

GREENKEEPER

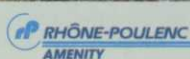
International



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■ The next edition of
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should be with you by
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GREENKEEPER

International

NOVEMBER 1997

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Cover

Hankley Common, winner of the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Pictures by Bob Taylor and Scott MacCallum

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GREENKEEPER

International

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Gaining an undeserved reputation

It wasn't so many years ago that "the environment" was nothing more than the title given to a Government Minister as a consolation prize when he had set his heart on becoming Home Secretary. And "Ecology", well that would have sat rather nicely on Maureen Lipman's BT "Beattie" adverts. "An 'ology! He tells me he's failed but he's got an 'ology. You get an 'ology and you're a professor!"

It was only ten years ago that I recall a friend of mine, who had returned to Scotland from Germany for a holiday, having to drive for miles to find a garage which sold unleaded petrol so he could refuel. I'd never heard of the stuff!

Nowadays the environment and ecology are not just words in the dictionary, nor merely the hobby horses of vegetarian, 2CV driving Liberals, but part of our everyday existence. Go into any primary school in the country and you are just as likely to have a five year-old come up and discuss the hole in the "O" Zone layer with you than quiz you on who is your favourite Tellytubby... Laa Laa, if anyone's interested.

We are all far more aware and quite rightly so. We have, after all, merely borrowed this planet and will be passing it on to our children and our children's children.

I can't believe that I've just written that, but it does show how ingrained we have become.

During this surge in global awareness golf has often been cast as the villain. As a result, the negative publicity spread by non-golfers who think Jack Nicklaus starred in "The Shining", has put greenkeepers at the sharp end. They have needed to be seen as whiter than white when it has come to the environment.

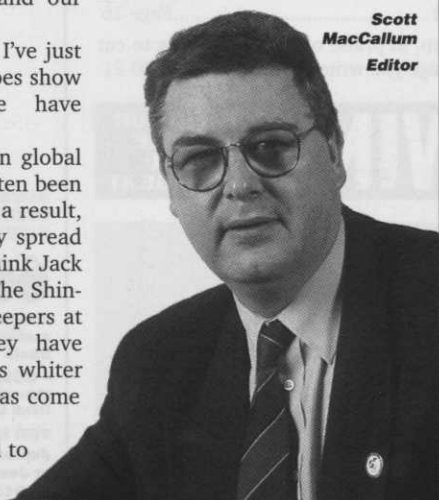
For that reason and to show that, despite

the purely circumstantial arithmetical evidence, golf is not an environmental four letter word, the success of this year's BIGGA Golf Environmental Competition, in association with Rhône Poulenc and Amazone, has been a huge boost to the game as a whole.

The quality of the entries was quite superb and in Hankley Common the competition has a Champion in every sense of the word. If anybody were to doubt golf's commitment to the environment and ecology they should pay Ian McMillan a visit at Hankley Common, where the work which goes on with the full support of the membership would be a real eye opener.

Indeed one of the most useful elements of the competition was the involvement of Dr Keith Duff, English Nature's Chief Scientist, who was one of the judges. He was extremely complimentary about what he found at golf clubs around the country and is an authority to whom many sceptics will listen.

Perhaps through the involvement of a non golfing body like English Nature, in environmental terms, golf will finally shed its reputation as the black sheep of the family.



Scott
MacCallum
Editor

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

My month started with Board of Management meeting at Aldwark Manor where one of the major decisions taken was the acceptance of the findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Salaries and Conditions of Employment. These came about following a series of meetings at which the Secretaries and the Golf Club Owners, as well as Bob McLaren the Chairman of the GTC, were involved.

The structure which is now in place will be useful for anyone who wishes guidance on greenkeepers' salaries.

Also discussed at the Board Meeting was a major new money raising initiative aimed at boosting the new building fund. This will be launched shortly. The identity of next year's Vice Chairman was also revealed. Gordon Child's right hand man is going to be George Brown, of Turnberry. I've known George for some time and I'm delighted that he will be coming in. It's the first time that the new constitution, which allows for someone to be appointed from outside of the current Board, has been put to such a use.

The day after the Board Meeting I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of David Spurdin. There were so many there that many of us were unable to get into the crematorium many of them David's colleagues from around the UK, greenkeepers and trade alike, who had made the journey to Scarborough.

That was followed by a trip to Northern Ireland for the IOG Show where I was royally looked after. Allison Sloan fulfilled the promise he made to me at the Hayter Final to buy me my first pint of Irish Guinness while another member of one of the newly formed Northern Irish Section committees Graham Wylie deserves thanks for driving me to the airport.

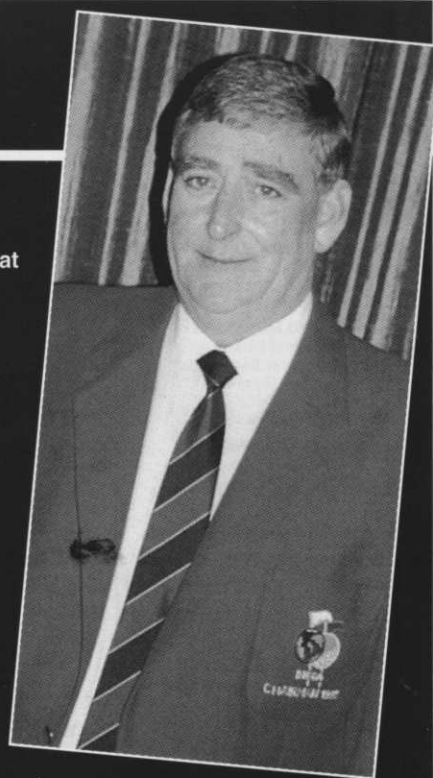
Other committee men were quick to help Janet, Amanda and I on the BIGGA stand.

Amazingly, on returning, I was able to spend some time at my own golf club. We have two new tees under construction while on the 8th and 9th we hollow cored the greens.

Next up was the Kubota Challenge at The Belfry and a chance to meet up with more friends, including Derek Ganning, and talk with others from the English Golf Union, the Secretaries and the Golf Foundation.

It was an excellent competition as always and congratulations are due to Rene Urban and his team at Kubota for their hospitality. I'd also like to thank The Belfry for giving me a buggy so I could get about in support of the team.

After that I was back to the golf club where I had my annual visit from the STRI and found myself running the clubhouse in addition to my regular duties, as the club steward was on holiday. Holiday? What's that?



Education tops agenda at European conference

The FEGGA European Conference draws near; Neil Thomas sets the scene...

The Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA) will hold its first European Conference for its member associations during the period 21-23 November in Fuengirola, Spain. Delegates will be based at the Hotel Mijas in the village of Mijas while the Conference will take place at the Spanish Toro dealers centre in Fuengirola. Toro's support for the Conference through General Sales Manager, Bob Buckingham is much appreciated by FEGGA's member associations, while the Company's backing for FEGGA since its inception in March 1996 has been instrumental in the establishment of the new Association. So, some 18 months on from the first gathering of associations in Amsterdam, the stage is set for a European Conference which will point the way forward for greenkeeper associations throughout Europe.

At present there are 16 member associations of FEGGA and it is anticipated that all will be represented at the Conference in Spain.

Two vital matters will be at the forefront during the Conference – education and the environment. FEGGA considers it very important that the greenkeeper associations throughout Europe can come together to discuss education within the greenkeeping profession and also discuss the situation in each country in respect of environmental issues. The Conference will also enable the member associations to become better acquainted with each other and thereby strengthen the new Association.

Each member association has been invited to send two delegates who will present papers respectively on the education programme and environmental issues within its country. These papers, together with the ensuing discussion, should enable FEGGA to develop a comprehensive overview of educational and environmental matters as they affect greenkeepers throughout Europe. FEGGA can then move on to establish its own programme of improving educational provision for greenkeepers throughout the countries of its member associations aiming to set common standards, while, through its place on

the EGA's Brussels based Ecology Unit, it can seek to ensure that greenkeepers' interests are protected and promoted within the environmental debate. This is therefore an important Conference.

At the Conference, BIGGA's papers will be presented by Chairman, Pat Murphy (Education) and David Roy of Linlithgow Golf Club (Environment). David's club has recently been selected as the Scottish Region winner in the BIGGA 1997 Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity. FEGGA's office base is currently in Sweden through the auspices of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association with administrative support being jointly provided by the SGA and BIGGA. The current member associations are Austria, Belgium, BIGGA, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, GCSAI, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Anyone requiring information in relation to the Conference or concerning FEGGA generally should contact Tommy Lindelof at PO Box 42, S-139 21 Varmdo, Sweden – telephone 46 8 570 196 10/ fax 46 8 570 198 10.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Martin Brothers (UK) has appointed Mike Crabtree as Regional Sales Manager North covering Scotland and the Northwest Region.



■ Eamonn Wall & Co has recruited Stuart Wilkie to open a second office in Scotland. Stuart will operate from Rothienorman in Aberdeenshire and cover the north of Scotland for the company.

■ Mark Pyrah has been promoted to Field Sales Manager for Kings Horticulture after seven years as Technical Sales Representative.

■ GCSAA President Paul McGinnis has been appointed Golf Course Superintendent at Alta Mesas Country Club in Arizona. He had previously been Superintendent at Moon Valley Country Club in Phoenix, Arizona.

■ We apologise for any confusion that may have arisen further to the article on page 33 of October's edition of Greenkeeper International regarding the new Northern Ireland Sections. The article should have stated, the North East Section will cover Counties Antrim and Londonderry, the South East Section Counties Armagh and Down. Members living in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh will have the choice as to which section they wish to join. We hope this clarifies the situation.

Irrigation champion retires after 27 years

Bill Hawthorn has retired as Director of Watermation after 27 years of service to the company which he founded jointly with Robin Sitwell in 1970.

In the last couple of years Bill has focused on improving standards within the industry and has given a series of nationwide lectures on irrigation, in associ-

ation with the EGU Golf Course Committee workshop programme.

He was also named BTLIA Personality of the Year last year.

"Bill has been a tremendous asset to our company and with his wealth of industry experience we are sure that he will be

a great success in his new role as an irrigation consultant. We would like to wish him well and look forward to working with him on projects in the future," said a spokesman for Watermation.

Bill has joined Wardle Consulting Engineers as Technical Director.

A cut above...

Sally Abell, of the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, was presented with the Hayter Harrier lawn mower she claimed as her own for winning the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition by Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter, at the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel Golf and Country Club.

Sally's estimate of the number of bunkers which would be found during the course of The Open at Royal Troon was the closest of all the press and media who entered

the competition. It was the third year that the competition had been run and Sally gave her colleagues in the Media Centre very little chance by being only two out in her estimate of 857 – the actual figure being 859.

"I'm absolutely delighted to have won, and I thank BIGGA and Hayter for putting on such an interesting competition during Open week. It certainly does provide some interesting statistics and gives us a chance of winning a superb prize," said Sally.



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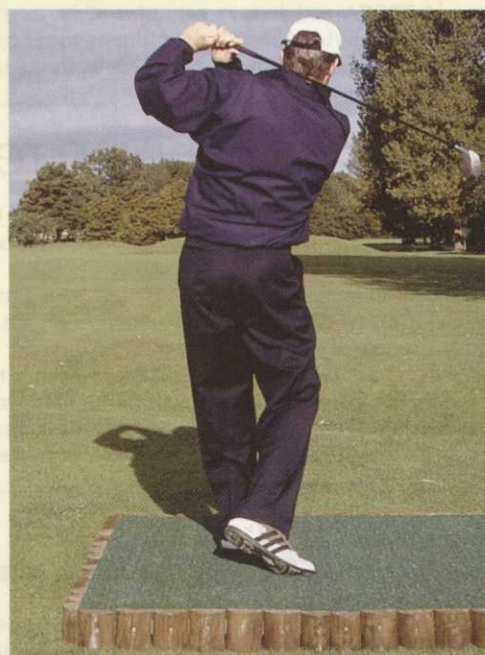
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Forum discusses where industry will be in future

A need for slow growing, low maintenance grasses to be promoted on the STRI listings was just one of the discussion points which came out of a forum of architects, agronomists, constructors, greenkeepers and seedsmen organised by Barenbrug in Toulouse, France.

The forum was looking at where the industry might be in five or ten years time and the point which came through loud and clear was the need to find a way of minimising the use of water, fertiliser and fungicides on golf courses.

Among those involved were architects, Martin Ebert, Jeremy Pern and Jonathan Gaunt; agronomists, George Shiels and John Hacker; constructor, Graeme Webster, greenkeeper, Gordon Irvine and Michel Mulder, John Bradley, Gerard van t'Klooster, Nicolas van Hanja and Claudine Taillefer of Barenbrug.

Jeremy Pern, who is the European Architects' representative on the European Golf Ecology Unit, explained the aims of the Unit and highlighted the implications of some European legislation which was on the horizon.

Gerard van t'Klooster said that seed people were already looking into producing drought resistant seeds and those which have an ability to flourish in more salty water.

George Shiels commented that every one of the fungicides currently used will soon be removed from the lists. He added that grass selection in future would revolve around those grasses which cope with recycled water and that selection should be done by agronomists rather than architects or greenkeepers.

John Hacker advocated the production and promotion of ecologically sound grass mixtures but Gerard felt that they had to breed for the STRI list because they needed to be on the lists to sell.

Easier way to pay subscriptions

BIGGA, in conjunction with Premium Credit, is now able to offer members the opportunity to pay their subscription by direct debit in 10 equal monthly instalments.

All renewal forms will be accompanied by a bank/building society mandate authorising Premium Credit to collect the monthly instalment from the member's bank or building society.

Members wishing to take advantage of D/D will, however, need to return their completed mandate and renewal form BEFORE their membership expires. The first instalment will then be collected

one month after the membership is renewed. Therefore, members with an expiry date of 31 December will not have to make a payment until 1 February and their last payment will be 1 November. Please note that if forms are submitted late, that is to say after the expiry date, the first two or three instalments may well be collected together to bring the remaining payments into line.

Any new member wishing to pay by direct debit can contact headquarters for a direct debit mandate which should be returned with the application form.

There is a small service charge (7%) made by Premium Credit in order to offer this facility and so a typical membership subscription of £49.00 would, therefore, work out at: Subscription, £49.00, Service Charge of 7% + £3.43, Total payable = £52.43, making each monthly instalment £5.24.

This facility is available to all members and may be used by individuals, clubs and companies.

Anyone requiring further information before their renewal form arrives should contact John Pemberton or Janet Adamson on 01347 838581.

Euro campaign backs environment pioneers

On the final morning of the 1997 Ryder Cup, European golf was given top level backing for its environmental activities when European Commission President, Jacques Santer, launched the "Committed to Green" campaign.

This is a new initiative by the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, supported by the R&A and the PGA European Tour. The campaign aims to encourage everyone involved in golf to participate in improving the environmental quality of golf courses.

In welcoming this move by Europe's golfing bodies to address environmental issues, Mr Santer expressed the hope that "Committed to Green" will lead to golf courses being seen as role models for good environmental practice. He emphasised the need for Course Managers to work together with independent environmental specialists and local interest groups, to improve dialogue and to seek mutual solutions to environmental management questions.

Mr Santer congratulated the Ryder Cup organisers for their vision in incorporating a green dimension to the event. He also paid tribute to the example shown by Valderrama, in presenting a top championship golf course together with maintaining high standards of environmental care. The Commission President stressed the importance of long-term commitment to environmental care, and the need to encourage sustainable development through partnership and shared responsibility. The "Com-

mitted to Green" campaign will offer golf clubs the opportunity to demonstrate such an approach.

Speaking on behalf of the European Golf Association and the other golfing bodies present, Ecology Unit Executive Director, David Stubbs, thanked the European Commission for its encouragement and for recognising the role golf can play in fostering environmental awareness. He

'Golf courses can become role models'

went on to say that, "To be 'Committed to Green' is to demonstrate environmental awareness and responsibility. The aim is to increase awareness of the environmental attributes of golf courses, and to demonstrate how well-managed golf courses are of benefit to the environment and the community.

"The game still faces many environmental challenges - we have to be good conservationists; we need to address water resource and pest management issues; we want to ensure that greenkeepers receive appropriate training in ecological management; and we must communicate these points throughout the golf industry and to the golfing public. 'Committed to Green' will be a major

step forward in achieving this."

The campaign provides a structured programme through which golf clubs can demonstrate their environmental credentials. It is a fully inclusive campaign, open to all types of golf facility on a voluntary basis.

Emphasis is placed on continual improvement of environmental performance. For clubs which achieve high standards of environmental performance, there will be the opportunity of public recognition through the "Committed to Green" Award for Environmental Excellence. To ensure objectivity and credibility, the setting of environmental criteria and awarding of recognition will be subject to independent verification.

"Committed to Green" is coordinated at a European level by the EGA Ecology Unit. The campaign will be operated on the ground through a network of National Ecology Officers attached to their respective National Golf Federations.

