

Jacobsen's parent company set to buy Ransomes

Two of the biggest names in fine turf machinery will come under the same ownership if a recommendation to shareholders by the board of Ransomes plc to accept a bid of £137.1 million for the company from American giant Textron is accepted.

Textron already owns Jacobsen.

The sale, which is expected to be ratified by shareholders, comes at the end of an extended period of speculation regarding the Ransomes, Cushman, Ryan, during which time the rumour mill had linked them to a number of other companies.

Ransomes' Chief Executive Peter Wilson said that he didn't expect the sale to be completed until the end of the year at the earliest.

On the future of Ransomes he said it was early days but it was his understanding that the com-

pany would continue to operate alongside Jacobsen.

"Textron has stated that we shall become a part of a \$800 million group with others including Jacobsen and E-Z-GO," he explained, from Ransomes' Ipswich base.

On the matter of another well known British company being sold abroad he was a realist.

"There is more to a company than who is the owner and whether it is British or American but it is important to have the security of having someone who is a UK based supplier of the product.

"Up against huge companies which are well financed and extremely diverse it was thought better for Ransomes to join with a

bigger player rather than risk the economic vagaries of going it alone. We have to consider the shareholders and our employees," he explained

Mary Lovejoy, Textron's Vice President of Communications and Investor Relations, based in Providence, Rhode Island, said the acquisition of Ransomes would be a great addition to the Textron group of companies, which already includes Cessna aircraft and Bell helicopter companies as well as E-Z-GO, Iseki and Jacobsen.

"We feel that there are a great many products within the ranges of Jacobsen and Ransomes which are complementary. Ransomes offers a great deal in the commercial market, not just the fine turf

market, which will strengthen our position.

"The fact that Ransomes offers a manufacturing base which we do not currently have in the UK will give us much greater flexibility and we will be looking at the options that brings us. Importing product is extremely expensive," she explained.

She added that brand name was important to Textron and that the Ransomes name, which has a strong reputation and links with some prestigious venues including Gleneagles, St Andrews and Pebble Beach.

"Obviously as the deal has not been completed it is too early to speculate on how Ransomes' name would be incorporated into any new company title."

One of the great figures of British greenkeeping retires at the end of the year.

Bill Lawson, Course Manager at Heswall GC since 1965, and a former Chairman of EIGGA, Vice Chairman of BIGGA and latterly a Trustee of the Association, has been instrumental in the rise of greenkeeping to the stage that it is the respected profession it is today.

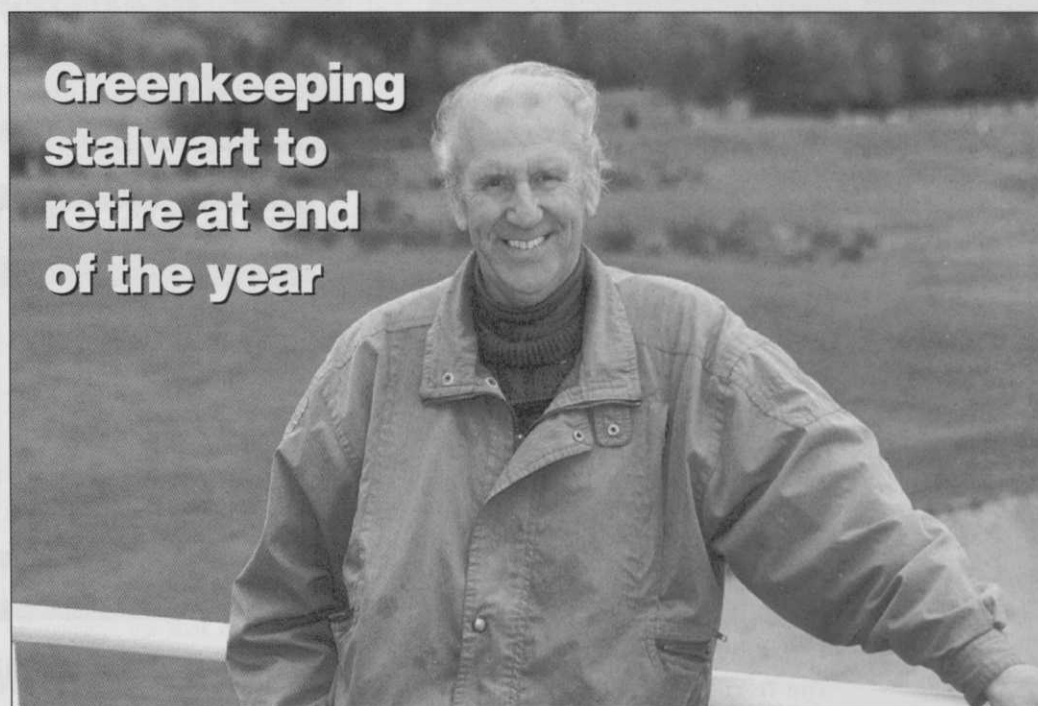
In the '70s and early '80s Bill was at the heart of discussions between Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers on how greenkeeper education should progress.

