McRae, David Smith, Andrew Graham, David Gorman, Scott Couttie, Simon Crawford, J Greig and D Halley (sorry, I don't have your first names). Hopefully, we will meet you at some of our section events in the coming months.

The illustrated talk by Jimmy Kidd of Gleneagles, at Burntisland, was another great success, with some 50 members and club officials in attendance. Jimmy was his usual inimitable self, giving us an insight into the development of the Gleneagles landscape over the last 400 million years. (I didn't think he had been there that long!) Who else but Jimmy could hold an audience's attention for three and a half hours, with no one leaving

# Around the Green



the room in case they missed anything. On reflection, perhaps we should have asked Jimmy to speak at the AGM.

With regard to the formation of a section football team, we held a 'trial match' at Dalgety Bay recently and from the commitment of everyone who participated it may not be too long before some of the Premier League teams are showing an interest in the Central Section (I'm sure there are a couple of teams who could do with our assistance right now.) Details of the match against the West Section will appear in the near future.

Congratulations to former section member David Murdoch on his appointment as head greenkeeper at Liphook GC. David served his apprenticeship at Dunfermline GC before deciding to take his skills down south. Well done, David! Congratulations also go to Ian



Jarvis of Alloa GC who, at the time of writing, was just about to give up the single life and settle down to 'wedded bliss', well that's what he is trying to tell himself.

JOHN CRAWFORD

#### SOUTH COAST

The section workshop at Sparsholt College was run by Frank Newberry, a well known figure to greenkeepers who have attended courses at Aldwark Manor. Seventeen members attended - it was necessary to keep numbers down because of the hands-on nature of these workshops. For those who were disappointed at missing out, there is to be another one during the autumn.

The feedback from those who attended was very positive with a general request for a follow-up programme. On behalf of those attending I would like to thank the industry sponsors for the day - Rows of Chichester, Romsey Garden Machinery and Rolawn.

The winter social programme for '95/'96 is being prepared and your thoughts for suitable events are requested. Please send your ideas to me at 45 Constable Close, Sholing, Southampton SO19 1EN.

We were all pleased to hear of the appointment of Jeff Drake as head greenkeeper at the Hampshire GC. Jeff worked for many years at Salisbury and South Wilts and Erlestoke golf clubs before joining the Hampshire in September 1993 as deputy head greenkeeper.

The committee has been asked by Bob Young of Sparsholt College to emphasise on all members and especially head greenkeepers/course managers the importance of supporting our trainees. It is incumbent on us all to give them our support!

ALAN MITCHELL

#### NORTH WEST

As I write these notes, the rain, as usual, is lashing down and I am trying to remember when we last went 24 hours without rain or snow. This winter must have been a nightmare for anybody involved with the mainte-

nance of turf. The grass has hardly stopped growing, but conditions are so wet that even normal winter maintenance cannot be carried out.

Let's hope the weather is fine for our golf match against the North Wales section at Northop GC on Tuesday May 2, tee off 1.30pm. A team of 16 is required so if you are available, please ring me on 0151 7245412.

A few movements to report this month. Stephen Worthington has moved from Prestbury GC to take over as head greenkeeper at Macclesfield GC, Peter Cross has moved to



West Derby GC as assistant greenkeeper, and Andrew Mannion is moving from Warrington GC to Southern Down GC in Mid-Glamorgan as assistant head greenkeeper.  
BERT CROSS

#### MID ANGLIA

Brocket Hall course manager John Wells, star of last month's magazine, gave 20 Mid Anglia section members a guided tour of the course. He went into the history of Brocket Hall and the difficulties faced when setting up a new golf course with predominantly sand greens. Thanks to John and the management of Brocket Hall for allowing us to see the course. It was disappointing, however, bearing in mind the location to see so few people there.

We are looking to secure Brocket Hall as the venue for our Autumn Tournament towards the end of October. As soon as this is confirmed, I will let you know.

Our Spring Tournament goes ahead on the 25th of this month at Royston. The format will be 18 holes in the morning (medal), which will be the qualifying competition for the Hayter-Beaver Challenge, followed by 18 holes stableford in the afternoon.

Several changes to the rules of the Lodge-way Fourball competition have been decided. These are: 1, The main draw to be drawn out of a hat (not regionalised); 2, 8 leagues; 3, Quarter finals to be drawn; 4, Semi finals to be drawn - to be played on a neutral course decided by mutual consent among the competitors. If they cannot agree, the committee will decide the venue; 5, The final will be played over 36 holes unless exceptional circumstances intervene; 6, All matches to be played to a win.

Ashridge GC is confirmed as the venue for this year's Texas Scramble/Christmas Tournament, to be played on Friday December 1.

Matches against the Midland Section and the London Section are currently being arranged for later in the year.

New members to welcome include: David Smith, Alan Smith, Duncan Flower, Ian Turnbull, Chris Slimm - all from John O'Gaunt GC; Peter Tiffney from Weston Turville GC; Thomas Hooper from South Beds GC; Ian Cropper from Hanbury Manor; Thomas Bowden from the Family Golf Centre; David Wright and Gareth Knight from Brocket Hall; Stephen Barrett from Knebworth GC; Brian Nolan from Kingsway GC; Anthony Perkins from Veralum GC; Mathew Towler and Michael Cutmore from Welwyn GC; and Timothy Lower from Delapre Golf Complex.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Colin Robinson on his appointment as course manager at John O'Gaunt GC and Steve Mason on his appointment as course manager at Mount Pleasant GC.

PAUL LOCKETT



## SHEFFIELD

More than 60 members attended our March meeting. If it takes a woman speaker to bring members to lectures, maybe I should look into booking more females. On the serious side, thanks to those of you who did turn out on such a bad day to hear Valerie Holt of the National Rivers Authority.

Seems I just about got it right to have a lecture about water as many of our courses seem to have been closed more than open this winter. But not those in and east of the Doncaster area which seem to have missed most of the bad weather as up to March this year my course has only been closed four days.

Getting back to the lecture, my thanks to Valerie – we all learned a lot from her talk and slides about rivers, ponds, conservation, bore holes and dykes on courses. One could tell by the questions and reception she got at the end of her lecture how popular her talk was.

New members include: Giles Brackenbury (Chesterfield GC), Michael Clegg and Paul Mason (Hallamshire GC), Leigh Platton (Lees Hall GC), Stephen Currie and Steven Lacey (Hickleton GC) and Christopher Sims (Scunthorpe GC).

RON ULLATHORNE

## SOUTH WALES

Firstly, members who went to Harrogate on the Westurf-sponsored trip have asked me to pass on many compliments to the organisers, Marion and Gordon Child. Once again, it was superbly organised and a thoroughly enjoyable four days. However, there were a few minor hiccups. No names mentioned, but there were four members who went to the wrong hotel to attend the AGM and by the time they realised that they had made a mistake they were snowed in! But if there was a prize for the best gaff it would go to the gent (you know who you are) who, in a hurry, made a mad dash to the toilet, to relieve himself of the previous night's curry, only to realise after a few min-

# Around the Green



utes that he had dashed into the wrong toilets – yes, the ladies. It was a further few minutes – 35 in all – before he plucked up the courage to make a dash for the exit, with fingers crossed that he wouldn't come face to face with a female.

A marvellous exhibition and a superb trip – get your names down early to secure a place on the coach next year.

At Cowbridge, Mid Glamorgan, RS Bird Ltd launched the new Ransomes E-Plex and G-Plex before a crowd of well over 150 who had gathered in the firm's newly revamped premises. Courage provided the liquid refreshment and BBC commentator Alex Hay provided the entertainment. It was a marvellous evening and our sincere thanks go to all at RS Bird, especially Jeff and Roger Bird.

A few days later at Pencoed College, Amenity Land Services presented a day's 'turf conference'. Topics included overseeding of golf greens, contract spraying, fertilisers and new products, including Farmura's Inhibitor and Rhone-Poulenc's Spearhead. The attendance should have been a lot better for this enjoyable, informative day. Our thanks to Farmura, Sharpes, Atlas Interlates, Rhone-Poulenc but mostly to ALS.

The following evening at Pencoed, David Ward, course manager at Royal Porthcawl, gave a talk entitled 'Course preparation prior to the 1995 Walker Cup.' It was so good to see not only so many people but so many new faces in attendance. An enthralling presenta-

tion was given regarding the great links of South Wales, where planning started some five years ago. David covered the building of a £6million sea defence, bunker rebuilding (all 96), tee enlargements and re-positioning, as well as an ongoing intensive coring and aeration programme. A thoroughly educational and enjoyable evening, thank you David.