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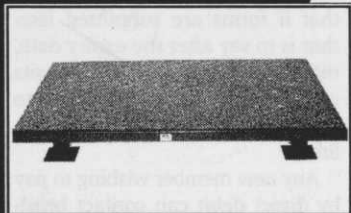
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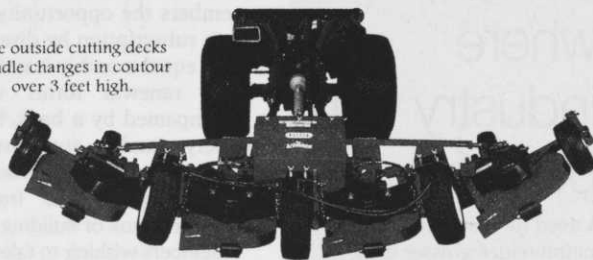
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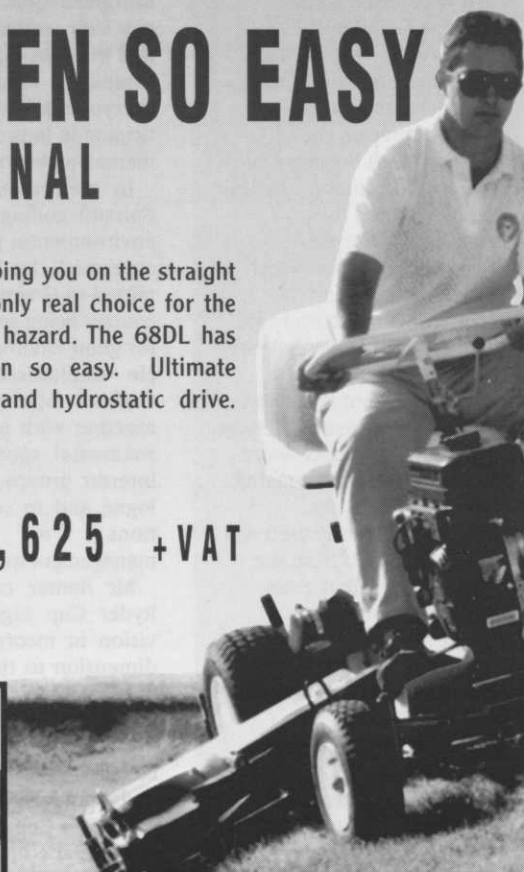
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David to take over BIGGA design role

BIGGA's latest recruit is Design and Production Editor, David Emery, whose arrival enables the Association to bring all of its publishing work in-house.

A native of Durham, 25 year-old David trained as a Graphic Designer in Durham and continued his training at York College prior to joining the local *Evening Press* as an Editorial Designer where he worked on a range of magazines and newspapers. He moves to BIGGA a short time after he had been promoted to the position of Deputy Studio Manager.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge that working at BIGGA will bring and it is particularly exciting to be in at the start of the Association's move to bring all of its publishing work to Aldwark Manor," explained David.

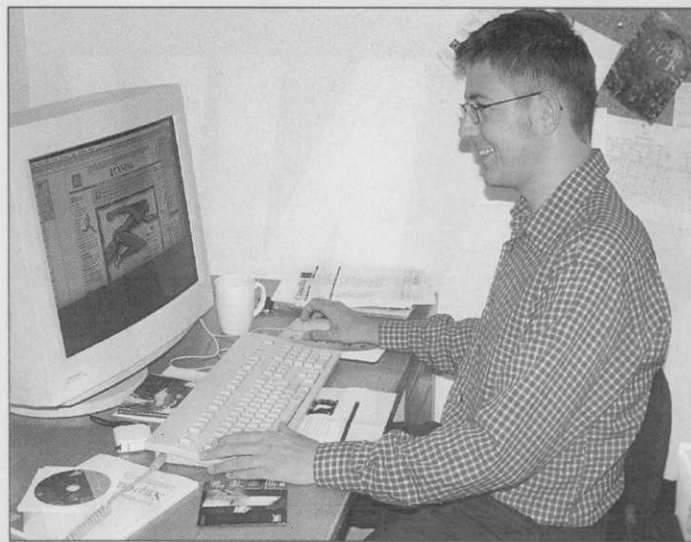
A sports fanatic, David, finds time – or he did before he joined the Association – for badminton, running, swimming and is a regular at a local gym. He recovers from his exertions by listening to music and relaxing at home with his girlfriend, Sarah.

Initially he will supervise the design and production of the Association's educational and promotional literature as well as its pages on the Internet, while he will begin working on *Greenkeeper International* in the February issue next year.

"We are all indebted to Tim Moat, of Headline Communications, for the wonderful design and production work he has done for the Association over the last seven years," said *Greenkeeper International* Editor, Scott MacCallum.

"In particular, the fact that *Greenkeeper International* has become the magazine it is today is due in large part to Tim Moat, who has worked on it since the first issue," he added.

"However, the continued growth of BIGGA meant that employing its own Design and Production Editor became a viable option and we are sure that David will enable the Association, and *Greenkeeper International* in particular, to maintain and improve on the already high standards."



BIGGA's new Design and Production Editor, David Emery

Lab's prestigious first

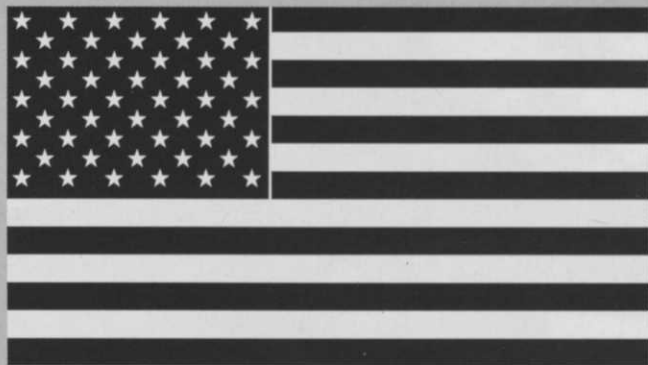
European Turfgrass Laboratories are the first European laboratory to be accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation, to undertake golf green materials testing to USGA standards.

There are five laboratories on the USGA list of accredited laboratories with ETL being the only one outside the USA.

USGA Golf Green Guidelines are very specific and require precise tests to determine particle size content, percolation rate, air and water filled porosities, along with a number of other tests to ensure that the rootzone drains properly and yet can sustain plant growth.

ETL also undertakes other testing procedures.

GCSAA CONFERENCE AND SHOW, ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 2-8, 1998



Go Stateside!

GCSAA's 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held in the Anaheim Convention Center. BIGGA will once again host a trip and the BIGGA party will meet at London Heathrow Airport on Sunday, February 1, for departure to Los Angeles at 3pm.

BIGGA will be able to arrange accommodation for any member wishing to stay overnight before the flight at competitive rates.

The Disneyland Hotel has been selected to accommodate our party and offers outstanding facilities. It is located near to the Convention Center and adjacent to Disneyland.

The GCSAA Conference and Show runs from February 2-8 with the trade show taking place from February 6-8. You will be able to attend the conference seminars and education programmes as well as take in the latest golf course equipment, products and services at the trade show.

ITINERARY

Sunday, February 1

All members will assemble at London Heathrow Airport and will take the 3pm Virgin Atlantic flight to Los Angeles with onward transfer to the Disneyland Hotel for an eight night stay on a room only basis inclusive of private facilities.

Monday, February 9

You will be transferred to the airport for your return overnight flight to London, departing Los Angeles at 5.30pm arriving at London

Heathrow at 11.45am on February 10.

PRICES

£845 per person based on a twin share

£1270 per person based on single occupancy

Plus comprehensive travel insurance for the duration at £30. Included are:

- Return Economy class flights London Heathrow/Los Angeles
- UK and US taxes
- Transfer to and from the airport to the Disneyland Hotel
- Eight nights accommodation on a room only basis and US accommodation taxes

Please note: Registration costs for the Pre-Conference seminars which run from February 2-5, the Educational Programmes which run from February 5-8 and the Trade Show are not included in the package and bookings will need to be made directly with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Details are available from BIGGA upon request.

Please forward full payment of £875 or £1300 (unless travel insurance is not required) to BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO6 2NF to arrive no later than Friday, November 28, together with name, address and contact telephone number. If accommodation is required for the night of January 31 please advise in order for the hotel rooms to be booked. Payment will be made on checking out of the hotel. N.B. Places on this trip are limited – book early!



Roland Taylor takes a look at the vexing task of dealing with banks and slopes.

Banks come in all shapes and sizes and are either natural terrain or man-made – they vary from gentle slopes to steep inclines. Even the flattest courses will have some form of banking, if only around bunkers and tees.

Some banks are cut regularly. Others may be left to develop as natural barriers, only being mown when necessary. Where they form part of a stream or river, regular attention is required to ensure the free-flow of water, especially in winter, to avoid possible flooding. Banks are an ideal habitat for fauna and flora to establish, but even then they will require some mowing as part of their management.

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account when considering the suitability of any machine. The most critical of these is the angle of slope as this will most certainly govern the final decision on what to buy. Ease of access also needs to be taken into consideration. Will it be possible to mow the whole bank from either the top or bottom? This is important when considering long-arm tractor-mounted units.

The condition of the surface is

critical, especially on new banking where water erosion can cause minor landslides and the soil's stability may be questionable. On older established areas wildlife will probably have taken up residence. As a result, burrows and holes could be lurking beneath the undergrowth. All this could make operating machinery difficult.

The type of vegetation will very often determine which type of mower to go for, as will the quality of finish required. Armed with

answers regarding the above information where do you start? Buying the right machine is important not only from an efficiency point of view, but also for the safety of the operator.

The first test is, can the bank be walked on comfortably? If the answer is yes, either a pedestrian or ride-on mower is probably going to be suitable. If the answer is no, then some form of extended-arm unit such as a tractor-mounted flail unit could be a possible solution. While some

machines will appear to be stable on the bank the operator may find them very uncomfortable to use. This sometimes applies to ride-ons where the machine's angle becomes so acute that the only way to stay in any position is to sit on the side of the seat. Not only does this create considerable fatigue it is also very unsafe. Clearly in these cases an alternative needs to be sought.

The power source is also relevant – two-stroke engines are ideal. There are no lubrication

THE BANK JOB



problems (unless the operator forgets to do it) because the oil is added to the fuel. Four-stroke engines may also be suitable at certain degrees. Make sure the engine specification is okay for the maximum degree of the bank that the machine is going to be used on. There may be a possibility that continuous use at acute angles could result in the engine being starved of oil resulting in premature wear and the increased chance of an engine seizing.

When using propelled machinery it is important to have some form of differential lock to provide extra traction, if the terrain is rough. A braking device is also necessary so the operator always has complete control of the machine.

Types of machine available

Brushcutters and clearing saws. These can be described as the replacement for the traditional scythe and will make light work of clearing fairly dense vegetation. Two versions are available – straight shaft or back-pack unit with flexible shaft.

Where access is not restricted and an operator can work comfortably without the risk of injury a straight shaft model is suitable. A range of cutter heads can be fitted so these machines will cope with vegetation ranging from grass, scrub to small trees.

In recent years the back-pack unit has become popular. The weight of the machine is carried on the operator's back like a rucksack – this greatly reduces fatigue.

The flexible-shaft-driven head allows the user to swivel it both horizontally and vertical. This gives greater freedom of movement and better balance when working on steep gradients or rocky terrain. Whether mowing ditches or banking it is recommended that cutting starts at the bottom and works upwards. Never should the cutterhead be above shoulder height.

Hover mowers

It can be said that these mowers changed the whole concept of bank mowing and today, four decades on since their introduction, they are still being used to keep steep banks looking tidy. A hover mower is suitable for keeping around bunkers and tees trimmed. When working these banks the operator should stand on the top, never on the slope.

Rotary, Flail and Reciprocating

These types of cutting systems are all favoured for banks where long, rough grass that is mown infrequently is likely to be encountered.

Most of the reciprocating cut-bar mowers available have been designed to work in the

mountainous pasture regions in Europe, so they are well able to cope with bank work in the UK.

All the machines in this category have pedestrian and ride-on models specifically built to work on sloping terrain, so ask your local outdoor power equipment specialist for details and a demonstration.

Long arm

The long-arm tractor-mounted mower is suitable for a wide range of applications. Like all the machinery described in this feature extreme care should be taken when using these flail heads.

The surface on which the tractor is to stand needs to be carefully checked. For example, the banks of a river or stream can be undercut by flood water and the sides could collapse without warning. The brink of a bank should be mown first so that any likely hazards are easily identified. Work out from the tractor and never reverse it with the arm fully extended or make high speed manoeuvres.

When choosing a machine always check the manufacturer's minimum specifications first. These have been set after the wheel base, centres of gravity, weight distribution and ballast options have been analysed. With this information the most suitable

unit can be matched to the tractor. It is recommended the tractor is fitted with an accumulator float device which makes the operation safer. Independent rear-wheels should be made active, to enable the operator to get out of a difficult situation should one arise.

Cylinders

There are slopes where cylinder mowers are used but the ground conditions on these must be smooth and stable. Generally the equipment will have to have a high degree of traction by the use of differential wheel locks, special tyres and weight transfer systems. At the same time it must be light enough not to damage the turf with wheel markings or scuffing especially when turning. There can be a considerable variation in the bank cutting abilities between different cylinder ride-ons.

There is plenty of specialist advice available and this should be sought when deciding which machine to buy. Make sure you view all the options before making a final decision.

Whatever equipment is used on banks, operator training is essential. They need to be fully conversant with the machine and aware of possible dangers. Bank cutting requires common sense – if it looks risky it is better left alone. Safety should always be the number one priority.

THE 1997 BIGGA GOLF ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



THE WINNER:

HANKLEY COMMON

“ The amount of work undertaken over the last ten years in developing the ecological potential of the course has been considerable. This has involved an on-going commitment to woodland management – tree thinning and felling, natural regeneration control and programmes aimed at heather conservation and reinstatement.

Over the last few years a massive tree felling operation has been carried out and the club is now looking at ways of reinstating the heathland character.

The club also recognises the need to develop an ecosystem approach to retain sufficient scrub to assist the diversity of wildlife which is present. The RSPB has offered advice with regard to wood lark conservation and the course does support other notable rarities such as the sand lizard and silver-studded blue.

The heathland flora is allowed to develop in the semi rough areas which is also worthy of special note given the prestige of the golf club.

A small number of ponds have been created which support quite a diversity of insect life including dragonflies.

A company has been employed to look at energy use within the clubhouse and while at the moment no policies are in place, already all peripheral lighting is controlled by sensors which offers energy savings. The club is also looking to purchase a bottle crusher for recycling clubhouse waste.

Grass clippings are stored in holding pits around the site, collected and taken to a designated area for tipping.

The membership is informed of the reasoning behind the current management works by evening seminars, open forums and members' evenings while all reports are available to the members. There are also regular newsletters and periodic status reports.

The members have been extremely positive in taking to designated pathways and areas cordoned off – imposed to secure reinstatement of the heath.”

STRI Ecologist Bob Taylor

This competition, in association with Rhône Poulenc Amenity and Amazone Ground Care, is designed to reward the golf course that is judged to have done most to encourage good ecological management and so improve the environment. The three way sponsorship, initiated this year, underlines the industry's commitment to the environment and the desire of the game to show the way towards good practice. Hankley Common, under the expert management of Course Manager Ian McMillan, is the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition Winner.

The search for a winner

STRI Ecologist, Bob Taylor has spent the last few months judging the golf clubs which entered the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. Here he talks about what he found during those visits and gives an insight into what he was looking for.

One of the most difficult tasks has been to obtain an objective balance between the larger prestigious sites set within areas of outstanding natural interest alongside those smaller clubs of limited budget found within a lower quality landscape.

A major change to this year's Environment competition, which has welcomed the involvement of BIGGA and Rhône Poulenc alongside Amazone, has been with regard to judging and the standardised way in which each course has been assessed. Both English Nature and STRI have become involved and produced a standardised and therefore much more qualitative format in which to assess individual golf clubs.

This has largely been overcome by asking a series of questions on up to three separate occasions. The first level of assessment was undertaken while assessing each application, which proved very successful in balancing the tremendous degree of variation found.

Questions focused on the level of enthusiasm, not just of the Head Greenkeeper, but of the entire team and the Club Committees, and indeed whether the level of enthusiasm had reached the membership. One would not expect that many of the larger, more prestigious sites could bask within the confines of the landscape in which they find themselves, but this was not generally the case. Take Loch Lomond for example, set within some of the finest countryside possible. Not content with this, the club has appointed a full-time Conservation Officer who has been actively encouraging woodland management, including the construction and erection of owl boxes and the recent excavation of a pond



Left and above: the splendour of Hankley Common. All photographs by Bob Taylor

purely for wildlife.

Additional work involves recording and pinpointing the rare Loch Lomond dock which apparently occurs nowhere else. To the untrained eye, the Loch Lomond dock looks just like the common broad-leaved dock typical of wastelands and disturbed ground.

A second series of questions was asked during the individual site inspections. These, taken from the "Committed to Green" initiative recently launched by the EGA during the Ryder Cup, included: 1. Nature conservation; 2. Landscape and cultural her-

itage; 3. Water resource management; 4. Turf and pest management; 5. Waste management; 6. Energy efficiency and purchasing policies; 7. Education and training; 8. Communications; 9. Public access.

The final level of scoring was qualified by a further series of questions which centred on the scale of works undertaken, whether it is sustainable, the nature of the challenge, how much flak or criticism has there been and how effectively this has been overcome. A very interesting point raised by Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature,

was, "Would the work impress a non-golfing nature conservation sceptic?"

Most of the clubs impressed Keith Duff but then he may be biased because he is one of the seemingly few golfing conservationists!

