

Greenkeeper

February 1998 – £3.50

INTERNATIONAL



Smooth running

Page 16

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Greenkeeper

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February 1998

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Greenkeeper International
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Reports and pictures from BTME98

Gordon Child 58



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Wet, wet, wet

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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Royal Mid Surrey has seen the colour return to its cheeks over the past year thanks to an overseeding programme and a new irrigation system. Scott MacCallum went to visit.

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Stick with what we know

As the dust settles I hope you can all look back at your Harrogate experiences with equal doses of pleasure and satisfaction and join in the general belief that the week was another to mark down on the list of memorable occasions.

I must admit I do enjoy the whole experience the only downside having to constantly end conversations with the phrase - "It's been great talking with you but I should really have been somewhere else five minutes ago." It must be as wearing to hear as it is to say.

It is amazing, however, even when you are at your busiest your mind finds opportunities to wander and at one stage during the week I found myself thinking what a great job James McEvoy, our Sales and Marketing Manager, has.

It seems pretty simple to me. He calls up people in the industry asks if they are interested in advertising in the magazine or whether they would like to take up any of the many exciting sponsorship possibilities BIGGA has to offer.

They then answer in one of two ways. 1. "That's a great idea, thanks for offering me the chance to be associated with such a superb organisation. For how much shall I make out the cheque?" Or they say. 2. "I'm sorry, James, I'm afraid we've allocated our budget for this year in other areas. It's a shame because it really is a stonking good idea."

In the latter case he merely continues to make calls until someone gives him answer number 1. Easy!

I know he's been to college and read enough books to be able to spout forth about any marketing phenomena which has ever existed but I reckon I could probably do his job in the few spare moments I have when I'm not editing this magazine.

I know such things happen because one of the PGA Regions sent a letter to its members suggesting that they, the club professional, could also take on the additional role of Course Manager.

I've also seen a recruitment ad in another magazine for a "Golf Manager" - "combining the responsibilities of the Head Greenkeeper with the Club Professional". It's true.

Let's face it, I couldn't do James' job, just as he couldn't do mine. The same goes for golf club staff. Obviously at the turn of the century circumstances dictated that a club professional combined duties but making a case that the jobs then are the same as now would be as pointless as arguing black is white.

The roles are not interchangeable. In this highly advanced, fast changing, age you need to work hard just to keep up to date with the role that you know best. The thought of making a decent fist of a completely different job just because it happens to involve the same subject is plainly ludicrous.

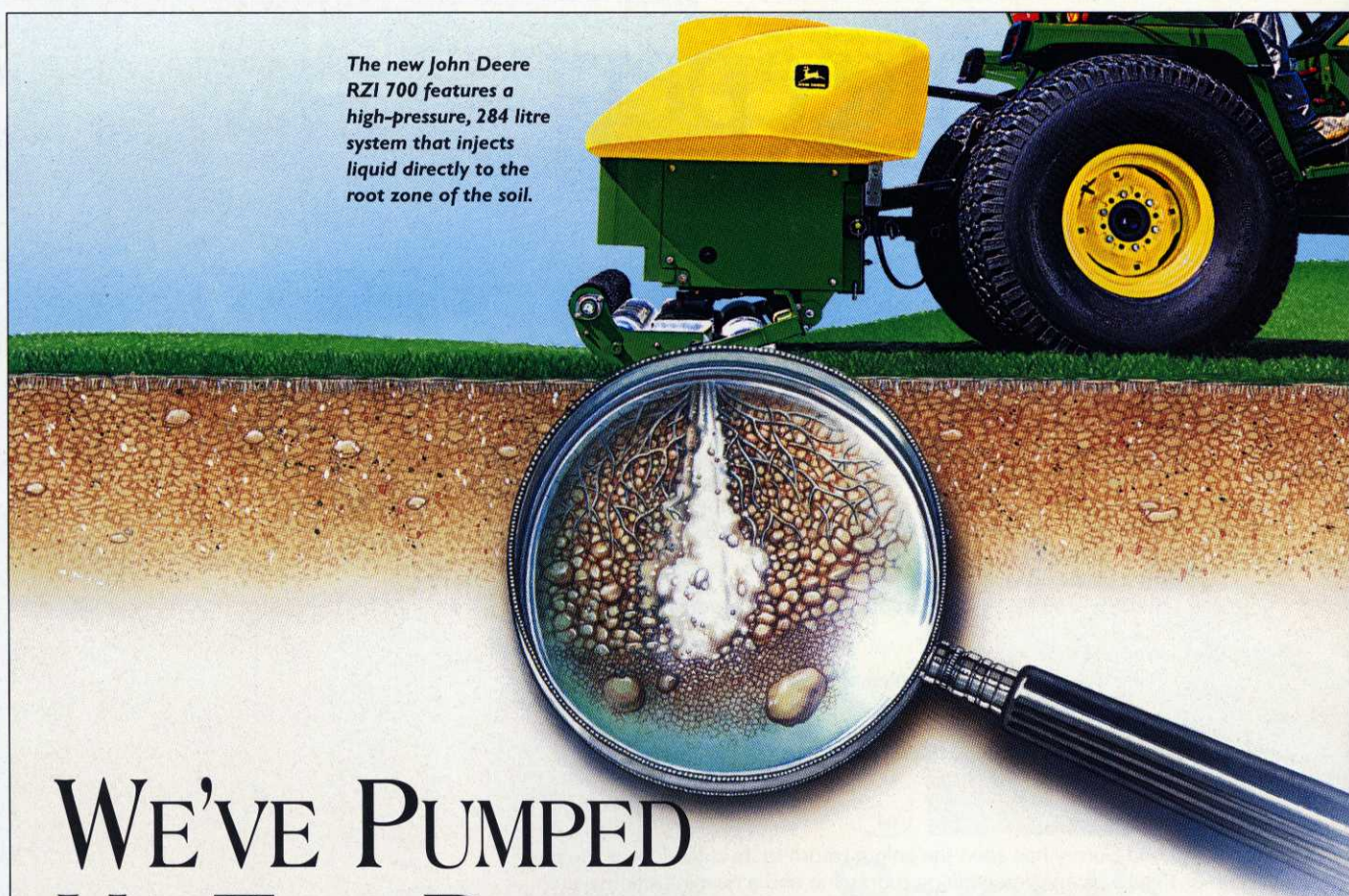
Let's continue to produce the best possible Course Managers to work alongside the best possible Club Professionals.

PS. I hope you like your new style Greenkeeper International.

Editor: Scott MacCallum

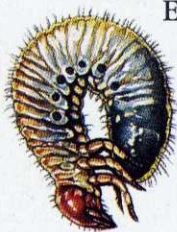


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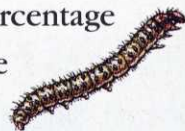
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In fact, tests show that a high percentage of grubs are killed from the force of injecting water alone. Hard to get more environmentally friendly than that.



NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE

C 626 E

Pat starts work on new headquarters

As soon as the bells to welcome in the new year had died down work began on BIGGA's new Headquarters and training facility and it was on Monday January the 5th that Chairman, Pat Murphy, arrived at Aldwark Manor to perform one of his last official duties before BTME.

The cutting of the first turf on the ground which will house the new Headquarters marked the culmination of months and years of negotiation and planning.

The new building will be adjacent to the 16th hole of Aldwark Manor Hotel Golf and Country Club, just north of York, and only 100 yards from the Association's existing rented accommodation. Once complete - the projected completed date being September of this year - it will offer superb facilities for Headquarter's-based training courses as well as accommodating 14 staff members.

"Today is a moment many of us have dreamed about for several years and I am extremely proud and fortunate to be the man to start off the building work," said Pat Murphy.

"The fact that we are in a position to build our own Headquarters is a measure of the success the



Left to Right: Pat Murphy; Project Manager, Stewart Broadhurst; Quantity Surveyor, Bridget Pearson; BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas, and Contract Manager James Moody, of RBA Moody Brothers (Contractors Ltd).

Association has enjoyed to date, and with the excellent facilities the new building will provide, BIGGA is sure to go from strength to strength," he added.

Within hours of the first turf

being turned site preparation work began in earnest and a matter of days later the site was virtually unrecognisable as it had been fenced off and heavy machinery had been moved in.

Patron's receive their just desserts at Award dinner



The Scottish Region Patron's Award Dinner at the Terrace Hotel, in Stirling, saw an excellent attendance of Patron's, Regional Board and Section representatives.

The Region and Patrons congratulated all winners of the awards each of whom was presented with a scroll, books and given a three day trip to BTME.

The awards went to members who had devoted a great deal of

time to Section business.

Picture shows award winners L-R: Stuart Sime, Leven Links GC; George Morrison, West Kilbride GC; Kenny Duncan, Dunfermline GC; Gordon Trotter, Glencorse GC; Dale Robertson, Newmachar GC; Stuart Taylor, Killermont GC; John Morton, Alford GC, Robert Thomson, Peebles GC and John Scott, Kirkhill GC with Scottish Regional Chairman Sam Morrison.

Abbott wins holy water for Sunningdale

M J Abbott Ltd has begun work on the installation of a new irrigation system to both the Old Course and New Course at Sunningdale Golf Club.

The contract incorporates the design, supply of equipment and installation of the irrigation system to 36 golf holes, putting greens, practice area and turf nursery.

Rain Bird Europe has designed the system which incorporates the Maxi Nimbus Control System, Maxi Weather Station, Eagle, Falcon and R50 series sprinklers and PEB pressure regulating solenoid valves.

All staff working on the site are directly employed by M J Abbott Ltd which owns and operates a fleet of specially adapted machinery for use on golf courses.

M J Abbott Ltd are no strangers to working at prestigious Clubs. Their portfolio includes The Belfry, Celtic Manor Hotel and Golf Club, and Killarney Golf and Fishing Club among many others.

Members get Open invitation

Applications are invited from members to join BIGGA's Green-keeping Support team for the 1998 Open Championship at Royal Birkdale GC.

Those wishing to be considered must be Full Members of the Association and should be available from Wednesday evening July 15 to Sunday evening July 19. The opportunity to take part in the most important golf event of the year is open both to team members from previous years and also those members who are wishing to participate for the first time.

Duties will be allocated on a rota basis over the four days of play and include early morning course preparation, bunker raking while matches are in play and evening course maintenance.

Members may also be asked to co-operate with the gathering of information for distribution in the Press Centre which helps raise the profile of the Association at the Championship. All members of the Support Team will be expected to remain on the course throughout the day and be available in the event of any unforeseen circumstances arising.

Accommodation, all meals and transport will be provided by the Association but successful applicants will be expected to pay their own travelling expenses from home to the Championship and return.

Those members wishing to be involved should put their names forward in writing to John Pemberton, Administration Manager, at BIGGA's HQ, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO6 2NE, to be received no later than March 16.

All names will then be placed into a draw to select the successful applicants. If you have not been to this event before in this capacity and wish to learn more about what will be expected please do not hesitate to contact John. Tel: 01347 838581.

I use **RiteFeed** because



It suits my course
Alastair Tough, Muckhart GC

CBE honour for Neville

British Seed Houses Managing Director Neville Bark was awarded a CBE in the New Year's Honours List for his contribution to agriculture.

He has been Chairman of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany for the last two years and was instrumental in establishing a dedicated amenity grass seed division in 1976.

"I'm naturally delighted to receive this award but I regard it as recognition of NIAB's reputation and continuing value to the agricultural industry as much as an honour for myself," said Neville.

Matt moves up

Jacobsen Division of Textron Ltd has become increasingly involved in sales of golf course equipment to large Companies (conglomerates) owning more than one golf course. In recognition of the huge potential growth in this area Jacobsen has appointed Matt Gough to the position of Sales Support Executive reporting to David Withers, National Accounts Manager.

Matt, who has been with Jacobsen for five years, brings a wealth of both product knowledge and demonstration skills to this position.

Charity begins at home for Swanston

Swanston Golf Club, in Edinburgh, held a charity golf day in aid of the Sick Kids' Hospital, the Intensive Care Unit and Radio Lollipop.

They were chosen because of the care and help they gave to Swanston Course Manager, Chris Yeaman's, young son, Christopher, who was in hospital for six months after having a terrible accident on his father's golf course during the Christmas period two years ago, while out sledging with his friends.

After the golf there was a disco and presentation of prizes, and presentation of cheques to the various charities.

"We would like to thank East Section Scotland for the kind donation of £200 to Ward 4," said Andrew Forrest, Deputy Course Manager, at Swanston.

"A Swanston GC member, Ronnie Reid, also held a charity golf event at Dalmahoy Country Club. Thanks to Ronnie for the organisation of the event, and to those who played in the event which included some football celebrities.



John Macaulay, of Radio Lollipop with East Section Chairman, Jimmy Neilson, and Chris Yeaman.

"Our thanks go to the members of Swanston G.C. who took part in the days event. And to everybody at Dalmahoy Country Club," said Andrew.

The total raised from the two events was £2,200 this was then divided between the various charities.

Chris' son went in for his six monthly check up in December and while there he presented a cheque to Ward 4 for £625 and to Intensive Care Unit also for £625. His check up went well and everything looks promising for the future.

A BIGGA thank you to Tim



To mark the conclusion of seven years of unstinting work on Greenkeeper International and many of BIGGA's promotional material, Tim Moat, of Headline Communications, Design and Production Editor since the magazine's inception was presented with a token of the Association's appreciation.

The presentation was made at Tim's offices in York by Sales and Marketing Manager, James

McEvoy, and Editor, Scott MacCallum.

"Tim has been a big part of the development of Greenkeeper International and I know we all wish him well in the future," said James.

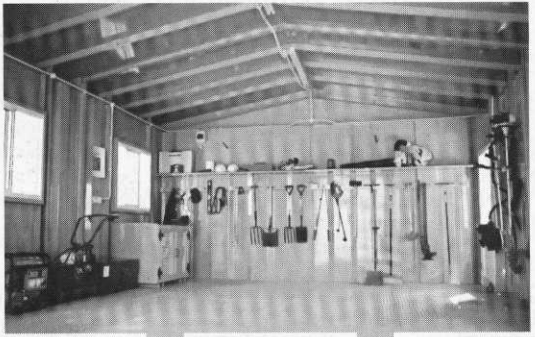
This issue of Greenkeeper International is the first to be designed by David Emery, who joined the Association as its first in-house Design and Production Editor late last year.


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Wisley experience for Declan

As part of his Master in Education Award, Declan Gallagher, Programme Manager in Golf Greenkeeping at Cannington College, spent 12 weeks working at the Wisley Golf Club in Surrey. Under the guidance of David Whitaker, Master Greenkeeper and former Greenkeeper of the Year, Declan was able to fully participate in the daily routine maintenance operations.

"I wanted to get my hands dirty and be an accepted part of the crew, three of whom were ex-Cannington

students, so I had to be on my toes," he said.

Declan was able to mow greens, tees and fairways, rake bunkers, flymo and hand pick Poa Annua from the greens, and was able to observe and ask questions about the tasks he couldn't participate in.