On the move: Andrew Jenkins, formerly of the Southerdown and Langland Bay golf clubs, has taken up his new position of first assistant at the Clyne GC where Anthony Bull has been promoted to deputy head greenkeeper.

Dates for your diary: April 19 – Spring Competition/Hayter qualifier, Creigiau GC, 1pm prompt; April 26 – Westurf, Long Ashton, Bristol.

PETER LACEY

## HAYTER CHALLENGE

The 1995 Hayter Challenge Tournament gets into full swing this month with 20 of the 25 sections holding their qualifiers.

The greenkeeping golfers are playing for a place in the regional finals and, ultimately, a place in their region's team competing in the final at West Lancashire Golf Club, Blundellsands on September 13-14.

Last year, once again, the Northern team came out on top, narrowly beating the Midland team.

*Dates of regional finals:* Scottish: May 30, Cardross Golf Club; Northern: July 4, Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Club; Midland: July 5, Erewash Valley Golf Club; South East: June 6, Stockley Park Golf Club; South West: June 15, Carmarthen Golf Club; Northern Ireland: August 18, Clondeboy Golf Club; Eire: May 25, Glasson Golf Club.

## Don't miss Westurf, the biggest little show in the west country

Here's a golden opportunity to view the very latest merchandise to be shown for the first time in the west country. 1995 has seen the launching of various new products and many of them will be at WESTURF on April 26.

Lindum, in addition to its existing range of turf, will have the new StrathAyr BAYr Rooted Washed Turf on display, so find out what the advantages are apart from a faster root development. Fleet is exhibiting its new range of line forming Xylene-free aerosols, and the new Sprayliner will be demonstrated. Terralift Fertilisers' top product for 1995 will be Year Round 4:2:8 crumble and the new product is Greens Start 11:1:1 Pencils, ideal for regular use on newly constructed greens and tees. Also new is Barkoel Crested Hairgrass, Barenbrug's biggest research project yet.

Two new products for the spring season come from Roffey Bros. Gypronit is a mini granular turf fertiliser and Eco-Dress is a topdressing derived from full composted and graded green waste. Since last year Gwilliam Kellands has been appointed main distributors for Hayter-Beaver cylinder machines, for Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Devon. Claymore will be showing the new Sabo Roberine C800, a 60in rear discharge or side discharge out front rotary.

Sisis Equipment is bringing some additions to Westurf: Supa-Rotorake, a heavy duty scarifier; Variseeder, a new tractor mounted 4ft seeder; Technicore, a pto driven vertical aerator; and Osca, an oscillating brush unit.



New products added to the Mascot range from Rigby Taylor will be on display, and Zeneca has two new mini granular products for 1995, Cleanrun (weed + feed) and Renovator (weed + feed + mosskiller). The new herbicide Touchdown LA will also be featured. British Seed Houses has recently launched Providence Creeping Bentgrass which has been bred for European conditions, and Scotts UK has two new ranges of fertiliser.

The English Golf Union will be making its debut at the

show, exhibiting alongside various colleges, the IoG and the STRI. Farmura has a major new addition to its range – Inhibitor for the natural management of fusarium. And there's lots more! So why not start your season positively and come to the show that's in the right place at the right time. Bristol's Long Ashton Golf Club, the hosts again this year, is an ideal venue for this prestigious "little" show. Ring 01803 844056 if you would like a catalogue or further information.



# GROW your own

Investing in a turf nursery can be better than putting money in the bank, according to David Boocock, senior agronomist with the Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley

**T**he availability of good quality mature turf containing the right grasses for a variety of situations and growing on appropriate soils is the acme of perfection. Whether considered good fortune, or the result of careful planning and foresight depends on your point of view, but the head greenkeeper or course manager who has developed such a resource can be forgiven for regarding it as better than money in the bank should disaster strike.

Advancing years bring some compensations but one's attitude tends increasingly towards pessimism. My beer glass is more often half empty nowadays than half full. With the sheer volume of traffic on our golf courses these days, both men and turf are under a good deal of pressure. The potential for disaster to strike is always there, from hydraulic oil pipe rupture and spillage to an overlap using a spray or a mis-cue with the weather forecast and having wetting agents or fertiliser down and then being stuck with a hot, sunny day.

There is sure to be a sod's law which states that if a disaster is going to happen, it will happen

the day before or the morning of your major club competition. Only you can minimise those risks, but a good turf nursery may well help you retrieve the situation if the worst happens, and we all have our fair share of vandalism these days.

## Greens

Before assessing the desirable qualities for turf that will be used on putting surfaces, take into

account the playing requirements for that area. Is the turf likely to be used to repair an area damaged by disease or winter kill and will the green be required to be in full use at normal cutting heights as quickly as possible? The same query must be answered if a green has been reconstructed and needs to be completely returfed.

The reason for asking yourself this question is quite simply that

most commercial turf grown from seed is barely 12 to 14 months old when it is sold, and relatively immature. Such material is certainly strong enough to cope with the stresses of lifting, handling, transport and relaying, and a good product will certainly look mature. Unfortunately, it will not cope at all well with normal green mowing heights and regular heavy play within months of laying.

How often do you see patches of new commercial turf introduced into putting greens which either gradually decline and die off, or remain weak and thin for two or three years affecting the smoothness of surfaces, never really blending in properly for a long time. In my opinion, the vast majority of commercial turf requires a "grow in" period before it can be expected to support close mowing and regular use. That period can take from nine months to two years depending on when the turfing is completed, the area of country and weather conditions.

One or two growers can now supply more mature sod, at a price. If you can afford it, that's fine, otherwise grow your own turf nursery.

Many clubs utilise part of the practice putting green for repairs, but that is never a really satisfactory solution, more of an emergency stop-gap. Far better to have a properly developed and maintained nursery area. Having a source of mature turf on site certainly widens management options. No longer is there need



Prepare and re-sow stripped areas in spring



# GROW your own

'For quality greens turf on most sites, it is usually best to buy in a good commercial turf to establish the area.'

for ugly bare scars from winter disease or other forms of die back, even if tucked away at the edges of the putting surface. You can actively set about removing coarser ryegrass patches, or, if needs be, introduce bent and fescue turfgrass plugs into annual meadow-grass dominated areas in a controlled management programme over the years. That has to add up to easier management, better presentation and, to some extent, peace of mind.

The qualities we are looking for in turf include the correct grass species, ie a blend of fine fescues and browntop bents with very little annual meadow-grass and no coarser grass species. For most inland sites there should be at least 50% or more strongly established bent in the sward. Fescues generally take longer to achieve a mature sod that can cope with normal summer mowing heights as well as regular wear and tear and whilst a good proportion of

them is acceptable for use on links greens, too high a proportion can lead to problems inland. The grasses should be growing in a free-draining medium that matches the soils on the existing greens. Even on older established courses the top profile will be fairly sandy as a result of regular topdressing, and there is no point "capping" that by laying on it a turf growing in heavy loam. The turf must also be free of soft, fluffy organic material at the immediate surface, and preferably used to regular mowing at the normal putting green height of cut.

## Tees

The situation with regard to obtaining suitable turf for tees is far less demanding. The type of grasses forming the sward are less important, although on most courses a blend of fescues and browntop bent will still be the aim. A small amount of annual

meadow-grass will not matter and quite often the finer-leaved cultivars of smooth-stalked meadow-grass are included because these can blend well with the other fine-leaved species and established rhizomes improve recuperative powers following wear.

Perennial ryegrass is still regarded as unsatisfactory for tees on the vast majority of courses because of its open, tufted habit of growth, coarse, fibrous leaves and stems which are difficult to cut cleanly and intolerance of mowing at or below 12mm.

The soil type the grass is growing in is also less important, although obviously it is desirable to have it established in a sandy soil if the turf will be used over a special rootzone mixture even on tees.

Normal commercial turf, given a reasonable sward at all, might be expected to cope acceptably with summer play after turfing in the previous autumn or early winter. Do not expect miracles of course, such turf is still relatively immature and it will do better under a more relaxed mowing height, with regular divot repair, generous nutrition and irrigation when required.

Choice in this situation therefore boils down to a question of cost, and the quantity of turf required. Where you have the nursery space available and the time to manage it properly, a nursery for tee grade turf is well worthwhile, especially if embarking on a tee extension or enlargement programme spread over several years.