Having completed the above quite rigorous programme, it became apparent that several entrants were worthy of winning, making selection that much more difficult. All of the applicants this year were worthy of due recognition but in the end certain decisions had to be made and I am indebted to Keith Duff for sharing

THE 1997 BIGGA GOLF ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



this burden with me.

The Dyke Golf Club is worthy of special mention with regard to Communication. Course Manager, David Ansell, has produced a noticeboard of photographs of the wildlife to be found and description of the work being undertaken, all of which is on regular view to the membership. Committee meetings are held monthly and reports are standardised so as to include regular topics on conservation management.

A similar scenario was apparent at Temple Golf Club whereupon a very strong and positive management structure is in place. Here, the green staff meet monthly with the Green Committee and weekly with the Secretary. The greenstaff together discuss policy on a weekly basis, so maintaining and ensuring the continuing enthusiasm for the work being recommended. Members are kept informed via notice boards, a quarterly bulletin and through on-course walks run by the greenstaff.

At Beau Desert and Berkhamstead Golf Clubs, notices relate the importance of each site to the players.

At most clubs visited, education and training does appear to be available to the greenstaff. At Loch Lomond this extends to seminars and specific aspects of natural history such as the identification and ecology of lichens, their conservation being particularly important on this site. At the Manor House each member of the greenstaff has received a copy of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's report to the Club. At Lyme Regis, individual members are being encouraged to develop their own special interests such as Lepidoptery (the study of butterflies and moths). Almost all those clubs assessed do allow the greenstaff time to visit shows, attend local seminars and training days as appropriate for their developing interests.

Special mention should go to Royal Birkdale who, over the past few years, have undertaken a substantial amount of work in order to control the buckthorn and other scrub encroaching over the course. The level of work becomes even more impressive

when one considers the relatively short period of time remaining to get the course back in condition before the Open to be held in 1998. Burnham & Berrow, although not hosting an Open Championship, have over the past two years or so totally reinstated the dune character, this formerly had succumbed to the mass encroachment of sea-buckthorn. The topography of the dunes following removal of the buckthorn is now clearly evident.

A number of heathland courses entered the competition this year, including Berkhamstead, Beau Desert, Enville, Hankley Common and Liphook. All have made tremendous strides in educating the membership of the need to reinstate the heathland character and in undertaking work appropriate to reclaiming areas of heather. This, at Berkhamstead, has changed the frequency of cutting to encourage heather back naturally, while at the other clubs scarification, turf laying and the use of chemical herbicides have all been tried. All of the above have had to give consideration to tree and scrub removal – always a contentious issue with the membership.

It has been interesting this year to note just how enthusiastic many of the regional conservationists have been to the work being undertaken. Charnwood have the full support of their local English Nature consultant, Royal Birkdale has developed a very close working relationship with the Sefton Life Project based at Formby, Temple Golf Club make good use of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Naturalist Group while Beau Desert Golf Club is benefiting from the expertise of the heathland project run by Sue Sheppard.

Even without such relationships, all of the clubs would, to a greater and lesser extent, satisfy the most sceptic of non-golfing nature conservationists and I would like to thank all of the clubs that participated this year and trust the advice given was appropriate and of benefit to each club.

I will look forward to reassessing these courses in the next year or so.

Other major award winners

Linlithgow GC – Regional Winner – Scotland

A number of conservation projects have been undertaken and include gorse management, grassland management and development and pond construction. Twenty bat boxes have been erected over the course and the Course Manager is keen to learn more about their placement and undertaking nest box surveys and a local bat group has been invited onto the course to record bats. The course is being used as a pilot project for both the Scottish Golf Wildlife Trust and the European Golf Association Ecology Unit.

Royal Birkdale – Regional Winner – Northern

Birkdale is intrinsically a very important landscape covering a whole series of internationally important habitats and species and the enthusiasm of the club, from Head Greenkeeper through to the membership is excellent. Numerous projects are being implemented and are benefiting the wildlife on and around the course. The club is also looking towards the damage likely to be caused during next year's Open to provide further opportunity for habitat development and conservation management. For example the thinning and loss of cover to encourage greater botanical diversity.

Temple – Regional Winner – Midlands

Temple was one of the first courses in the country to realise its environmental responsibility. This has grown to such an extent that it is now recognised as an ecologically friendly golf course to which people including conservationists can visit. The club has planted 2,500 trees in accordance with the Forestry Commission Grant Scheme and has also been engaged in hedge layering the work undertaken by the staff while the club intends to extend the amount of meadow-type grassland.

Burnham and Berrow – Regional Winner – South West and South Wales

The club is built on a sand dune system which is of considerable ecological and conservation importance. The club recognises the ecological significance of these habitats and is keen to carry out management operations to reinstate or maintain their significance. Much of the work concentrates on the removal of sea-buckthorn and the reinstatement of sand dunes. In one or two areas ponds have been created, largely in an attempt to reform dunes and this has created areas of open water which is beneficial to wildlife.

Berkhamstead – Specially Commended

There has been a drive towards reducing the dominance of trees and the expansion of acidic grassland. Heather is becoming quite strong which is leading to greater acceptance within the club therefore presenting other opportunities to develop the work. Indeed the club

boasts that due to the success of its management work it supports the largest parcel of heather within the surrounding area.

Northamptonshire County – Specially Commended

Special recognition is given to the increasing interest that is now being devoted to rough management work. Gorse and broom feature heavily and the club is embarking on a programme of cutting and reinstatement. A number of trees have recently been planted to increase the amount of woodland in one section of the course. Ready mixed organic fertilisers are preferred and have resulted in well conditioned greens.

Dyke – Specially Commended

The club is a very good example of a typical downland course with typical management problems but such as been the enthusiasm with which the challenges have been met the course is now worthy of higher ecological significance and it is perhaps more botanically rich in species numbers than adjacent downlands. Butterflies such as the adonis blue, silver-studded blue, brown argos, gatekeeper, small copper, small skipper and marbled white can all be seen on the course.

Lindrick – Specially Commended

The club is very enthusiastic towards nature conservation management and is worthy of special consideration. The surrounding land is predominately arable or woodland so the course has preserved the outline heath supporting a wide and diverse ecological community. Extensive work has been carried out recently including the planting of 500 gorse plants, clearance and renovation as well as the development of a pond beside the clubhouse.

Loch Lomond – Highly Commended

The course, by its presence, is now safeguarding the future of the historic parkland from further development – it lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and may in the near future become the first area of National Park in Scotland. It is almost unique in supporting the Loch Lomond dock, a very rare and localised plant species. The club employs a Course Conservationist and several ecologically based projects are currently being undertaken.

Leominster – Highly Commended

Over the last seven years the club has done much in the way of tree planting in accordance with the Forestry Authorities woodland grant scheme and grassland retention. Some areas are being managed ecologically in that they were cut once a year while there is potential to develop the grassland rough. Policies are also in place with regard to storage and the disposal of grass clippings.



Amazone Groundkeeper in action at Leominster



Royal Birkdale: assessing site for Natterjack Toad pond



Dock at Loch Lomond



Wild pansies in the semi-rough at Linlithgow



A male Common Blue at The Dyke



Reinstating the dunes at Burnham and Berrow



Composting facilities at Temple GC



Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

Life has become very hectic in the Education and Training Department with Regional Courses, Aldwark Manor Courses and three competition finals taking place this month.

Bookings have started to arrive for the National Education Conference, Workshops and BTME Seminars and you need to send in your application as soon as possible to ensure that you reserve your place.

Despite all this activity, I managed to find time to visit Elmwood College, in Scotland, together with Janet Adamson, to talk to a group of full time students about the benefits of BIGGA membership. Hopefully, the information that we gave, together with a strong input from Ian MacMillan, Course Manager at Balbirnie Golf Club, will help to recruit many of these future greenkeepers.

The findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Pay and Conditions of Service have now been published and will be

sent to all golf clubs soon. The main details are published on Page 22 and I thought that it would be useful to include a copy of the Greenkeepers Career Pattern in this column – see right.

The Standing Committee felt that a career in greenkeeping should be linked to qualifications and experience, with appropriate recognition in the form of enhanced pay. Further information on Contracts of Employment, Job Specifications and Greenkeeping Qualifications is available from BIGGA HQ.

Field Guides

The long awaited Grass Identification Field Guide is being printed and will be distributed later this month. Linked to the Greenkeepers' Training Manual, the guide gives information on the identification of ten common grasses found on golf courses. Further field guides on Trees and Shrubs, Control of Mammals and Machinery Maintenance will follow later in the year.

NEW

SITESAFE

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Keep those conference and workshop bookings rolling in

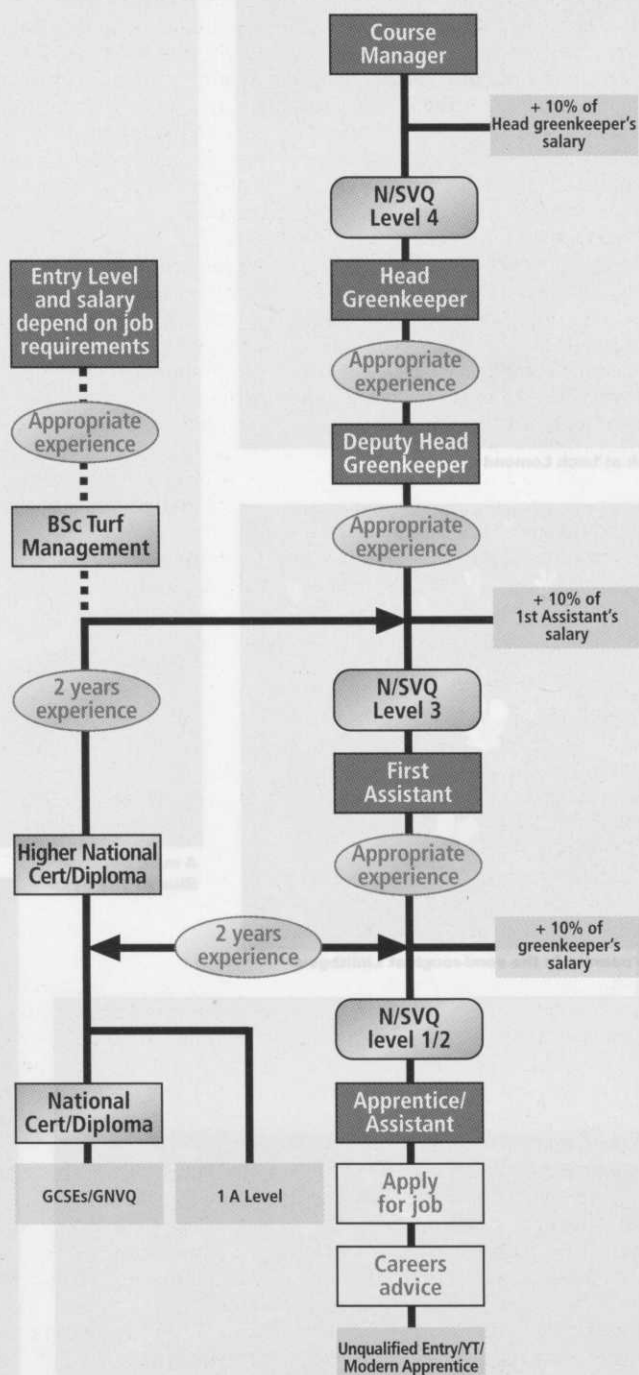
TRIMS 97

Copies of TRIMS 97 are available to colleges and other training providers for £350. This price represents a very substantial discount on the normal price for this latest edition of TRIMS course management software. Any training provider wishing to purchase a copy should contact me at HQ.

Turfgrass Pests and Diseases Compact Disk

Copies of the Turfgrass Pests and Diseases Compact Disk are now available from BIGGA HQ priced at £175. Designed to help Course Managers, Greenkeepers, Lecturers and Students discover the facts about turfgrass problems and how to manage them.

Greenkeeper's Career Pattern



NB Head Greenkeepers with D32/D33 assessor qualifications should receive an increment to their basic salary

RISK ASSESSMENT

By Tony Rees MIOSH

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 came into force on 1 January 1993 and provided a general framework for Safety Management and places duties upon employers, self employed persons and partnerships.

One of the main duties that the Regulations impose is where employers have to complete formal, suitable and sufficient, risk assessments and record all significant risks if more than five persons are employed (Regulation 3).

Risk assessment is the formal process of identifying hazards and then deciding what is the significance of the danger that has been identified. What this means for the Greenkeeper in general is:

1. What are the hazards ie something with the potential to cause harm. This could be, for example, any piece of machinery that you use, any chemicals etc or any time that you are actually on the course.
2. Once the hazards have been identified, you have to look at what is the probability that exposure to that hazard will result in harm ie what is the risk. Risk assessment is, therefore, what is the probability of something that could cause harm occurring and what would be the severity of the outcome. This process is similar to what we have previously looked at with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). However, whereas COSHH dealt specifically with chemicals and substances used at work, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations deals with all other situations that are encountered in the workplace that are not already covered by specific legislation such as Manual Handling, Noise, Display Screen Equipment etc.

Situations that Greenkeepers and green staff encounter are varied and this would give the impression that a risk assessment programme would be a difficult and arduous task, this is not necessarily the case however. It is important to remember that we carry out "risk assessments" as part of our everyday tasks anyway. For example, can you use the ride-on mower on the tees or are they too wet and you have to use the hand mower? You have looked at the situation and decided that it would be the wisest and safest if you used the hand mower. With that decided you then realise that you have got to wear your safety boots with steel toe caps etc. This is all part of the process of risk assessing but without actually writing it down and recording it.



So in order to meet the legislative requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations request for risk assessments, you firstly have to identify all the hazards that you will encounter. This process can be made more manageable if the task or work area is broken down into stages eg.

WHAT

- is happening
- materials are in use
- is the effect on golfers, fellow employees, the environment
- legislation is in force

WHO

- is doing the job
- is exposed to the risk
- else could be affected
- is supervising the task

WHERE

- is the activity located
- are the instructions
- do waste materials go

WHEN

- is work/task carried out
- was task last carried out
- were procedures reviewed/updated
- else could task be carried out

WHY

- is task/activity being performed
- is exposure possible/risk uncontrolled
- is exposure not controlled at source

HOW

- is hazard controlled
- can exposure occur
- may people be affected.

This procedure requires a physical examination of the work area and activity and can often be sufficient to identify the majority of the hazards that you will encounter in your work.

Once the hazards have been identified we must then look at the second part of the risk assessment process, actually assessing the outcome and what its severity will be. We will look at this next month.

■ For further information on training courses and consultancy contact ATB-Landbase Training Services (Jean John on 01282 617466 or Tony Rees on 01686 622799).

NEW PRODUCTS

A valuable addition

Launched at the Saltex exhibition, Mascot Magnet from Rigby Taylor should prove a valuable addition to the range of products available to today's greenkeepers and groundsmen.

Iron products in various forms have been used for many years, in some cases to correct iron deficiencies, but on many occasions to produce an even dark green sward when otherwise the grass would look sickly and yellow. The continual use, however, of traditional ferrous sulphate (sulphate of iron) can lead to problems with "black layer", blackening, iron pan formation, reduced root growth and corrosion of spray equipment.

Mascot Magnet has none of these drawbacks and will produce a beautiful green sward even during periods of negligible turf growth. Mascot Magnet has therefore all the advantages of traditional iron treatments but none of the disadvantages!

Mascot Magnet utilises a mixture of high purity, biologically active iron chelates plus a leaf penetrant. The addition of a leaf penetrant system enables very efficient movement of the iron chelate through the turf-grass foliage in addition to uptake via the root system. Mascot Magnet will not only produce rapid and long lasting "green-up" of turfgrasses, even during cool autumn/winter conditions, but will also correct iron deficiency under alkaline and acidic conditions.

"The product was originally developed for the Spanish market where the soils in many areas have high pH levels," said Clive Williams, Marketing Director for Rigby Taylor Ltd, "but when the performance had been confirmed by an independent trials programme at ASTARA (Aberystwyth Sports Turf and Amenity Research Association) we realised that there was a substantial market for this product all over Europe.

"Groundsmen and greenkeepers faced with television coverage particularly in the autumn and winter will find this product invaluable," concluded Mr Williams.

Power packed

The new Jacobsen LF135 Turbo features a powerful, 35-horsepower, fuel efficient, turbo-charged Kubota diesel engine. That turbo power goes straight to heavy duty, seven inch diameter reels to tackle tough



warm season turf, wet conditions or hilly terrain. For additional traction and handling, the easy to engage mow switch gets automatic four-wheel drive.

More powerful features include the hydraulic oil monitor, alarm horn and the high-back, contoured suspension seat that reduces operator fatigue.

For more information Tel: 01536 417777.

Cleaner sweep

Spaldings has introduced a range of replacement brushes to fit most leading makes of yard sweeper.

The brushes are available in both heavy duty steel and nylon options and regular replacement of brushes ensures maximum sweeping efficiency.

The products can be ordered under Spaldings product numbers 2600 for steel and 2601 for plastic and are priced at £3.99 each.

For further information Tel: 01522 500600.

More Belfry blues



Scott MacCallum and National Chairman Pat Murphy arrived to cheer BIGGA's team in the Kubota Challenge. Unfortunately they didn't make it in time to inspire the team into the final.

They came, they saw, they finished third.

It doesn't have a great ring to it but alas it does sum up the fortunes of the 1997 BIGGA Kubota Challenge team where a horrendous back nine in the semi finals consigned our men to the third and fourth play-off during which they finally played to their potential.