The primary purpose for working at the Wisley was to carry out field research into the importance of vocational updating for lecturing staff. Cannington College strives to ensure its lecturing staff are technically competent in their respected vocational subjects. Last summer Huw Parry, Senior Lecturer in Golf Course Management, worked on a golf construction project in Portugal and recently employed Brain Jones, Greenkeeping Instructor was Head Greenkeeper at East Dorset Golf Club.

New training role for Geoff

Geoff Porter, previously of Forest of Arden, Royal Antwerp and GolfClub Issum in Germany has taken up a project managing and training role in India with architects David Hemstock Associates.

He would like to keep in touch with the greenkeeping world while in India and can be contacted by e-mail through Geoff Porter@golf-design.demon.co.uk

Cheers, John!

The winner of the case of wine from the free prize draw at the Sisis Direct "Direct-to-Your-Door-Tour" was John Scotney, of Sleaford GC. He was presented with his prize by Area Representative Jason Briggs.

A free lunch...?

At a recent company day Ronnie Bunting, of Kilmacolm GC, won a prize of lunch and a round of golf for four people over the Monarch's Course at Gleneagles... but he did not have to swing a club to do it.

Ronnie won the prize for his skill as an after dinner speaker and is now having to show similar skills as a diplomat in choosing which of his old, and many new, friends he is going to take with him.

Plumpton College in East Sussex has become the first college of its type to be awarded a Charter Mark for excellence in service to the public.

"The award is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of College staff who, despite cuts in funding, are providing a better service to the public each year," said Principal John Brookham.

Picture shows staff from the College with John Brookham on the right dispensing the drink.



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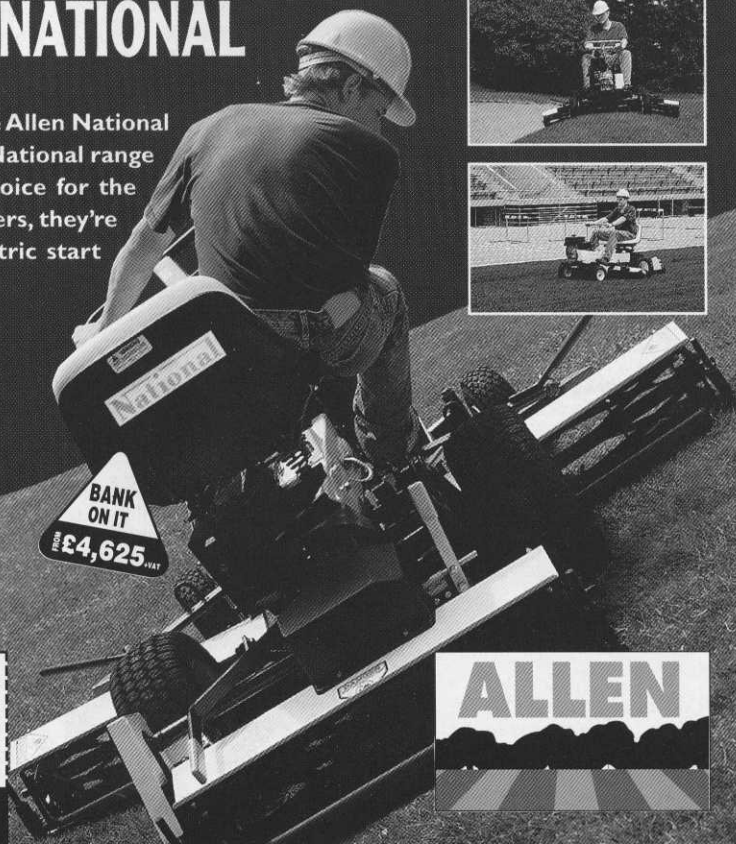
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Usually the spotlight falls on the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper at a Club.

Now it is the turn of those whose work often goes unheralded to star.



Name: Gordon McKie

Club: St Andrews Links

Position: Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Age: 30

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?

12 years.

2. What education are you currently undertaking?

HNC Golf Course Irrigation Systems.

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?

Building and revetting bunkers

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?

Not many but probably cleaning ditches.

5. What job other than greenkeeping might you have ended up doing?

Motor Mechanic

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

Iain MacLeod, Head Greenkeeper at Tain Golf Club.

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?

Teach golfers how to rake a bunker properly.

8. What are your hobbies?

Golf, football and music

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?

Magazine, BTME.

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?

Head Greenkeeper or Course Manager at a top course

Address your letters to the Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Aline, York YO6 2NF. You can also fax them to 01347 838864, or e-mail them to general@bigga.co.uk

But why should I join BIGGA?

As a BIGGA member who was the beneficiary of two exceptional events in November, I feel duty bound to write to the magazine and share my experiences with all of you who care to read on.

My first sojourn took me to the deep south to participate in the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone and Rhône Poulenc award ceremony. Our club was chosen as the Scottish regional winner, which was a real surprise to me knowing the quality of the work already carried out at other Scottish clubs such as Loch Lomond. So with this in mind, it was with great pride that I travelled down to the highly impressive Hankley Common to accept our award.

This is the second year in a row that we have won this specific award and I would like to say that the people who I have met at each award ceremony, in conjunction with the award itself, have provided me with a great deal of motivation and inspiration to drive on with our conservation management plan at Linlithgow. I am sure that our club is not the only one which gains so much from this competition and I think Rod Baker can take great personal satisfaction from the way this whole concept has grown, and from the good that it has engendered.

Part two of my week of travelling took me to sunny Marbella (although it was pouring when I arrived and left), to deliver a talk to the inaugural FEGGA conference.

When first asked by FEGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver, to represent BIGGA by delivering the paper on the environment I was stunned, honoured and delighted (in that order), but I became so concerned with trying to live up to Dean's expectations that I travelled to Spain with very few expectations about what I could learn from the whole experience. This state of affairs did not last too long though because literally from the moment of my arrival, which was fortuitously just in time for dinner, I was put at ease by the assembled company, which by the nature of the event consisted of many of the leading lights of greenkeeping in Europe.

During the two day conference I learned a great many things not only about greenkeeping, but about life in continental Europe in general, which in these days of common Governmental policies may prove to be very important. Consequently I came away from listening to the many varied and stimulating talks given with the impression that we greenkeepers in the UK may have

our problems, but they are in no way comparable to some of the things that our colleagues on the continent have to put up with.

It was struck home to me in Spain that not only do our continental cousins have to put up with difficult climactic conditions, oppressive pesticide legislation and a populace that generally has no time for golf, but they face these difficulties with much smaller Professional Associations than ours. This is a very important point and one that is far too often taken for granted in this country. In BIGGA we British greenkeepers not only have a very well run organisation led by motivated and capable people, but we have a collective voice for the profession that is taken seriously by others in the golf industry and beyond.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have had an exceptional year, taking part in many wonderful events including the Loch Lomond Invitational, The Open, The National Tournament as well as that fabulous week in November which was all made possible for me only through my involvement in BIGGA. So if anyone has to ask me "Why should I join the BIGGA?" my answer will be ready for them!

David Roy
Course Manager
Linlithgow GC

Jim'll fix it...

Having been in greenkeeping for the last 43 years and therefore seen many changes I have reflected on who has been responsible for the major changes in the game.

Firstly, professionals I am sure would agree that Arnold Palmer was the prime mover for making things happen even to the point where more golfers wanted to see and listen to his passion for the game.

From the greenkeeping side I have to say nobody, and I mean nobody, has done more for greenkeepers than Jim Arthur. He started off as a lone voice in the wilderness telling us - not to overwater, that green is not everything, don't try to be like the States etc, etc, etc. How true this has all turned out to be.

He is the man who makes greens committees sit up and take notice with his forthright views. Of course, lots of people do not go along with Jim's views but as we all know the truth can sometimes hurt.

One thing I am convinced of is that greenkeeping would be a lot poorer without Jim Arthur.

Greenkeeping has progressed dramatically over the last ten years or so and, believe me, in no small measure this is due to Jim and people like him who see the future and are not afraid to state their case.

I am not like the fellow who said "I don't mind progress so long as it doesn't mean change" but I think we need to take stock now and again and make sure that every road we take is the right one with no dead ends.

John Nudds
Course Manager
Gerard's Cross GC

Toro-mendous

I would like to thank BIGGA and Toro for a very enjoyable time at the finals of the Toro Awards held at Harrogate. Meeting the other finalists and swapping stories of greenkeeping times.

Tom Murray
Ratho Park GC

PS. All the best to Ian McMillan and Steve Nixon who were worthy winners of the awards.

PPS. Harrogate has lots of shops so any greenkeepers taking their wives or girlfriends beware! Don't let them loose it's fatal - hence my empty wallet.

A northern thank you

The Northern Region has had its ups and downs, its highs and lows but over the course of many years the Region has become a credit to all members who have participated in Regional events and Seminars. Major events such as the Hayter Golf Challenge, which the Northern Region has won on numerous occasions, with all Sections thriving. Since Bob Lupton took over we have had three National Chairman, George Malcolm, Barry Heaney and our immediate Past Chairman, Pat Murphy. So between the three of them they must have clocked up more miles than Michael Palin!

Bob and Sarah had worked tirelessly for the Region with the introduction of the Patron's Scheme so without the support of the Patrons the Region would not be as prosperous.

I have to thank Bob and Sarah for the support they have shown me

as Regional Chairman, keeping me right and making sure I was informed of meetings and section events so I could attend.

I know I leave the Region in good hands with the Regional Chairman, Bert Cross, and Bob leaves the Region to the new Regional Administrator, Douglas Bell.

I must thank everybody for the support they have given me over the years and I am sure that Bert will receive the same support.

Once again, may I take this opportunity to wish the members and officials all the best for the future.

Ian Holoran
Past Northern Regional
Chairman

Competition is a winner

In response to the article in Greenkeeper International, page 34, January issue, I thought I would spend a few moments trying to clarify the situation. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending upon one's viewpoint, I am able to report that I have not had a single response to my comment made in the November issue, other than yours.

It was indeed English Nature who were keen to point out the number of non-golfing sceptics who still perceive golf as being of relatively minor importance in the wider conservation framework. Keith, however, in playing golf and more recently in judging the competition, has a very different viewpoint and is keen to point out that golf is an important land use which can have particular environmental benefits. These points were highlighted at all of the Clubs which he and I visited.

I have always stated that the BIGGA Golf Environmental Competition was to comprise of more than just one winner and several losers. I have indeed worked hard through last year to ensure that this is the case. Sure, the winner gets £5,000 and the regional winners £250 but that's not the end

of it. All those entering received either a letter of support with recommendations relating to their individual way forward or one or two site visits which allowed me to talk at length about their management programme. Seminars and articles have also contributed to elevating the publicity of those Clubs showing a positive commitment to environmental management.

I see the Competition as a step up to the newly formed "Committed to Green" programme being initiated through the European Golf Association Ecology Unit. The scoring of the Competition was indeed based on the main target areas that the technical working panel, including STRI, agreed. These include nature conservation, landscape cultural heritage, turfgrass management, water resource management, waste management, energy efficiency and communication, including public awareness.

A further extremely important benefit of the Competition is to demonstrate that golf courses by acting in a positive environmental manner are aware of their environmental responsibilities and it is hoped that continual recognition will gradually filter through to the wider public and to those that criticise the sport often without appropriate foundation.

Most Greenkeepers that have spoken to me or have heard me talking at seminars will be fully aware that I appreciate their conservation interests. Indeed, a significant part of greenkeeping is related to the pleasure of seeing birds of prey, foxes and other wildlife passing over the course. The focus must now turn to educating the membership and the Committee Managers if greater strides are to be made.

Finally, while every golf course realises they may not win one of the major prizes, I trust that everyone will agree that by entering we are giving greater focus and credibility to the fact that golf courses are not just a selfish use of the landscape.

R.S Taylor
Ecologist, STRI Ltd

While on the subject of The Environment Competition, keep your eyes peeled for our new logo (left), which will be used everytime we have news or an update for you, regarding the competition. Entry forms are available from BIGGA, at the usual address.

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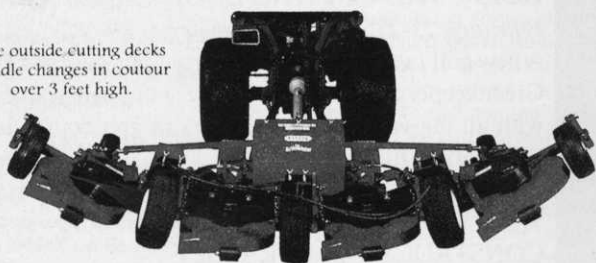
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The path of leased resistance

A Guide to profitable options for acquiring new golf course equipment

Ask any young blood and he will tell you about those first tingling charges of adrenalin – they come as standard equipment with any new sports car – and how rapidly they evaporate. The harsh reality is that adrenalin plummets just as soon as the realisation hits; that fistfuls of hard-earned cash have flown from the pocket quicker than you can shake a stick. Called depreciation, it's very, very painful, especially where boy-racers and their motor cars are concerned.

Thankfully, depreciation of golf course machinery is quite unlike that prevalent in the motor trade. One obvious reason is that turf care machinery earns its keep, rather than being a mere status symbol, so there's no free-falling without a parachute. Another reason, taking a tractor as a prime example, we have a vehicle that has a long, useful life, with relatively low maintenance costs, thus it's most unlikely to dive in value as the result of fashion-freak body styling.

Nothing, it seems, causes the collective mind of a golf club committee to focus quite like competition. Not competition of the games variety, but that which beckons from just over the hill. A rash of new proprietor-owned golf clubs, built in the past decade or so, has caused many an old-guard committee man to ponder the vexatious question of how to keep his club competitive.

Playing quality and value for money are the yardsticks by which a nomad player measures his rounds – new courses or old – and each time the golfer opens his wallet both will be held for comparison.

No longer immune from today's fast-moving business arena, those in golf club management increasingly find it necessary to investigate alternative ways of financing, rather than paying cash, for their equipment. The good news is that

they are finding the right answers.

There are many good reasons for financing, the most obvious being that the true value of working equipment comes from its use, not its ownership. Add to this the increase in immediate cash-flow; by freeing capital for more profitable uses, the freedom from 'hidden costs' and the bonus of keeping the golf course in peak condition – it's hardly surprising that more and more 'savvy' committees are opting for the practical option of leasing.

One popular form of lease financing is a package unique in the turf care market and tailored specifically for the golf course industry. Devised by Ransomes in association with Farming & Agri-cultural Finance Ltd (FAF), the flexible finance option is known simply as Select 123.

Because this type of financing allows a wider flexibility of options – to become the owner, to trade in the equipment at an agreed and guaranteed buyback price, or simply to walk away from the agreement – it allows the golf club to make the final decision.

There are three flexible plans available, so whether your club is considering a new compact tractor, a professional greens mower, or one of a range of aeration products, Select 123 offers the purchasing solution. The three options are:

- a) Your club can make a final 'balloon' payment to become the owner of the machine.
- b) Take full advantage of the guaranteed residual value by either:
 - i) Trading in as part exchange for a new machine.
 - ii) Handing the equipment back and walking away from the agreement.
- c) Extend the final 'balloon' payment over an agreed further term.

