

# Michael is Britain's most wanted man

By Andrew Vaughan

This year's drought had many repercussions for most golf courses, not least the size of their water bills. As the privatised water suppliers in England and Wales now address the many years of under-investment in infrastructure the cost of water will undoubtedly rise with forecasts of three and four fold increases in the next few years. (Scotland soon to follow?)

"Pay as you use" is perhaps the tip of the iceberg, as it is not unreasonable to expect the most heavy water users to pay a premium for the quantities required, and golf courses must figure amongst them.

The solution to the problem is undoubtedly under your feet. Surveys in Scotland have shown that private ground water sources supply 13 million litres per day for a variety of uses, including chemical and manufacturing industry, foodstuffs, agriculture, as well as domestic consumption. In 1978/79 ground water provided 78 million litres per day (of a total supplied of 2800 million litres per day) – a drop in the ocean.

After complying with the various planning requirements, the next problem is how to find the water. Large numbers of dry bore holes indicate that it is not as easy as simply drilling a deep enough hole. Several golf courses have overcome this by calling on the services of a water diviner, Michael Cranfield of Dollar, Cen-



Michael Cranfield: Dowser

tral Scotland Tel: 01259 742744.

Mr. Cranfield, 72, has been dowsing since the age of 13 when he learned he had the knack from a naval commander experimenting on his parents' lawn in Sussex. Over many years he honed his skill by practising on various farms he visited while selling animal feed for Quaker Oats, and on retirement, took up water divining as a recreational occupation.

Due to advancing years, he prefers to pre-survey the particular site using a map on his dining room table. He then sweeps over the map with a crystal pendulum ("but a rusty nail would do"), which when passing over a likely site swings round and round.

After finding as many "hot-spots" as possible, he then checks the site using the well known

hazel dowsing rod, and has found the map surveys surprisingly accurate. The many years of experience also allow him to judge the depth and flow-rate of water present.

Any sceptic cannot be left unimpressed by his strike rate of 98.5% for over 450 clients. However, perhaps his most important skill is that he pinpoints exactly where the borehole is to be located, which could involve hitting a two foot wide target, 300 feet down.

Farmers make up 70% of his work load (often dairy farms that require regular and vast quantities), and to date only 12 golf courses have called on his unusual services. Undoubtedly this situation will change when clubs realise the potential rising cost of water usage, and the relatively quick payback period for installing your own bore-hole and pump. In some instances, the capital cost has been paid back after just three years.

Mr. Cranfield does not expect to be travelling the length and breadth of the country for many more years, but hopes that his dining room table will continue his amazing success rate well into his 80s, that is if the water companies don't outlaw him first!

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## Art editor gets mower out of The Open

Keith Jones, Art Editor of Golf Monthly magazine, winner of the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition at The Open in St Andrews earlier in the year, was presented with his prize at Saltex '95 by Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter.

The competition was run in the Media Centre at The Open and asked journalists to predict how many bunkers the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team would rake during the course of the Championship. The final figure was 700 with one more coming in the play-off and Keith predicted 684 thus depriving Andy Farrell, Chief Reporter of Golf Weekly magazine, who had won each of the first three daily prizes with his uncannily accurate predictions only to be wildly wide of the mark on the Sunday. The final daily winner was Mike Kern of the Philadelphia Daily News.

Keith won a Hayter Harrier lawnmower valued at £600. He is pictured, left, receiving his prize kindly donated by Hayter from Kim Macfie as BIGGA Chairman Barry Heaney looks on.

## Swedish study trip

A group of 18 Swedish Head Greenkeepers is visiting Scotland this month to investigate the art of greenkeeping in the Home of Golf.

The group, gathered from the Swedish Greenkeepers Association will be visiting Fife and taking in the Alfred Dunhill Cup as well as visiting links courses in the area and studying how the education of greenkeepers is undertaken at Elmwood College in Cupar.

## One stop shop gears up for autumn

Wokingham-based Grass Roots is gearing up for a busy autumn as it caters for the needs of the greenkeeper. The one-stop shop for everything from turfcare consumables, machinery sales and service to furnishings and maintenance means the greenkeeper doesn't have to spend time shopping around for individual suppliers.

The company guarantees a definite time of arrival for any order and a daily 2.5% retrospective discount with be offered until the order is confirmed. The office is open to quote and take orders from 7am to 9pm six days a week and they can be contacted on Tel: 01734 771185 Fax: 01734 785116.