Since becoming Editor I have attended three Kubota Challenges and in that time the BIGGA team, competing against the Golf Club Secretaries, the English Golf Union and the Golf Foundation has never finished in the same position twice.

Guess the one position for which I am still waiting?

In '95 we finished last. It was our worst performance in the history of the event and, at the time,



Steve Sullivan

I took full responsibility as "new boy" for my inability to halt the team's slump to such lowly depths. Last year things looked up and we claimed second place losing in the final to the then defending Champions, the EGU, but this year we dropped a place



Paul Neve

beaten in the semi final by the EGU over the new PGA Course at The Belfry.

The EGU went on to win the event for the third successive year and are beginning to dominate the Challenge in the same way BIGGA did in the heady years



Stefan Antolik: "Captain Fantastic"

between 1985 and '93 when we won every time – count them. That's nine wins in succession.

The eight man team, led by Stefan Antolik, did redeem itself with a convincing win in the third and fourth place play-off against the Golf Foundation but it was

in the Kubota

the failure to compete for the "big prize" which really rankled.

What made it all the worse was that at the turn during the semi-final BIGGA was up in seven matches and level in the other. Shades of the Americans in the Ryder Cup at Valderrama.

It would be unfair to point the finger at those players, many of them extremely solid ball strikers, for losing their match in that semi final. As they say, anyone can win over 18 holes and there has to be a loser, but I think it is important that those players who did show fighting spirit and won the three points in what was ultimately a 5-3 defeat should be given credit. Step forward John Waite, Paul Neve and Captain Fantastic Stefan Antolik.

It is perhaps worth highlighting this very point to someone like Seve Ballesteros who had considered being a playing Captain in the Ryder Cup. Seve, it doesn't work. Speak with Stefan. You'd be so wrapped up in your own game that you wouldn't be able to keep the wheels on the respective wagons of the rest of the guys.

Whatever lessons were learnt from the disappointment of the semi finals were put to good use in the third and fourth place play-off against the Golf Foundation. Although a day too late, they

were inspired:

National Tournament Champion, Steve Sullivan, fought back from an unpromising position to reach the infamous final hole of the Brabazon course all square. Once there he held his nerve and holed a long putt to clinch the match. Whisper it, though, he won the hole with a seven.

Mike Hughes demonstrated a skill on the same hole which, if he could market, would make him a very wealthy man. Relaxed, having already clinched his game on the 16th, he landed his approach some distance short of dry land but two Barnes Wallace bounces later and he was in a position to chip onto the green.

John Waite earned full points over the two days but things had looked less than promising when he arrived on the 8th green with nothing to do. He had found the water off the tee and conceded the hole. It didn't dent his confidence, however, and he expressed his confidence in his ability to close out the match... which he did on the 15th.

Archie Dunn was forced down the last having been dormie two but kept a cool head and hit a fine five iron to the left edge of the green to close out the match.

Trevor Pipe fought gamely but by his own admission has spent more time recently on the bowl-



Archie Dunn

ing green holding a jack than on a golf green wielding a putter and was undone by the length of The Belfry course.

Captain Fantastic, up against a man who chipped in twice in the first seven holes, fought back to halve his match by winning the final hole. Using a golfing brain which would have done Ben Hogan proud he laid up a yard in front of the lake after his opponent had found water then showed his steely nerve by firing

an approach into the heart of the green. That's Stefan's story anyway!

Paul Neve was BIGGA's secret weapon and could lay claim to the title of "Finest 24 Handicapper in the Country". Having been one of the three heroes on the first day he produced the biggest victory of the second day when he rounded off his match on the 13th green.

The man given the responsibility of playing the anchor role was Antony Bindley a man who is the possessor of the most violent practice swing in golf. It is quite remarkable that after an act which would induce hernias in all but the fittest he can produce such unerring accuracy and he put that to good use in his 5&3 win.

So third place and I'm eagerly awaiting next year when I hope to complete a full set of places with a victory. However 1997 will be remembered for the high degree of camaraderie displayed by all 32 competitors, the magnificent organisation masterminded by Peter McEvoy and Sporting Concepts team and, perhaps most of all, the extraordinary hospitality of Rene Orban and everyone at Kubota who make the event one of the highlights of the season for all who are lucky enough to attend.



The Greenkeepers team

We all share in the grief

As you are aware, it was my intention to write some words for *Greenkeeper International* following the final match of the Hayter Challenge Tournament at Ganton Golf Club. However, following the tragic death of David Spurden, such a contribution seems untimely and totally inappropriate. Instead I would prefer to record my gratitude to David and convey to his colleagues and family, my deepest sympathy at this sad time.

I first met David in May of this year. Instantly I recognised in him the qualities of warmth, good nature and pure human kindness. He was conscientious, self deprecating but with a strong sense of determination to succeed. I only met him a few times but his friendly disposition and true gentlemanly qualities were such that I felt I had known him for years. He prepared Ganton to perfection for our Challenge Tournament Final and I know how proud he was to have secured his own place in the competition, played on the course he loved and served with such distinction. He will be greatly missed by all and greenkeeping has lost one of its finest ambassadors.

Please convey the condolences of all of us at Hayter to his staff, his colleagues, his Club, but most of all to his family. No words can adequately ease the pain they will be enduring but, hopefully, the knowledge that their grief is shared will be of some comfort. He was a man of outstanding stature.

K.I. (Kim) Macfie
Sales & Marketing Director
Hayter
Spellbrook
Bishops Stortford

'Ambassador' will be missed

Everyone will be shocked and saddened to learn of David Spurden's death at Ganton GC in a tragic shooting accident.

I introduced David to greenkeeping when, as a school leaver, he joined me at Otley GC in 1962. He worked with me for six years before accompanying

me to Ilkley GC for a further 11 years after which he became Head Greenkeeper at Knaresborough GC. David then moved to Ganton, remaining there for the past 15 years.

His work was always of the highest standard, this being reflected in the condition of Ganton in recent times.

He played golf, and with a single figure handicap was a regular competitor and winner in both regional and national events. He was also a member of the BIGGA Open Support Team.

David was keenly interested in, and quite an authority, on natural history and the environment, and with a cheerful, pleasant disposition made friends easily.

A man of rare quality, his loss to golf and greenkeeping is immense.

This fine ambassador for his chosen profession will be sadly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

Adrian Robertshaw
Middleton
Ilkley

In praise of education

While we have yet to make staff appointments from the many applications received, the response to our advertisement in the September issue of your magazine for our course vacancies has been overwhelming. The standard of applicant is evidence of the improvements that have been made in the education of greenkeepers over the past few years and the excellent training that they now receive.

Graham Bond
General Manager
Lanhydrock Golf Club
Bodmin, Cornwall

Don't believe the hype

I read the article on chemical soil analyses (p66. *Greenkeeper International* October '97) by NRM based on the old ICI Jealots Hill Agricultural research station with some consternation. The need to correct some false deductions is urgent, though few experienced Head Greenkeepers would follow ADAS recommendations for golf courses, which may be relevant to

non-greenkeeping conditions.

Details are given as to how pH, phosphate, potash and magnesium levels are analysed. My point is that I have yet to be given a level for any nutrient status below which the analyst regards that nutrient as being deficient. With phosphates particularly, we have excellent greens with levels of 10 p.p.m. and less – sometimes 3 p.p.m. We have some awful Poa annua ones at 300 p.p.m., sometimes over 1000 p.p.m. Most experienced men (confirmed by a breakdown of the analyses of greens fertiliser, 61% @ 8:0:0) would agree that golfing turf should never receive phosphates in fertiliser form if total dominance of Poa annua is to be avoided. Greens which are known to have received no fertiliser phosphate for 25 years still show figures in the 25-50 p.p.m. mark, though whether that phosphate is available to plants is debatable.

Potash being soluble may need topping up occasionally but analysis will never determine the level. There is absolutely no evidence that magnesium is a limiting factor in practice for healthy grass growth on any course – the only exception being sterile sand-only greens, virtually all of which are in poor or deteriorating condition, with increasing Poa annua invasion, as such greens have to be fed hydroponically and frequently with NPK and lime and even trace elements to stay alive and in comes the Poa.

There is no fixed figure for pH level – the ideal is the one you have which hopefully is natural to the site.

Nitrogen is the most important element in golf greenkeeping and there is no easy test for nitrogen. I rest my case.

I regard with sadness and alarm the return of fertiliser firms offering chemical analyses as a sales gimmick. Even STRI. (Dr Canaway, December 1995) states that they will no longer routinely analyse soil samples chemically, "as it tells us nothing".

If you want fine wiry grasses, use balanced nitrogen only. If you have awful Poa annua greens you may feel they need NPK but analysis will give you no help in deciding how much. We are not growing cereals or managing intensive grassland on our golf

courses. The link between phosphatic fertiliser and Poa annua has been known virtually all this century and is unarguable. Forget chemical (not physical) analysis and the sales ploy that so often accompanies it

J.H Arthur B.Sc. (Agric)
Budleigh Salterton
East Devon

How to cut card fraud

I am writing to you about the BIGGA membership cards. I wondered if in the future it would be possible to put on the cards the members position at the club and the golf club's name. Both of which on the front as there is space to do this.

I would also like to see the member's official golf club stamp on the rear just as we had to do on our membership application forms this year. This may possibly stop any fraudulent use of the membership cards as I have heard of cases of this happening.

Does anyone else think this is a good idea?

Chris Yeaman
Course Manager
Swanston Golf Club
Edinburgh

A great team effort

On behalf of all the greenkeeping staff and myself I would like to thank everyone involved for the excellent help from the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team during the week of The Open. It was much appreciated and I hope they all enjoyed themselves despite the hard work they put in.

Many thanks again and I hope to see you in future.

Billy McLachlan
Head Green Superintendent
Royal Troon Golf Club

Feature is spot on

I have just read the article, "Preparing for the Drama at Valderrama", and would like to express my sincere congratulations. It is the very finest that I've read about maintenance in this golf course!

Rafa Castillo
Technical Editor
Green Tecnico magazine
Madrid

Winner has lot to look forward to

Now that my reign as Premier Greenkeeper of the Year is over I thought it would be the right time to wish my successor good luck.

After that final nerve wracking interview he will have been announced (the final was held as this magazine went to press). I didn't really feel nervous that day as I thought I surely couldn't win... although I hoped I might. When the results were announced – in true Miss World reverse order fashion – and mine was the only name left I had won!

Of course everybody at the club was thrilled for me. The Managing Secretary was grinning from ear to ear, the lads were wondering what to do with their share of the money and there was handshakes all round. During the next few weeks and months there were photo shoots, interviews and the once in a lifetime experience of a trip to the States

to take in the GCSAA Exhibition and Conference. If there is ever another opportunity to go I'll be the first on the plane.

Gradually news of my win filtered through to the members who greeted me by saying "I knew you'd get it right in the end" or "Well, you've got a good team of lads, haven't you."

It was nice to see my name in the papers but it was the acknowledgement of my fellow, long suffering professionals which meant most to me.

Everyone at Broadway fell a part of my success and we all benefited from it. The lads and I feel we're getting somewhere and our own morale and self esteem has been lifted, although unfortunately the whole year has seemed to rush by too quickly.

So all the best to this year's winner and I hope he has as pleasant a time as I've had.

Cedric Gough

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- Harrow School Golf Club
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- North Foreland Golf Club
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- Omond Fields Golf Club
- Piltown Golf Club
- Pineridge Golf Club
- Ponteland Golf Club
- Preston Golf Club
- Ramsdale Hall Golf Club
- Reykjavik Golf Club (Iceland)
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- Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club
- Royal County Down Golf Club
- Royal Dornoch Golf Club
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club
- Royal Portrush Golf Club
- Royal West Norfolk Golf Club
- Royston Golf Club
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1998 Salaries and conditions – recommendations

The following scale constitutes the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Salaries and Conditions. The Committee comprises representatives from the Association of Golf Club Secretaries, the Association of Golf Course Owners and the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association. The Chairman of the Greenkeepers Training Committee has attended in an advisory capacity.

The salaries quoted are the recommended minimum rate for each level of greenkeeper on appointment with effect from 1 January 1998 and represent an increase of 3.5% on the 1997 BIGGA recommended rates, this

figure being the Retail Price Index figure at August 1997. Any changes in this figure should be taken into account at the time of implementation. These recommendations do not take into account annual increments or other bonuses as may be paid to staff.

Basic conditions of employment for all greenkeeping staff should include the following in addition to the recommended salary:

- Non contributory pension
- Death in service benefit
- Subscription to BIGGA
- Provision for continuous professional development which may include time off to attend BIGGA conferences and seminars

NOTES:

1. The recommended minimum starting salary is based on a 40 hour working week.

2. Tied accommodation is a contractual matter for negotiation between the individual and club. The recommendations below constitute the minimum amounts the Standing Committee feels should be paid for doing the job in question, regardless of other contractual agreements. A draft contract for greenkeeping staff is available from BIGGA.

EXAMPLES:

1. Trainee "X" has been at the club for 18 months, having joined at age 17. Now aged 18 years and 6 months, he is working towards

his N/SVQ Level 2. Using the 1998 scale, he should be earning a minimum of £8,736.

2. Trainee "Y" has been at the club for 36 months, having joined at age 18. Now aged 21 he has gained his N/SVQ Level 2. Using the 1998 scale he should be earning a minimum of £13,793.

3. A Deputy Head Greenkeeper who is competent at N/SVQ Level 3 has just joined a 27 hole golf course. Using the 1998 scale he should be earning a minimum of £16,508.

4. A First Assistant who is competent at N/SVQ Level 2 but is still working towards Level 3 should on appointment earn a minimum of £13,093.

RECOMMENDED minimum starting salary for trainee and apprentice greenkeeping staff working towards N/SVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf maintenance

Age on appointment	16	Qualified	17	Qualified	18	Qualified	19	Qualified	20	Qualified	21	Qualified
Salary on appointment	£6,158	N/A	£7,032	N/A	£8,125	£8,938	£9,367	£10,304	£10,777	£11,848	£12,316	£13,540
After 6 months	£6,620	N/A	£7,559	N/A	£8,734	£9,608	£10,070	£11,076	£11,585	£12,657		
After 12 months	£7,116	N/A	£8,126	£8,939	£9,389	£10,328	£10,825	£11,907	£12,454	£13,526		
After 18 months	£7,650	N/A	£8,736	£9,609	£10,094	£11,103	£11,637	£12,800	AT AGE 21	AT AGE 21		
After 24 months	£8,224	£9,046	£9,391	£10,330	£10,851	£11,936	£12,509	£13,760				
After 30 months	£8,841	£9,725	£10,095	£11,105	£11,664	£12,831	AT AGE 21	AT AGE 21				
After 36 months	£9,504	£10,454	£10,852	£11,938	£12,539	£13,793						
After 42 months	£10,216	£11,238	£11,666	£12,833	AT AGE 21	AT AGE 21						
After 48 months	£10,983	£12,081	£12,541	£13,796								
After 54 months	£11,806	£12,987	AT AGE 21	AT AGE 21								
After 60 months	£12,692	£13,961										
	AT AGE 21	AT AGE 21										

NOTES:

1. The recommendation shows that trainees and apprentices receive an additional 7.5% every six months as recognition of the valuable experience they are gaining as they work towards their qualification. This is in addition to any increment they may receive on achieving a recognised qualification.

2. The "Qualified" figures shown in green include a 10% increase on the recommended rate for staff having obtained N/SVQ Level 2 (or NC/ND plus two years experience).

3. Staff who have obtained qualifications on a full time basis should not receive the 10% qualification addition to their salary until they have completed two years satisfactory service as a working greenkeeper.

4. The rates apply for all sizes of golf club. NB Over the age of 21 greenkeepers remain on age 21 scale except for annual increments or bonuses which may be paid to staff. Further increments for qualified greenkeepers depend on promotion to supervisory and management positions.

RECOMMENDED starting salary for supervisory and managerial level greenkeeping staff

Position/size of golf course	18 Hole	Qualified	27 Hole	Qualified	36 Hole	Qualified
First Assistant (Competent at N/SVQ Level 2 working towards N/SVQ Level 3)	£13,093	£14,402	£13,093	£14,402	£13,093	£14,402
Deputy Head Greenkeeper (Competent at N/SVQ Level 3)	£15,111		£16,508		£18,475	
Head Greenkeeper (Competent at N/SVQ Level 3 working towards N/SVQ Level 4)	£21,010		£22,873		£25,616	
Course Manager (Competent at N/SVQ Level 4)	£23,111		£25,160		£28,177	

NOTES:

1. The "Qualified" figures shown in green include a 10% increment on the recommended rate for qualifying to N/SVQ Level 3 (or HND/HNC plus two years experience).

2. Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers

possessing D32 or D33 certificates should receive additional appropriate recognition. 3. The post of First Assistant is designed to recognise a third in charge. In cases where the First Assistant is the recognised Deputy, the Deputy Head Greenkeeper rate should apply.