To illustrate, here are some typical examples:

	Eg 1	Eg 2	Eg 3
Description	GA30 Aerator	Fairway 305	3-Wheel Cushman
RRP	£13,410	£29,065	£11,479
Cost (assumes 10% discount/part exchange)	£12,069	£26,159	£10,331
Term	4yrs	4yrs	4yrs
Profile to customer	1+3	1+3	1+3
Payments per annum	£3,067	£6,322	£2,649
Balloon payment/ Guaranteed buy back	£1,743	£5,523	£3,089

Still not convinced? Consider these further benefits:

Farewell to obsolescence

Access to state-of-the-art equipment, especially grass-cutting machinery, provides a cushion against technological obsolescence. Though certainly not in the same league as computers, which seemingly become obsolete on the shelves, most golf machinery manufacturers quite rightly seek to improve and upgrade their models, year after year. It makes sense, therefore, to plan against any uncertainties by transferring the risk to the lessor.

Matching revenue to payment

By matching payments with the income a club generates over a complete year, working capital will be released, rather than being tied up.

Say farewell to botching

Nothing is more irritating than 'making do' with machinery that is ill-equipped for a job. At best it's inconvenient, at worst it can be downright dangerous. Spreading the load by financing equipment will give you the proper tools to do the job.

Machinery that is in peak condition

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How you can sway the decision - in your favour!

No one knows better than you what new machinery is needed, or which ageing piece needs replacing, though to smooth the go-ahead for capital improvements it will pay you to doff your salesman's hat. While it's bad to whinge about not having the right equipment, (it will, be assured, get you nowhere), it helps enormously if you are seen as the guy who makes the most of

what he has; one who does a good job and solves problems.

Unless your Green Chairman is an absolute no-hoper, you will gain Brownie points by aiming his attention to each little area of improvement taking place on the course - moreover those that need extra application - while, of course, explaining the reason and thinking behind what you would like to undertake, if only...

Choosing the right moment for discussion is important, which might well come during those times when your Green Chairman is making his inspection. Even better, if you can play a few holes with him this will provide you with a great opportunity to draw comparisons, perhaps by calling upon experiences shared with a colleague at 'the course down the road.'

Every chairman worth his salt wants to see a well-conditioned golf course. Simply by carrying out a little homework beforehand you can present him with a well-considered case. Of course, it is your job to keep him informed so that he may report to his committee, so make lists, but don't try to baffle him with science.

Prepare a plausible presentation and ensure that you include specifications so that you may talk in precise terms about the improvements that proposed new machinery will offer. You should include all the benefits that will come from upgrading, for example the increase in the speed of greens or fairways cutting, improved turf conditioning and a reduction in running costs. This latter item, increasingly, is a vitally important factor. Let him know how much you want to retain a competitive edge. He'll thank you for it.

Finally, enlist the help of your dealer and get him on your side. Developing a sound relationship will never hurt your cause.

A cut above

**Tim Kirk of T. Kirk Forestry -
ATB Landbase Registered Instructor**

Portable hand-held chainsaws are widely accepted as being potentially dangerous machines which need to be handled with utmost care.

The Health and Safety Executive has produced Guidance Note GS48 which is aimed at people who either use chainsaws at work or who employ others to do the work.

The Guidance Note is concerned with the minimum levels of training and competence required by chain-saw users. It states that operators should be adequately trained and that by obtaining a relevant certificate of competence or national competence award (NVQ/SVQ) recognised by industry will show that adequate training has been received.

This applies to employers, employees and the self-employed.

There are several regulations within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 which place legal duties on employers and the self-employed in relation to the use of chainsaws at work.

Chainsaw operators should have a reliable and mature attitude to their work. They should have a reasonable degree of both physical and mental fitness. People with disabilities need not necessarily be excluded from work with chainsaws, however, medical advice should be obtained about their suitability.

There are many hazards when using a chainsaw, the most obvious are contact with the moving chain, being struck by falling timber and incorrect manual handling techniques.

Most accidents occur due to lack of knowledge and failure to provide

adequate personal protective clothing (PPE).

Training is very important in the control of accidents - it should be of the highest quality and normally carried out by specialist instructors or organised training courses.

Although most courses contain



small amounts of theoretical classroom work the majority of the course is devoted to practical supervised instruction.

In the next issue we will look at the requirements of PPE and the different routes to certification in the safe operation of chainsaws.

For further information on training courses and consultancy contact Agenda Training Ltd - Jean John Tel: 01282 831973 or Tim Kirk - T. Kirk Forestry Tel: 01484 685114.

Ken Richardson announces the launch of three new competitions...

Take up the challenge

Thanks to the continuing support of Ransomes, we were, once again, able to give an increased number of delegates a true Learning Experience.

The National Education Conference and Workshops started the week off on a high note with some very high quality presentations and intellectually stimulating subjects. The use of a new liquid crystal projector and high quality slide projector ensured that all conference presentations could be seen and should ensure a better quality of video. Despite the problems that we had rearranging some early seminar session, due to a problem obtaining slides, the BTME Seminars gave all attendees something to ponder, with a record number attending the talk by Mr Ortiz Patino. With the Seminars returning to the Royal Hall, there was space for all those who wanted to attend and it was gratifying to see over 100 delegates still in the Hall at the end of the last session. Thank you to all those who presented papers at the Conference and Seminars and to those who organised and ran the three workshops. We are thinking about the programme for 1999, already, and if anyone can suggest speakers or topics that they would like to hear then please contact me as soon as possible. Written tran-

scriptions and videos of all Conference and seminar sessions are available from BIGGA HQ.

Three major competitions were launched at Harrogate, the TORO Student of the Year, the TORO Excellence in Greenkeeping and the BIGGA Golf Course Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity. All registered training providers will be sent copies of the Student of the Year leaflet and entry forms in the near future. So make sure that your college submits an entry. Remember, the winning student wins the TORO Scholarship, including and eight week study tour to the USA and the winner's lecturer wins a trip to the GCSAA show, which will be held in Florida, in 1999. Leaflets for the Golf Environment and Greenkeeping Excellence Competitions were available at BTME and will be sent

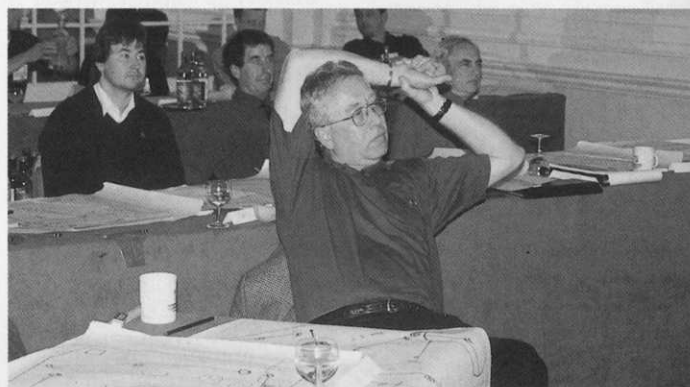
to all golf clubs and head greenkeeper/course managers during February and March. Judging for the Greenkeeping Excellence Competition has been changed and courses will be judged by a panel of judges comprising respected, retired greenkeepers, chaired by Walter Woods. Additionally, the Competition is open to Master Greenkeepers and/or winners of the previous Miracle/Zeneca/ICI competition.

The last local supervisory management course of the 1997/98 season will take place at the Courtyard Hotel in Bradford, on 16 and 17 February. There are still plenty of places left for anyone who wishes to attend.

The Refund of Education/Training Expenses Scheme started in January 1998. Application forms for a refund of fees can be obtained from BIGGA HQ.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Chris Carpenter and Andy Campbell on becoming the tenth and eleventh Master Greenkeepers in the United Kingdom, which added to the five Master Green-

keepers in the USA gives us a total of sixteen. The next Master Greenkeeper examination will take place on 28 and 29 March. Anyone wishing to sit the examination should contact me or Sami as soon as possible. Full details of the Master Greenkeeper Scheme can be obtained from BIGGA HQ.



Top: Billy McMillan thinks our sign which could do with a bit of levelling itself! **Above:** Concentrating hard during the golf course design workshop. **Below:** Our two latest Master Greenkeepers pictured here receiving their plaques from Chairman, Pat Murphy



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Jim Smith, Ardeer GC

Jim McConnell, Head Greenkeeper at Banbridge GC, County Armagh addresses the problem of thatch...

Thatch of the day

The reason for choosing this subject is because of the problems it can create in a situation where a course has a number of small greens (e.g. those around 250 to 300 sq. metres).

With the growing volume of traffic on our golf courses these days one must be constantly aware of the ever increasing volume of problems that may present themselves. If the management programme is not correct, consistent, and on-going then we may find our playing surfaces in trouble.

If greens are small they will obviously limit the number of pin-positions, thus during periods of extremely wet weather, and heavy play these greens will compact much more quickly. When compaction is severe this will reduce the supply of oxygen to the plant, therefore, no oxygen will pass into the soil for respiration but also no carbon dioxide will be capable of getting out. The result here is that grasses will choke in their own waste.

When this situation occurs the playing surface becomes soft and very susceptible to damage instead of remaining firm and true. The sward becomes poor, thin, and open to fungal attack, instead of remaining dense, healthy and resilient. The recuperative capacity is greatly reduced, therefore the sward will deteriorate even further where *Poa annua* is the predominant species.

If this situation occurs immediate action must be taken in the form of a very intensive aeration programme which of course must be on-going. This intensive aeration programme should be along the following lines;

- ensure good drainage is in

place e.g. that no surface water from slopes around greens is finding its way onto the green or greens;

- hollow-tine once a year at least if the thatch problem is a serious one;

- ensure material used for top dressing is consistent e.g. that sand is free draining, low in silt content, and of even particle size;

- verti-cut once every two weeks during the growing season;
- pencil-tine as often as need be during the playing season especially if play is heavy;

- ensure that mower units are cutting clean to prevent any infection entering the grass plant;
- feed only as and when necessary.

- water only when absolutely necessary ie, just before wilting point.

- ensure the soil profile is getting plenty of air throughout the playing season.

- all the above recommendations must be carried out as and when climatic conditions dictate.

Drainage is a vital aspect of good turf management, not only from the view point of keeping golf courses open through wet periods but also in enhancing free movement of water through the soil profile all year round. This will keep nutrients in circulation and increase the effectiveness of summer irrigation. Aeration relieves compaction and improves water penetration into and through the soil. It also restores the air/water/soil particle ratio and hence improves conditions for root extension. Although root growth peaks spring and autumn, aeration through the rest of the year is equally important to encourage new root.

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A very fine vintage

It is the oldest cliché in the book to say that BTME was the best ever. It's been said every year since the first show was held but perhaps, even in some illustrious company, BTME '98 might come to be regarded as a very fine vintage indeed.

Let's look at the evidence. Well, more people attended the show than ever before; the Learning Experience, in association with Ransomes produced a range of topics and quality of speaker to rival anything which will be heard anywhere this year; the changes to previous year's the marquee to replace Hall D was a resounding success and assisted the flow of the show; the aforementioned Hall D was unrecognisable when it transformed itself into a stunning star lit lounge to host the traditional Thursday night banquet allowing 650 guest to enjoy a fine meal and watch an excellent cabaret.

Among the witnesses to speak in

support of the week and the work of the Association was Michael Bonallack, Secretary of the R&A who, during the Chairman's Lunch, recalled BIGGA's early days.

"There were many sceptics who said the Association wouldn't last... look at it now. There were many people who said the Show was a mistake... look at it now and there people who said the magazine wouldn't last... but look at it now," said Mr Bonallack, who presented the Golden and Silver key plaques in place of Viscount Whitelaw who unfortunately had to miss the week due to ill health.

Another to be impressed by the quality of the Show as Jaime Ortiz-Patino, President of Valderrama Golf Club, who spoke on preparations for last year's Ryder Cup on the Seminar Programme. He expressed a desire to return to Harrogate to give another paper at some future date.

The success of the show is due to



Chairman Pat Murphy does the honours at the opening ceremony

a number of factors which ever year combine to make the third week in January special for so many people. The excellent support from members who travel to Harrogate in droves, the support from the trade

who ensure that visitors are met by friendly and familiar faces when they venture into the halls and an education programme which is second to none.

Roll on BTME '99!

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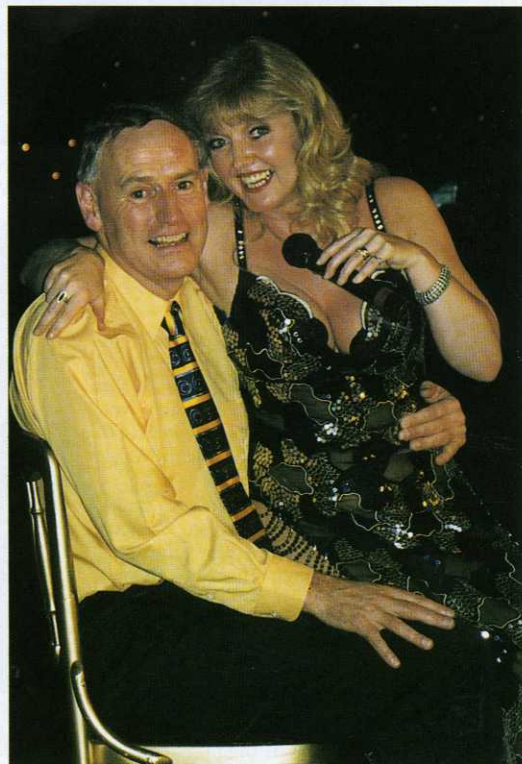
Clockwise from far left:

Lee Hurst entertains the 650 guests at the Gala Banquet.

Jaime Ortiz-Patino, President of Valderamma Golf Club gave an enlightening paper on preparations for last year's Ryder Cup, and then selected the winning number in BIGGA's membership draw.

In cabaret, Neil Thomas and his new friend Linda Nolan captivate the audience

Michael Bonallack receives a token of the Association's appreciation for attending the Chairman's Luncheon and presenting Golden and Silver Key Awards



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BIGGA's Buy a Brick Campaign to raise money for the Association's new Headquarters was given a superb launch during Harrogate week.

A major boost had been given right at the start of the campaign when the Golden and Silver Key supporters decided to allocate a total of £44,000 of Education and Development Fund money towards the furnishing and equipping of the new building's Training Room. This room will host many of the Association's workshops and training course and will also be available to Golden and Silver Key supporters should they wish to host a training event in the York area.

Three Sections donated money to the Fund at the Conference Dinner. The North of Scotland gave £1000, the East Midland £750 and Sussex £500 and Iain Macleod, David Leatherland and Ray Day presented a cheque for the total amount to Chairman Pat Murphy. Two day's later Ivor Scoones, presented Pat with a cheque for £1000 on behalf of the South West and South Wales Region.

Another day later and another generous donation this time by Jaime Ortiz-Patino, President of Valderrama Golf Club. During the Education Conference and throughout the Show Gold, Silver and Bronze Brick badges were selling like hot cakes thanks to the Board of Management members.

