

# Finnish golf put

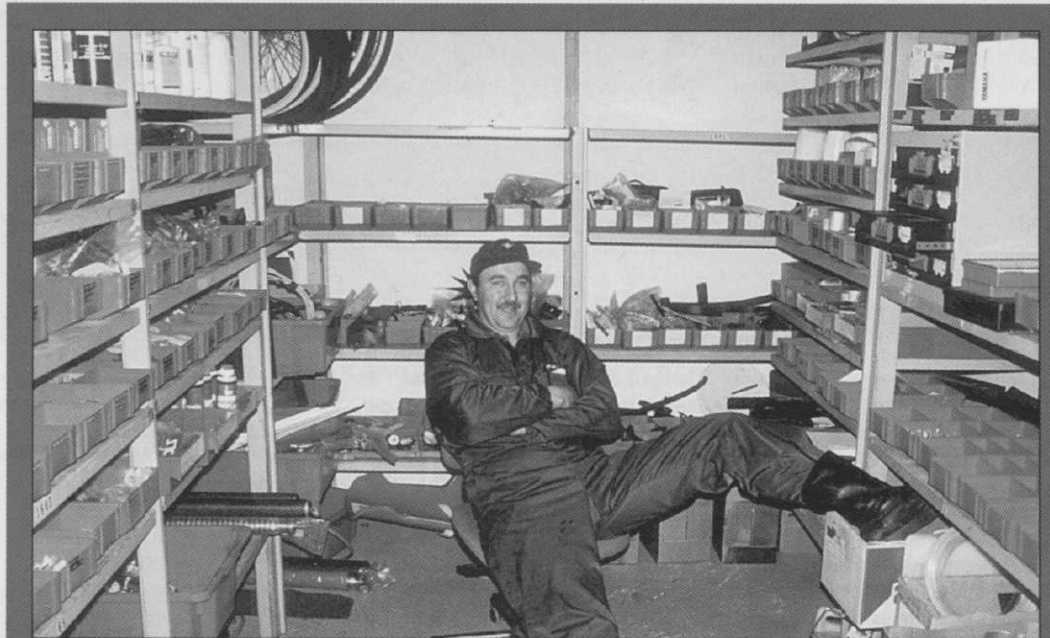


**B**eing virtually unique in terms of golf course conditions Finland offers many problems for its greenkeepers.

To find the best way of tackling those difficulties the Finnish Greenkeepers Association together with the Finnish Golf Union undertook extensive research in a bid to discover solutions to those problems.

Over a five year period beginning in 1989 with a visit to the STRI in Bingley to learn how to go about such a project greenkeepers from the length and breadth of the country administered to 15,000 test plots, on 16 golf courses, and the results show just how extreme are the conditions in which golf courses are expected to be maintained and the solutions which have derived from them.

All the work was done voluntarily with greenkeepers giving up their spare time to count shoots



More and more golf clubs in the United Kingdom are now employing full time mechanics but with the obvious benefit of having someone on site to service and repair machinery comes the need to provide him or her with a workshop.

This can range from a couple of spanners and a workbench to a fully equipped affair the equal of any dealer.

However, one workshop recently visited in Finland would be the envy of even the best equipped here at home.

taking two to three weeks over four consecutive winters. The samples were actually kept in a freezer so they could be counted



Mechanic Matti Niskanen at Katinkulta, the excellent course which is a major draw at Scandinavia's largest tourist resort, has everything he could possibly want from a workshop including,

would you believe, a "dish-washer" for machine parts.

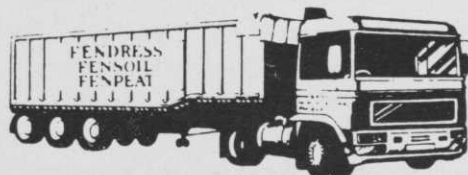
Everything is designed with cleanliness in mind. There is a cold shower outside the front door so any chemicals can be washed off overalls - as you can imagine it is also the ideal initiation instrument for new members of staff. Oil is piped into the workshop and then drained into a tank in the floor while the Finnish made machine parts washer is ideal for cleaning mowing units and many other pieces of equipment.

when the golf courses were not so busy.

"The tests were useful because in some cases they showed just

how little time there was to repair everything, ready for the new season. It can be days instead of weeks and this can come as a

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# to the test...

shock to any non-Finnish greenkeepers who come to work in the country," explained Elise Jarvinen, the Chairman of FGA, and someone heavily involved in the research work.

"There has also been environmental benefits because it showed that better results were often obtained with reduced fertiliser or without any 'unnatural measures'," she explained.

● Fig 1. Shows the difference in fine fescue shoot density in a course in the north of the country, Brahestad, and another about 300 miles south, Bjorneborg. The northern course enjoys significantly greater shoot density but for a shorter period. This is particularly important as it allows the greenkeeper to know how much time he has to work on the course.

● Fig 2. When Finnish courses come out of winter they require a stimulant to encourage them to grow again.

This shows that the best results were obtained merely by brushing the greens, although the diagram clearly shows that verticutting, brushing and aerating all perform better than merely



And you thought you had it bad: checking for ice in Finland, a task carried out three or four times a year

allowing nature to take her course.

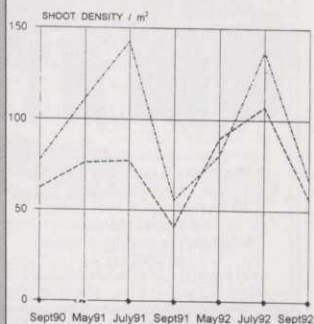
● Fig 3. Shows a list of varieties and how they performed in the Finnish conditions. The testing

areas were one metre square and each variety had three plots. Cutting height was 12 millimetres and the plots were maintained as tees. The golf course where the

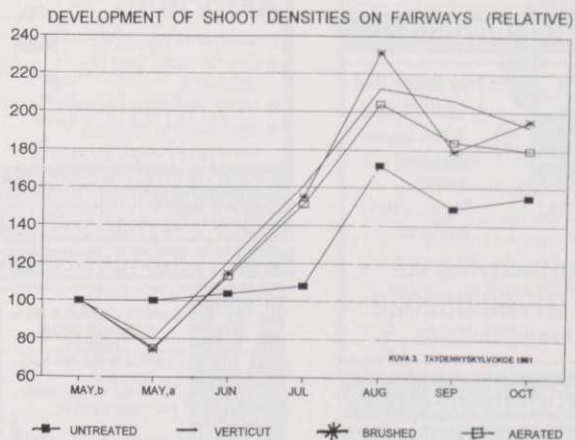
tests were carried out is 300 miles from the Arctic circle.

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**Fig. 1: Festuca Rubra Commutata. The development of shoot densities on greens in Raahel and Pori**



**Fig. 2: Festuca Rubra Commutata**



**Fig. 3: Poa Pratensis - winter damages 1992-94**