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Central

The final golf tournament of '97 was held by courtesy of Auchterarder GC, on September 18, when 34 members and guests enjoyed a great day's golf in glorious sunshine and on a course in superb condition thanks to Head Greenkeeper, Archie Dunn and his staff. Our sincere thanks go to everyone at Auchterarder, especially Secretary Bill Campbell, Club Captain Alex Murray for presenting the prizes and to Sandra, Dougie and staff for their first class fare and service in the clubhouse throughout the day. Prize winners on the day were as follows:- Ransomes Shield (Best Nett Aggregate Spring & Autumn Tournaments) – Kenny Stirling, The Dukes Course; AMP Trophy (Best Gross) – Stuart Smith, Lundin GC; Aitken Trophy (Best Nett) – Donald McAllister, Ladybank GC; Division 1: 1. Kenny Stirling, The Dukes Course; 2. Rod Hensby, Tulliallan GC; Division 2: 1. Andrew Crawford, Kinross GC; 2. Stuart Sime, Leven Links GC; Division 3: 1. Peter Finlay, Auchterarder GC; 2. Ronald Peat, Fife Council; Patrons – John Souter, Souters Sportsturf; Associate – Ailsa Wade, Milnathort GC.; Guests – Sandy Herd, Leven Links GC.

Thanks to the Scottish Region Patrons for contributing towards our trophies and prizes and to everyone who donated to the raffle. I am still trying to secure venues for next year's tournaments so if anyone has any thoughts on this matter please get in touch with me.

On October 1 a number of members enjoyed a visit to the Stewart's of Edinburgh turf farm at Kinnesswood on the shores of Loch Leven where we were given an extensive and educational presentation of the work and investment involved in producing high quality turf for our profession (it still won't stop me haggling over the price!). It was nice to see that, although he has retired, David Sword, formerly Head Greenkeeper at Bishopshire GC, is still supporting the Section and joined us on the day.

Our thanks go to Alan Miller, of



Stewart's, for arranging the visit and for the hospitality which he extended to us at the local hotel prior to the tour of the turf fields.

We extend a warm welcome to the Section to the following new members this month – Derek Scott, Scoonie GC; Halldor Svanbergsson, Neil Middleton, Angus Miller and Suzanne Corgan, all Elmwood College, and Gary Smith, of Stewart's.

I have eventually managed to get all Section trophies together and I will now have them valued and engraved in time for the Spring Tournament when we can present them to the winners.

The Inter-Club Tournament is yet again running behind schedule (so what's new?) due to games not being played by the given dates. As this Tournament is a way of keeping in touch during the summer months and meeting fellow greenkeepers from other courses would everyone please try and bring their respective ties up to date in order that we can present the trophy at the Spring Tournament in 1998.

A matter which is causing concern to the Section Committee is that at golf tournaments we have reached the point where patrons and guests are giving greater support than greenkeepers. Does this mean that the majority of members would not bother if we stopped these tournaments? When you consider that for less than £20 you can have a round of golf (sometimes two), meals and be competing for around £500 worth of prizes you would go a long way before getting better value for your money. SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR SECTION?

I will give you an update on the AGM in next month's issue, or perhaps everyone will have attended the meeting and know exactly what is going on. Ah well, I can always dream! Andy O'Hara had a dream which I may tell you about one day!

John Crawford

East

With the season nearing its end we had our last major of the season, the Autumn Tournament at Turnhouse GC, on September 25. A great day was had by all who attended but a very small turnout considering this was the first of the

two qualifying rounds for the Hayter Challenge (or whatever it is to be named). Only 44 people played and that included trade, guests and invited guests. So not a good turnout on a glorious autumn day. The weather couldn't have been better which provided us with some very good golf as the scores show.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Captain and Council for the courtesy of the course, the clubhouse staff for looking after us – the meals were great and last but not least Gavin Ballantyne, the Head Greenkeeper and his staff. The course was in great condition, guys. You did yourselves proud and it was very enjoyable to play. We would also like to thank Mr Jim McColl, the Greens Convenor, for presenting the prizes and also joining us for the golf. The trophies were shared between Swanston GC (my club) and Glencorse GC as you will see from the scoreboard that follows. (Ian, you will have to try and regain your aggregate cup in 1998).

I was pleased to be the first winner of the new Scottish Grass Machinery Cup and I would like to thank SGM for presenting the cup to the Section. It is a superb looking trophy which is worth winning. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Outing in 1998.

The results were:- Gross:- D. Melville, Swanston GC, 72; Division 1:- 1. T. Murray, Ratho Park GC, 70; 2. I. Bell, Glencorse GC, 74; 3. J. Manuel, Goswick GC, 75; Division 2:- 1. C. Yeaman, Swanston GC, 73; 2. S. Halliday, Melville GC, 75; 3. G. Ballantyne, Turnhouse GC, 76; Division 3:- 1. A. Forrest, Swanston GC, 74; 2. S. Hall, Glencorse GC, 74; 3. J. Lumsden, Glencorse GC, 77; Veteran – R. Bullock, retired, 77; Trade – I. Thompson, Provan GC, 77; Guest – D. McGinley, Swanston GC, 73; Aggregate Cup Spring & Autumn – C. Yeaman, Swanston GC, 144; Best Nett of the Day – Douglas Melville, Swanston GC, 65. Turnhouse GC par was 69.

I would like to thank the trade members for providing the raffle prizes on the day, this is always much appreciated by the Section.

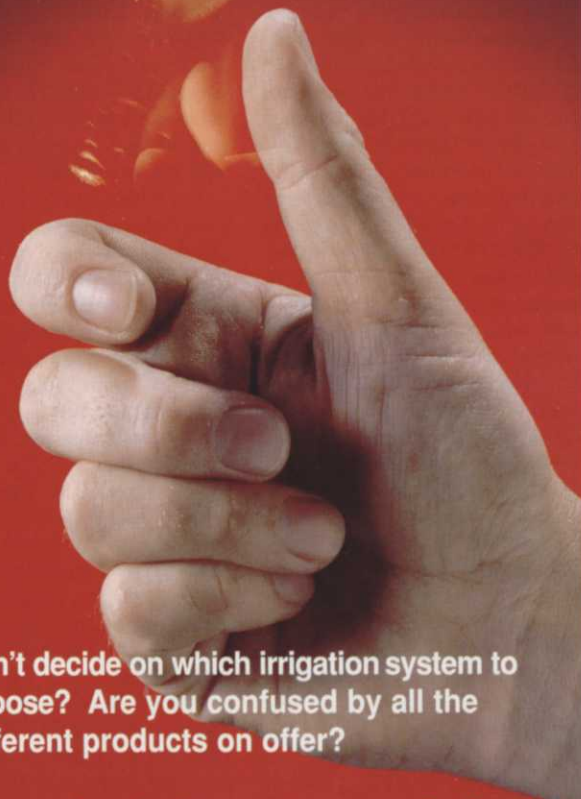
In October we also had the annual Stewart's and Co match with the North East of England Section at Haddington GC, East Lothian. A great day and night was had by all! Thanks to Haddington GC for the courtesy of the course, the Steward and Stewardess for the great meals and even better refreshments! Also thanks to Norman Wood and his staff for having the course in good condition for the visit of all these greenkeepers. The result this year was another victory by the North East lads by 3.5-2.5 so they retain the trophy again! We are going to have to do something about this. Possibly if they don't bring passports next time they try and cross the border they won't be able to get into Scotland and we will win by just turning up! No, we are not that lucky, we will have to improve our performances if we are to win back the coveted "Stewart's Quaich".

The team is looking forward to next year's match already and once again well done to the North East lads on a winning performance. We would also like to thank the match sponsors Stewart's and Co and their Technical Sales Rep, John Geddes, for looking after us all once again. Your support for this match is much appreciated by everyone who plays in this match. Thanks for everything you do each year to make this match a success.

Next on the Agenda is the AGM at Swanston GC. I will report on this next month. I am echoing an article from the Devon/Cornwall Section news that when attending all BIGGA events and functions, please remember you are representing your profession and BIGGA so please ensure you are properly dressed with collar and tie on arrival for lunch and afterwards for evening meal. The standards in the Section seem to be dropping so let us ensure that it goes back up to where it has always been.

If anyone has not got their dance tickets by now for the annual dinner dance they should give Steve Dixon a call now on 0131 660 3965 to reserve the last few tickets available for the night of the year. The date if you do not know by now is Saturday December 6 at the Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady. So if you need to drop me a line

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Around the Green



you can do so at 74 Muirfield Drive, Gullane, East Lothian EH31 2HJ or phone 01620 842037. If you have any information let's hear from you, remember it is your Section and this is your chance to be heard.

Just one last thing before I go, the Patrons' Awards for 1997 are to the two people who have attended all BIGGA events and functions over the past year. This year they go to Robert Thomson, Peebles GC and Gordon Trotter, Glencorse GC. Well done lads, you both deserve the awards. The prizes are a trip to the BTME 98, in Harrogate in January, which will be presented in December at the Patrons' Dinner and we are looking forward to seeing you down in Harrogate which is a great three days and is well worth attending. If anyone is thinking of going next year BIGGA Scottish Region are running a trip to include coach travel, Bed and Breakfast and entrance to all seminars and the show. If you are interested give our Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd a call on 0141 616 3440 for an application form and further details.

Well, that's it for this month, I hope to hear from some of our members soon!
Chris Yeaman

West

The first thing to report on is the result from the five-a-side tournament held on September 7 at Scotstoun Leisure Centre. The weather once again was fantastic, bright sunshine.

After a few hiccups the tournament got under way although the playing order was not quite what it should have been! Souters strolled through the first section then Windy Clyde secured their place

through a Campine player being sent off. East Kilbride as usual eased their way through from section three then a close fought battle in section four saw Rigby Taylor come out on top on goal difference. In the semi-finals East Kilbride beat Souters and Windy Clyde beat Rigby Taylor, both games being well contested.

Down to the final - Windy Clyde started well easing forward 3-1 with six minutes to go, then two quick goals saw honours even. It looked like penalties again but wait a minute, a pass back (or was it? Remember the ref's decision is final) and East Kilbride were awarded a penalty. The fourth goal came and a Windy Clyde man was sent off for disagreeing just slightly with the ref's opinion.

The whole tournament went, in the main, smoothly. A few words of thanks are extended to John Scott for presenting the prizes and for keeping control of the score board on the day. The referees are to be thanked. Everybody thinks it's so easy to control play but after watching and listening to play I think they have an extremely difficult job. Rigby Taylor were the main sponsors by presenting a magnificent trophy for the winners. We have to say thank you very much for their kind generosity and last but not least thanks to all the teams which took part. We are delighted the event is so popular and enjoyable.

A few things to remember for the coming months. The annual dinner is at the Admiral once again with the same format and it is booked for November 28 so please come along, tickets will be available shortly. The AGM come games night has been organised for December 11 again at the Claremont. This is a very good night, normally with free pies, so come along and enjoy the evening and if you wish, say a few words at the meeting!

The 11-a-side team have been in action recently against Allied Timber, a match Brian Hillam arranged

which will be a regular occurrence judging by the response. Plenty of activity on this front I would hope this year as a lot of interest has been shown.

Now the report, a good team was compiled even though it was a last minute fixture Allied proved good opposition. Our Section opened up the scoreline from Eddie Devine, Paisley GC. He apparently had an excellent game. Then disaster - they scored two goals to make half time 2-1 down. Next Graeme Shearer equalised and then they scored again - 3-2 with desperate action on both sides. However, with the last kick of the ball the equaliser and who was the scorer, yes Brian! We still remain undefeated, so well done.

I would like to wish a warm welcome to new member James McIntyre, Glasgow University Estates Manager. We hope to see you at some of the events.

Finally the Hayter report. This year three people represented the West Section and although an excellent time was had I'm afraid our performances left a lot to be desired. The course was long and tight which proved costly for any stray shots of which I had plenty. The event was extremely well run, very enjoyable and we should express our thanks to all those who are involved.

Thanks go to Ganton for holding the event, to Head Greenkeeper David Spurden for preparing the course in excellent condition, to BIGGA for running the tournament and last but not least Hayter for their support for sadly the last time.

On a sad note less than a week after the event the David Spurden was shot and died in an accident and we send our sincere thoughts of condolence at this time.

That's all folks, remember if you have something of interest then please contact me on 0141 942 5554.

Sorry, I nearly forgot, welcome to Peter Boyd, our new Regional Administrator - I hope we don't

give you too many headaches!
Stuart Taylor

North

The Section outing to Alyth was a great day out on a superb golf course in lovely sunshine. Thanks to Brian Cocker, his staff and all at Alyth who made us very welcome. Prize winners were as follows:- Scratch, G Hampton Cup - 1. John Urquhart, Tain, 68; 2. Colin Forbes, Tarland, 73; Division 1 - 1. Bruce McLaren, Blairgowrie, 72; 2. Neil Kidd, Keith, 72; 3. Gordon Moir, St Andrews, 74; Division 2 - 1. (MacLean Trophy) Ross MacLeod, Tain, 67; 2. Scott Williams, Peterculter, 70 (also winner of Spring/Autumn Aggregate for the Meldrum Trophy with 132); 3. John Taylor, retired, 73 (also winner of M & M Trophy for Veteran Aggregate on 142); Division 3 - 1. Brian Cocker, Alyth, 69; 2. David Marnoch, Peterculter, 75 (also winner of Head Greenkeeper Aggregate Shield); 3. Michael Reid, Newmarcher, 79; Veteran Toro Trophy - 1. Robert Napier, retired, 71; 2. Arthur Williamson, retired, 73; Apprentice - 1. Calum Faulkner, Strathpeffer, 70; 2. John Morton, Alford, 77; Guest - A. Fiddes, Alyth, 69; Trade - Pat Allan, Stewart's, 71; Longest Drive - Division 1 - Neil Sadler, Grantown; Division 2 - Gordon McKie, St Andrews; Division 3 - David Marnoch; Nearest the Pin - John Morton; Committee Trophy - Ian MacLeod, Tain, 75. The BIGGA Blazer was won by Willie Robertson, Elenisla GC. 200 Club winners were May £30 - Eoin Riddell, Royal Dornoch, June £30 - Kevin Fowler, Fortrose, July £30 - Murray Gordon, Braemar, and August £100 - Sam Morrison, now of Bothwell Castle. The final four draws will be made at our AGM this month at McDonald GC, Ellon.

Colin Mackay, Elmwood Golf Club, got a late call up to the Hayter Team at Grantown but unfortunately was unable to inspire them to victory.

I would just like to say how upset I was to hear the news of the



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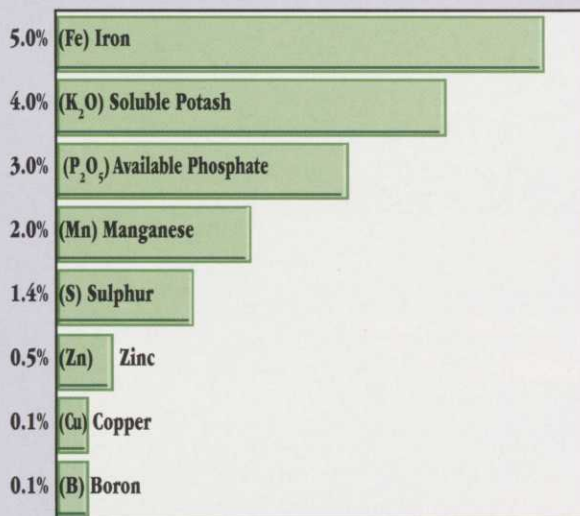
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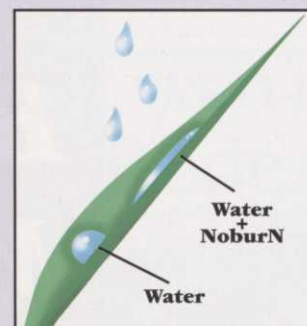
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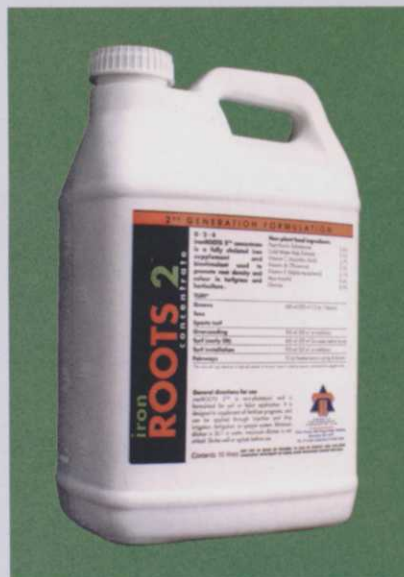


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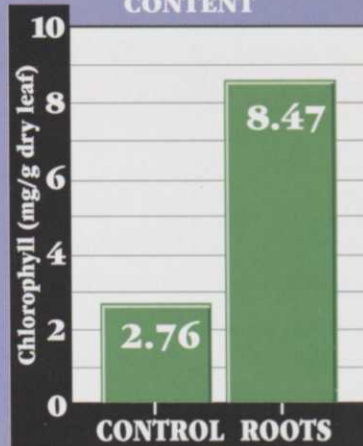


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tragic death of Ganton's, David Spurden, in an accident on the course recently. He was a good friend and I will miss seeing him at BIGGA events. My condolences to his family.

The Section patron winners are Dale Robertson, Newmacher, and Bradley Wood, Westhill, who win a trip to BTME 1998. Thanks to the Scottish Patronage Scheme.

All the best to Sean Jaffrey, who moved from Strathmore to Ellon recently. Congratulations to Steve Sullivan, Craigie Hill, for sweeping all before him at the BIGGA Championships at Cooden Beach in August. Steve would like to start up a Four Ball Better Ball Knockout in the Section next Spring. Early rounds will be regional to cut down on travel to start with. For more information and to enter phone Steve on 01738 643778.