The campaign will end at BIGGA's annual golf day in June when the raffle tickets bought in conjunction with the badges will be pulled for an array of magnificent prizes.



Ivor Scoones hands over the South West and South Wales Region's donation



The BIGGA Building Fund gets another boost from Iain Macleod, Ray Day and David Leatherland



The Golden and Silver Key supporters who agreed to donate a total of £44,000 to equip and furnish the training room in BIGGA's new headquarters with Michael Bonallack and Pat Murphy

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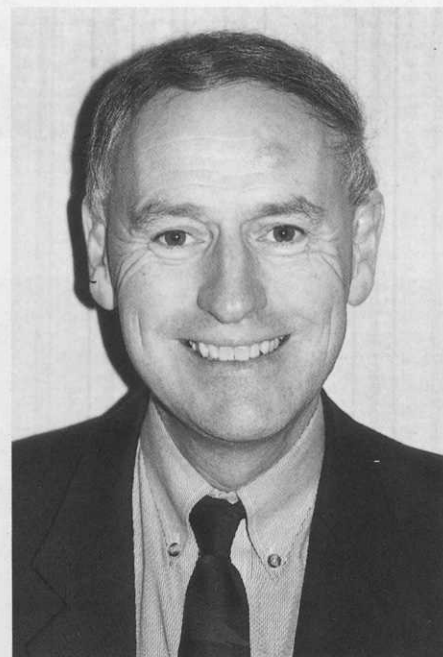
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Days to remember



Sunday, January 18

Another year has rushed by and I'm heading for Harrogate and the BTME. It's all of twelve minutes from home (the real reason why the exhibition is held in Harrogate!). As I drive in it has been raining through the night and morning and it is very mild for the time of year. No danger of that white stuff this year. 3.30pm and preparations for conference registration have begun. Ken and Sami are in control. Many members already booked into the Majestic - they clearly like it there. I welcome our international guests and an informal dinner is followed for many by a late night at the bar.

Monday, January 19

First job is to switch on the TV for the weather forecast. I don't believe it! Dr Peter Hayes gets the conference underway in his usual efficient manner. At the outset one is impressed by the quality of the speakers and particularly how well our members present themselves, beneficiaries no doubt of BIGGA's public speaking courses. The presentation of Master Greenkeeper Certificates to Andy Campbell and Chris Carpenter is a highlight - 16 Master Greenkeepers now since the inception of the certification scheme in 1990. Food and accommodation are again excellent in the Majestic and I'm feeling quite relaxed until the Chairman pointedly directs my attention through the window to the arrival of the white stuff. Heavy snow showers follow but it will all be gone before Tuesday, won't it? And so it proved... Conference dinner is very enjoyable with a return visit from David Kendal - 'the banker from York' as our after dinner speaker. Excellent delivery - our international visitors kept pace and laughed with the rest of us. Good to welcome Andrew Sunaway as our guest from Ransomes. I have to mention Peter Wilson's unavoidable absence on 'business in the city'. What can this be? Now we all know.

Some members retire from the bar at 6.30am!

Tuesday, January 20

Conference continues apace along with the three fully subscribed workshops. Comments would indicate that the Conference is the best yet. Noted that many members are now wearing BIGGA's 'brick' badge - the Headquarters building project is already very much to the fore. The exhibition is looking good and Amanda is in charge. Short Board of Management meeting to elect Chairman and Vice-Chairman and then off to beer and burritos (no - I didn't know what they were either!) gathering for the exhibitors. The fifth Hayter Dinner in the George Hotel follows superbly organised as usual by Kim Macfie and Barbara Garton. I really enjoy this dinner as I have nothing to say or do! Meanwhile the Past Chairmans' dinner takes place in the Majestic - a lively affair by all accounts - I can't decide whether to book a referee or comedian for this event next year!

Wednesday, January 21

This is it. Hall A is buzzing long before 9.00am when the Chairman cuts the ribbon. Queues are forming (half way up the hill to the Majestic at one stage) and a great atmosphere. The marquee in use for the first time meets with warm approval. Off to the Majestic for the Chairman's Luncheon. We are sorry that our President, Viscount Whitelaw, has been unwell and cannot join us but delighted to welcome the Secretary of the R&A, Michael Bonallack to make the Golden and Silver Key Company presentations. He speaks of the R&A's longstanding relationship with BIGGA and his pleasure at BIGGA's progress. Prepare for AGM. This goes smoothly with a sense that everything is in good order when Cecil George rises with his inevitable and inimitable questions. Most staff are then off to the Ritefeed Race Night but I find myself in a FEGGA Board meeting which ends just before midnight - what a way to enjoy yourself! Enough for one day!

Thursday, January 22

Early start. 7.30am meeting of BTME Steering Committee. Well supported and everyone seems well pleased with the Show even if brains are not fully functioning at this time of the morning. I'm able to savour the atmosphere in the halls for a couple of hours before the FEGGA AGM. This is well attended and the progress of FEGGA in twelve months is there for all to see. In mid afternoon I check on preparations for the banquet which this year is being held in the International Centre. The nightclub setting is quite stunning. One can sense the growing anticipation for the big social event of BTME. At 6.30pm I attend the Chairman's pre-banquet reception for our VIP guests and make an early departure to check the banquet arrangements. All is under control and soon the 650 guests begin to gather in the reception area. I meet with Lee Hurst to check details for his appearance - he is very friendly and easy going. Any worries about the catering are soon put to rest - it is excellent. The Chairman says a few words and then at 10.00pm I introduce Lee Hurst and the cabaret is underway. Very funny and well received.

After Lee we look forward to Linda Nolan - a return visit after the 1995 Show by popular demand. And we are not disappointed. She is highly professional. Now I have often wondered what it is like to be picked on at an event of this magnitude. Now I know. I had been set up. Suddenly Linda is at my side and I am whisked away to the stage. It's now or never. One choice is to die a death in front of all and sundry, the other is to get on with it. I wisely choose the latter and surrounded by her curvaceous charms I ham my way through the 'ding-a-ling' song. This can, I assure you, prove quite daunting given the natural level of eye contact with Linda sitting on your lap. I return weak-kneed to my chair. I am overwhelmed with congratulations from

members - this simply hasn't happened in ten years so I determine to enjoy it. A great night and certainly one I'll never forget!

Friday, January 23

Tired but happy seems to sum up the mood of all present in the halls. Those who arrived on Sunday evening are still with it - just. Stamina is a prime requirement for the week. It's been a great Show and a good start to the year for members and exhibitors alike. The Show closes at 1.30pm and the evacuation of personnel and equipment goes smoothly. One Board member tells me that he wishes it could carry on - I think I know what he meant. Thanks to everyone who contributed to and supported the event and particularly to the exhibitors without whom there would be no BTME.



And finally...

Once again an abiding memory is of the audience at the banquet linking arms and singing with Linda Nolan "we'll meet again don't know where don't know when". But we do, don't we? It will be in Harrogate from 18th-22nd January 1999. Be seeing you.

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Rolawn's ryegrass free, Olympic Turf will be available from late Spring '98 onwards.

The volume of customer requests for the turf encouraged Rolawn to bring it back into production after an absence of five years.

Olympic turf, suitable for areas where a ryegrass mix is not desirable but a top class appearance and hard wearing turf is needed for tees.

The new Olympic mixture has been sown from Chewings Fescue (Bargreen), Slender Creeping Red Fescue (Barcrown), Smooth Stalked Meadow grass (Limousine), Brown top Bent (Herriott).

"We are delighted to be able to give our customers the choice once again, between having the ryegrass free Olympic turf or our hard wearing Medallion turf for areas requiring a general purpose hard wearing turf," said Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales & Marketing Director.



Jacobsen Textron's newest product offering, the Greens King Electric greens mower, (above) is the company's response to environmental concerns and customer demand.

"Jacobsen is one of only two companies offering a totally electric,

non polluting mower - it's the mower for the 21st Century," said Terry Herlihy, Jacobsen Product Manager. "The Greens King Electric is a product that's good for the operator, good for the golf-course and good for the environment."

Aware of the increasing regulations on noise and air pollution in Europe and around the world, the Greens King Electric is powered by a 48-volt battery system. Unlike an internal combustion engine, the unit's electric battery system releases no harmful emissions.

In addition the absence of hydraulic components makes it impossible to have any hydraulic fluid leakage's, which can burn turf grass and harm soil.

Without a combustion engine, the Greens King Electric is virtually silent, perfect for any course with residential properties on it. Greenkeepers can be assured no neighbours will be disturbed by early morning mowing.

Created for golf course use world-wide, the new Greens One of a number of convenience features on the Greens King electric is the continuous information panel, which indicates battery charge levels and mower functions.

The new Jacobsen LF-135 Turbo boasts the exceptional quality of cut and all the features that have made the LF-

128 the world's most popular fairway mower - plus extra power for the toughest wet or hilly conditions.

The Jacobsen LF135 Turbo features a 35-horsepower, fuel efficient, turbo-charged Kubota diesel engine.



A new generation of versatile John Deere compact tractors was launched at BTME '98, with the introduction of the 20hp 4100 Gear model 670, and features

a new Yanmar 'clean & silent' three-cylinder diesel engine with lower exhaust and emission levels, very narrow overall width for true compact performance, and a high standard specification.

This includes shift-on-the-move engagement of mechanical front wheel drive and an eight forward, four reverse speed transmission plus diff lock and hydrostatic power steering.

Further big tractor features include long life oil cooled disc brakes plus shiftable mid and rear mounted ptos, which can be operated either separately or together to allow versatile, multi-implement operation. There is also a new 410 front mounted loader with joystick control for materials handling and heavy lifting jobs.

An industry first, John Deere's new fairway conditioner was featured on the company's stand at BTME '98.

Recently launched as an optional attachment for the established John Deere 3215A and 3235A fairway mowers, it incorporates a contra-rotating grass tender conditioner, which is gear-driven rather than using the more conventional belt drive.

This enables the attachment to provide a better, cleaner finish by



grooming, recutting and dispersing grass clippings more evenly, particularly in wet conditions, without leaving unsightly clumps of grass on the fairway.

In operation, the grass clippings are effectively thrown back into the cylinder at least three times, giving an extremely fine cut, before being dispersed across the surface of the turf. A gear driven brush keeps the rear roller clean, and helps produce a more consistent height of cut.

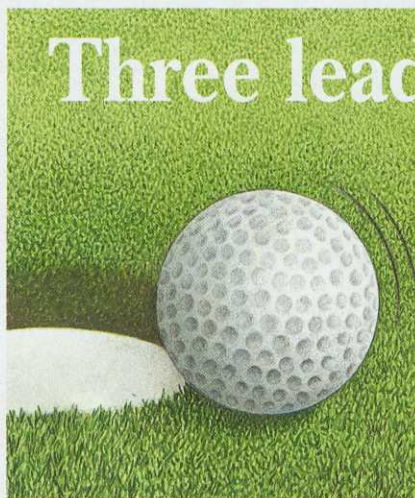
"This is an ideal attachment for greenkeepers who need to cut a lot of grass early in the morning when there's dew on the ground and conditions are generally damp," says Graham Williams, Commercial & Consumer Equipment Division Manager.

"The gear-driven brush is more suited than a conventional belt drive to the faster speeds used on fairways."

Toro gave its 'new generation triplex mower' a public world debut at BTME with UK greenkeepers the first to see a prototype with its wraps off.

Chief among the golf mower's innovative features is that its three cutting units can be moved hydraulically to the left and right to increase overhang up to 22in,

Three leading MM golf mixtures, quality



which offers great benefits when cutting around bunkers, as well as obstacles such as trees or under overhanging branches.

"By increasing the length of overhang, operators can keep the wheels further away from the bunker to prevent edges collapsing," said Toro Commercial Product Worldwide Marketing Manager Barry Beckett.

The new mower features Toro's patented three-wheel-drive system and, coupled with the machine's low centre of gravity, this gives it a remarkable hill-climbing capability. A 24hp diesel engine provides ample power to tackle the most testing terrain.

The new Greensmaster 3050 is Toro's lightest ride-on greensmower, to further ease greenkeepers' concerns about greens compaction and related problems. Weighing 165 pounds less than its predecessor, the Greensmaster 3000, and 80 pounds less than the 3100, the new mower also has an economy model price which makes it a more affordable option for budget-conscious golf courses.

The Greensmaster 3050 adopts many of the same, proven features of the Greensmaster 3100, the most successful ride on greensmower sold by Toro, such as the identical hydraulic system and 16hp Vanguard petrol engine.

Ransomes' new AR 250 articulating rotary mower boasts five fully-floating cutter decks, all of which glide smoothly over uneven surfaces, providing a cut of unruffled consistency and with precious little missed, whatever the terrain.

Though designed specifically for high output mowing of rough and semi rough grass on golf courses, along with sports grounds and general amenity turf areas, the AR 250 is certainly no cumbersome heavyweight. It zips along in transport mode at up to 23km/hr (14mph), is shod with wide, turf friendly tyres and is powered by an economical but powerful 28.3kW (38hp) water-cooled diesel engine. Each deck features Ransomes' twin blade 'Envirodeck' cutting technology, which mulches the grass it cuts before blasting it downward into the sward.

As part of Ransomes' continuous development programme, a new and comprehensive selection of cabs for its range of tractors is receiving final finishing touches before being shown for the first time at BTME.

Covering Ransomes' entire tractor range—from the 16hp garden tractor through to the all-conquering CT445—the cabs will offer convenience and comfort of an



exceptionally high standard.

Cabs for the CT325 to the CT445 incorporate roof-mounted heating and ventilation systems; complete with filtered air and comprehensive sound insulation. Laminated safety glass provides clear, uncluttered vision and, of course, the cabs are all ROPS certified.

Ransomes Cushman utility range boasts a complete stable of thoroughbreds, each vehicle performing and delivering exactly what is expected of it. The new, improved Cushman Hawk is an ideal choice for transporting people and loads.

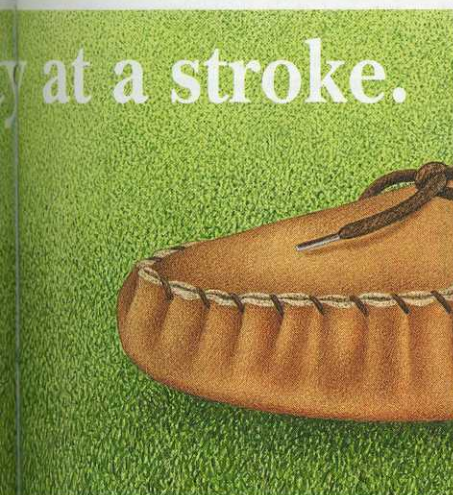
Tonick Watering has increased the warranty on all its Decoders to 5 years; this includes damage by lightning. The range includes guaranteed compatible replacements for Watermaton, Toro, CIC, Wraithtrain, Primetime, Robydom and ISS Aquaflow.

New for 1998 is a versatile controller family.

First in the range is the unique, Tonick Translator enabling existing controllers to switch most types of decoder (for example, a Watermaton TW2 controller can switch Toro decoders).

