

# Out to grass...

The revelation that it takes 15 years to develop a new variety of grass was just one of the interesting pieces of information revealed at the South West and South Wales Region Seminar at Cannington College in Bridgewater, Somerset.

Sponsored by Barenbrug the day was introduced by John Bradley, Area Manager of Barenbrug UK Ltd who reminded the delegates of a passage from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels.

"And he gave it for his opinion that whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."

The talks began with "Perennial rye grass for the golf green in the year 2005" by Gerard van t'Klooster, Head of Breeding in Holland who explained the work behind developing new varieties

and getting them to a state where they are ready to be marketed.. He was followed by John Linneker, Manager of Royal North Devon GC who spoke on "Golf Club Management". His advice to managers was "not to punish every mistake that people make".

## 'Treat wildlife like novice swimmers...'

Cannington College HND student John Wilson took the day up to coffee with his talk on "Work experience on an American golf course" from his time at Sahali Golf and Country Club near Seattle. He gave golf clubs something to think about with the fact that the club spent £10,000 per annum on employee meals.

After coffee Mike Canaway, Chief Executive of the STRI spoke on "Research today for the needs of tomorrow" and gave an insight as to the work currently been under taken at Bingley. He was followed by Mark Anderson, a student of Sparsholt College and Head Greenkeeper at Newbury Golf Club on "A golf course

within a racecourse" who talked of the problems he had encountered which included concrete creeping its way to the surface of the course making vertidrainage impossible.

After lunch Dr Anne-Maria Brennan, ecologist for the EGU talked on "On course conservation, golf and nature in partnership" and gave a tip on the building of ponds. "Treat wildlife like novice swimmers and give them a shallow end and no steep banks."

George Shiels closed the seminar with his talk on "The presentation of a golf course form an agronomist's point of view". Using a car analogy his advice was always to make the best of the courses qualities and not to try and make it something else. "An Audi tries to be the best Audi it can be' and not a Roller or a Porsche."

The day was rounded up by South West and South Wales Regional Administrator Gordon Child, who, along with wife Marion, had organised the day.

## Keeping the course open for 52 weeks of the year

"If golfers want to play all-year-round they must accept that vital preventative maintenance has to be carried out in the summer months and must accept the disruption that goes with it", so says Martyn Jones, Head of the Turf Section at Myerscough College.

"Fusarium can be largely prevented by summer treatments; aeration is most effective when carried out in the summer when the grass plants are most in need of oxygen and overseeding is most successful in the late summer when good germination is guaranteed and Poa annua less likely to thrive".

Martyn Jones was speaking at an evening Greenkeeping Seminar and Supper at Mere Golf and Country Club.

Mike Sheehan, Course Manager, explained that at Mere they now have an established policy to hollow core and top dress at the beginning of August. Disruption at this time of year is minimal and usually within two weeks all evidence of the treatments have disappeared. Competitions are arranged round this programme and generally a large percentage of the golfers are on holiday then anyway. Delegates from Davyhulme Golf Club and Prestbury

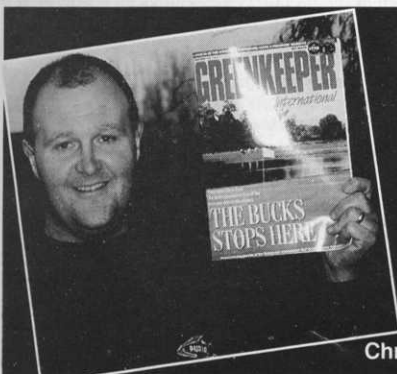
confirmed that they too regularly hollow core in August with excellent results.

Dennis Mortram from Reaseheath College spoke on aeration and he too advocates summer treatments to prevent problems in winter rather than waiting until the course is waterlogged. He reminded the delegates that they don't manage the grass - they manage the soil. And if that soil is compacted or waterlogged then vital oxygen is restricted and the grass will not thrive. He also made a plea for more research into the whole subject of aeration.

A lively Question & Answer session covered topics ranging from the benefits of sand based greens, to the optimum number of competitions for an average course; overseeding; compaction and the difference between a Head Greenkeeper and a Course Manager.

90 delegates attended from 44 North West clubs, nearly half of whom were Chairmen of Green or Committee members.

The evening was organised by SISIS Equipment and jointly sponsored by SISIS and Rhône Poulenc.



## Membership milestone

Richard Martin, a 33 year old assistant from Ripon Golf Club is BIGGA's 6000th member and as such has had his membership cheque returned. "I'm delighted, it's a great Christmas present," he said.

## HAYTER CHALLENGE

### Hayter broaden their horizons

Scotland may be still basking in the glory of their victory at West Lancs last September but preparations for the 1996 Hayter Challenge are already well under way.

Such has been the success of the competition since Hayter's took it over from Iseki in 1993 under the guidance of Sales and Marketing Director Kim Macfie that plans have been announced to expand the event to take in the rest of the world.

It comes in the shape of the Hayter International Cup which will run alongside the Hayter Challenge final next year with the match alternating between Britain and the USA on a two year cycle after that - similar to the Ryder Cup, an event destined to play second fiddle to the Hayter International Cup once it becomes established.

The match, which next year will take place at West Lancashire Golf Club on Monday September 16, will pit the Rest of the World, in the shape of greenkeepers from the four home nations, Spain, Germany, Sweden and Australia against the Americas comprising six Americans, four Canadians and two Argentinians.

The format will be six four-balls in the morning and 12 singles matches in the afternoon. The competitors will then join the Hayter Challenge finalists on the Tuesday and Wednesday at Fairhaven Golf Club.

The British representatives will be selected from the leading nett scorers in the handicap bracket scr-12 residing in each of the home nations at last year's Hayter Challenge final.

"I see the Hayter International Cup as an ideal opportunity for greenkeepers from all over the world to meet, mix and share each others experiences as well as enjoy a friendly but competitive golf match," said Kim Macfie.

"I hope that like the Hayter Challenge it grows to become an important event on greenkeepers' calendars."