Finally have you got a library book from the Section? There are three missing. Contact Hugh McLatchie on 01779 470173 or Dougal Duguid on 01224 740329 if you know where they are.

Iain MacLeod

NORTHERN REGION

Douglas Bell

Tel: 0151 431 0433

North West

This month's news unfortunately starts with some sad news. John Lennard, a member of the North West Section for many years has died after a long illness. John, who worked at Prestbury GC some years ago, moved on to Northenden GC and then on to Shrigley Hall where he carried out some major construction work. Eventually he made his final move to Merriydale GC where he constructed 9 holes before becoming ill.

More sad news is the death of David Spurden, a member of the Northern Section. David was Head Greenkeeper at Ganton GC for 17 years and had just hosted the Hayter Challenge Final at Ganton one week before his untimely death. Many of the North West

members will have known David from the Roses matches and the Greenkeeping Support Team at the Open.

The weather just before the Autumn tournament at Keswick GC on September 9 had been continual rain for days and John Turner, the Head Greenkeeper was anxious to say the least as to how the course would be on that day. No problems! The sun shone, the course was in great condition and thanks to John and his staff everyone enjoyed the day. The views from the course of the surrounding mountains are breathtaking and we were even treated to the sight of a buzzard flying up the valley. The prize table took us through to 11th nett but the main prize winners were:- Best Nett - Peter Rainey; Best Gross - John Berry; Over 55s - Bert Cross; Aggregate Trophy - Alec Davies. We were fortunate to have a very special guest with us on the day. Lord Whitelaw came along and presented the prizes to the winners before joining us for dinner. I would like to thank Lord Whitelaw for allowing us the pleasure of his company, Keswick GC for allowing us the courtesy of the course, John Turner and his staff for their hard work in preparing the course, John Fleet and his wife for the lovely meals and bar service and the companies who helped to swell the prize table, namely Rigby Taylor, Supaturf, Ritefeed, GEM, Martin Brothers, Cheshire Sand and Top Dressing, Cheshire Turf Machinery and Bathgate Top Dressing.

The Hayter Challenge Final at Ganton GC was played on September 18 with 63 competitors who had won through from their various spring tournaments and regional finals. The course was immaculate thanks to David Spurden and his staff and it is easy to see why this course is classed as one of the best and most difficult courses around. The course is heavily planted with gorse and trees and there are plenty of bunkers waiting to catch the way-

ward short. I think the bunkers were designed by Adolf Hitler and constructed by this war planes with landmines they were so deep! The competitors had plenty to play for with prizes but also with places for next years Rest of the World team to play in America. Unfortunately we had no winners from the North West.

This year's Christmas competition is at Wilmslow GC, on Thursday November 27. The Section AGM will take place immediately after the golf and will be followed by a Christmas Dinner. The tee will be available from 10 am and all entries must be in by Saturday, November 22, with your deposit of £10 to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool, L4 9RB. All competitors will be required to bring along a bottle so that everybody takes home a prize.

Any news, views or complaints please contact me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

North East

The Autumn Competition was held at Boldon GC, on Thursday, September 25. Forty members turned up to play which for me as Secretary was very gratifying considering there were a few familiar faces missing. Steve Miller and his staff had the course in excellent condition and we thank the committee for giving us courtesy of the course and also to the Stewardess for a great meal. Donations were received from The Ryton Gravel Co, Aitkens, Boldon GC, Stocksfield GC, Greenlay, Border Turf Services and Turf Care Supplies and on behalf of the Section I would like to thank all the sponsors. The results were as follows:- Best Nett (Ransome Cup) - B. Wilson, Stocksfield, 73-6-66; Best Nett, Greenlay Cup 0-9 handicaps - R. Reid, Prudhoe, 75-7-68; Best Nett (Fewster Shield) 10-28 handicaps - G. Wright, Crook, 85-15-70; Best Gross Salver - A. McLure, 75. Other scores were B. Walker (guest), 83-14-69; M. Woods

(guest), 80-10-70; A. Mooney, 91-20-71; D. Sharkey, 76-4-72; G. Baxter, 78-6-72; J. Redhead, 84-12-72; D. Dalby, 82-10-72; D. Street, 83-11-72; K. Mould, 87-15-72.

The annual match against SE Scotland will have taken place by now, hopefully we shall regain the cup at Haddington.

Both Brian Hughes and Kevin Mould, of Whickham, have done well this year in passing Phase 4 and Phase 2 respectively, better late than never with that news. May I remind you that some of the players who played in the knock-out competitions have not paid their entry fee. Please get in touch with David Cuthbertson, we need the money for the prizes.

Sometime in December we are having a competition at South Moor followed by the AGM presentation of all the trophies played for in 1997 followed by a meal. All members will be sent a letter asking if they would like to attend. The President of the Section Mr Tony Chambers of Shorts will present the trophies.

Jimmy Richardson

Cleveland

The Turfcare sponsored quiz versus the Institute of Groundsman takes place at Mount Oswald GC, Durham at 7.30 pm on December 10. The brilliant two Kevins from Brancepeth GC need help to defend the greenkeeper's record, so turn up lads and show your talent!

Our Secretary, Gary Munro, has been busy as Manager of the Wynyard GC. His course was host to the European Tour "School" recently in a 54 hole event. 150 entered with passports into the final qualifying stage on the Costa del Sol up for grabs.

George Salabank, Student Greenkeeper, at Eaglescliffe GC has, after three months employment, been taken on for a further year. Earlier he completed a two year course at the Scottish College where he obtained a HND in Sport and Leisure. He plays off a handicap of 11.

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The banquet

Have you booked your ticket yet for the most sensational night of the year? Due to ever growing demand, the venue this year will be Hall D of the Exhibition Centre and tickets are selling like hot cakes.

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Who's coming to dinner?



Find out more in next month's

GREENKEEPER
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Around the Green



Shaun Carroll is to attend a machinery training course in an effort to help out at his Club with machinery troubles in the future. Machines are getting more and more sophisticated, and costly!

The dry weather in September is great for treatment of greens and tees and there's no sign of worm casts yet!

There will be more news in the members' newsletter from our Secretary.

Bruce Burnell

North Wales

Well, it has been a long time hasn't it? May I first introduce myself - I am David Goodridge and Acting Chairman and Press Officer of your Section and Head Greenkeeper at Denbigh GC. The last 12 months have seen a turbulent time at committee level with resignations flying about and all the gossip and innuendoes that go on. Most of us have to deal with committees in our working life and know all the inherent short falls etc. However it is democratic even though things don't always go the way you would

want or expect. Remember it is YOUR Section and it needs YOUR input. I am available on 01824 710693 for your views, news and basically anything to do with golf and greenkeeping including births, deaths, weddings... I sound like a register office!

But seriously we are looking for a Secretary as Trevor Johnstone finds he hasn't got the time to do both the Secretary's and Treasurer's job. The position does take time and you will find your ear has to be surgically removed from the phone at times but there must be one of you out there that would love to know everything that's going on as well as contributing a hell of a lot to the Section.

The AGM will be held at the Christmas meeting, on December 3. More details will be available from me soon.

Onto a more sombre note, it is my sad duty to inform you that Ken Hawkins passed away on August 8 after spending some time in hospital after suffering a stroke. Any of you who played in the meetings at Cardon Park, Porthmadog or Frodsham will remember Ken as a starter who made sure everything ran smoothly, always had a laugh and a joke and showed such enthusiasm that starting a round of golf and the clubhouse afterwards will never be the same.

It is always best to finish things

on a high note and for one of our members I suppose a few thousand feet over the Atlantic next October is pretty high. The said member is Russell Lewis, of Northop Country Park. Russell who plays off 3 is representing Wales in the Hayter International Challenge Cup after winning his way through Frodsham, Maften Hall and Ganton and he finds himself on his way to Atlanta, Georgia. Nice one Russ, let's hope it's the Dragon that flies top of the pile. I'm sure the whole Section will be willing you on.

Anyway, it's Friday, it's 7.30pm, now where's that beer?

Dave Goodridge

Sheffield

On September 22 we held our autumn competition at Sicklehome GC. It was a perfect day for playing golf and was enjoyed by the 38 members who played. Our thanks go to Sicklehome for giving us courtesy of the course. Thanks also go to Mike Lake and his staff who presented the course in such lovely condition. Well done, Mike!

Thanks also go to the stewardess and her staff for the excellent meal which was enjoyed by everyone.

Our thanks go to Tony Dobson, of Henton 7 Chattells, who were the main sponsors of the competition and for providing the excellent prize table. Other trade members who provided prizes were Glen

Hardcastle, County Crops; Alan Dyson, Gem; Brian Booth, Rigby Taylors; Steve Burroughs, Amenity Turf Supplies; Peter Fell, Aitkens, and Les Purdy, Purdys.

Congratulations go to all the prize winners at Sicklehome and well done to Craig Duncan who, with an excellent score of 38 points, won the competition. I think local knowledge helped Craig. Well done.

Results: 1. C. Duncan, 38pts; 2. M. Coltas, 37 pts; 3. P. Neve, 36pts; 4. P. Docherty, 36pts (I heard you had a bit of fun on the 18th, Paul!)

My apologies to Paul Neve who also qualified for the Hayter Final. Unfortunately, Mick Coltas and Paul didn't have any luck in the final.

At the National Tournament Paul had better luck because he won his Handicap Division thus qualifying for the Kubuta Challenge. Well done and good luck Paul.

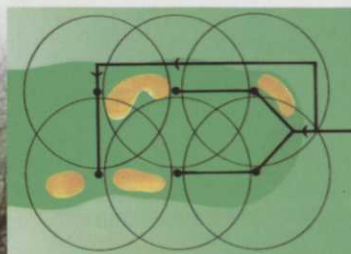
Congratulations go to Jeremy Duffield who has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Dore and Tootley GC. Jeremy moves to Dore from Howley Hall in Leeds. Good luck, Jeremy.

A few dates for your diaries.

Golf:- November 24, Christmas competition at Rotherham GC.

Lectures. December 4, Mr R. Laycock, Turf Consultant; February 5, Mr N. Baldwin, Service Chemicals, ex- STRI and March 5, Mr A.

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or (01425) 479232



Around the Green



➔ Morton, Maxicrop. All at Rotherham GC at 2.30pm.

Finally, Barry Heaney recently retired from Wortley GC due to ill health. I hope you have an easy and happy retirement, Barry. Barry has done a lot of work for the Association and is still doing it so you deserve a happy retirement. Good luck.

John Lax

Northern

This year's Winter Tournament which is at Scarcroft GC is to be held on Wednesday December 3 and NOT Wednesday December 10 at previously advertised. The tee off time will remain the same at 10.30 am. The AGM will follow the golf and meal with a start time of 6.00 pm.

This year's Invitation Day Tournament was held at Skipton GC. Unfortunately I was unable to attend but reports have filtered back that the day was a success. Many thanks to committee members for sorting out the proceedings on the day. Thank you to Ritefeed for sponsoring the prizes and to

Alan Cordingley for attending on their behalf. The greens were apparently in excellent condition so thanks to Gary Potter and his boys for their hard work preparing the course. Results for the day were as follows:- 1. A Baxter & M Collins; 2. A Court & J Oxley; 3. K Christie & T Jackson; 4. C Hill & A Cooper; 5. K Purdy & I Summersgill. Nearest the pin:- 1. P Kavanagh; 2. G Potter.

Congratulations to three of our lads within the Section on recently reaching Head Greenkeeper status. Firstly to Telford Jarvis, at Scarcroft GC, secondly to Tito Arana, at Riddlesden GC, and finally to Gavin Hawker, at Silsden GC. I hope you all settle in your new roles.

At a recent section committee meeting a couple of things were agreed upon. Firstly that the golfing events for 1998 will have to be paid in full at least one week before the tournament - no name and money before hand means no play on the day. This will hopefully prevent problems we have encountered in the past.

Secondly that the Annual Dinner Dance is again to be held at Bradford GC at the date agreed upon, March 14 1998. The agreed price is £16 per head to include the meal, wine on the table and entertainment.

It was nice to see our new

Regional Administrator, Doug Bell, attend our meeting. Doug stated that everything was a little strange to him at the moment but I am sure that he will soon get into the swing of things. No doubt many of you will be seeing Doug at your golf clubs - maybe he will even be able to persuade some to pay the recommended rates!

Again, if anyone has any news from within the Section please do not hesitate to contact me at 1 Cockley Meadows, Kirkheaton, Huddersfield HD5 0LA, telephone 01484 317813.

Simon Heppenstall

MIDLAND REGION

Peter Larter

Tel: 01480 437507

East Midlands

This year's Autumn Tournament was played at the excellent venue of Chevin GC on September 3. Although heavy rain had been falling for several days prior to the Tournament and on the day, the course was presented in pristine condition by Mike Billings and his staff. In difficult conditions some respectable scores were posted with the winners as follows:- Category 1: 1. P. Billings, Cotgrave Place, 82-8-74; 2. R. Barker, Kirby Muxloe, 78-3-75; 3. A. Foulds, Manor, 84-9-75. Category 2: 1. A. Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 91-16-75; 2.



K. Davis, Lutterworth, 92-15-77; 2. D. James, Scraftoft, 94-16-78. Category 3: 1. M. Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 91-21-70; 2. S. Heap, Rothley, 102-22-80; 3. M. Billings, Chevin, 104-22-82. Trade and Associate: G. Thurman, Charnwood Forest, 86-8-78.

The Section's gratitude should go to Chevin GC for courtesy of their fine course and to the Steward for an excellent meal. Also I would like to thank our very generous sponsors for the day, Charnwood and Highmeres Lawnmower Services who unfortunately could not be with us on the day because of the Saltex Show. Also I am most grateful to all those committee members who helped to run this event.

This years Supaturf K/O Cup was won by Adie Porter, Greetham Valley, who defeated Dave Mitchell, Springwater, by 6&5 in the final held at Lingdale GC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lingdale GC for hosting the Final on their excellent course.

In the Cosby Am-Am Richard Barker, Adie Porter, Roger Barker and myself finished with a 2-over-par score of 144 with the highlight of the round on the par 3, 185 yard 14th hole. After hitting a 5-iron onto the green Roger then knocked in a 30 foot putt for a birdie 2 giving the team a share in the 2s sweep. Antony Bindley

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PUMPS TECHNOLOGY

– the heart of the system

Irrigation systems are carefully designed by specialists to balance the local supply of water with the demand created by operating sprinklers. This balance can be achieved either by increasing water supply at the source; or, by limiting the number of sprinklers or zones of sprinklers applying water at any given moment.

Furthermore, sprinklers are designed to function at specific pressures. The water source must not only deliver an adequate volume of water, but also at the right pressure. This makes on-site pumps essential for proper irrigation on golf courses, parks and other large sites.

Considering golf courses have between 500 and 2,000 sprinkler heads controlled by many field stations, with generally only one pump station, the balancing act is

very complicated. Consider further that irrigation must occur in a limited time frame, that the amount of water being applied changes by station and by the irrigation event (with input of evapotranspiration data), and that higher elevation can reduce the water pressure available for sprinklers in higher zones. Now, you can appreciate why experienced engineers are needed to design and install large irrigation systems. Pressure and flow are related. If the flow of water used by sprinkler heads exceeds the supply, pressure will fall. If pressure falls below the design pressure of the head, it won't distribute water to the same rate, distance of uniformity.

One way to achieve balance is by regulating the number and types of heads operating at the

same time to match the water output of the pump station. You start with the known output(s) of the pump station and figure out a combination of zones to use this amount of water. You will also need to schedule irrigation so that all combinations of zones have the correct demand. The old way to do this was to pop in valve groups until the pump could just keep up. This is considerably easier today with the advent of computer flow management software and central controllers. Hydro-zoning of sprinklers and flow sensors make it possible to create an almost infinite number of sprinkler combinations.

■ New pump technologies – the other way to achieve balance is to regulate the output of the pump station by staging multiple pumps or by changing pump speed with variable frequency drive (VFD). This leads to a debate between pump station manufacturers regarding which is better.

Conventional electric pumps running on alternating current operate at one efficient speed. By staging pumps to come on one after the other as flow demand increases, the specified pressure and flow rate are met. When flow demand decreases, the pumps shut down in reverse order. Generally, a small pump runs constantly to maintain system pressure.

The rough edge of this type of system is the surge in pressure it can generate at start-up and shut-down. When electric current is supplied to each pump, it accelerates quickly to its design speed. The solution is to closely co-ordinate the opening and closing of sprinkler valves with the start-up and shut-down of the pumps in the station. Significant progress has been made getting pump controls to mate with sprinkler valve controls. However, the output is still restricted to the total of the pumps operating at any moment. Unless the irrigation schedule delivers a sprinkler demand that matches these staged outputs, some energy will be wasted.

VFD lets pumps ramp up and down to soften the pulse of pressure in the irrigation system. The

speed of these pumps can be changed to reduce or increase their output. While the efficiency of the pump might not be the greatest at lower rpms, some energy is conserved. The real question is when is the higher cost of VFDs returned by energy savings. The longer the irrigation system operates during the year, the more likely a VFD is to make sense.