## Fairways/traffic routes

Widespread weakness or damage due to drought or wear on fairways will normally be best tackled by appropriate surface treatment, seeding, mild feeding and, in dry situations, irrigation during the summer can often be the key to success. Large areas of turf for fairway repair are therefore unnecessary. It can, however, be useful to have some mature fairway quality turf available. This comes in useful for patching repairs on drought-prone mounds, local heavily trafficked areas, especially at the edges of bunkers, on green sur-

rounds and anywhere that contours funnel feet and trolleys and which come into play.

Such places can seldom be given special treatment during summer, especially watering, and on dry slopes or mounds that can be vital to survival of thin, often rather thatchy and young commercial turf. Material like that cannot cope with heavy foot or trolley traffic either, unlike the tees which get a rest between periods of wear.

## Bunker turf

The traditional and still best way of retaining and holding a face on links bunkers, especially those facing full sun all day, is to build up a revetted wall of turf. As might be expected, that requires a good deal of the right sort of turf and on a regular basis. Turf walls receiving full sun all day combined with sand splash, wind and normal erosion often survive no more than three or four years, so a regular replacement programme is essential. Where there are many bunkers on a course, up to 2 or 3 acres can easily be used per year on renovations and rebuilding throughout autumn and winter.

On many links, suitable areas of turf for this purpose in the rough have been plundered over the years to the point where there is very little of the correct type of turf remaining. Commercial turf is totally unsuitable for bunker revetting and even where this is used on bunker heads, it can be a disaster unless very carefully managed and watered in its first year. For these purposes, nursery turf really comes into its own. Because natural regeneration of turf on the links can be such a slow process, a special area which can be reseeded when necessary, irrigated in summer and which is reasonably convenient for regular maintenance is now more a necessity than a luxury.

Above all else, turf for revetting must be a tough, mature sod with a well developed fibrous root system which can be cut 50mm thick, will handle easily and build up into a solid turf wall. Grass composition is of less importance but for neatness, general appearance and ease of maintenance, the finer grasses are best.

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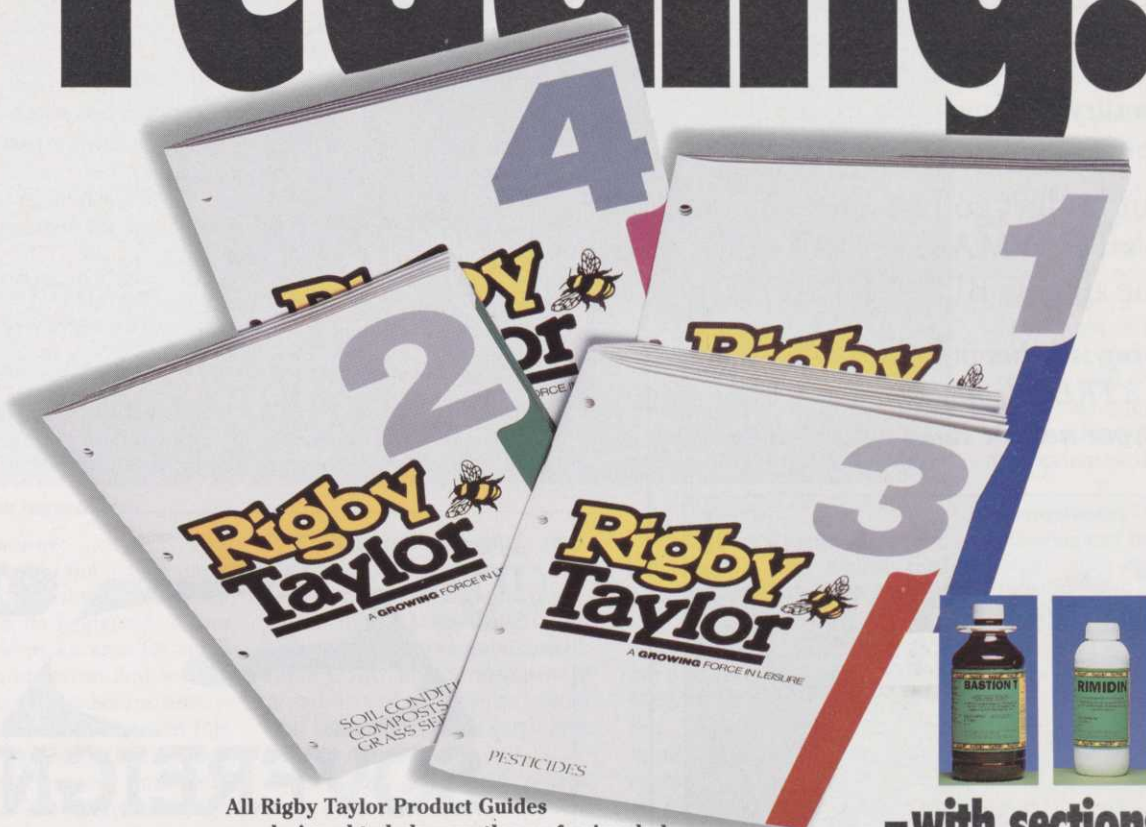
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Protect your nursery area

#### Establishment

An area close to the maintenance base is ideal since it is then unlikely to be neglected. It can also double as an area for small trials with materials and for setting up machinery before venturing out onto more important fine turf playing areas. The chosen place should be away from areas that come into play, although space considerations often mean part of the practice ground may have to be utilised.

There should be a good 100 to 150 mm depth of sandy topsoil, especially for putting green turf.

If not, ensure that a sandy root-zone is at least provided on that area. A means of irrigation is useful on inland sites, essential on links to allow sure establishment, rapid growth and development of a mature turf and also to ensure that you can recycle a small area on a regular basis.

For quality greens turf on most sites, it is usually best to buy in a good commercial turf to establish the area. Then, manage it carefully for 12 to 18 months until it matches the existing greens and is mature enough to take close cutting and play.

Seeding is clearly an option, but you must have a clean seed bed free of weeds and particularly weedgrasses such as annual meadow-grass, Yorkshire fog grass and perennial ryegrass. Many high hopes of developing a turf nursery have foundered through being swamped by these coarser species. Where you can start clean through adequate fallowing and cultivation, or on a naturally clean soil, produce a seed bed in late summer and sow during the period July through to early September. A small amount of an NPK fertiliser should be

# GROW your own

worked into the seed bed followed by sowing a standard fine grass seed mixture containing top-class cultivars of chewing fescue, slender creeping red fescue and browntop bent chosen from the tables in the current STRI publication "Turfgrass Seed".

Sow on to a firm soil bed with uniform surface levels at no more than 34 g/m<sup>2</sup> and very carefully hand rake or lightly harrow in; on sandy soil finish off by flat rolling. To ensure even coverage, split the total amount of seed and sow each half in opposite directions. Final raking should be at right angles to the greatest slope, especially on seed beds which will not require rolling afterwards.

Any areas to be sown for tees or general purpose material that could be used on fairways, traffic routes or bunkers should be clearly defined and sown with an appropriate seed mixture.

#### Management

Once fine turf has reached 50mm height from sowing, top over with rotary mowers twice at a height of 30mm. Then, gradually lower the height of cut by stages over several months to 12mm and in the second summer down to 6 to 8 mm. Always box off grass clippings. Top dress if you have to, but it is far better to spend time and effort achieving a really smooth, firm soil bed before sowing, and which will allow close mowing afterwards. Feed regularly and quite heavily with nitrogen-based fertiliser at between 150 and 250 kg N/ha



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# GROW your own

'A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly.'

during the first year to achieve rapid development of a strong, dense sward. Once the grass has established properly, reduce feeding to just basic maintenance of one or two nitrogen feeds and control thatch and any weeds as necessary.

Irrigate carefully in summer, particularly during the first year when rapid development of a dense and strong sward is vital. After that, use water at lower rates simply to maintain some growth, but at the same time aiming to develop a harder, tougher, more mature sod.

The same basic approach will be appropriate for other classes of turf from seed, although fertiliser treatment could be reduced. Maintain the sward at the height appropriate for its intended final use.

By buying in commercial turf intended for greens you can gain the establishment year. Such turf

may need topdressing to ensure a true mowing surface, keeping it topped initially at 12mm until roots are established strongly and the sward is growing away. Feeding will not be required at quite such high levels as from seed, but on sandy soils up to 150 kg N/ha may still be required to ensure vigorous enough growth and rapid development of a dense and mature turf. Commercial material often needs a bit more light raking or verticutting initially to reduce the often soft, fluffy thatch that comes with it. Afterwards, reduce these operations bearing in mind that to achieve maturity a turf must develop a strong mat of stems, roots and partly decomposed material at the surface which produces a tough mat that gives resilience and the wearing properties we are looking for.