"The sound nature of those discussions backed by forward thinking golf clubs like Heswall have proved to be right," said Bill, who worked closely with Reaseheath College.

Bill is quick to pay tribute to his own golf club which has had only one Chairman of Green in the last 18 years: "It has been a privilege to work with Dr Frank Harkin who has been so forward thinking in working along with me in setting up the working and training programmes at Heswall. The emphasis is on working on five year programmes with Head Greenkeepers or Course Managers and Chairman of Green who will be there throughout."

A measure of that is the number of people who have moved on to top jobs from Heswall.

Among them, Raymond Hunt, from Forest of Arden; Marc Lewis, PGA European Tour; Kevin Roe, Pannal; Paul Pearce, Stockport; Norman Pearce, Lobenfeld Heidelberg; Ian Farrall, Caldly; Nick



Greenkeeping stalwart to retire at end of the year

Bower Hoylake; Neil Toner, Wirral Ladies, Reg Sommers, Head Groundsman at Liverpool FC and Guy Cannings, the new Course Manager at Heswall.

Bill sees a need for the educational standards to continue to improve. "The pressures are far higher today that you could ever have imagined 30 years ago. Then if you had a dozen cars in the car park it was a busy day. Now you can have 150 people playing by 10.30 in mid November.

"These pressures are here to stay and will only increase as golf continues to grow in popularity. This makes our work as profes-


sional greenkeepers more important than ever and makes BIGGA even more central to the future of every young greenkeeper."

He has enjoyed his time at a genuinely friendly golf club which offers up superb views into North Wales and out into the Irish Sea. He can look back at his work on the course which has included a general tightening up of fairways, the construction of new bunkers and a tree planting project which has involved the addition of 2,800 new trees.

Bill will spend more of his new found spare time on the riverbank indulging his passion for fishing.

■ Picture by Ian Birch.

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► From Page 31 at all the golfing tournaments throughout the year. I hope this will continue in the future, as all help to generate funds and keep the Section going is much appreciated.

There has recently been a football match played between staff at Rigby Taylors and our Section greenkeepers. Unfortunately I do not have any details at present but will give a full report in next month's magazine.

Any news from within the Section can be passed on to myself by telephoning 01484 317813 or to John Waite on 0113 286 6432.

Finally may I wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Do not forget the Annual Dinner Dance on Saturday March 4 1998 - £16 per person payment is required to book a place. Simon Heppenstall

North East

The Barburial Foursomes Knock-out Cup has now been played at Tyneside GC and the winners were John Surtees and Tony Mclure who defeated Michael Gunn and David Thompson 5&4. The presentation will be made at South Moor GC on December 11 after the AGM. An 18 hole competition will be held in the morning and all members will be notified.

The annual match between the North East and the South East of Scotland was recently played at Haddington GC for the Stewart's Cup. The winners were the North East Section, our thanks to Stewarts for sponsoring the event and we look forward to the return match next year. Hopefully we could be playing at Slaley Hall.

Alan Parkin, Assistant Greenkeeper at Whickham GC, has taken over the Head Greenkeeper's job at Beamish Park Golf Academy. We wish him well in his new appointment.

The first green at Whickham is busy being altered again and put back to its original design of a two tier but on a larger scale.

Askham Bryan College is doing well out of the North East Sec-

Around the Green



tion, John Surtees and Brian Clark are doing Phase Two and Craig Parkinson and Craig Wyman are doing Phase Three.

Brian Hughes passed Phase Two and is now taking Phase Four.

Stocksfield's Head Greenkeeper, for 18 years, Tommy Harrison, has now taken over at the Bridle Path course at Gosforth, the Section wish him well on his new appointment. Ian Hutton, formerly working in Austria is now working at Slaley Hall GC. The golf fixture is almost complete for 1998 and the match against the South East of Scotland will be played at Slaley Hall in the first week in October. Jimmy Richardson

Cleveland

John Chanthill, ex Teesside GC, has moved to Lilleshall GC, in Staffordshire, and is very happy in his new appointment. His old boss, Tony Smith, has now completed mound building and tree planting as a sound barrier close to the A19 and A66 and Parkway motorways. Over the past two years 10 new tees have been built and bunkers altered at four greens at Teeside GC.