Sovereign Turf can provide turf in 'Jumbo' rolls, 2' 6" wide by up to 90' in length (20m²). With a good root structure to provide speedy establishment, Jumbo Rolls are often preferred, as turf can be laid quickly and economically with fewer joins and gaps to fill.

For tees, tee extensions, around bunkers, reconstruction or pay and play courses, larger rolls can considerably reducing laying time. In addition whether a minimum order (850m²) is placed or a larger quantity of turf is required, Sovereign offers the benefit of a free Jumbo laying trolley.



These three mixtures have been specifically designed for the golf course – from tee, to fairway to green.

MM10 is a mix of fescues and bents, with the slender creeping red fescue 'Mocassin', giving a dense, close knit, resilient turf for close mowing on greens and tees.

MM12's adaptable blend of species - also including 'Mocassin' - gives good colour and texture on tees and fairways, withstanding wear and giving excellent divot recovery.

And MM11, a traditional 80-20 greens mixture, fine in appearance and playing quality, offers a very stable sward with all-year-round performance.

For free technical advice on how you can take the lead with MM mixtures, or for your nearest distributor, call the **Mommersteeg Main Line on 01480 459500.**

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John Hughes looks at the business of overseeding and passes on some useful and practical advice...

Sowing the seeds

Greenkeepers often receive unwarranted criticism, particularly over the conditions of greens, yet the public's insatiable demand for regular golfing has led to heavy usage for courses – often in conditions where grass has little or no chance of recovery.

Older courses still have a proportion of greens designed primarily for summer play only, with their construction allowing for the retention of moisture for periods of dry weather usage rather than in wetter winter conditions. Those courses constructed over recent years tend to have very high proportions of sand within the rootzone. Some greens are even constructed of pure sand, while others are simply poorly constructed. Greens therefore suffer from a host of problems from their original construction – let alone from heavy wear. These range from waterlogging and black layer, to rapid pH changes, nutrient imbalance and dry patch.

All this can be compounded by lack of irrigation, irrigation failure, lack of equipment and an inadequate provision for annual maintenance. Climatic variations in recent years have placed further strains on greens maintenance. Low rain levels and mild winters have led to drought damage and stress often followed by disease problems.

With playing surfaces suffering because of conditions often beyond the green staff's control, it is hardly surprising that greenkeepers must wage a constant battle against heavy odds.

Golfers frequently comment on how wonderful championship courses look on television. One sus-

pects that they would not be quite so keen on paying the fees required to maintain the quality of playing surface at such top line courses, or that they would give up their weekend round of golf because of tougher restrictions on playing in poor weather or more frequent course closure for maintenance, experienced at prestige venues. Quality greens come at a price – more money and more time invested in maintenance.

While some greens personnel may feel pressured into radical measures, even digging up the green to resolve problems with playing surfaces, there are various means by which golf course staff, even on less favoured locations, can gain the best from their greens. Chief among them is the underrated, yet highly practical option of reviewing the management of the greens and adopting autumn overseeding.

Evaluation

Due to the enormous variation in greens, their location, construction and usage, it is vital to carefully evaluate the prerequisites for, and the intended results of overseeding.

While the structure of the green, its populations of grass species and the conditions and proportions of these species are of prime importance, factors such as rootzone structure, drainage irrigation, staffing levels and budget requirements are also relevant.

Comparatively simple – if time-consuming – measures such as reviewing mowing techniques, or regular soil testing could reveal problems at an early stage. They allow remedial measures to be

taken ahead and even avoid the need for overseeding.

The final choice naturally rests with the greenkeeper, with his/her intimate knowledge of the course being invaluable, but it is always useful to discuss all the options and keep abreast of the latest developments from outside sources.

An agronomist or seed specialist can discuss the current management techniques and future strategies with the greenkeeper who can then communicate these to the club management and the wider membership. This can make members aware of the immediate benefits possible from improved management. Moreover, club committees appreciate the considerable savings which preventative measures over a period of years can make compared with costly remedial and structural work on affected areas.

Different greens - different problems

The overseeding of greens, particularly in early autumn is now an accepted annual operation. Various methods over the years have been employed to try to restrict the ingress of *Poa annua* and the logical follow-on is to re-introduce the most desirable grass species for the location and soil type.

Many greens, particularly on inland courses, are predominantly *Poa annua*. These are managed skilfully and effectively by greenkeepers to the extent that greens with smaller areas or discrete areas of *Poa* often present a less uniform surface, despite having a good proportion of desirable grasses. The

risk is that when weather conditions favour disease or drought conditions prevail, *Poa annua* suffers badly and the main part of the surface is rendered unplayable.

Greens constructed with high proportions of sand within the rootzone or free draining greens have their own problems. Dry patch, high water requirements and rapid loss of nutrient are common. Highly specialised greens of purely creeping bent surfaces require a different management to 'traditional' greens.

Creeping bent requires small, regular doses of nitrate-based fertiliser during growth. Overall fertiliser inputs are higher, as is the general moisture requirement. As a result, such greens require efficient irrigation systems to ensure correct infusion of fertiliser while coping with a freely draining rootzone. In contrast, links courses have generally higher populations of fescues, where their natural tolerance to drought and higher pH has favoured their establishment long term.

Management of creeping bent surfaces is also specialised. As a relatively aggressive species, it requires regular, close mowing during its growth phase to deliver a tight, dense sward. Grooming and verticutting is required to prevent thatch build-up.

Correct autumn maintenance is vital: if the sward is overfed, it will be highly susceptible to fungi, which can spread rapidly with a monoculture. The balance between stressing a relatively 'hungry' grass

The dense swards of *Agrostis canina* make it ideal for older, soil-based greens





Fine-leaved, dense-growing bents such as *Agrostis stolonifera* can be used for overseeding sand-based greens

and overfeeding can be quite fine.

Generally, where courses have creeping bent greens, the maintenance budgets tend to be higher than for 'traditionally sown' courses. Moreover, play levels are controlled at such sites – a situation which would benefit many other course types.

Even within courses, greens and their requirements may vary. Where greens are built on reclaimed or infill areas, or where different soil types are encountered, the populations of grass species can vary from one green to another within a single course. Heavy shade or lack of air movement can also hamper healthy growth on a playing surface.

Overseeding - the choices

As mentioned, full evaluation of the sward's components and its location is vital before a decision is taken. The actual objective, timing, grass species and method involved in an overseeding programme must all be considered.

Objective

In some cases, overseeding in isolation will not bring much benefit. Many greens suffer from structural problems, drainage failures, anaerobic or toxic conditions already described. Such problems must be resolved through consultation with agronomists and seed specialists, and revised management techniques tested before overseeding is attempted.

Timing

Many courses are involved in competitions and in heavy use well into autumn months. This often means overseeding is attempted too late and little success is experi-

enced and the staff pushed toward more drastic measures such as reconstructing the green. Greenkeeping staff and club officials must establish a space in the playing schedule for overseeding – and preparatory work – to go ahead. Again, the practical possibilities should be discussed with the relevant advisor.

The choice of grasses

If overseeding can be carried out at the optimum time, which grasses are going to be of long term benefit? The majority of greens, especially on inland courses, will certainly improve with the reintroduction of bentgrass. Greenkeepers are increasingly overseeding with pure bent or using higher proportions of bentgrass with fescue.

While golf course managers feel that bentgrass is costly, this species compares well, however, with a 'traditional' fescue/bent mixture, because bent is applied at such low sowing rates, a significant increase in the proportion of bent will create a massive increase in bent seed numbers. In any case, the more competitive bent will in time dominate the sward.

Fescues, both chewings and slender, provide a more rapid initial establishment than bent and are essential for the repair of 'take all' damage. In many greens however, fescues are of little long term benefit and in an overseeding operation can be a very costly 'carrier'.

As many greens are predominantly *Poa annua* and bent, it is logical to use bentgrass in the overseeding operation. There are several species of bent available:

Agrostis castellana, *Agrostis tenuis*, *Agrostis stolonifera* (var *palustris*) and *Agrostis canina*.

In general, *Agrostis castellana* is losing favour for greens because it is not as fine leaved, wear tolerant or disease resistant as the other bents.

Agrostis tenuis is used increasingly for the overseeding applications. *Agrostis stolonifera* is used to overseed greens where the species was used originally. *Agrostis stolonifera* has also been used in some older greens due to its quicker establishment and competitive growth characteristics. While thatch was an issue with early varieties, modern *Agrostis stolonifera* produces less thatch and is finer leaved than the older varieties.

Agrostis canina is used as a direct alternative to *Agrostis tenuis*. It has a much finer leaf and tremendous shoot density, providing exceptional wear tolerance.

Particular advantages of *Agrostis canina* are the dense swards produced despite low nitrate inputs and low moisture levels. These benefits make it an ideal choice for overseeding older, soil-based greens.

Overseeding techniques

As previously mentioned, an evaluation of the existing components of a sward should be carried out prior to overseeding to allow the most suitable technique to be adopted.

Surface scarification, seeding and top dressing can be effective, but tend to leave seedlings vulnerable to foot traffic, mowers and drying out. An alternative is overseeding using direct drilling, the seed delivered into narrow slits into the soil surface, with the slits then closed-in over the sown seed. This creates minimum surface disruption and has been used to great effect in many courses, particularly with

creeping bent. The effectiveness of overseeding is strongly enhanced with hollow coring. This method has the advantage of providing an ideal rooting medium for the seed and allowing a reasonable degree of growth from just below the green's surface.

In all these operations, key conditions must be in place to promote establishment.

The rootzone must be at a suitable temperature and moisture available. Mowing heights must be raised to allow development. If there are serious problems (eg. black layer) within a green, overseeding cannot be implemented until those problems are rectified. In most cases, it is preferable to close the green completely before overseeding.

Whatever the course type or location, don't be afraid to take independent advice on managing greens. While the majority of overseedings will involve fescue/bent combinations, most greens will benefit from the use of competitive bents over the longer term. *Agrostis tenuis* gives sound results, but *Agrostis canina* with its density and hard-wearing qualities in dryer conditions, can improve the playing surface, particular on older courses.

For sand-based greens, where overseeding with fescue/bent overseeding has not prospered, fine-leaved, dense-growing bents such as *Agrostis stolonifera* could provide the answer. Whatever route is taken, we must remember that the best grass in the world will not perform unless the green is managed to suit its own characteristics and the local ground conditions.

John Hughes is Senior Technical Advisor for British Seed Houses.

Wet, wet wet

In the past drainage on the golf course tended to rely heavily on agricultural practice, but the drainage needs of agricultural land is different from that required for a golf course and this is now recognised. Basically the golf course needs much faster response with rain required to be removed from the playing surface almost as fast as it falls, leaving minimal surface water, even after (or during) heavy rainfall – and this is particularly true for greens.

As any greenkeeper knows the demand is now for courses that are playable virtually all year round – and waterlogging is not acceptable. However, for the greenkeeper perhaps it is more important to know, and act on, the fact that waterlogged soil is detrimental to grass growth – and although most grasses are remarkably tolerant, you can be sure that waterlogging will discourage preferred species to the benefit of weeds and weed species.

While new courses are mostly designed with comprehensive built-in drainage there are many older courses and some 'farmer built' courses which have inadequate drainage, furthermore there are some new courses where drainage has been inadequate or has failed, often because of settling of landscaped features. In the view of Nigel Wyatt, of M J Abbott, one of the leaders in sports turf drainage, it is vital that the main skeletal drainage system should be in place early on in construction or upgrading. In other words that main streams, culverts and drains be put in before features, greens, bunkers and other details are installed. This can allow for a secondary phase of drainage once greens and features have settled and there has been a chance to see how the water runs. Putting in a skeletal system ensures that later work is undertaken to fixed reference points.

Retrospective installation and remedial work tends to be both disruptive to golf and considerably more expensive, however, Nigel

maintains that with proper planning and the right machinery disruption can be minimised, and justified by subsequent benefits.

Many modern courses have USGA specification greens with intensive underground pipe drains under geo-textile, a stone carpet and a sand base ensuring that water drains through very quickly. Fairways may be less intensively drained or even not drained at all but landscaped to give natural run-off while bunkers are likely to get individual treatment with specific drainage under the sand to a convenient ditch or main drain. Nigel commented that care is necessary to ensure that the bottoms of bunkers are higher than the point to which they must drain. Typically, main drains are put in at 900mm plus deep while the laterals which feed into them are likely to be from 600 mm deep with stone back-fill above them to within perhaps 150mm of ground level. At this depth the drain itself is unlikely to be damaged by mechanical aeration however such aeration is expected to encroach and cross the gravel layer to provide water channels to the drain from the surrounding area. Good aeration should fracture the soil so that water can drain laterally.

Only so much water can be removed from any area unless there is an effective system for getting it to a stream or storage and perhaps this is where the expertise of the specialist is most important.

The least expensive means of moving water may be via an open ditch or stream, however, these do need subsequent maintenance, furthermore there are limitations to their routing – water won't run up hill! So in some cases deep pipes may have to be laid. An alternative is to flow into a series of lakes, nevertheless spillway provisions will be necessary to take any surplus water away.

Following several dry summers there is growing demand for irrigation and the trend, with pressure

from the environmental agency (and others), is for golf clubs to store surplus rainfall for summer use. Such lakes are likely to make ideal course features nor are streams unacceptable to players, but considerable fore thought may be needed over siting. Empty lakes – after the water has been irrigated – cause comment and are not attractive, so it may be better to site the reservoir – of surplus water – safely off course, and securely fenced. If you drain into an existing water course this will not give you a right to extract from it later, although it may be possible to get permission to build a dam. Again the specialists know the answers. Tax implications can be extremely complex and inevitably require involvement of the club's own tax adviser. Certainly drainage, irrigation and water storage are major capital expenses which need prior consideration for their tax – and VAT implications. Getting advice to write in this feature quickly led to the conclusion that it needed thousands more words and still would not be comprehensive for all the tax positions of all clubs. In any case few greenkeepers wish to understand the complexities of tax – that can be left to secretaries.

Some areas of the country are (perhaps) blessed by having naturally draining soil and subsoil – and a sufficiently low water table to take the water away, however, there are many areas, such as London, Oxford and other clays which drain reluctantly, for these more active measures are needed. There are also areas where the underlying rock prevents water percolating away and others where the soil is easily panned so that it becomes impervious – and even those with a chalk or limestone base can find themselves in this position.

Although some clubs do undertake some drainage work themselves, more particularly cleaning out streams and water channels, the majority depend on specialist



contractors of whom there are several who specialise in sports ground and golf course work. The two most notable names have many years of experience having graduated from agricultural to turf drainage and developed specialist divisions.

There is a belief held by many that drainage once installed can be forgotten – this is a myth, drains do have a finite life. This life may be extended by regular maintenance, so it makes sense to inspect and review the workings of the whole system on a regular basis and to undertake remedial work at the first sign of deterioration.