It is, of course, possible to

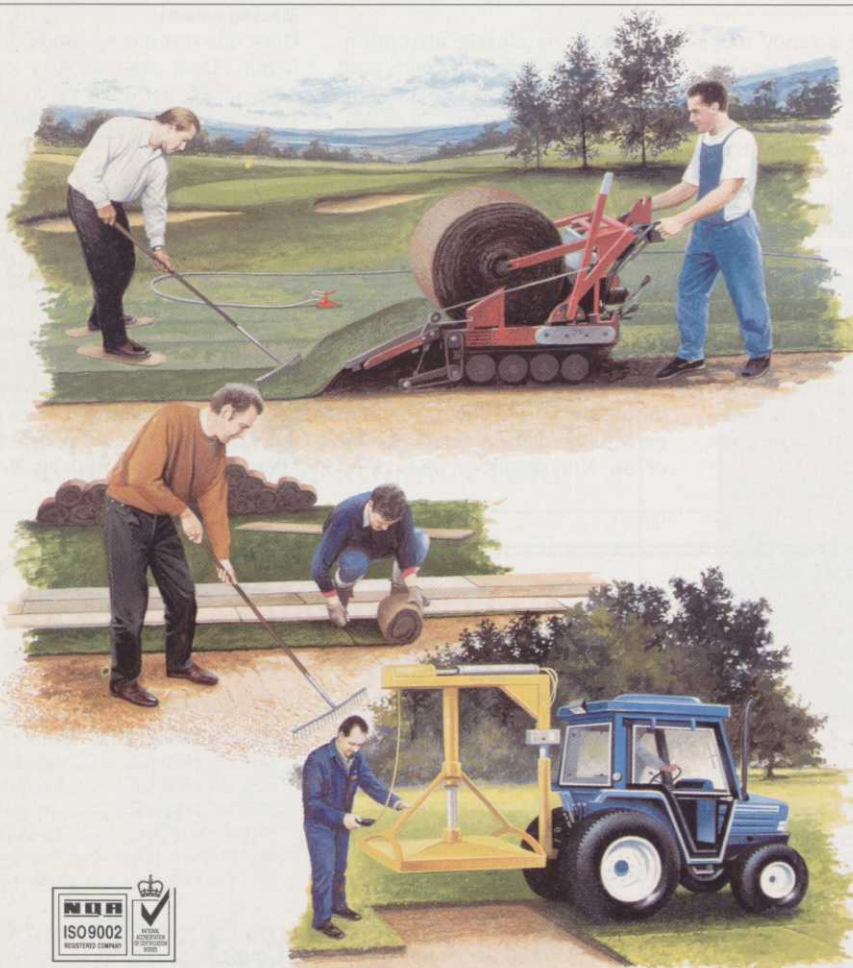
work existing swards down, after all most of our older courses started life that way, even putting greens. Tees and general purpose turf can readily be worked down from rough simply by vigorous initial harrowing, flail mowing and, where necessary, surface level improvement. One or two feeds the following summer and a gradual reduction in height of cut combined with light raking and any weed control needed will soon produce results.

Bear in mind the need for regular preparation and resowing of areas that are stripped of turf over the winter. On sandy soils there will be a need to rebuild a suitable depth of topsoil from time to time, easily accomplished by spreading a skim of topsoil and then thoroughly incorporating this into the underlying sand to produce the very sandy mixtures suitable for links.

A few courses are blessed with an ample depth of good fertile loam which can be stripped and regrown several times if the turf is cut thinly. Indeed, it is not unknown on some sites like this for the turf to be cut and lifted, leaving 25 mm wide bands of grass between the stripped out rows, and for the area to recover within a year. It goes without saying that however the used area of nursery is re-established, a little protection from traffic or play if it is a part of the practice ground will help.

## Conclusion

Commercial turf is often a clean, well-grown product, but it does have some limitations. Knowing and appreciating these, you can often tailor the situation to suit your own club's circumstances and requirements, and developing a turf nursery will often give you the best of both worlds.



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# NEW PRODUCTS



■ A low-cost, lightweight transporter equipped with the option of either petrol or electric power units has been introduced by grass machinery manufacturer **Ransomes**.

Suitable for use on turf or hard surfaces, the Sprinter utility vehicle, pictured above, is designed for all applications requiring fast, efficient and cost-effective movement of light goods, tools or work materials around golf courses and sports complexes.

The four-wheeled Sprinter has a polypropylene body to resist knocks and bumps while its tubular steel frame and heavy-duty suspension give a smooth, comfortable ride. Rugged moulded bumpers are fitted at the front and rear for added protection.

The petrol engine available for the Sprinter is an air-cooled unit developing 8.5hp and fuelled by a 6gal (28 litre) tank. Alternatively, customers can specify the electric Sprinter which has a 36-volt direct drive motor powered by six 6-volt batteries. Equipped with electronic speed control, the system gives an operating range of up to 30 miles from a single charge, depending on temperature, terrain and load.

The Ransomes Sprinter has a manually-tipped, polyethylene dump box suitable for carrying tools, work materials and other light loads. Maximum payload of the vehicle, including driver and one passenger, is 800lb (364kg).

The price of the petrol-engined Sprinter is £4,100. The electric model is £3,950, to include a battery charger with fully-automatic timer.

■ After two years of development and testing, **Dennis** has added the 24in FT610 to its range of fine turf machines. Designed with greens and tees in mind, the FT610 can be used to cut, comb, scarify, de-thatch, brush, roll,

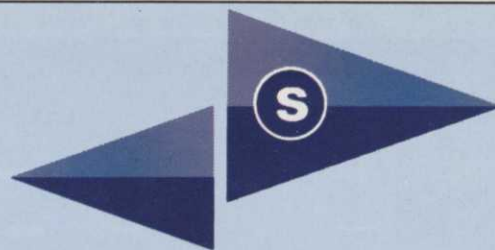
sorrel roll, or slit, simply by removing and replacing cassettes – a job which takes less than a minute and requires no tools. "This variety of functions performed by a single power unit allows for year-round usage with cost effective savings in time, money, and storage space," says managing director Ian Howard.

Other features include:

- Variable drive speed, independent of engine revs, gives the operator total control (including cuts per metre/yard);
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■ **Huxleys** report an amazing response from customers for its new Soil Reliever Vertical Deep Tine Aerator. Orders have exceeded initial expectations and include Carnoustie Links, Helensburgh GC, Radley College, Tylney Park GC, Shrewsbury GC, Parker Hart Contract Services, Corhampton GC and Sundridge Park GC. Director Paul Huxley says: "On all demonstrations, customers have been tremendously impressed by the Soil Reliever's speed, smooth operation, clean finish and robust construction. Use of the hydraulic link attachment allows the operator to regulate aeration depth from the driver's seat, and routine maintenance is minimal." Tel: 01506 856968.



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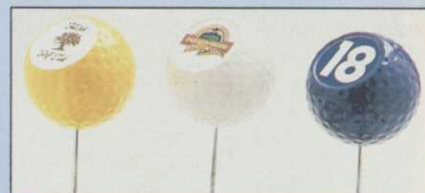
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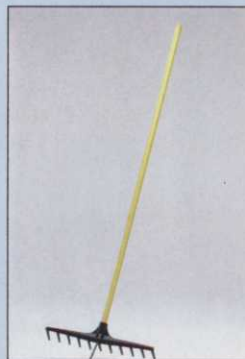
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**A** number of mammal and bird species, such as rabbits, badgers, Canada geese and moles, are known to cause problems on golf courses.

Greenkeepers are the ones who have to deal with the problems – humanely. Public attitudes to wildlife management are such that the welfare of wildlife is quite properly a major concern and therefore greenkeepers will have to manage these animals in a humane manner. There is also legislation in place which prescribes the way in which many animals can be managed.

Wildlife on a golf course may be of considerable ecological importance and in addition may make a course more marketable in terms of the course's aesthetic appeal.

Therefore, the objectives must be to manage any species only when numbers increase to a level where they are causing economic losses to the course and then only

to take such measures as necessary to reduce losses to non-economic levels.