At Bedale, Ian Pemberton, the Head Greenkeeper moved house from Middlesbrough but his wife has not settled in Bedale so they are to return to Middlesbrough to live and he will travel daily, while Kevin Scarce, the Assistant at Bedale is on a training course at Askham Bryan College, York. Bedale are to install irrigation to six tees and have started an extensive tree planting programme. The 6,000 trees will certainly create interest to the golfers in the future!

Dinsdale Spa GC have re-laid two greens to USGA specifications using their own greenstaff. The surrounds and mounds have been newly shaped and turfed to complete the job.

SISIS held a machinery demonstration at Eaglescliffe GC in October. Sixty greenkeepers attended a successful day of excellent equipment. Two courses have also been arranged at Houghall College this winter, NVQ 3 and NVQ 4.

George Malcolm, at Brass Castle GC, Middlesbrough has replaced his sand in the bunkers with one which is firmer for both the player's stance and for the ball to sit on the sand rather than sink in. Bruce Burnell

MIDLAND REGION

Peter Larter
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East of England

The annual match again the Secretaries Association took place at Market Rasen. Head Greenkeeper John Hewson and his staff had prepared the course in its usual excellent condition. The result went in favour of the Secretaries 5-3. There was talk around the dinner table that the Secretaries had had their Spring meeting at Market Rasen to practice in preparation for this match as they lost to the Greenkeepers last year. The event was sponsored by Chandler's Machinery, thanks to Jim Carr for the company's help. The longest drive was sponsored by Phil Wilkinson, of Fieldcare, and was won by the big hitting Jim "Daly" Carr! Nearest the pin was won by Eric Coombes, of the Secretaries Association.

While I am on the thank you trail one must thank John Brown, Secretary of Market Rasen, for allowing us all courtesy of the course and thanks to the caterers for an excellent meal (but get some port in stock!).

The East of England Section results were:- Jim Birkett & Phil Wilkinson lost 3&1; Dave Griffin & Andy Richardson lost 1 down; John Scotney & Les Purdy lost 3&2; Peter Fell & Dave Hornsey won 3&2; Ted Lake & Fred Cobb lost 2 down; Norman Hewson & John Hewson won 7&5; Richard Smith & Graham Bontoft lost 2&1; Graeme Macdonald & Jim Carr won 3&2.

Next year's match has been provisionally booked for Toft GC.

Anybody interested in attending a Chainsaw Course at Woodhall Spa on February 2, 3, 4 and 5 then contact me on the number below.

That's all for this month apart from saying hello to Jim Brown, a Northern BIGGA member, who always reads this Section.

Contact me if you have any news from around the Region or Section on 01636 626564. Graeme Macdonald

Midland

The much awaited educational trip to Sunningdale and Wentworth took place on October 13 and proved to be very enjoyable for all of the members who took part. To be able to see behind the scenes of these two well documented courses was of great interest and the time given to us by Brian Turner and Chris Kennedy was much appreciated. The timing of our visit to Wentworth was not the greatest being the day after the World Matchplay and many thanks go to Chris for

his co-operation.

I would also like to thank Richard Minton, of Miracle/Scotts, and Nigel Tyler, of County Crops, for their sponsorship of the day and mainly the meals and drinks at lunchtime, thank you.

We are also looking to organising another trip to Turnberry but this will involve an overnight stop and there could be a round of golf. There would obviously be a small cost but if we can get enough numbers there would probably be some kind of sponsorship. If you are interested please contact me on 01384 292396.

Finally I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year and hope every greenkeeper has a successful 1998.

Welcome to these new members - Michael Bratton, Robert Coxall, Steven Lloyd, Adrian Haddock, Michael Gash, Robert Mason and Michael Trotman. Jonathan Wood

BB&O

The golf day at Lambourne was a great success with a full field yet again. The weather was a bit on the miserable side but this didn't affect the enjoyment on the day. Sadly there were no surprises when it came to the winner again! He must be in the running for sports personality of the year! The results were:- 1. S. Putt & M. Timms, 61 pts (boring!); 2. T. French & P. Walker; 3. L. T. Anderson & T. Smith (a prize at last!); Longest Drive - P. Walker; Nearest the Pin - M. Timms; Wooden Spoon - B. Wall & D. Winterton. I won't embarrass them by revealing their score as neither of them would speak to me again... on second thoughts I'm sure it was approximately one point per hole!