Modern under drainage utilises mostly corrugated plastic pipe with slots through which the water percolates, the diameter of these pipes depending upon the water flow anticipated. Obviously it is vital to ensure that water can get easily and quickly to these pipes, which is why they are usually laid under a stone bed and sand, or if trenched into tees or fairways with the trench back filled with stone or gravel and sand. Nor should the use of geo-textile be forgotten in the design as this is another way in which the drainage pipe can be protected against blocking or silting – silting is caused by finer sediment settling and building up where there is insufficient flow to discharge them downstream.

Other techniques which can be



used mainly to augment piped drainage are 'slitting' and 'sand banding'. Such methods are ideal to remove water from specific spots, furthermore they can be used to intercept water, such as from a spring, and channel it to a drain.

While slitting and sand banding are within the capability of greenkeeper most still prefer to employ a contractor. This saves capital expenditure and should take away any measure of uncertainty from the task. In simple terms it is just a matter of cutting a slot or trench and filling it with stone and/or sand. Unless there are significant variations in level the grade or fall for this is seldom vital - and the operation can be carried out by eye, in any case runs are usually short.

Under drains are generally closer spaced on a golf course in comparison to agriculture and often augmented by sand banding or slit trenches running across and over the drainage pipes.

Of course, aeration carried out regularly on a golf course contributes to drainage and soil water mobility, but to be effective for drainage, aeration needs to be carried out while the soil is relatively dry. Nevertheless aeration holes can be used in some cases to remove water from the surface - and particularly to get it through a compacted layer.

Another option to gravel bands or sand slits is to use an artificial medium such as the Hydray fin drain which comprises of a plastic core covered by geo-textile. This more expensive option may have better water conductivity, however, it is prone to mechanical damage so care is essential when aerating.

With agricultural under drainage mole ploughing is a vital and intrinsic part of most schemes and needs to be carried out regularly. With a golf course this is seldom acceptable and so mole drainage is not often used. Nevertheless it can be effective but it only works in clay soil - where the soil will hold a channel open. It is may be ideal for specific quick drainage of a wet patch. It also requires that the mole is drawn when the soil is in a suitable 'plastic' state - in contrast to aeration where the soil needs to be more friable.

In the view of Nigel, drainage is largely common sense, with most drainage runs being reasonably obvious without the need for sophisticated level sighting equipment or technical knowledge, however there are traps into which the inexperienced can fall.

Experience will also provide a quick guide to what will work, and what are the options available for the prevailing circumstances.

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Ransomes deal goes through

Textron's proposed purchase of Ransomes plc, which was reported in December's magazine, was finally concluded on Monday, January 26.

In the lead up to the deadline day there was growing speculation that the required percentage of Ransomes' preferential share holders in favour of the deal would not be reached and that the deal would flounder but in the end sufficient numbers gave the thumbs up and the £137.1 million purchase was secured.

Textron currently owns Jacobsen and E-Z-GO as well as Cessna aircraft and Bell Helicopters.

The Scott's company purchases Levingtons

The Scotts Company has acquired Levington Horticulture and will integrate the company with its existing UK operations of Miracle Garden Care Ltd, which it purchased in '96, and Scotts Professional UK.

The new business will be part of Scotts International, headed by Robert Stohler, which operates in Europe, Asia, Australia and Latin America.

Levington Horticulture's Professional operations will be com-

bined with Scotts UK Horticulture and Scotts UK Turf/Amenity to form a new Professional Group and the existing sales and marketing agreement between Levington and Shamrock will be maintained.

"The Scotts Company is enthusiastic about the strategic opportunities presented by combining Levington with Scotts Europe Professional and Miracle Professional Care," said Robert Stohler.

"Levington's strength in peat-based growing media for the professional grower markets and its well known Greenmaster turf brand complement Miracle's product range in controlled release fertilisers and chemicals."

As Scotts Professional UK and Levington Horticulture are part way through a trading season they will continue to trade under existing company names and trading conditions.

THE RiteFeed CLASSIC

If every golfer in the country were to sit down and draw up a short list of potential venues for the final of a national golf event it is a sure bet that the venue eventually chosen to host the first National Final of the Ritefeed Classic would have figured high on most people's top fives.

The Gleneagles Hotel has a reputation for excellence both on and off the golf course and it is through being a slave to perfection which has seen it become regarded as one of the top resorts of its type - not just in Great Britain and Europe, but worldwide.

It is for a chance to represent your Region at this golfing Mecca that you will no doubt soon be playing in Section Qualifiers and further incentive to put in a bit of serious practice shouldn't be needed.

As was the case with the previous Hayter Challenges three qualifiers from each of the three handicap sections 0-9, 10-18 and 19-28 will win a place in the Regional Finals which are also being played at superb venues with the same three groups of three making up the team for the final.

June 11
Scottish Region - Royal Dornoch GC

June 29
Northern Region - Mere Golf & CC

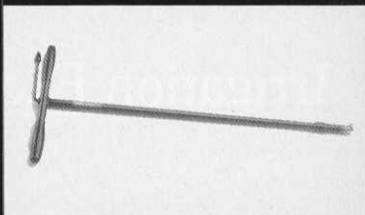
June 24
Midland Region - Stoke Poges GC

June 29
South East Region - Wildernes GC

June 4
South West and South Wales Region - St Mellion Golf and Country Club

Oct 7
Ritefeed Classic National Final - The Gleneagles Hotel

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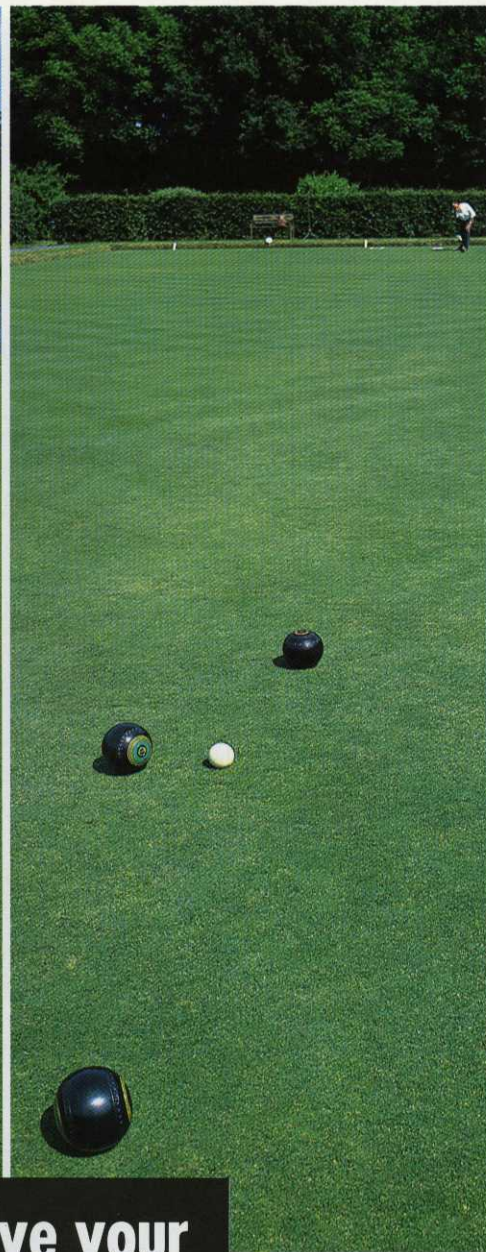
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The work that Ian McMillan and Hankley Common undertook in support of their entry in the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award became all the more worthwhile the moment Ian sat astride part of the prize, a Toro Reelmaster 2300-D, at a presentation just before BTME.

Winning the Toro Excellence Award completed a marvellous double for Ian and Hankley Common, one which will be extremely difficult for any club to repeat, as a week before winning the Toro the club also won the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone and Rhone Poulenc.

As you read this Ian will be enjoying the other element of the Toro prize – a trip to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Anaheim, USA.



Picture shows J. K. A. O'Brien, Hankley Common Secretary; Michael Hunter, Club Centenary Captain; Ian McMillan and Peter Mansfield, of Toro Distributor, Lely UK.

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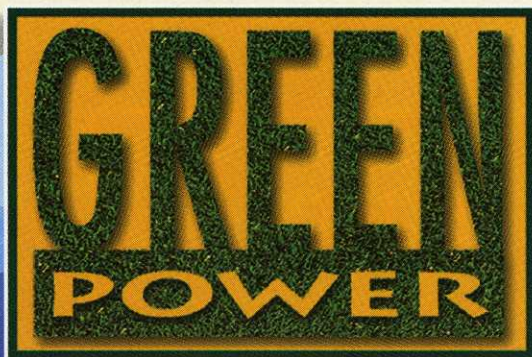
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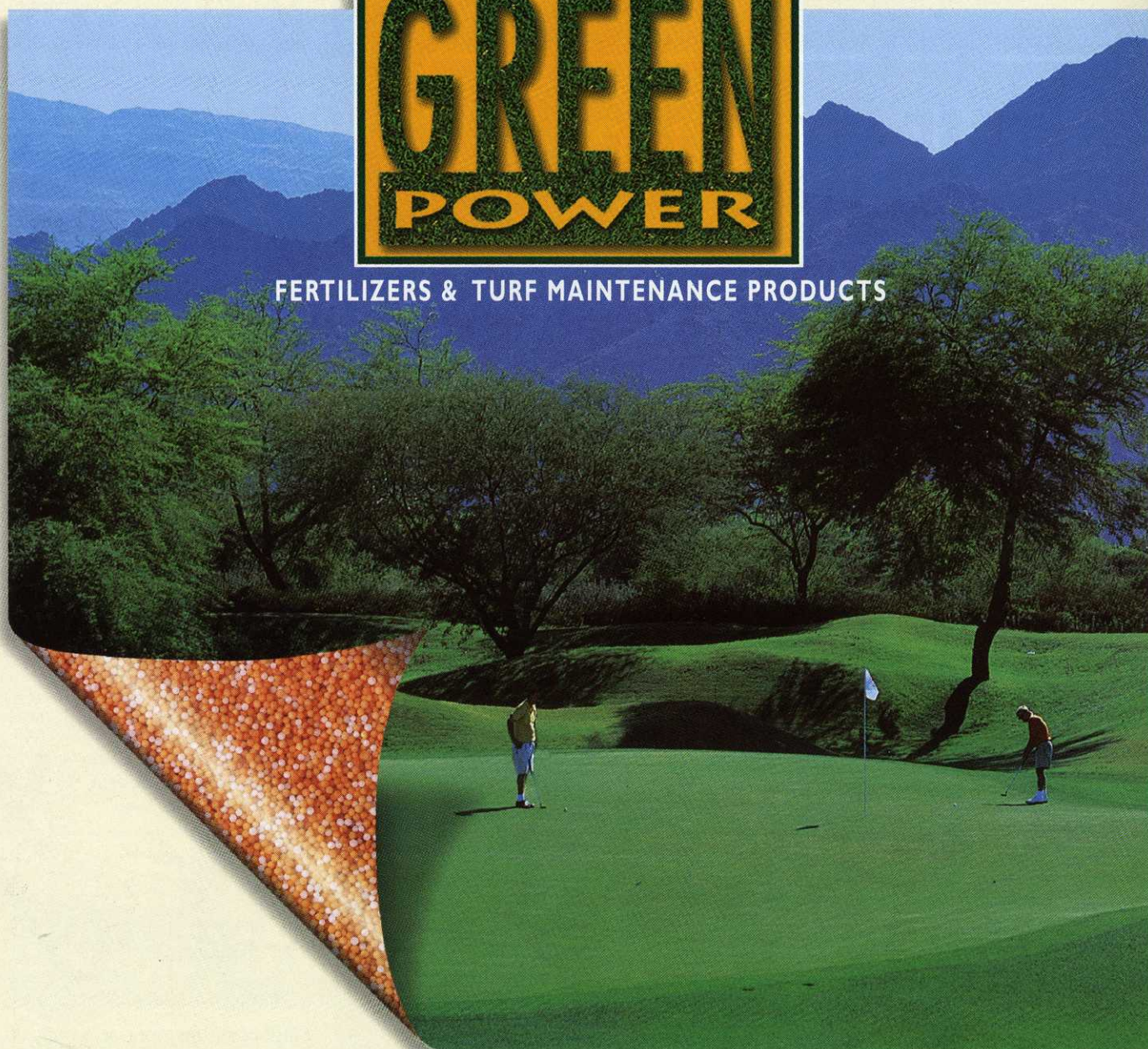
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Developed by Alpha-Scientific Ltd, the Alpha-Dot security system is proving highly successful in protecting a wide range of other industrial and commercial plant, vehicles and equipment against theft. The secret and random method of vehicle identification has led to a number of insurance companies offering automatic discounts to customers using the system. Further details on the Alpha-Dot security system can be obtained from appointed Kubota dealers nation-wide.

Yet another Scottish Goalkeeping nightmare

Don't be late, make a date, for the event of '98. With good intentions I pre-booked, and duly, arrived early, Sunday evening to be precise. A message on the phone, requested me to play goalkeeper for the Soots against the Exiles, in the annual Football Challenge Match.

There was I, playing well, in the running for 'Man of the Match' when, with ten minutes to go, something snapped and I kept falling over. I hear the Exiles won 6-5, but I would say the Scots should have had a penalty in the last few minutes, that's the way I saw the incident from my 'worms eye' view.

As a consequence I missed out in much good social intercourse, good food and a great exhibition - the best ever I hear. I also missed out on a great "Race Night" which raised much for the Building Fund and a fantastic banquet where Lee Hurst was a star turn. As for my

football career, you think it's all over, it is now.

May I, through the magazine, thank the nurses of Harrogate District Hospital, Ward 2A for the way they looked after me, during my short "break" with them. I must also thank Jim Paton, West Kilbride, for assisting me change from the horizontal to the vertical positions in many places, ranging from a football pitch to an Italian restaurant. Thanks to Sue of the Acorn Lodge Hotel for the 'courageous' painkiller - it works, and to Ronnie Bunting, Kilmacoll, for organising and carrying out my safe return home.

Thanks Richard (Lawrence) for the reading material, John (Walker) for the grapes and Alastair for the sympathy. Many thanks to all the well wishers who have been on the phone, and I look forward to joining them all next year at Harrogate.

Robert T. Bruce



All Rite on the night



The Ritefeed Race Night which made its debut on the Wednesday night of the show in the Majestic Hotel was a superb success and raised £650 for the BIGGA Building Fund. The money was raised by auctioning horses before each of the races. The racing theme was continued on the RiteFeed stand where Managing Director, John Walker, (third from left), had borrowed a sleek racing car to attract more business to his stand.





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Around the green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions



Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

North

First new member to be welcomed in 1998 is Ross Farmer, apprentice at Stonehaven GC. We hope he is the first of many to the Section. The first new appointment of 1998 that has come to my attention is Brian Anderson, who this month takes over at Murcar GC, in Aberdeen. Brian, originally from Scotland, has been working down in Wales for a number of years so we welcome him and wish him well in his new position.

Stewart McBain has the task of running the 200 Club in 1998. Souters of Stirling are this year's sponsors and we thank them for their assistance. The cards should be out soon so please help Stewart by returning your payment as soon as possible so that we can sell all the tickets by the Spring Outing in time for the first draws. Remember, this is the first year that we will receive no subs refund from Headquarters as this money now helps to pay for the Regional Administrator so we must start to be self sufficient and the 200 Club will be our major earner in that respect. If we want to keep the costs of outings etc down we must make the maximum possible from the 200 Club and besides you could win up to £100 in the process.