Problems encountered and management solutions available are detailed below:

#### **RABBITS**

Rabbits cause problems by digging burrows and these are particularly prevalent on slopes and banks where drainage of water is more efficient. Digging occurs throughout the year but is more common in spring when new nesting sites are being dug in preparation for the birth of young. On flat ground, burrows are usually no more than 1m deep. Rabbits also cause damage by digging smaller, shallow scrapes in the soil and by eating the bark of newly planted young trees.

Under the 1954 Pests Act, it remains the legal obligation of occupiers of land to take steps to destroy wild rabbits on their land

# ANIMAL INSTINCTS

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# How to manage wildlife without breaking the law

## ● Fencing can be 90 per cent effective

or, if this is not practical, to prevent rabbits from causing damage on adjoining land. Rabbit numbers can be reduced by gassing their burrows, by ferreting, trapping or shooting but gassing is at least twice as effective as any of the other techniques. Numbers are best reduced between November and March because they are at their lowest at this time of year due to natural mortality. Any action taken before winter will only replace rather than add to this mortality.

Non-lethal methods such as fencing can be used to exclude rabbits from parts of the course and if properly maintained can be over 90% effective. Chemicals marketed as repellents are also available. They are sprayed onto the turf. Data on the effectiveness of these compounds is at present limited, although we are currently undertaking trials on one product. Finally, tree guards can be used to provide effective protection for individual trees.

### **BADGERS**

Badgers damage turf by digging holes when looking for food, such as insect grubs or worms, and this can occur

throughout the year. Badgers and their setts are, however, protected by legislation which makes it an offence to interfere with badgers or their setts without a licence. Therefore, preventing badgers causing damage is a complex problem which could not be adequately covered in this article. However, an extensive booklet for this purpose, called 'Problems with Badgers?', is available from the RSPCA (Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG).

### **CANADA GEESE**

Canada geese cause damage to the grass particularly around ponds and lakes on a golf course by excessive grazing and trampling of the ground and they may make areas unplayable as a result of excessive fouling. Their droppings may also pose a potential health hazard if players eat, smoke or drink without washing their hands after handling golf balls which may have landed in the droppings. In addition, during the nesting period geese may become aggressive towards members (although some greenkeepers may not see this as a problem).



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## ● Altering the habitat by planting shrubs can deter Canada geese

Canada geese are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which requires that a licence must be obtained from the DoE or MAFF for certain types of management procedures and for any control carried out during the close season (February-August inclusive). These procedures include egg pricking, egg substitution and shooting during the close season or at night. However, the Act does not allow licences to be issued if the only purpose is to prevent damage to amenity land and therefore it is unlikely that one would be issued for management on golf courses.

Procedures not requiring a licence include fencing along the edge of ponds or lakes to deny easy access to adjoining grass. This may make an area less attractive to the birds and, consequently, may lead to a reduction in numbers or divert geese from greens to areas of rough where their grazing may be less damag-

ing. Also, altering the habitat, for example, by allowing the grass to grow or planting shrubs, can be undertaken to break up the open vistas preferred by geese along the water's edge and this may discourage them from using the area. Newly planted shrubs should, of course, be protected by fencing during establishment. Visual scarers can be used but, although they can be effective, they may be unacceptable on aesthetic grounds.

### MOLES

The most obvious damage which moles cause is the hills of soil produced as a result of digging their underground tunnel systems which can be several hundred metres long and can run at depths of up to 2m below the surface. Moles are managed by poisoning, by gassing and by trapping. Poisoning is carried out by placing worms treated with strychnine in mole runs.

However, the sale or supply of strychnine for general purposes is prohibited under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1933, except to those with written authority from MAFF to purchase it for the express purpose of killing moles. Written authority will be given only to those who have received training in the technique and further information on how to obtain training can be obtained from MAFF offices. Treated worms should be placed in deep rather than surface runs to prevent these worms becoming a hazard to other wildlife. Gassing is conducted mainly by placing tablets which generate phosphine gas into mole runs. Traps, which kill moles, should also be set in deep rather than surface runs and should not be set in mole hills. Control is best done between October and April when moles tend to be most active and their workings easily seen.

## Try a course on wildlife management

A course to provide greenkeepers with training in aspects of wildlife management is being provided by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) starting this autumn in conjunction with BIGGA and the GTC. CSL is also able to provide consultancy advice to greenkeepers and further information on both these aspects can be obtained by writing to Gordon McKillop at the CSL, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Tangle Place, Worpleston, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3LQ.



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# Seven FAVOURITE tractors

**T**ractors are a prime part of the machinery fleet on most golf courses, their main functions may be hauling a trailer, aerating, loading, mowing or any of many other tasks. Their ability to provide traction, carry or drive an implement, or provide hydraulic flow and pressure makes them versatile and cost effective work horses. However while most tractors are extremely versatile the specific requirements of certain courses often determines which abilities are most important and so which tractor is most suitable.

Most golf course tractors are in the 25hp to 70hp power range and while those below 45hp are often tagged 'compact' there is considerable overlapping in specification and price. Not all tractors are equal, the standard specification of one tractor may be significantly higher than another, on the other hand sophistication usually costs money, so a basic tractor may offer best value, especially if it is only needed occasionally. Tyre and transmission options need most careful consideration, four wheel drive may be an option not needed by all. Specific equipment, such as a loader, may call for extra hydraulics or a larger pump while a cab may be a desirable option for 'compacts' usually quoted with basic roll-bar.

There is almost infinite scope to match machine to specific requirement, which is just as well as the needs of each golf course is as individual as its greenkeepers and traditions. This makes it impossible to try to compare one tractor against another. Nevertheless specific requirements often indicate a specification and this may be found as standard or at little or no extra cost in a particular model. Existing equipment and main line operations, such as deep aeration, trailer and loader work or gang mowing often determine the power, weight and transmission requirements, or there may be a price constraint. Another and very important reason to select a specific make and model may be the ability of the local dealer. Thus this feature is not an attempt to judge one machine against another but to appraise them against their environment and the expectation of their respective greenkeepers.

## Massey Ferguson 1260 at The Belfry

The Belfry has a fleet of eight tractors of varying sizes, but the selection of a Massey Ferguson 1260 was largely determined by the need to operate a deep tine aerator. A prime consideration was the strength and credibility of the dealer support, and Derek Ganning, course manager, stated that they would not contemplate going to a supplier who could not provide the level of support they at The Belfry consider essential. The course has considerable favourable past experience with ET Breakwell Ltd at Shirley and while Breakwells had just changed their tractor franchise, Derek said it was not as if MF was an unknown make, furthermore the quoted price was 'competitive.' While the exact price was not quoted to *Greenkeeper International*, the suppliers did hint that it was in the region of £17,000.

The Belfry had demonstrations of both the MF and one other similar machine before making their decision. Options specified included cab, front weights and extra wide turf tyres. As the machine was to be used extensively on tees and greens the requirement for the widest possible tyres is obvious. The machine has four wheel drive as standard. Front weights are required to ensure stability with the 1.6m wide Wiedenmann Terra-Spike and this is more important due to the fact that the tractor has a high lift capacity of 1300kg at link ends. Although The Belfry cannot be considered a hilly



Derek Ganning, left, receives the keys to his MF 1260 from ET Breakwell's Mark Radford

course, tractor stability is important and they had noted how compact tractor and Terra-Spike are as a combination.

Asked what in particular they like about the tractor, the first response was "the gears," both for their ease of selection and for the handy positioning of the levers. Although the gearbox provides sixteen ratios in both forward and reverse, selection is simple and the 'shuttle' lever makes shifting direction easy. Maximum speeds are 16.2mph – and slightly less in reverse while the minimum speed at the rated engine speed is 0.8 mph, which is considered slow enough. With all three gear levers placed beside the driver to the left the operator platform is kept uncluttered, and the 'tidiness' of the whole layout

was remarked on.

The Belfry expect that the tractor will be used for other tasks and these could include operating the Gannon reseeders and also a Varispreeder. The PTO has a rated maximum power of 31hp, and with both 540 and 1000 rpm outputs, there are the options to transmit maximum power or drive lesser loads with greatest economy. The PTO has an independent clutch which is operated hydraulically, again an essential feature where PTO operation is to be the main use of the tractor.

Technically the MF1260 has a rated engine power of 35 hp at a rated speed of 2500 rpm. The engine is a three cylinder turbo charged diesel which gives maximum torque at 1600 rpm.