■ Variable Speed Drive Pumps

The modern approach to pump station efficiency is two-sided. By communicating the pump station controller, a central controller can deliver greater efficiency and reduced pressure fluctuation. This results in lower energy consumption and fewer blowouts caused by pressure surges. Higher elevation zones can be recognised by the controller to signal the pump station to increase pressure. Since the pressure zones can be controlled to fit sprinkler design specifications, water distribution uniformity by the heads is optimised for the best control over application. Not only is energy saved, so is water.

Operating pressures are also coming down as lower-pressure turf heads are perfected. Older pump stations might need to be retrofitted to deliver less pressure.

Finally, as water supplies are stretched and lower quality water is utilised for large turf irrigation, filters must be engineered into the pump station. The needs of the filters must be met by the pumps, just as the needs of sprinklers have been. Backflushing and other types of filter maintenance must be considered in the irrigation schedule.

From the beginning, pump stations have been a critical component of irrigation system control. This role will continue to grow as water and energy become more precious.

SPRINKLER TECHNOLOGY – THE MUSCLES OF THE SYSTEM

Golf sprinklers have probably one common denominator – they all lay water down in a circular pattern. The basic principle of turf

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irrigation is to apply an even application of water over the irrigated area.

■ Valve in Head (VIH) or Block Control?

There are advantages and disadvantages to valve-in-head control. The important point to understand is that certain sites suit VIH sprinklers whilst others do not.

With total individual sprinkler control, maximum water use efficiency can be achieved. This is probably the most important argument for valve in head sprinklers and is the main reason for their development. The most important point to note here is that the system must be operated efficiently, however it is expensive, it is complex and it works well.

■ New Sprinkler Technologies –

Low pressure, low precipitation irrigation through nozzle engineering is becoming more popular towards the millennium, offering the following advantages:

a) More efficient profiles are easier to maintain, closer head spac-

ing facilitates lowering of precipitation rates and head operating pressure.

b) Lower head operating pressure saves in energy cost to pump the system:

- saves in the wear and tear on system due to surges and water hammer (heads, valves and plumbing),
- creates larger droplets that fight wind better.

c) Lowering the precipitation rates will conserve water:

- matching application rates to soils infiltration will minimise run-off wastage,
- water stays where applied, reduces compaction, chemical waste and liability,
- better uniformity of water yields better turf appearance and improves playability,
- smaller lateral pipes, swing joints, fewer and smaller automatic valves, fewer stations/control zones and less wire,
- eliminates the need for higher maintenance valve-in-head sprinklers to control application rates.

d) The initial costs savings will be augmented by such long term benefits as extended system life, and lower ongoing maintenance costs, with no valves in the sprinkler heads, live pipework under fairways or playing areas, under lower pressure, all system components will work better and last longer.

■ Metal or Plastic?

At the grocery store it's "paper or plastic?" but with sprinklers the question becomes "metal or plastic?" The conventional wisdom is that metal is more durable than plastic, and therefore is better. Up until the late 1970s metal (usually brass, sometimes zinc) was the standard material from which almost all sprinklers were made. However, times have changed and now plastic is the state-of-the-art material for sprinklers. The primary reason for this change in materials is cost; machined metal parts are more expensive in comparison to injection moulded plastic. Fortunately, most of today's plastic sprinkler

heads are very well engineered and will perform as well as a metal sprinkler.

Hybrids: A few companies manufacture plastic sprinkler bodies which accept brass nozzles, which often results in a better water pattern. Other manufacturers claim that plastic nozzles give better performance than brass. I personally haven't noticed any significant difference in performance between most brass and plastic nozzles, although brass nozzles will no doubt last longer.

■ Impact or Gear Drive?

Sprinkler heads are divided into two types based on the method they use to distribute the water.

Impact Rotors – the example which most people are familiar with is the "impact" rotor sprinkler which moves back and forth firing bursts of water. You probably know this sprinkler best for the distinct sound it makes when operating – tooka, tooka, tooka, tic, tic, tic, tic, tic, tooka, tooka, tooka, etc... The impact rotors are rapidly being replaced now by gear driven rotors which are very quiet, lower maintenance, and much smaller in size.

Gear Drive Rotors – provide a steady, powerful rotation to the sprinkling streams.

Water under pressure enters the base of the head through a diffuser which converts it into high velocity jets. These jets are then impinged against a turbine-like rotor causing it to spin at high speed.

A gear train, driven by the rotor, reduces the high rotational speed and converts it into a powerful turning torque. This torque gives the nozzle assembly the relatively slow rotational speed required for good coverage and precipitation.

Part-circle models incorporate a reciprocating mechanism that slowly drives the nozzle-assembly back and forth over a predetermined arc. Gear trains are usually contained in separate housings to protect the gears from debris in the water.

Which to use, impacts or gear drive? Cost-wise it comes out about the same.

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Around the Green



BB&O

At the time of writing this article the Lambourne golf day was approaching, unfortunately the deadline fell before the event so for those of you who did not participate you will have to wait until next month for the results. The long running Rigby Taylor fourball knockout is finally taking shape with the favourites easing through the field towards yet another final. I am referring to Tony French and Geoff Wheeler, having disposed of R. Fletcher and D. Parrish, from Henley, with ease 5&4 they are fairly confident of brushing aside their next opponents in the same manner. R. Clark & C. Jacobsen, from Harleyford, will have other ideas after thrashing B. Holt & N. Wheedon 6&4 and then coming through a tough encounter with G. Austin & M. Rapley by one hole. I have a feeling home advantage may prove decisive for the Harleyford boys. Unfortunately in the bottom half of the draw things have been a little slow with several teams unable to arrange a suitable date to play their matches thus leading to a couple of walk-overs! This has been a big disappointment to the sponsors. I would stress that in future if you are planning to play in this event please make every effort to play your matches!

The next Golf day is in a few weeks time at Richings Park, this is also our AGM.

Finally the Regional Seminar is on Wednesday, November 19, at Northampton Rugby Club. It would be nice to see a strong contingent from our section.

L. T. Anderson

Mid Anglia

This month our annual Regional Seminar takes place on the 19th at

Northampton Rugby Club. All members should have received an application form from Peter Larter, our Regional Administrator, a few months ago listing speakers etc and how to apply.

Next month our last golf event of the year takes place at Family Golf Centre, Chesfield Downs, Gravelly, on Thursday December 4.

It is the usual Texas Scramble format, so please organise your teams and make sure your entries are sent to Richard in good time as this event is sometimes oversubscribed.

The final of the Lodgeway Fourball Competition took place in early October between Gavin Simpkins and Steve Mason of Mount Pleasant GC and Rupert Lawrence and Eddie Thompson, of Berkhamsted GC. Eighteen holes were contested in the morning at the end of which Rupert and Eddie were seven up (local knowledge an obvious advantage!).

However, Gavin and Steve fought back during the afternoon round at neighbouring Ashridge, but eventually lost by 4&3.

Congratulations to the finalists and our thanks to Berkhamsted and Ashridge golf clubs for allowing the final to take place and also to Gerald Bruce and Jim Cassidy for the fine condition of both courses.

Once again, Chas Ayres, from Lodgeway, our sponsor, has organised the event well and I'm sure everyone who entered this year's event will be looking forward to next year's competition. Paul Lockett

Midland

On October 2 the Autumn Tournament was held at North Worcester GC. A great day was had by all and many thanks go to the greenkeepers who presented the course in superb condition and to the catering staff on the excellent meal. The results were:- Gross - M. Hughes, 69; Nett - 1. M. Jones, 65; 2. M. Hughes; 3. J. Wood; 4. D. Fellows, 67. Trade Cup - R. Minton, Mira-

cle; Longest Drive - R. Minton; Nearest Pin - T. Cheese. We would like to thank our main sponsors for the day who were Burrows of Stafford.

The Christmas competition will be held on December 8, at Druids Heath. This will also be the venue for the AGM. It has been decided by the committee that the current officers will serve for two years so they have another year to serve. The other members of the committee are up for re-election so anyone wishing to stand must be put forward to me before December 1 with a proposer and seconder. We have decided to change the AGM in this way as to save any confusion on the night as there was last year. This will mean that there will be no nomination on the night. The same procedure will stand for questions to the committee. You will need to send me them before the above date but we do anticipate there will be some questions asked on the night. I would appreciate your commitment and support at this AGM as it is your Section and you have the opportunity to wish Andrew Parker Smith a very speedy recovery from a terrible accident. Andrew works for Soil Systems and mainly covers the south of our region so there will be a small number of you who will be familiar with him. Let's hope you make a speedy recovery and a full one - best wishes from the Section.

The Committee Cup was held at Walsall GC on September 17 and was won by myself. Thanks to Eddie Stant for organising the competition and to Walsall GC.

Jonathan Wood

SOUTH EAST REGION

Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

South East Region

What a difference this year! The similarity between Blackpool (last year's venue) and Scarborough is that they are both by the seaside. Scarborough however does not have the distractions of Blackpool,



doesn't stay open until the early hours, there isn't a bar every 25 yards and most significant of all does not have a 'Brannigans', which were some of the reasons for the South East's lack of success last year!

This year, as those of you who failed to qualify in a rain soaked 9 holes at Ham Manor for the Hayter Finals will be glad to know, the South East Team made the best of their good fortune in qualifying in such conditions and had a most successful few days at Ganton.

The course which was in superb condition is a most attractive inland links with practically every hole being a potential "card destroyer" and Ganton have done a superb job in converting what appeared to be old open-cast mining sites and disused quarries into bunkers!

For the first time in a long while the South East got into the money being narrowly beaten into second place by first time winners SW & SW, but were more than compensated by the success of Dave Murdoch, Liphook GC, taking the best gross prize and Andy Sheehan, Bentley GC, playing superbly to level par taking the 2nd best net and the coveted English place in the International Match to be held at Atlanta, Georgia next year. Barry Jackson, Broke Hill GC, played very steadily to make the 3rd spot in the 19-28 Handicap Section.

As non-playing Team Captain (I didn't have enough golf balls to play Ganton!) my thanks are due to Dave Murdoch, Andy Sheehan, Neil Gilham, Jon Selwood, Jon Hill, Ian Sutcliffe, Martin Mison, Barry Jackson and Trevor Hindmarsh for applying themselves so well and for being a great bunch of lads and making my trip so enjoyable.

The Region's thanks are also due to Kim Macfie and Hayters for their generosity in sponsoring this event for the last five years and Kim - if you promise to improve the joke you can take this as an invitation to be the Region's guest at the Gentle-



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men's Dinner which will be held at Walton Heath Golf Club on March 6 1998.

Derek Farrington

Essex

On September 25 the Essex Section met at Writtle College to hear Dr Tim Lodge give us an insight into the use and misuse of top dressing and gave us an update on recent research into golf greens construction and maintenance. Our thanks go to Chelmsford Grass Machinery and Nigel Cornwell for sponsoring the lecture and to Patissons, Pearl, Avoncrop, Kings and Parker Hart who provided raffle prizes. Thanks also to the 28 people who turned up for the meeting. If you require notes to this meeting please contact Martin Forrester on 01245 603131.

Our best wishes for the future go to Di Edwards and Tony Filbee who have both recently retired from Writtle College. We welcome Stuart Brown as a new member of staff at Writtle.

Dates for your diary – Presentation Dance on November 14 at Langdon Hills and the AGM on December 3 at Orsett GC.

Following two days of rain we were greeted by strong winds on October 9 when we visited Stock Brook Manor for our latest golfing challenge, sponsored by Grass Hopper. The course was in excellent condition and for a course so young Michael Fance and his greenkeeping team must be very proud. We would like to thank Mr Peachey, the owner, for making the club facilities available to the Essex Section. We would also like to thank Kevin and Alison in the Pro's Shop for marking the cards and to Gerado, Fernando and all the catering and bar staff. The results for the day were as follows:- 0-9 handicap:- 1. A. Toomey, 38 pts; 2. M. Fance, 31 pts; 3. J. Cook, 31 pts; 10-18 handicap:- 1. S. Townsend, 37 pts; 2. C. Ward, 36 pts; 3. J. Morgan, 35 pts; 19-28 handicap:- 1. G. Speller, 33 pts; 2. J. Barnard, 23 pts; 3. M. Forrester, 23 pts; Trade prize – S. Denton, 32 pts; Guest prize – B. Wallace, 38 pts; Booby prize – B. Speller; Nearest the pin on the 7th sponsored by the Greenkeepers Supply Company – M. Fance; Longest drive on the 18th sponsored by the Greenkeepers Supply Company – S. Cox; Putting competition:- 1. S. Townsend and A. Toomey; 3. M. Fance.

Thanks to the trade for their generosity in giving the raffle prizes:- Avoncrop, Collier's, Grass Roots, Kings, Parker-Hart, Pearl, Rigby Taylor, Scotts/Miracle and Tuckwells. We have already mentioned our sponsors for the day but a special thanks must go to Dill Barnard, from Grass Hopper, who

joined the 45 players throughout the day.

Our next function is on Friday, November 14. The disco and buffet evening will give us all a chance to bring our other halves! It will be held at Langdon Hill GC at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £8 each, for more information ring Carl Crocher on 01375 892354.

The Essex Section's first AGM will be held on December 3 at Orsett GC, please try and attend. More details will follow, if not please contact Andy Sheehan on 01277 215765. If you have any news or information you want to go in the magazine, call me on 01702 522202.

Dave Wells

Sussex

The autumn meeting was held at Birch Grove which is a course I had heard a lot about but never had the pleasure of playing before, and what a pleasure it was. The layout, setting and presentation was first class. Can I pass on our thanks to Jon Hill for arranging the day for us and to him and his team for presenting the course so well? As many of you know, the aim of the day was to raise money for the Brighton General Renal Unit where Chris Allen has his treatment. As there are no clubhouse facilities at Birch Grove, Jon arranged for his local publican to do the bar and catering for us. This was a great success with bacon rolls on arrival, a ploughmans lunch and a barbecue to end the day. After all costs were taken out we managed to raise around £500 with which we will be purchasing some colour TVs for the unit. Ray Day will be arranging the presentation. Before I get on to the results of the competition there is one more thank you to the sponsors for the day, that is Parker Hart for providing all the prizes and Miracle for the half way house. Without support from companies like these the cost of golf days would be far more. The results are as follows:- Morning Stableford – 1. Jon Hill, 36 pts; 2. Chris Reed, 34 pts; 3. Shaun Sturrock, 32 pts. The longest walk was Johnny Beck, of Miracle (sorry Justin, you can't win all the time!). Afternoon Stableford – 1. Neil Cleverly, Gary Ogilvie, Mike Butrymowicz; 2. George Barr, Colin Cathie, Paul Ward.

The next meeting is the Turkey Trot on December 12, at Littlehampton. Don't forget to return your entry form as soon as you receive it as there is usually a big response to this event.

Since staging the National Tournament at Cooden Beach, Stefan Antolik has been invited to play in the Kubota Challenge at the Belfry. Good luck Stefan and have a great time.

By the time you read this article you will have received notification of this year's AGM. We want as many members as possible to attend as it still seems to be the same old faces every year. I also understand that some of the committee who have worked hard for the Section over the years would like a rest so some posts will be becoming vacant.

Colin Cathie

SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES REGION

Paula Humphries

Tel: 01363 82777

South Coast

Our Christmas Turkey Trot will be held at Royal Winchester GC on December 1. This will be followed by the AGM. On completion of the AGM there will be the Christmas Dinner and prize giving. All members wishing to play golf should send their names complete with current handicaps and a cheque for £12.50 to:- Tony Gadd, Cherry Trees, Lymington Road, Milford on Sea, Hampshire, SO41 0QL, telephone 01590 643746. All cheques should be made payable to BIGGA South Coast Section. All entries should be with Tony by Friday November 21. Anyone who just wants to attend the AGM and the Christmas Dinner are most welcome. Please contact Tony in the usual way. Anyone wishing to be nominated to serve on the committee or if you have any items for the agenda then please contact our Secretary Jef Drake, 10 Coldharbour Lane, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 7PN, telephone 01722 503938.

Our Region/Section seminar will be held at Sparsholt College on February 26 1998. The speakers will include Janet Adamson, from BIGGA Headquarters; Allan Mitchell, our Section Chairman; John Noyce, from Scott Fertilisers, and John Wells, the Course Manager from Bocket Hall. There will also be two students who will be talking on a greenkeeping subject of their own choosing. The cost for the day will be £15 for members and £20 for non-members which will include lunch. All entry forms should be filled in and returned complete with cheques to our Secretary Jef Drake. Previous years' seminars have been a great success. This is all down to our education sub-committee who have been responsible for the organisation and the choosing of some very good speakers.

BTME will soon be with us again. I am told that the regional coach is filling up fast. Hurry up and get your completed forms and cheques to our Regional Administrator Mrs Paula Humphries, Truants Cottage, Zeal Monachorum, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6DF, tele-



phone 01363 82777. All of you who are travelling on the coach and wish to make use of the South Coast Section feeder catch, contact me on 01329 282362. I will then know what size coach to book and also be able to arrange the various pick-up points.

I have just heard that Brian Gauntlett, who is an Assistant Greenkeeper at Romesey GC, has just become the proud father of a baby daughter. Megan was born on Saturday September 20. Congratulations to Brian and Natasha on their happy event.

One last piece of news – I have just had a telephone call from Tony Gadd who informs me that the South Coast have retained the trophy in the annual match against the South West Section. The score was three games to two. It sounds like it was a very close fought game – well done lads! One thing Tony did not tell me was whether he won his match or not!