The day was sponsored by Avoncrop Amenity Products which was much appreciated by all. My special thanks to Richard Haynes for his organising on the day and also to Joe Feltham for presenting the prizes on behalf of the company. Thanks to Tony French and his team for providing an excellent test of golf and many thanks to all concerned at Lambourne for their hospitality on the day.

One other golf tournament is drawing to a close at last and that is the Rigby Taylor Fourball Knockout. B. Benzie and C. Millard have coasted into the final having disposed of P. Plater and J. Lee with ease. They will play R. Clark and C. Jacobsen who knocked out last year's winners T. French and G. Wheeler 3&2. The results of the final will be posted in next month's magazine. There are some Winter Lectures

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Robert Hogarth, Cathcart Castle G C

approaching so please make a note of the following dates in your diary:-

Berkshire College; January 14 – Communications, February 4 – Golf Course Design, March 4 – Irrigation. These all commence at 7 pm and run until 9 pm when refreshments will be served.

Warren Farm College; January 28 – Health and Safety, February 25 – Irrigation and Conservation, March 25 – USGA Specification. These also commence at 7 pm with refreshments to follow.

Please try and attend as many of the above as possible, the colleges need to see some support from our Section.

I would like to end by wishing all of you a Happy Christmas and a drunken New Year! See you in 1998.

L. T. Anderson

Mid Anglia

Our Autumn golf tournament was held at the end of October at South Beds Golf Club over 18 holes. Although the first frost of the year arrived prior to the tournament, it quickly disappeared in the autumn sunshine and didn't spoil the day.

The golf attracted an entry of 32 people, seven of whom were trade members. This was down considerably on last year's corresponding fixture at Collingtree Park. Those who did enter however seemed to enjoy a good round, with good scores evident on the day. The results were as follows:- 1. Gary Boulton, Dunstable Downs, 41 pts; 2. Leon Cant, Broucket Hall, 39 pts; 3. Eddi O'Hanlon, Chesfield Downs, 39 pts; Longest Drive – Jon Moorhouse, Broucket Hall; Nearest the Pin – Gary Boulton, Dunstable Downs; Trade Prize – John Donaldson, 44 pts.

Our thanks go to our main sponsors for the day, Driving Force Leisure, represented by David Murphy, and also to Kings Horticulture who sponsored Nearest the Pin.

Thanks also to the other trade members who supported us on the day and participated in the golf. My personal thanks to South Beds for the excellent choice of meals and hospitality shown and also to my staff for preparing the course.

The AGM of the Mid Anglia Section was held after the prize giving and in the absence of our Chairman, Stewart Boyce, Vice Chairman Mark Ellis chaired the meeting. The Secretary, Gerald Bruce reported that the Section now had 242 members and that the Hayter National Tournament will in future be sponsored by Ritefeed. He also thanked Chris Brook, who is standing down

from the Committee this year for his efforts over a number of years of service to the Section.

The Fixtures Secretary, Richard Saunders gave a report on all the golf matches throughout the year and complimented Jason Hatton, of Broucket Hall, on reaching the National Final of the Hayter Tournament.

The Treasurer, John Wells, submitted a balance sheet and gave a verbal report on the financial situation which is most satisfactory at the present time. No rise in the cost of golf events is anticipated.

The following people were elected to serve on the committee for the next year:- Secretary – Gerald Bruce; Fixtures/Match Secretary – Richard Saunders; Chairman – Stewart Boyce; Vice Chairman – Mark Ellis; Treasurer – John Wells; Regional Representative – Paul Lockett. Three other new members were voted on to the committee:- Colin Robinson, John O'Gaunt GC; Steve Mason, Mount Pleasant GC, and Neil Whittaker, Arkley GC.

One of these newly elected officers will become the Handicap Secretary. In "Any Other Business" several questions were asked concerning spread of prizes, fixture lists, handicaps and reduced levels of attendance to golf events. Most of the questions were answered at the time but they will also be discussed in depth at the next full committee meeting.

Finally, I would like to wish all our members a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year and look forward to seeing Section members at BTME in Harrogate next month.
Paul Lockett

East Midlands

This year's Rigby Taylor East Midlands v Midlands Section golf match was played at the delightful venue of Whittington Heath GC on October 16. Despite a wet start to the day things eventually improved, not long into the greensome matches, with the Section taking a 3-2 lead. The afternoon format of matchplay singles started very badly for us with us losing five of the first seven games with the only winners being Anthony Foulds and Adie Porter.