Duncan Bawcutt  
with his  
John Deere 855

#### John Deere 855 at Bowood Golf & Country Club

The second tractor considered is a John Deere 855 of which Bowood Golf & Country Club in Wiltshire have two – alongside several other models in the same shade of green. Of the two machines the more interesting is their loader tractor as this is equipped with both front loader and a back hoe. Used to load topdressing as well as for trenching and similar work, "It is," says Duncan Bawcutt, course manager, "perfect for what it does." Although about four years old and with a modest 1200 hours on the clock, it has never had any problems, "just one set of seals, damaged by string around the axle". The three cylinder direct injection diesel engine is rated at 24hp and it is, says Duncan, a superb engine which always starts first time and uses no oil. "Furthermore it is quiet, unlike others I could name."

However perhaps the most important feature of this tractor is its drive train (transmission in American) which is hydrostatic. Used as a loader this means quick gearless speed and direction changes making for fast work cycle times. Of course it also has power steering and four wheel drive, features which Duncan considered essential for such a use. Operation is so simple to use that the tractor is frequently 'borrowed' by other departments on the estate. Bowood have their own fitter, Tony Rumming, and he particularly likes the tractor because it is "simple to work on". He said they operate a slightly extended service schedule, although based on the JD recommendations, because, "we use better oil." Asked about the cost of replacement parts, his comment was that if you never need any, it did not matter how much

they cost. The one modification which Tony admitted having made to the tractor was to the exhaust as the standard outlet is a stub on the side. To this he had added an upright pipe to emit the exhaust gas above the operator's head.

When first bought the tractor was simply equipped with the JD 70A front loader which was counterbalanced by a concrete block lifted on the rear links, however the versatility of the unit was later increased by the purchase of a Lewis Landlord 300S back hoe for trenching and ditching. An important design feature of the tractor, and one which makes it suitable for loader and back-hoe, is the substantial frame built into the tractor as this gives strength and rigidity to take the stresses and strains of the work. Mounting and demounting both loader and back-hoe is quick and easy, about two minutes to remove the front and perhaps ten to clear the back. The back-hoe mounts on a sub-frame and is held with two bolts while the hydraulics are self-contained and driven by a PTO pump. The front loader has a built-in stand which flips down when required to remove the unit.

Another feature of hydrostatic transmission is the ability to vary speed instantly, and Duncan said this makes the 855 particularly ideal for topdressing. The tyres on Bowood's 855 are 'oversize turf', and are interchangeable with those on the larger 33hp JD955.

The engine is a direct injection three cylinder diesel, with a two range transmission giving maximum speeds of 8 and 11mph. The PTO is live and independent, and a mid PTO is available as well as the conventional rear one. All up weight without loader and back-hoe is well under a tonne.

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# Seven FAVOURITE tractors



## Zetor 5245 at the Chesfield Downs Family Golf Centre

The Chesfield Downs Family Centre has two Zetor tractors, one five years old and another just three – and they expect to buy another shortly. Course manager is Chris Brook and he joked about the cab being big enough to be a dining room. In fact with extra seats it is both roomy and safe to carry one or two passengers, in addition it is quiet and comfortable. But of course the most important reason for Chesfield Downs' pur-

chase is financial: Zetors represent exceptional value for money, and Chris made no bones about the fact that they equal cheap horsepower. The original machine cost £6,500 with interest free repayments spread over four years, and while changing circumstances and inflation together with increases in specification have raised the cost of a replacement, Chris still does not expect to pay more than £12,000, interest free over three years for four wheel drive and 50hp.

Chesfield Downs do their own servicing on the tractors, ensuring that oil changes are carried out regularly and everything is kept up together. The dealer, Lodgeway Tractors, has been very supportive, but there have been no reliability problems on the tractors, although they have experienced one clutch cylinder oil leak, and the lights have posed some problems – but Chris said these are not vital to him. Those replacement parts which have been needed have been inexpensive too.

The Zetor 5245 is powered by a 50hp 3 cylinder direct injection diesel engine with a ten speed transmission. One of the features of the transmission is that it has two low speed gears at the bottom of the range which are ideal for working with a deep tine aerator – Chesfield Down has a 1.6m Terra-Spike, whereas some tractors need a special creep gearbox.

Although the Zetor is larger, more powerful, and heavier than a 'compact' tractor there is now a well established option to fit wide low ground pressure tyres, and Lodgeway Tractors say that they can fit GoodYear 'Softrac' tyres which give even lower ground pressures, these tyres made specially for turf production fit as if made for the tractor. In summing up, Chris said, "Yes – we're very pleased with them," but perhaps the fact that he is considering buying another is the ultimate seal of approval.

## Ford 1520 – Faringdon Golf Course

Fitted with a Lewis Landlugger 22 front loader and 4 in 1 bucket, Faringdon GC's Ford 1520 "does everything," according to owner Roger Carpenter. Bought two or three years ago, the tractor has played a large part in making this nine hole pay and play course at Faringdon, Oxfordshire which is run by the owner very much as a hands-on operation.

Roger tried out a number of competitive machines before selecting the Ford 1520 from T H White Ltd, whom he cannot praise highly enough. In comparing it he commented it 'eats' the competition, and was 'ten times better' than another well known make. In particular the transmission is far more efficient and it has a very effective lifting ability, both on the linkage and with the loader. Roger has not found it running out of power, but he did say that he would have the next model up in Ford's range if it had hydrostatic transmission.

With the loader and 4 in 1 bucket the tractor is an extremely versatile unit which is used for all manner of lifting,



Roger Carpenter aboard his Ford 1520

levelling and shifting jobs. Roger said that the transmission made operating it so easy, "you just rock the foot pedal to go backwards and forwards, and of course steering is fully hydrostatic." Furthermore the lift height on the loader is sufficient to load the normal tipper lorry. It is kept on and used as a front weight when operating with the Amazone Groundkeeper and

other implements on the back. The Groundkeeper is also a tool which has multi-purpose use at Faringdon being used to cut long grass as well as for collecting leaves, rubbish and grass clippings – "it'll take up anything," Roger commented.

"In fact the only time the loader comes off is when I go spraying the greens and I want the least possible weight". The

listed weight of the tractor is 1034 kgs and it has a 874kg linkage lift capacity. The tractor has a 23hp 3 cylinder engine and hydrostatic transmission, four wheel drive and wide turf tyres. Its service and reliability record is impeccable and certainly Roger was no less enthusiastic than the other users to whom *Greenkeeper International* spoke.



### Kubota ST30 at Laleham Golf Club

At Laleham alongside the Thames in Middlesex the need was for a compact tractor which was very light and versatile, and which could be used for tasks for which the Cushman was not well suited, such as aeration and other draft work. John Ross, course manager at Laleham, sees the compact as being complementary to turf maintenance vehicles. The club took quotes on several machines of similar specification before deciding on the Kubota ST30 supplied by J Gibbs Ltd of Bedford.

Particular features of the Kubota are hydrostatic transmission and a bi-speed front axle which means less scuffing of the ground on tight turns when using 4WD. Rated at 29hp and under a tonne in weight, the tractor offers a very high power to weight ratio and John has been able to slit weekly or more often all through the winter, often in front of the golfers without them being aware of it. As a result only about four days play have been lost this winter, and there has been no disease. John stated that a prime reason for buying the tractor was to take a lot of the TMVs' workload as these were in danger of being 'worked to death.' The ST30 has proved itself able to haul the Magna 5 mower,



John Ross with his Kubota ST30

although this will not be a regular task. John summed up operating it by saying it was quiet, comfortable and easy to use, and his only reservation was the relatively high centre of gravity which meant that common-sense is required by the operator, particu-

larly when operating with the loader. However Laleham on the Thames flood plain is basically a flat course. No reliability or service problems have been encountered, the one call made to Gibbs, under warranty, got them on the course within 20 minutes.

The ST30 is fitted with a loader and back-hoe and can operate a deep tine aerator which gives it even more versatility. "You can't be too flexible," John stated, "the Kubota ST30 gives us exceptional flexibility and we are absolutely delighted with it."

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## Lamborghini 250 Runner – at Coombe Wood, Kingston-on-Thames

Compact manoeuvrable versatility sums up David Holloway's requirements, however more specifically he needed a machine which could carry a sprayer, could operate on banks and has good dealer support. The Lamborghini meets his requirements well with its 25hp power output, 4WD and full power steering. But the more salient features are that it has good ground clearance and a short wheelbase which allows it to go over the banks which surround many of the tees and greens and then turn round within the limited space available. Iseki and Kubota had also been considered.