I have not had any ideas from anyone about the possible Section Conference we plan to hold at the end of the year. We need to start securing speakers soon if we are going ahead

with the project and this is your chance to tell us what you want to listen to or about. I await your ideas!!

Finally, anyone interested in the Section Four Ball Better Ball knockout competition that has not already entered please do so now as Steve Sullivan needs to decide if the numbers entered are good enough to run the tournament starting in the Spring. As mentioned before early rounds will be regional to cut down on travelling. Steve's number is 01738 643778.

Iain Macleod

West

Well done everybody who attended the AGM at Claremont Bowling Club on Thursday December 11. In all 40 people attended which is an excellent turnout, mainly the same regular faces with one or two new ones but thank you all for helping make the evening a success. The main area of controversy was wages, no different from any other industry you might say. We missed the usual points of order raised by Cecil, making the meeting run a tad shorter than usual. Elected onto the committee was Robert Hogarth, from Cathcart Castle. The committee consists of:- Chairman - J Stuart Taylor, Glasgow GC; Vice Chairman - Brian Hillan, Drumpellier GC; Secretary - Sandy Bulloch, Fereneze GC; Past Chairman - John Scott, Kirkhill GC; Committee - Scott Ballantyne, Cowglen GC, Drew McKechnie, Douglas Park GC, Ronnie Bunting, Kilmalcolm GC, (Education), Greg Burns, Lenzie GC, Robert Hogarth, Cathcart Castle GC, Derek Duthie, Aitkens and Kenny Hunter, Huxleys. May I express my thanks to John Scott for his chairmanship, he did an

excellent job under difficult circumstances. I look forward to having an interesting year and as new Chairman one of my first duties is to thank those concerned with the running and organising of the game's night.

First of all thanks to Claremont Bowling Club for allowing us the use of their excellent socialising facilities and to our barman on the evening, Graham. Thanks to John Scott once again for organising the Club venue, pies at half time and for clearing glasses, selling raffle tickets and just being that cheerful personality. Gary Burns has to be given thanks for running the games of which the eventual winner was Drew McKechnie, there's a surprise! The raffle was won by myself, Simon Murray and Gary Burns. Once again our gratitude to all concerned for their assistance.

The next event was the 11-a-side game of football, north of the river against the south. What an exhibition of how to play football. The south slaughtered us 10 goals to 2. In all some 19 people turned out so what happened to the others? Well done the south, maybe next time.

A few things to note - The Conveners match at East Kilbride for March and a football game against either the East or Central Section will be organised. Those who took part at Scotstoun will be considered. The Scottish Education Conference will be held the first week in March.

Stuart Taylor

Central

There's not a great deal to report at this time what with the new year holidays and the BTME at Harrogate everyone appeared to be easing them-

selves towards the golfing season which lies ahead. With a bit of luck the Spring will be as kind to us as the Winter appears to have been up to now as up to the time of writing (January 3) we have yet to have any snow.

We extend a warm welcome to new members Stuart Raeburn, Tulliallan, Scott MacGregor, The Dukes Course, Thomas Meenagh, Coatbridge, Thomas Adamson, Dullatur, and Michael Goode, Carol Borthwick and Francis Gallagher all from Elmwood College. Hopefully we can keep up this fine start to '98 with new members so if you know of any greenkeepers who are not in the Association encourage them to join or invite them along to some of our events as your guest.

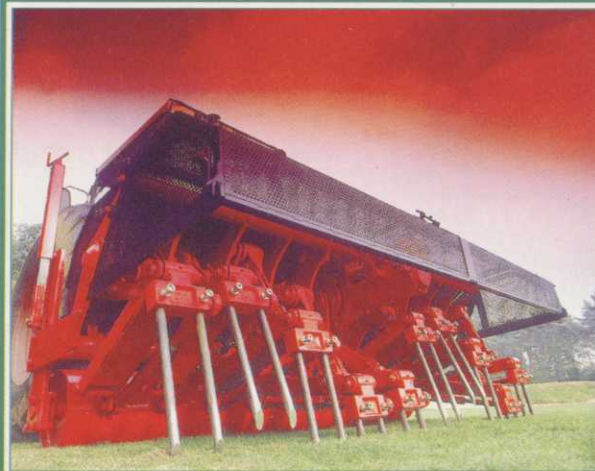
Entry forms for the Spring Tournament/Ritefeed Qualifier at Ladybank in April should be with you by now or arriving soon. If you want to be sure of competing in this event please return your forms well before the closing date. Also, the Autumn Tournament will be held by courtesy of Crieff GC in early October, the exact date has yet to be confirmed. You may think that notice of some of our events are being sent out rather early. The reason for this is that you will be informed of as many events as possible with the one mail shot in an effort to reduce Section running costs.

Well, that's it for this month, not a lot I know but hopefully there will be more next time!

John Crawford

East

Before we get started I would like to wish all our members, patrons and



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friends a very happy and prosperous new year and hope everyone has a good 1998. Now down to business - since I last wrote in the column we were the guests of Scottish Grass Machinery at their new premises in Inverkeithing. There was 30 people in attendance that day from a wide variety of clubs and everybody enjoyed themselves. The day went like this, we were picked up by bus (courtesy of SGM) at various points on route and were taken to Gleneagles where we had coffee and biscuits. We then had a very interesting talk from Jimmy Kidd, Gleneagles Golf Developments, about the work his company are on with at the moment and also have planned for the future. He also talked about Gleneagles' tie with SGM and Ransomes for complete range of machinery. We then had a tour round all maintenance sheds to see their range of equipment. I must say I have never seen so many Cushman trucks in my life. We then boarded the bus and headed to Inverkeithing to have a great buffet lunch at SGMs new premises and then a guided tour round their offices, stores, workshops and warehouses. We then had a very informative talk by David McInroy, the Managing Director and also a very interesting question and answer session. I would like to thank David McInroy, Roy Auld, Bill Smith, Duncan McNab, Steven McInroy, Gordon Rodger and anyone else I have missed! for a great day out and wish them all the best for the future at their new premises. As they say, the future looks good.

In December we had our annual dinner dance at the Kilspindie House Hotel, Aberlady, where 75 members and guests enjoyed a great night out and also early morning as all but a few stayed in the hotel that night which we totally booked up and also another hotel a minutes away in the village. In future we would like to see more greenkeepers at the dance as it is your night out. We had one or two call-offs at the last minute so that is why the numbers were down.

I would like to thank everyone that brought along a raffle prize and also the social committee for organising everything so well this year. The meal was excellent and so was the drink so I have been told! Next year let us see some new faces along as it is a great weekend out. There were one or two moans and groans on the night but

these will be ironed out by next year. We had a presentation on the night by Andrew Forrest to his parents who were celebrating their ruby wedding anniversary. Our Secretary, Steve Dixon said a few words on Andrew's behalf then they were presented with a basket of flowers and a bottle of champagne. We would like to wish them both all the best for the next 40 years.

PS - the East Section Patrons Award winners were Gordon Trotter, Glencorse, and Robert Thomson, Peebles. They were presented with certificates and books along with a trip with the Scottish party to Harrogate 98. Well done lads from the Section, you will enjoy your time in Harrogate. On your return I hope you will write an article about winning your award and your trip to Harrogate.

The Section committee are putting the final details to the fixture list for the coming season. We have an exciting range of events coming up this year so let's see all our members getting behind the Section and supporting all events this year and make 1998 an even better year for the Section than last year. This year if anyone has anything of interest they can give me a call on 0131 445 7165 (work) or 01620 842037 (home) or drop me a line at 74 Muirfield Drive, Gullane, East Lothian EH31 2HJ.

Also anyone from other Sections can also give me a call or drop me a line about anything that would be of interest to the members of BIGGA and the readers of Greenkeeper International so come on, let's hear from you.

So, that's it this month, more information next time and also a report on BTME 98 along with some photographs of people enjoying the highlights of Harrogate.

Chris Yeaman



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North Wales

A few things to mention this month. Firstly, Brian Anderson is leaving us to go back to his native land where he is taking the position of Course

Manager at Murcar GC, Aberdeen. Brian will be known to most of you as a past Chairman of our Section and since he moved to Abergele in May 1990 has been one of the prime "movers and shakers" in keeping our Section active and alive. I am sure that all who know him will wish him all the very best for the future, we have definitely lost one of our "characters" but I am sure we'll meet up at various BIGGA events. Once again, thanks Brian.

Some good news on the education front. Phil Davies, formerly of Mommersteeg, has been appointed Senior Training Officer within SDA Training Ltd, a subsidiary of the Welsh College of Horticulture. Phil's primary role will be for greenkeeper training and support of NVQ trainees but he will also be liaising directly with members as to the needs for specialist short courses. His experience as a Head Greenkeeper will provide the perfect link between golf club and training provider. Anyone requiring training assistance or advice can contact Phil at SDA on 01352 841055.

Still at the college the educational seminar on February 18 will include bill Hawthorn on Irrigation, Jon Allbutt on Health and Safety, Neil Baldwin on micro organisms, John Ver Hoven, from Mommersteeg, on breeding for the future and a representative from the R&A talking about research and development so remember to make that date available.

One last thing, I am writing this just after Christmas and the New Year and what a lovely Christmas. Four days without electricity - there's nowt like Spam for Christmas dinner and then I go back to work to see what looks like a nuclear holocaust! We used to have a lot of ash trees but after three days of chain sawing and still more to go now I can see why Brian has moved to a links course!

Dave Goodridge

North West

New Years day and the weather is fairly calm after the recent gales. I hope none of you have suffered too much with storm damage in the Liverpool area as we appear to have got off fairly lightly as far as structural damage but there are plenty of mature trees down. Up until now we have had very little frost and the fusarium is still rampant, as is the moss. Speaking to some of the local greenkeepers they

have given up spraying the fuzz, partly because of the losing battle but also because of the cost. It probably costs in the region of £800 each time to spray an 18-hole course and the budget must have taken a fair hammering this year. Anyway, we will soon have "Augusta" on the telly and then all the "armchair greenkeepers" will be giving you advice on how to improve your course.

Hopefully by now you will have received your fixture list for the year (I say this while holding my breath), but if you have not please contact me. The date for the Mere Seminar is Thursday March 19 and we have planned a roadshow by PSD Agronomy Ltd covering management and maintenance of golf courses and sports grounds. We hope this will attract members of the Association of Groundsmen so that a closer working relationship can be realised between everybody working in the fine turf industry.

I have been informed that Alan Worthington, who works at Prestbury GC, had a very nasty accident before Christmas when he was knocked off his motorcycle and received severe injuries to his legs. He underwent surgery to his legs which included bone and skin grafting and he will be attending hospital for many months to come for further treatment and is not expected to return to work for about four months. We all wish him a good recovery.

That seems to be about it for now but any enquiries please ring me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

Cleveland

Our annual quiz against the North East zone of the Institute of Groundsmanship was held at Mount Oswald GC, Durham and was sponsored by Turf Care of Leadgate. Directors, Terry Charlton and Barry Clennell, deserve our sincere thanks for organising and arranging this pleasant evening as do Pam Armstrong and Alister Forster. The meal was first class. The Shield, named after Dave Pearson (ex Durham IOG) was won by the groundsmen and it was a pleasure to see original members of Durham present.

Congratulations go to Craig Hardy and his wife who have just had a baby girl. Craig works at Ramside GC, Durham City.

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St. Andrews Links Golf Course supervisor

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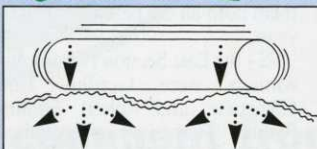
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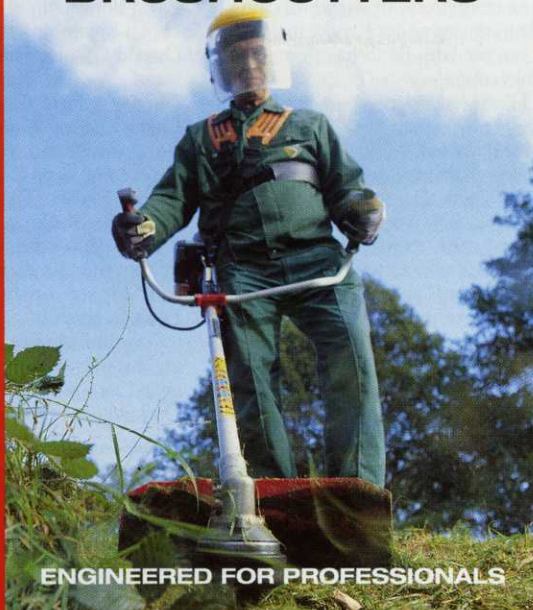
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On the construction and maintenance side, the drainage of wet areas is in full swing following a mild Autumn. The grass is still so green, is this a danger sign? Wearside GC have reconstructed 21 bunkers at their Sunderland course. Head Greenkeeper, Barry Walker, is also to install a bore hole for future irrigation use. Brancepeth Castle GC have extended the 1st and 14th tees and also made a new path round to the 15th tee and have planted over 1000 tree whips and standards.

Blackwell GC, Darlington have 2 adjoining tees and at one side a retaining stone wall and steps was built to support it which looks beautiful. They have also recently built a new green beyond a natural looking pond which now blends in very well.

Local drainage contractor, Cliff Addison from Yarm-on-Tees did all the mechanical work on the reconstruction work on two greens at Dinsdale GC. Drainage on the porous base root zone was all carried out before the greenstaff relaid the original turf.

Bruce Burnell

North East

On December 11 we had our first Christmas competition at South Moor GC followed by a dinner and then the AGM. The results were:- 1. George Wright, Crook, nett 64; 2. David Cuthbertson, Slaley Hall, 67; 3. Darren McGee, Crook, 67; 4. Alan Harrison, Garesfield, 67; 5. Tony McLure 69. Our thanks to the committee for the courtesy of their course and also to Tommy Fenwick, the Head Greenkeeper and his staff, for getting the course playable considering how much rain had fallen in the past couple of days. Tony Chambers, the President of the Section presented all of the 1997 trophies to the winners.

Brendan Brown, of Carburial, kindly sponsored the summer knock-out competition and he presented the winners with their trophies and prizes. Hopefully we shall have more couples entering this new competition.

The AGM was attended by only 23 people and quite frankly it was a pretty miserable turnout by the members considering we have over 100 members in the Section and it's still growing. Let's hope we have more next year. Three extra members were required to join the committee and those who volunteered their services were Alan Harrison, Ian Hutton and Russ Black. The committee would like to thank Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, and Tony Chambers, of Shorts, for the drinks given to all members who were there.

One final thank you to the stewards of South Moor GC for the barrel of beer donated to all the golfers - it was much appreciated.

Jimmy Richardson

Northern

In the December magazine insert, the date for the annual dinner dance had been incorrectly printed. The actual date for the 1998 dinner dance is the 14th March and not the 4th March as quoted. Please make sure you get your names and money in as soon as possible as places are running out rapidly.