Ken Lodge

South West

Winter is here and everyone will be well into their Autumn and Winter programmes. The professional has started his money counting operation and so will be busy until Christmas while the greenkeeper is getting the blame for everything from the captain's hernia to the Bosnia crisis.

Image becomes a real problem for the greenkeeper at this time. Gone are the heady days of summer where we could take on a God-like persona as the men responsible for the lush fairways and superb greens. It is now that a low profile is adopted or better still a long vacation is taken, preferably in a different hemisphere. I have always envied the professional at this time. Image for them has never been a problem. After all they are the ones that have what every club golfer longs for, the ability to play golf. They are there at the hub of the golf club with their bouffant hair styles and designer couture selling magic wands to the gullible masses while occasionally disclosing snippets of information on the latest swing techniques. Is it any wonder that when a nubile young female accidentally strays into the confines of a golf club it is the assistant professionals that get their grubby little mitts on them long before any greenkeeper gets so much as a sniff in the relevant direction?

But enough of my bitter envy, what has been happening within our Section? Well, two matches have recently taken place and it has become clear that Tim Dabernett's departure from greenkeeping was in fact a desperate ploy to relinquish his captaincy as we complete a 100% record in all three

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Around the Green



matches this year ie losing the lot! Following on from Tim, vice captain Matt Hawker took over the reins in a four matches to one loss against the South Wales greenkeepers at Thornbury. Thanks to Robin Greaves and his crew for their usual high quality course preparation for that one. I must apologise to the rest of the team for not being able to attend the meal which I have been informed was excellent, but I made the mistake of taking the only set of house keys with me to the match and as my locked out wife likes to punish such misdemeanours with justice based on Islamic principles I felt it necessary to return home quickly. Matt, following his traumatic experience against the Welsh, gave the job of captain to Terry Humphries at High Post against the South Coast greenkeepers. Unfortunately the South Coast like their South Wales counterparts continued the unsociable habit of playing good golf and so came out three matches to one victors in that one. But we all enjoyed the excellent course maintained by Lauchlan Millar and his team and a very pleasant meal to follow. Getting the team together once again proved to be very difficult so please could everyone try and make themselves available for these fixtures as they are great fun and help keep the links between all other greenkeepers going.

There is however some good news on the golfing front as congratulations must go to Anthony Knight, from Kingsdown, who showed his true form in taking Ganton apart and coming second overall in the Hayter Final as well as winning his handicap category.

Best wishes must also go to Terry Humphries, our long serving committee man on his retirement from Filton and also to John Barr from Bristol and Clifton who is travelling North of the border again for a new project up there.

So what events are coming up? Well, actually quite a lot. Firstly we have the annual South West regional seminar at Cannington on November 26. Everyone should have had their forms for that by now and as you will be able to see it promises to be a good one. We also have the Christmas Tournament at Minchinhampton on December 10. This is always quite popular and great fun so please go along to that to support the Section and to enjoy yourselves. Then in January we have the BTME at Har-

rogate and the Region's coach party so if anyone wants to go along and I am sure there will be many, then give Paula Humphries a ring.

Marc Haring

Devon and Cornwall

Could members please note the change of date for the Avoncrop sponsored meeting which will now be held on Tuesday March 3 1998?

Once again Christmas is approaching fast, what better way to start the festive season than by attending our P J Flegg sponsored Christmas meeting which will be held at Okehampton GC on Wednesday December 10? As in previous years numbers will be limited to the first 80 members so to avoid disappointment please return your entry with correct money as soon as possible and before the closing date. The day will start as usual with golfing members playing for the P J Flegg Trophy with the format being greensome. For those of you not wishing to play golf the now customary course walk will start from the clubhouse at approximately 10.30 with Head Greenkeeper Richard Wisdom showing members his fine work. Lunch will be followed by our afternoon cabaret and the day will conclude with the raffles.

I would like to remind you that the Region's annual seminar will be held at Cannington College on Wednesday November 26. Places on the Region's package to BTME 98 which includes transport, accommodation and entry to the BTME show and seminars are going fast so to avoid disappointment you are advised to return your booking form as soon as possible. If you haven't already booked your place for the seminar or BTME package don't delay, call our Regional Administrator Paula Humphries today on 01363 82777. Richard Whyman

South Wales

Our Autumn Tournament was played for recently over the Tenby Links, a super golf course that breathes character and tradition, the only downfall being that it lies far west, certainly too far west most people must have thought. That was a pity and certainly their loss for we were greeted with warmth and hospitality and were made to feel at home by each and everyone at the club. Where else does the Secretary buy you a drink on arrival and the Captain buy you a drink with your meal? The weather was glorious, warm sunshine with a stiff breeze (gale force 3) - the Captain informed us that it was considered a gentle breeze for Tenby and ideal golfing conditions. The course itself was in excellent

condition and the greens were just a little on the quick side, a tribute to the dedication of Head Greenkeeper Chris Jenkins and his staff. Chris incidentally dusted down his clubs and joined us playing his first 18 holes in let's just say a long while! We hope that we will see a lot more of him in the near future, he's still got the swing you know!

Winner of the day and the Jacobson Cup was Daryl Bray of Morriston GC with a nett 73 winning a golf bag. Second, winning the President's Cup was Andy Roach of Haverfordwest GC winning a trendy long handled putter. Winner of the Waycott Cup was Langland Bay's Ian Harwood who also won a Ryder Cup sweater.

Our sincere thanks to the sponsors, Keith Morgan Mowers and to both Ben and Jon Morgan for their continued support. A special thank you to the Tenby GC for granting us the courtesy of the golf course and to their Secretary Jeff Pearson who really did make us feel welcome. Thank you to the caterers and Roger Phillips for a wonderful feast and to the Captain, Mr Howard Griffiths for his kind words. All in all we had an excellent day!

At the Thornbury GC, Bristol the Annual Match South Wales versus the South West was recently contested. The South Wales Section were out to avenge the white washing they received at the hands of the South West team at Tredegar Park GC last year. It very nearly didn't happen for at 3.00 pm on the evening before the match was due to take place we had registered only 4 players! 6 hours of frantic phone calls later we had a team of 9, would they all turn up? Yes they did and I'd like to thank them all for doing so. For the match that very nearly didn't happen turned out to be our best win for a number of years.

The results were:- Match 1 - Peter Lacey/Adrian Panks won 3/2; Match 2 - Daryl Bray/Dennis Jones won 3/2; Match 3 - Vince Northey/Ray Everson lost 4/2; Match 4 - Laurence Walter/Lee Carter won 3/2; Match 5 (singles) - Kerry Llewellyn won 6/4. A sincere thanks to all those who turned up and helped in bringing the Shield back across the water. Hopefully we can keep it this side for at least a few years! Thanks also to Matthew Hawker and his team for the spirit in which the matches were played and to all at the Thornbury GC who contributed in making the day such an enjoyable one.

Please book early for the Winter Tournament, Christmas Competition and AGM at Pyle and Kenfig GC on Wednesday December 10 since I've a feeling we are going to be a bit stretched! Peter Lacey

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Profile

Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club. Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star...



Name: **Alan Buckley**
Club: **Newark GC**
Position: **Assistant**
Age: **47**

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
Five years

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
Hoping to continue NVQ III at Askham Bryan

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
All types of construction and setting the course out for the larger competitions

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Divotting

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you have ended up doing?
Burglar alarms service engineer.

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
My brother Ian at Rhuddlan GC.

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Alert the golfer that our work is done to improve their golf if given time to do it

8. What are your hobbies?
Golf, DIY and gardening.

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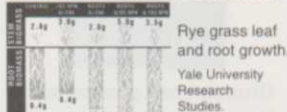


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John Millen, Willow Valley Golf and Country Club, Highmoor Lane, Clifton, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 4JB

Ulverston Golf Club Ltd

Applications are invited from qualified greenkeepers for the position of

COURSE MANAGER

At this very popular 18 hole parkland golf course situated on the Furness Peninsula in South Cumbria, some 10 miles from the Lake District National Park.

Applicants must be experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping with appropriate qualifications and have a practical knowledge of modern machinery and irrigation systems with good organisational and management skills. A sound knowledge of the current Health & Safety regulations is also required.

Accommodation is not available. Salary is negotiable. Apply in writing with full CV to:

P Wedgwood, Hon Secretary, Ulverston Golf Club Ltd, The Club House, Bardsea Park, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 9QJ

Closing date: First post Monday 24th November 1997

Chorlton-cum-Hardy Golf Club

We currently have a vacancy for an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Greenkeeping experience is essential.

Apply in writing with CV to:

The Secretary, Chorlton-cum-Hardy Golf Club, Barlow Hall, Barlow Hall Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 7JJ

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- ◆ Take great care and pride in maintaining all equipment
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Agates Nursery Farm, Fleet Hill, Finchampstead, Berkshire RG40



Eaglescliffe Golf Club

requires a

HEAD GREENKEEPER/COURSE MANAGER

For an 18 hole parkland course.

Applicants must possess recognised qualifications and be experienced in all aspects of golf course management, including maintenance of machinery.

The ability to lead and motivate staff, organise work programmes and maintain health and safety requirements is essential.

Practical knowledge of modern greenkeeping methods and budgetary control is also required.

An attractive salary will be paid. Accommodation is not available.

The position to commence on 1 April 1998.

Applications in writing with a CV to:

The Secretary, Eaglescliffe Golf Club, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton on Tees TS16 0DQ.

Closing date: 24 November 1997



Stratford Oaks Golf Club, Stratford on Avon, Warks

invite applications for the position of

DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

The successful applicant will be a BIGGA member with a minimum of NVQ Level 3 and hold a PA1 and PA2 Certificate. At least five years greenkeeping experience and a good working knowledge of automatic irrigation, machine maintenance and golf course construction.

The position is available immediately and the salary will be based on BIGGA salary scales. There is no accommodation available.

Please apply in own handwriting and full CV to:

Nigel Powell, Director of Golf, Stratford Oaks Golf Club, Bearley Road, Snitterfield, Stratford on Avon, Warks CV37 0EZ

Malone Golf Club COURSE MANAGER

Malone Golf Club was founded in 1895 and is one of Ireland's finest parkland courses. The 27 hole layout is situated five miles from Belfast city centre, in 300 acres of rolling parkland dominated by a 28 acre lake.

The Club has hosted Irish amateur championships as well as professional tournaments, including the Irish Senior Masters.

We are seeking a top class head greenkeeper/course manager, with a proven record on parkland courses. Applicants should therefore have a recognised qualification in agronomy, with specialisation in golf course management. Applicants should have at least five years' experience as a head greenkeeper or assistant at a mature course.

Applicants must be fully versed in modern methods and techniques of maintenance and presentation, as well as having proven man management skills, and the ability to prepare and monitor work programmes and budgets for both revenue and capital spends.

An excellent remuneration package will be available to the successful candidate.

Please send CV by 30 November 1997 to:

**The Club Manager, Malone Golf Club,
240 Upper Malone Road, Belfast BT17 9LB**

Ganton Golf Club Limited

wish to appoint a

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Established in 1891, Ganton Golf Club is recognised as one of the finest championship courses in the British Isles, and is scheduled to host some important national and international amateur events in the future, including the Curtis Cup.

Applicants should have experience as a Head Greenkeeper or Deputy. The requirement will be to lead an established and experienced greenkeeping team to maintain a classical heathland/links course to the highest standards.

Salary and conditions are negotiable.

A good 4 bedroomed house is provided at the club.

Please apply in writing enclosing a full curriculum vitae by the 30th November 1997 to;

**Major RG Woolsey, Secretary,
Ganton Golf Club, Ganton, near Scarborough,
North Yorkshire YO12 4PA**

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Send or fax a full CV and photograph to:

**Gary Moseley
Colony Club Gutenhof
Schubertring 6/1
A-1010 Wien (Vienna)
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Salary will reflect the importance of these positions along with use of company vehicle and expense account. It is unlikely that anyone under 27 years of age will have the necessary experience and qualifications for these positions.

Applications in writing with CV and current remuneration to:

**Personnel Manager,
10 Wenham Drive, Meir Park, ST3 7QG**

A Norwegian experience

Anna Joelsson Softing, Golf Course Superintendent at Chalmers GC, in Sweden reports on activities in the frozen north.

It was in the middle of a time when both Susanne Lindstrom, Head Greenkeeper at Partille GC, and I were spending more than 15 hours a day, at work. Susanne had been installing a brand new pumphouse, the results of the irrigation salesman (size XXL) of the S-48-Irrigation Company jumping on the pipes. I had been rolling around on my greens in my Helly-Hansen thick thermal outfit, in the belief that the friction between myself and the turf would raise the temperature in the top layer of my greens so that they would start to grow.

But things were getting better, I received a letter from the NGA/NGF – The Norwegian Greenkeeper Association/Federation. It was an invite to a Special seminar in Oslo, with Dr Paul Rieke, from Michigan State University, and Scientist Julie Dionne, from Laval University in Quebec.

Susanne and I did not waste any time learning more. We called for directions – it's embarrassing but I have to admit that we women are not too good at this, I am lucky every time I find my way to work.

Jeanette Immo, had started her new Head Greenkeeper job at Larviks GC in Norway. So Susanne and I decided to use our famous simultaneous capacity and combine the seminar with a visit to Jeanette at Larviks GC. We organised both housing and travelling arrangements, but there was only one thing missing – a good chef – there are not a lot of McDonald's in Norway, since Norwegians only eat raw fish!

So we called on Carl-Axel Hernstrom, Head Greenkeeper at Ekerums Golf and Country Club. He quickly collected his Big Bertha, his cookbook and picked us up.

We went to Norway and Larvik GC, a course designed by the Swedish Architect Jan Sederholm. He must have been in a good mood when he designed this course, because it was absolutely gorgeous. The greens where lush like a Swedish midsum-

mer's dream. This is due to the fact that they had been covered with a thin acrylic canvas for eight days. The fairways were so even that it was almost insulting and the bunkers so strategically placed that you shot from one bunker to another. Larviks GC is not just famous for the fantastic course but for the Larvik Invitation which is played here in July. Last year golfers like John Daly, Jesper Parnevik, Colin Montgomerie, Ian Woosnam and many others played here.

After having scrutinised the surroundings we found that this was more than just a great golf course. We found a genuine farm estate, with cattle and also a big and beautiful castle, a valley full of deer and cabins for hire – all made with a Nordic natural materials like domestic woods, stone floors, roof paintings. This is an estate with a Championship Course with an Nordic touch, it's something special, one of a kind and it could only be in Norway.

Enough of impressions of the course. After an 89 I was rather tired and it was time to do what we came for – attend the seminar. We all got a warm welcome from our Norwegian colleagues and the seminar initiated by Stal Bo, the President of the Norwegian Golf Association.

Dr Paul Rieke talked about the importance of identifying physical soil problems on golf courses. If you have, for instance, a problem with your greens you must localise the problem in order to do something about it.

Is it a compaction problem? A soil layer problem? A thatch problem? A drainage problem? A water holding capacity problem? A nutrient CEC-problem? Or a combination of the above? He talked a lot about thatch which is caused by compacted soils, acid soils, overwatering, aggressive species/cultivators, improper mowing practices, improper use of pesticides or a badly balanced fertilisation programme. The most efficient way to keep the thatch layer to a minimum, was to topdress frequently with small amounts from the start. Once you've got a problem it's a lot more work to get rid of thatch with verticutting, hollow coring and so on. As always it is best to do it correctly the first time (easier said than done!).

He also said that grass had a low IQ-value – this is my personal Swedish translation and should not taint Dr Paul Rieke – since the grass does not care if it gets the fertiliser in granules or solved in water and sprayed on. This may very well be,

but I have my own idea of how to treat my greens. My recipe is "treat your greens like you, yourself would like to be treated".

I have been thinking about my Pennecross, bent greens and found out that they are almost identical with the human being. I base my theory on the fact of several similarities. Both grass and humans:-

1) consist of cells, 2) we need a good environment to feel good, 3) we could get ill (cold virus, fungus disease), 4) sometimes we need medicine to cure the illness (penicillin, Rovral), 5) some humans/grass are stronger than others, 6) we need nutrients to survive, 7) we all die eventually, 8) we breed, 9) we prefer the warm summer, 10) we do not like it when other people walk on us.

Julie Dionne told us about the trials made mainly in Canada but also in Norway and Sweden with different winter protective covers on Poa annua greens. Winter damages are caused by three major factors, cold temperatures, turf grass diseases and disciccation. The snow cover is an important fact, it has a good insulating cover with low thermal conductivity, but the problem is that sometimes it gets too much and sometimes to little. The snow cover is some winters over 1 meter thick and rainfall will also destroy the good snow cover. Industry offer several protective cover materials but they do not have precise recommendations on their use under northern climate.

An effective winter protection programme must: 1) Include a sound fungicide protection prior to the covers, 2) always use impermeable protective covers, 3) consider local winter conditions and snow cover, 4) monitor temperature profile under covers, 5) install and remove covers at the right time, 6) use spring covers after removal of winter protective covers, 7) recognise that winter covers will never replace good turf management.

Winter protective covers are invaluable tools for the management of cold stress. The research provides information in an area where there was a real lack of information. Winter protection of golf greens requires knowledge on cold stress physiology, cool-season disease control, local winter micro-climate and protective covers.

The seminar finished, and then the first working day after the seminar was over, both Susanne's and my greens were white, not with snow, but with a spring cover mat.

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