David is a staunch advocate of compact tractors finding that turf maintenance vehicles such as the Cushman have their limitations on the course because of their lack of clearance and linkage lift height. In comparison he also considered that the compact tractor is simpler, more sturdy and likely to have a longer trouble free life with a better resale value at the end.

One of the more important implements for the Lamborghini is the 300 litre Hardi sprayer, and David saw particular advantage to the fact that the operator could

lift and lower it on the arms when necessary to clear banks and slopes. Nor had it escaped his notice that three point linkage equipment is cheaper to buy and more readily available than that made for TMVs.

A manual transmission tractor was deliberately chosen because it does not suffer loss of speed when climbing a hill in the way that hydrostatic transmission does, this is considered as being of particular importance when using a sprayer. The 250 Runner has a twelve ratio box with full synchromesh and 'shuttle'. The speed range of from 0.4 to 15 mph gives a very low speed for Verti-draining and similar tasks,

although this is not a current requirement.

Double acting spool valves and a full set of six front weights were also specified, the former placed conveniently ahead of the operator instead of in the usual place – around the driver's bottom. Although not equipped with a loader, David was well aware that one is available and easy to fit. The two criticisms he made were that the hydraulic oil filter looked vulnerable and there was little room on the platform for anyone with large boots, particularly on the right hand side where there are two brake pedals, a diff. lock and accelerator pedals all vying for limited space – perhaps

## Seven FAVOURITE tractors

a penalty for the short wheelbase of the tractor.

As to service, David has found suppliers Risboro' Turf extremely 'willing and able', but after the first year with a maintenance contract linked to the warranty Coombe Wood will use their own mechanic for most of the work on the tractor.

Price had been a consideration, but not an over-riding one, however it was 'right' and it represented good value. In summary, David's comments were "it is a sturdy little tractor, very stable and to date I'm very pleased with it".

David Holloway is pictured with his Lamborghini 250 Runner



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# Seven FAVOURITE tractors

## Antonio Carraro Tigretac 5500 on Mendip Springs Golf Club

Bought specifically for autumn and early spring work because of its exceptional light footedness, the Tigretac 5500 hides 48hp under its bonnet with a 3 cylinder water cooled diesel engine. It has constantly engaged four wheel drive with large wide 31x15.5-15 tyres which spread its almost two tonne weight very well, so well that according to Ian Harrison, course manager, it makes less impression than the human foot. In fact prior to purchase Mendip Springs had the demonstrator on the course and put it to tow a set of trailed gang mowers over one of the wettest spots, and while the tractor made no impression the gang mower wheels left deep ruts – it was virtually ordered on the spot.

Mendip Springs has 27 holes plus a driving range, with eleven of the holes running onto the North Somerset Levels – in other

words low lying, flat and liable to becoming very wet. Thus a high powered low ground pressure vehicle is essential if late autumn and early spring work is to be carried out with minimum damage to turf and soil. The main tasks for the Tigretac are spraying, fertilising, gang mowing and trailer work, however it is flexible enough to be used for a wide variety of tasks including aerating and soil working. The manual transmission with twelve ratios provides ample scope for suiting speed with the requirements of the job and is amply slow enough at the bottom end for drainage and aeration work.

One feature which has yet to be tested is the ability to swing the entire seat and driving console so that the tractor can be operated in reverse. Ian suggested that this would be ideal for operating with a rotary mower in front.



The main criticism of the tractor is the cab and ergonomic layout inside it, this Ian suggested was not particularly well thought out, with the cab cladding seeming to be an afterthought. In-cab noise was not a problem as operators use head phones for a radio or ear protectors. BS Mowers of Bristol who supplied the machine, Ian said, have been fantastic, nothing has been too much trouble, they have moved switches, added lights and adapted the cab to our requirements without any extra charge. Neither servicing nor spares seem to be any problem.

Ian is very conscious of safety

particularly with young inexperienced operators, here the stability of the Tigretac is 'brilliant' with the wide tyres and a low centre of gravity it is very sure footed on banks – which may be as well when the result of getting too close to the edge and losing control would be an involuntary bath.

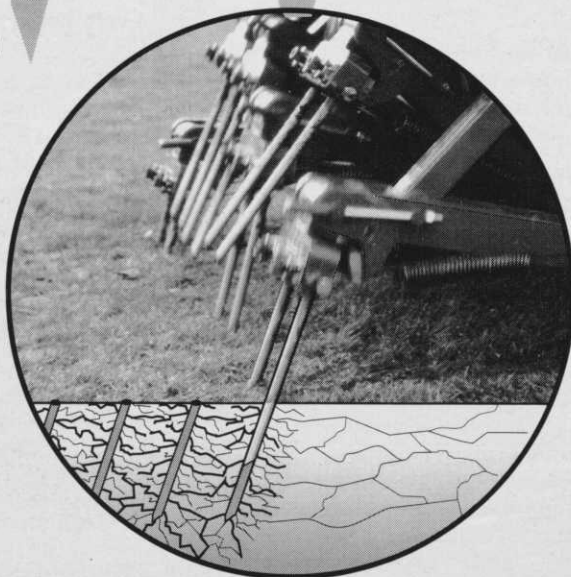
Overall Ian has no hesitation in recommending the machine, for him the price was right, it is a high powered compact golf tractor which does not suffer from being a compromised agricultural tractor, and he does not understand why there are not more of them on golf courses.

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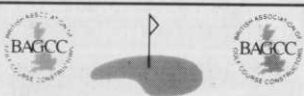
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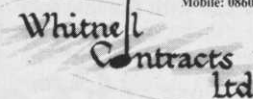


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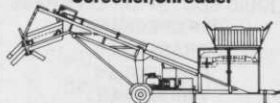
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# God's greatest theatre

The question is often posed; who is the ultimate judge of a golf course, especially its design? Could it be our mythical Mister Average? Therein lies the rub, for while there may be several accepted methods by which a golf course can be judged in its technical sense, in its adequacy so to speak, there is no way on earth that our by-no-means-mediocre-though-essentially-rather-average golfer can be objective about the charm, grace and splendour of a golf course. Beauty, golf buffs are led now to believe, is in the eye of the fellow who holes a big percentage of his putts; the standard applying as much to par-busting giantkillers as witless thrashers. Individual taste remains the only gauge, a player either likes a particular course or he doesn't, while the vitriolic outbursts of the tournament professional – more common by far than praise – will usually be governed by his fortunes: how well he has just played. After all, how many desolate experiences does a player care to remember?

What is a great golf course? The most unequivocal thing you can say is that it will possess the very breath of life; a personality, character and (sometimes) antiquity that is clearly its own. Many certainly have the stamp of ancient history about them, while there are scores of great courses that are positively youthful. Still more are mere infant prodigies, yet destined for great things. Most of these admirable courses will hold the distinction of having been created; designed by a golf course architect. Further, though most golf courses are conceived with the object of testing the few to their limit, if their architects' are anything like the artists we know them to be, they will in addition have painted the broad canvas especially for the average golfer; those who will sustain the course in the greatest of numbers.

Dr. Alistair Mackenzie, in his book *Golf Architecture* (1920, reprinted 1982), under a chapter titled 'Plans for the perfect golf course', suggested that:

- A really great course must be a constant source of pleasure to the greatest possible number of players.
- It must require strategy in the playing as well as skill otherwise it cannot continue to hold the golfer's interest.
- It must give the average player a fair chance, and at the same time it must require the utmost from the expert who tries for sub-par scores.
- All natural beauty should be preserved, natural hazards should be utilised, and artificiality should be minimised.

Placed somewhat inappropriately at the tail-end of his book under 'Hints on Greenkeeping', though aimed (with tongue in cheek), perhaps at green committee chairmen, Mackenzie further suggested: 'Never follow the advice of a golfer, however good a player he may be, unless he is broad minded enough to disregard his own game and recognise that not only has the beginner to be considered, but also that a very high standard of golf architecture improves everyone's play. Golf course construction is a difficult art (like sculpture) and still in its infancy. Endeavour to make every feature indistinguishable from a natural one. Most courses have too many bunkers. They should be constructed mainly from a

by David White

*strategical and not from a penal point of view. Fiercely criticised holes often improve the standard of play and ultimately become most popular.'*

Scotland's Donald Ross, who progressed from clubmaking at Forgan's workshop in St Andrews, while also studying golf with Old Tom Morris before becoming pro-greenkeeper at Royal Dornoch and, finally, the most active and sought-after golf course architect in America, put his opinion thus: *It is obviously the function of the championship course to present competitors with a variety of problems that will test every type of shot which a golfer of championship ability should be qualified to play. Thus, it should call for long and accurate tee shots, accurate iron play (and let me say here that I consider the ability to play the longer irons as the supreme test of a great golfer), precise handling of the short game and, finally, consistent putting. These abilities should be called for in a proportion that will not permit excellence in any one department of the game to too-largely offset deficiencies in another. Likewise, penalties should not be unduly severe nor of a nature that will prohibit a full recovery by the execution of an unusually well-played shot. These are the problems presented to the golf architect when undertaking the design of a championship layout.*

## 'Nature must be preserved both with dignity and integrity'

Though Donald Ross's object lesson for would-be architects, amateur or professional, was written several decades ago, at a time when the choicest plots of land were still available to golf course architects, its premise holds good today.