Needing to win the final three games was left to Steven Heap, Mark Bindley and myself and all of us managed convincing wins, to finally win the competition 8-7. I would like to thank all the members of the Midland Section for participating in a great game of golf, and for playing in the correct spirit. Also I would like to thank Whittington Heath Golf Club for their marvellous hospitality. Finally a special thank you

should go to Steve Blackman and the rest of the Rigby Taylor team for sponsoring a really enjoyable day.

The Team on the day consisted of the following members:- Pete Billings, Dave Leatherland, Anthony Foulds, Dave Mitchell, Steve Goode, Adie Porter, Ian Needham, Antony Bindley, Mark Bindley and Steven Heap.

As Chairman of the Region I was fortunate enough to represent the Greenkeepers Team at the Kubota Golf Challenge, held at the Belfry GC on October 14 and 15. After losing in the semi-final to the eventual winners, the EGU the team performed well in the third place play-off defeating the Golf Foundation by 6.5-1.5 points. Thanks should go to Kubota for sponsoring an excellent two day competition.

This month I would like to wish all members of the Section a Merry Christmas and a Happy 1998. Remember this year starts off with the BTME at Harrogate, where hopefully as many members as possible will attend.

I would also like to thank all the companies who sponsored the Section throughout the year:- Spring Tournament – E T Breakwells, Autumn Tournament – Charnwood & Highmeres Horticulture, AGM Tournament – Vitax Ltd, Christmas & East Midlands v Midlands Section – Rigby Taylor and Scotts and ALS for sponsoring the Pairs Tournament, your support is greatly appreciated.

Two dates for next years diary, Spring Tournament – Beeston Fields on May 13 and the Autumn Tournament at Scraftoft GC on September 2.
Antony Bindley

SOUTH EAST REGION

Derek Farrington
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Surrey

The sun was up, the sky was blue and Kingswood GC on October 29 was the venue for the Autumn Tournament. The course was in superb condition and with lush green fairways and fast greens, the promise of a great day's golf was fully realised. The results were:- 1. D. Langhiem, Foxhills again!, 38 pts; 2. A. Freeman, Roehampton, 36 pts; 3. T. Edwards, Lingfield Park, 34 pts; Nearest the Pin – R. Christie, Addington Palace; Longest Drive – R. Glazier, Foxhills; Trade Prize – P. White, 40 pts.

Congratulations to Ian McMillan on winning the 1997 Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping and the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Rhone Poulenc and Amazone Ground Care. A

truly excellent achievement to win them both in the same year. Perhaps a Golf Day at Hankley Common will inspire other Surrey members to take up the challenge.

And now a bit of local news from our roving reporter. Gavin Kyle has moved to Hendon GC as Course Manager, Ray McClatchie is the new Head Greenkeeper at Blackmoor and Bill Lowe, Head Greenkeeper at High Elms GC, has just become the father of a bouncing baby named Jason. All three have moved to courses in adjacent Sections but can we get rid of them? Fortunately not!
Brian Willmott

East Anglia

Our travelling band went to Gog Magog GC on October 9 and played the Wandlebury Course which is very new and was in excellent shape due to the high standards set by Lydon and his team. It was also a Captains and Greenkeepers competition – my fourball played some excellent golf but failed the orienteering! The Captain/Greenkeeper prize went to D Childs and his Captain D Bram from Sheringham with a combined total of 73 points. The other results were:- 0-9 Handicap – 1. Alan Carter, 38 pts; 2. M Brewster, 38 pts; 3. Roger Plummer, 35 pts; 10-18 Handicap – 1. I Semson, 38 pts; 2. I Hill, 37 pts; 3. P Mallows, 37 pts; 19-28 Handicap – 1. Tim Russell, 41 pts; 2. Steve Davidson, 36 pts; 3. Ernie Hart, 34 pts; Guest Prize – 1. T Winter, 40 pts; 2. D Bram, 40 pts; 3. I Skellon, 38 pts; Longest Drive – James Gemun; Nearest the Pin – Brian Lemmon.

The prizes were donated by Kings, Rigby Taylor, SISIS, Rushbrooks, Pattisons (Longest Drive), Tomlinsons (Nearest the Pin), Barenbrug (Captains and Greenkeepers) and Does (main sponsor). Thanks lads yet again. The prizes were presented by Mr T. Winter, Captain of the Wandlebury Course. Our thanks to all at Gog Magog for a super day and I



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