How interesting it is to learn also of Mackenzie's likened the art of golf course construction to that of sculpture, for sculptor and artist are clearly the closest of partners in golf, both working subtle intrigues with nature; soothing the beleaguered player while at the same time offering irresistible temptations.

There are those who claim that golf was never invented; certainly its lowland origins remain ambiguous, while the first golf course architect quite likely was a hacker from East Lothian called Old Father Time. We know that bunkers were simple scars on the links caused by sheltering sheep, that greens were born in the 1700s at St Andrews, that tees didn't exist before 1875; and that the century had turned before Willie Park Junior first shifted soil in fashioning elevated and contoured putting surfaces at Sunningdale. We know also that every player fancies his chances as a golf course architect.

For all that, the designing of golf courses is a youthful occupation. The title *golf course architect* was unknown until 1902, when Charles Blair Macdonald coined the term, while according to architect/researcher Geoffrey Cornish, co-author with Ron Whitton of *The Golf Course* and *The Architects of Golf*, there has only been in the whole of the

chronicle of mankind some 600 or so recorded golf course designers. This figure, of course, takes no account of 'dog' tracks, whose perpetrators undertake their 'designs' on the back of a fag packet, but if nothing else it demonstrates the exclusivity of such a profession. Six hundred? Surely there have been more astronauts launched into outer-space than that?

Exclusivity there may well be, but in Britain today the British Institute of Golf Course Architects (BIGCA), founded just 21 years ago, is ensuring that this does not also mean anonymity. Throwing open their doors and letting the world see what they are about has proved a grand start, followed by their becoming the only teaching institute in the world for 'would be' golf course architects. Their 1995 post-graduate diploma course through Kingston University is full to overflowing, the belief held within informed circles that this will become the architectural qualification, ultimately recognised throughout the world.

Already we are seeing the results of their other entente cordiale activities, first with the signing of a protocol of co-operation between the Institute and AFAG, the French architects' group, second with a declared desire for closer co-operation between all other organisations involved in the world of golf, including those professional players who have embraced design as a new, often secondary, career.

Finally, the Institute is staging a two-day conference and seminar programme, the first of its kind, at the Wentworth Golf Club on April 20-21. Looking always to the future, the seminar addresses several likely problems head on. A session on ecology will be staged, ie fitting the modern course into a natural image, plus discussions on game improvement, with regard to both human frame and modern implements. With golf balls being hit longer and harder (though not necessarily straighter), there is a greater need for safety and this issue also will be addressed. There will be sessions on design concepts for the modern age, how to make new courses maintainable, how to keep them (economically) watered, plus discussions on the equation that everyone seeks to get right first time – the financial market place. The finale, the icing on cake so to speak, will be when Dr. Alistair Cochrane discusses how we might balance modern day technology with the strongly held traditions prevalent in our beloved game.

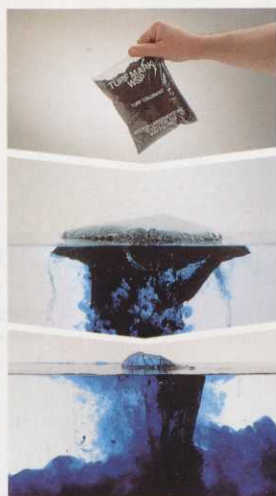
Seventy years ago Tom Simpson summed up the need for architectural simplicity: *"The educated taste admires simplicity of design and sound workmanship for their own sake rather than over-decoration and the crowding of artificial hazards."* Thank God, Britain's architects have only very rarely been required to enter the (mainly American) frenzy that has real-estate sales as its bottom line. Our finest continue to uphold the traditions that are deeply rooted in their profession, knowing that nature must be preserved both with dignity and integrity.

● Readers interested in attending the BIGCA two-day seminar and conference can obtain further details from the BIGCA secretary. Tel: 01883-712072.





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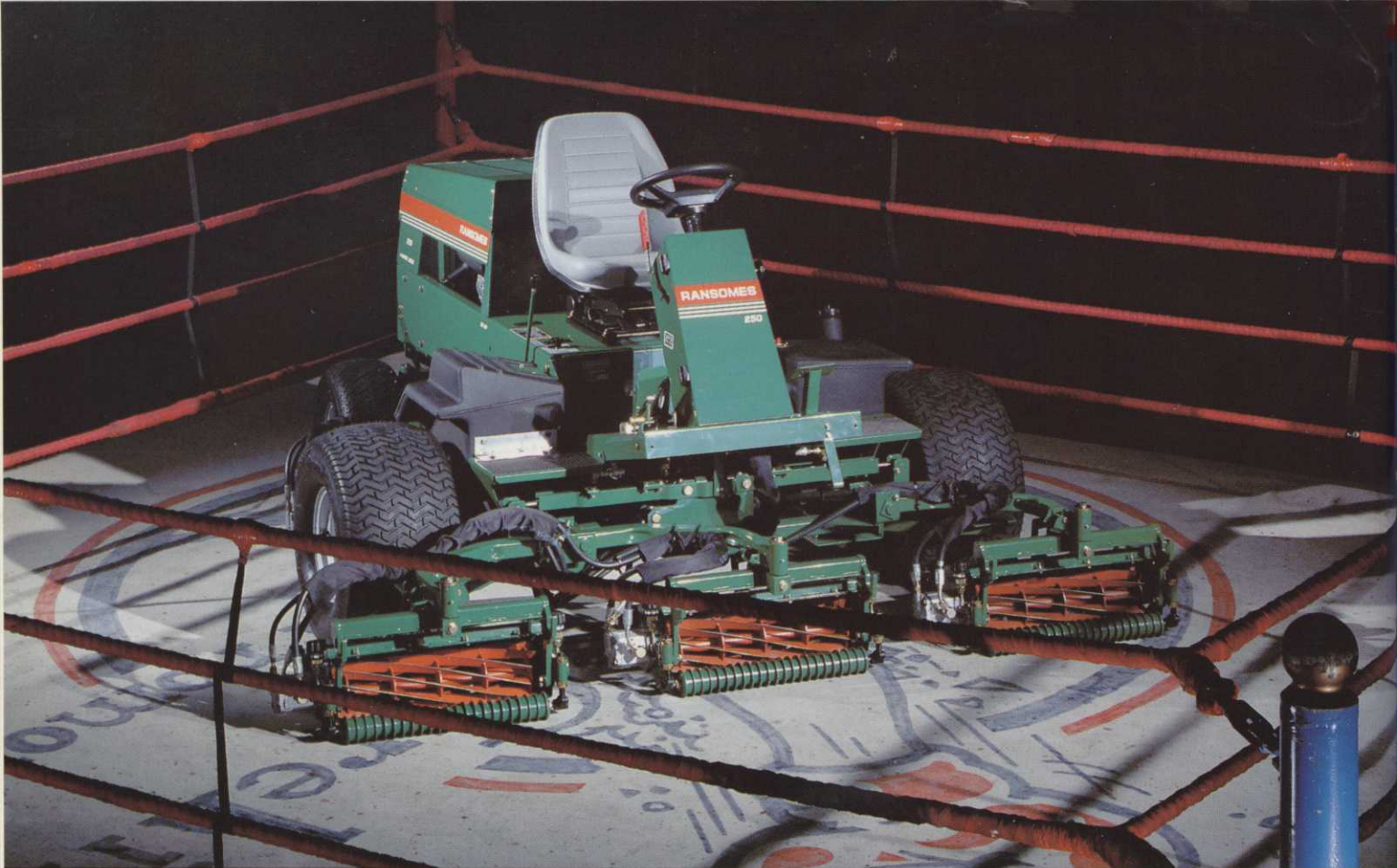
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