Our 1997 Winter golf tournament

was held at Scarcroft GC. The weather was not brilliant but at least the rain held off apart from a few spots now and then.

May I thank Messrs Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the excellent prize table and to Mike Brear and Norman Schofield for joining us on the day on their behalf. Thanks Mike for presenting the prizes and taking the time to help me choose to them.

Thank you also to Telford Jarvis and the lads for preparing the course so well in a period when the elements are not at their most pleasant.

The results for the day were as follows: 1. S. Hardwick, 2. D. Collins, 3. A. Court, 4. A. Baxter, 5. G. Potter, 6. T. Arana, 7. S. Marston, 8. D. Lindley, 9. Robin Smith, 10. F. Hurd. Nearest Pin: Richard Smith

Following the golf we had an excellent Christmas dinner which everybody seemed to enjoy. Thank you to the caterers and the bar staff.

Our 1997 AGM followed the tournament, where 29 members attended the short meeting.

The elected committee for 1998 were: President, Mel Guy; Chairman, John Waite; Vice-Chairman, Dave Thackray Secretary/Treasurer Simon Heppenstall.

Members: Telford Jarvis, Richard Gamble, Dennis Cockburn, Phil Mitchell, Ian Thompson and Gary Potter

Pat Murphy congratulated the 1997 committee for producing such an excellent year end balance and hoped this would continue.

The Chairman, John Waite, thanked Alan Gamble for his 25 years service to greenkeeping and to the Northern Section Committee, after standing down from the committee.

Congratulations to Mick Hannan on his recent engagement. You certainly kept that one quiet, Mick.

On behalf of the Northern Section may I thank Pat Murphy for his year in office as our National Chairman. I think he may well be glad to settle back down at work and enjoy the 'odd' night in his own bed!

The President's Day Tournament for 1998 has been confirmed. The venue is to be West Bradford Golf Club on June 3. The tee has been booked from 1.30pm to 3pm.

Congratulations to Richard "Jaffa" Gamble - on eventually getting his wife pregnant again. I think all the offers from the lads to do the job for you Richard must have made you get your act together!

If anyone has any news from around the Section please contact me at 1 Cockley Meadows, Kirkheaton, Huddersfield, HD5 0LA. Tel: 01484 317813 or 0411 601420

Simon Heppenstall

East of England

Another year over which ended with a Texas Scramble at Kirton Holme followed by the AGM. All who played thoroughly enjoyed a new course cared for by David Welberry. The scramble was sponsored by Burdens Groundcare and thanks go to David Holmes, the main sponsor for bringing some machinery along for everybody to look at and demonstrate.

First in the team prize was Nigel Marshall, George Venables and

Graeme Macdonald who pipped Kevin Hodges, Peter Larter and David Holmes. Nearest the Pin was sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds, thanks to Ben Petitjean. Thanks to all the sponsors on the day as everybody who played received a prize.

The AGM followed on from a superb meal which had a poor turn out of members. The Chairman, David Walden, welcomed all and apologies were read and the previous minutes were passed. The Secretaries report covered the 1997/98 programme of events and the Secretary took the opportunity to thank all clubs for allowing us the courtesy of their courses and thanked all sponsors for the years excellent prizes. The Treasurer then explained the healthy financial report.

The election of officers onto the committee has tow new changes. George Venables and David Welberry were unanimously elected and all other posts were duly elected. Thanks go to Ian Morton and Phil Belton who have now stood down from the committee. Any other business covered a range of discussions that left the Secretary with plenty of ideas for 1998. The Section also agreed to purchase a computer with the help of regional funds. The fixture list of events will be posted to you as soon as possible.

Finally I close by wishing you successful greenkeeping and good golfing for the forthcoming year.

Graeme Macdonald



Midland Region
Peter Larter
Tel: 01490 437507

East Midlands

This year's Christmas Tournament hosted by Kilworth Springs GC attracted 28 members. Played in arctic conditions the competition had to be reduced to 9 holes as the course was becoming unplayable with all the snow! The winning scores were as follows:- Category 1 - 1. S. Goode, Scraftoft, 16 pts; 2. R. Barker, Kirby Muxloe, 16 pts; 3. A. Porter, Greatham Valley, 13 pts. Category 2 - 1. D. James, Scraftoft, 15 pts; 2. A. Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 12 pts; 3. G. Robson, Lingdale, 11 pts. Trade and Associate Winner - G. Thurman, Charnwood Forest, 17 pts.

Our thanks go to Kilworth Springs GC for allowing us courtesy of their fine course and to the Steward and Stewardess for providing us with an excellent Christmas meal. Also I would like to thank Tony Burgoine and his staff for setting up a most challenging course. Finally our appreciation must be extended to our generous sponsors for the day, Rigby Taylor.

The day finished with a presentation of £750 to the Executive Director of BIGGA which will go towards the building fund at Headquarters.

This year's Better Ball Pairs Tournament will be held at Kedleston Park on Monday March 9. After the days golf an evening lecture will be presented. A free buffet is provided for anybody attending this day. If you have not received your entry form

please contact me and I will gladly forward you a copy.

Antony Bindley

Mid Anglia

Our last golf event of the year took place in December at Chesfield Downs GC. The usual Texas Scramble format was used which attracted an entry of 23 teams of four comprising greenkeepers, professionals, trade members and guests. The course was playing very long on the day but some good team scores were posted, the results of which are as follows:- 1. C. Derham, D. Mason, R. Andrews, P. Bunn; 2. A. Grew, J. Clarke, E. Thompson, G. Bruce; 3. R. Howson, L. Rance, M. Dunleavy, C. Parnell. Nearest the Pin - Gary Snell, Welwyn Garden City GC; Longest Drive - Roland Perry, Harpenden GC.

Our thanks go to Chesfield Downs for the courtesy of the course and for looking after us so well on the day. The course was in excellent shape so thanks to Chris Brook and Eddie O'Hanlon for their efforts in making the day so enjoyable. Also thanks go to our main sponsors of the day, Avoncrop Amenity Products represented by Colin White and to all the other trade representatives who supported the Section event.

Midland

This report is probably the hardest to put together as we have not got much news to report on and the start of the new year always brings changes to the Section regarding the committee and future events. All of these events and the news on the AGM will be reported on in the following months.

As a committee we would hope to continue to give our members new venues for trips and competitions but we would also ask you to support your section and make these events worth the effort of organising.

We have had many new members join us last year and expect this trend to continue. With that I would like to introduce the first new members of 1998 - Alan Dickson, Derek Smith, Steven Tipper, Alan Shore, Timothy Earley, Shaun Pritchard and Richard Adlington.

Jonathan Wood

BB & O

Once again the main playing season is approaching fast, hopefully everybody has managed to complete their winter programme and are preparing

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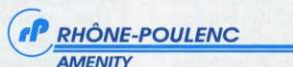
Fraser Ross, Renfrew GC

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Spring & Summer	14 3 7	-	2.0%	8.5%	✓	✓	500-710	Mar-Aug
Autumn Feed	5 5 15	1.5%	2.0%	8.4%	✓	-	710	Aug-Nov
Finegreen NK	15 0 5	-	2.0%	10.0%	✓	✓	500-710	Mar-Aug
Nitrogen + Iron	8 0 0	2.5%	-	12.0%	✓	-	500-710	Mar-Aug



Product	N P K	Fe	Mg	S	Seaweed Extract	'Didin'	Coverage sq. m	Usage Period
Spring & Summer	11 6 9	-	1.0%	12.0%	✓	✓	500-710	Mar-Aug
Autumn Feed	10 10 15	-	1.5%	9.0%	✓	✓	710	Aug-Nov
Nitrogen	25 0 0	-	-	10.0%	✓	✓	500-710	Mar-Aug



Product	N P K	S	Herbicides	Coverage sq. m	Usage Period
Spring & Summer	9 7 7	13.0%	-	355-710	Mar-Aug
Cleanrun 2	9 7 7	13.0%	Dicamba + dichlorprop + MCPA	500	Apr-Aug
Autumn Feed	4 12 12	7.0%	-	355-710	Aug-Nov



Product	N P K	Fe	Mg	S	Seaweed Extract	Herbicides	Coverage sq. m	Usage Period
'Invigorator'	4 0 8	4.0%	2.0%	7.5%	✓	-	710	Feb-Nov
Preseeder	8 12 8	-	2.0%	9.0%	✓	-	500-710	Mar-Oct
Renovator 2	8 3 3	6.0%	-	15.0%	-	Dicamba + dichlorprop + MCPA	500	Apr-Aug

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their individual courses for the flood of golfers keen to blow the cobwebs of the clubs.

Looking back to last season the weather was kind to all of us with just enough rain to prevent the course turning into deserts. I hope this coming season is just as kind (is that too much to ask for?). At present we are putting together the fixture list for golf dates and venues and these will be posted as soon as possible.

On the education front remember that two local colleges are still running evening lectures:- Berkshire College - Golf Course Design on February 4 and Irrigation on March 4; Warren Farm - Irrigation and Conservation on February 25 and USGA Specification on March 25.

I know from experience it is difficult to go to all of the lectures but if you could try and make a couple of the above that would be great. A lot of the work that helps to make the Section run smoothly is carried out by the Committee and they tend to remain anonymous, well not any more below is a list of this years committee:- Chairman - R. Clark; Treasurer - R. Lucas; Golf Admin - A. Cooper & B. Wall; Handicaps - C. Vernon; Administration - T. French and R. Kates.

Finally I would like to make a plea to all members for some information to fill these articles. Anything that you would like to share with us maybe a humorous or embarrassing story please let me know.

Lindsay Anderson

Essex

Well, the first month of the year and Harrogate has passed and a report will appear in the March column.

Our first event of 1998 will have been held at Writtle College on February 3 with guest speaker, Frank Newberry giving us a taste of his expertise on supervisory management. Following on from the above, Frank will be our course tutor for our one day course to be held at Stockbrook Manor GC on March 10. The cost, including lunch etc will be £12. Places are limited to 12 on a first come first served basis. For further information please contact Martin Forrester on 01245 603131.

Our next evening lecture at Writtle College will be held on Tuesday March 17 at 7.30 pm in the main building, room L60 with Dr Alan Gange, of the Royal Holloway University of London, as our guest

speaker explaining micro-organisms and recent research.

We would like to thank Neil Peachy, Tuckwells and John Deere for producing the Essex Section fixture card for 1998 and for their sponsorship which helps to continue the success of the Section. If you have not yet received your fixture card please contact Martin Forrester on 01245 603131.

With our membership fast approaching 150 we would like to welcome the following new members and hope to meet them at one of our events in the near future:- Stuart Mackie, Five Lakes, Luke Robbins, Three Rivers, Eric Sherris, Canons Brook, Christopher Baldock, Romford, David Arter, Epping Forest, Tony Thrower, Burstard, and Wayne Chapman, Darren Dowsett and Michael Delue all from Stapleford Abbots.

I am always on the look out for information and news to write about so if you have any to pass on please contact me on 01702 522202.

David Wells



Sussex

The Turkey Trot was held at Littlehampton GC again this year. As usual we had a terrific day. David Woods and his team had the course in great condition and the clubhouse staff once again gave us a first class service. The committee have asked me to pass on our thanks to Littlehampton for continuing to hold this Christmas event. We were extremely lucky with the weather as it turned out to be a bright dry day. The competition was played as a Texas scramble in teams of four. The results are as follows:- 1. Ray Day, Colin Cathie, Richard Elderfield, Dustin Houghton, 60 pts; 2. George Barr, Stephen Blake, Bob Watters, Nigel Bailie, 59 pts; 3. Neil Cleverley, Carl Whyborne, Jon Budd, Eddie Docherty, 58 pts. Being part of the winning team was great fun, we laughed and joked through the whole round with all of us playing our part. Many thanks to our sponsors for the halfway bar and the prizes.

Well, that's all for now, I hope to have more news next month.

Colin Cathie

East Anglian

At last I hear you cry. Did I miss Crimble again and New Year? I'll have to stop eating the beef! Well, I hope you all enjoyed it.

Our last meeting was our AGM at Thorpness way back in December and what a day it was. It was a day that 3 desperados namely Virley, Kennedy and Lathrope (that's me) won the first prize in the Texas Scramble with a nett 51. Brian had to make do with a lemon, sorry mate. Other prizes were:- Longest Drive - Mr Witing, Nearest Drive - E. Hunter. Last year's shields were presented as follows:- Spring - Tim Russell, Summer - Alan Carter, Autumn - Ernie Hart, Winter - Tim Russell. The prizes were presented by Mr Duckworth, Vice Captain of Thorpness, and were donated by

CMW (main sponsor), Rushbrooks (Nearest the Pin), Kings (Longest Drive), Turfactant, Rhone Poulenc, Atterton and Ellis, SISIS, Headland, L F Engineering, Rigby Taylor, Colliers and Bob Chesham. There was also a presentation made to Ian Willett, our long suffering Secretary, for steering us through some very difficult times and now we are one of the strongest Sections in the Country. Our thanks also go to Ian and his men for presenting an excellent course (my team single putt 14 greens!).

After all that there was the AGM and the motley crew were re-elected on block. As AGMs go this was pretty quick at 20 minutes. One or two points were made namely trying to get more apprentice greenkeepers to come along. Last year we had two. I didn't think there were two in the whole country so the future is now secure! There was also the new/old face of John Carey among us. A long time ago when we had proper money and feet & inches John was the first Chairman of the East Anglian Section when we broke away from the South East Section back in BGGA days and he had a lot to do with that breakaway. It is good to see him back.

At the end of the meeting £25 was collected from those not wearing BIGGA ties and this was presented to the McMillan Cancer Fund.

This year's venues are as follows - in March we are at Lakenheath. Please can you get your reply slips back quickly as we all have been checked for security reasons before we can enter the base! This promises to be a memorable day (and probably a nice one). The others are Stowmarket, The Norfolk and Sheringham. Looks like being a good season again.

We are also trying to sort out a match against the Essex men, probably on August 26 but watch this space. Our team came second in the Regional Final of the Hayter Challenge so well done lads.

Well, I think that's it except to say thanks again Thorpness, Hello Frank and see you on the first tee.

Mick Lathrope

Surrey

Many thanks to Walton Heath Artisans for allowing us to use their excellent clubhouse for our first quiz night in November. The turnout was not as large as hoped for but all who did come had an enjoyable evening. The winning team from Royal Mid Surrey was led by their Course Manager, Allan McDougall. Alan has promised to defend his victory in the next round, the date and venue to be announced.

The Surrey Turkey Trot was held at the Drift GC on December 12 and we thank Paul Weston and his team for a splendid game on a course they can be proud of. We also thank the Drift for their wonderful hospitality and delicious food. The results were:- 1. John Mathis, 40 pts; Nearest the Pin on 3rd - John Ross; Nearest the Pin on 9th - John Hobbs; Nearest the Pin on 16th - Dave Wyborn; Longest Drive - John Mathis.

All matches in the Huxley Bowl competition have been played and the final results are:- Winners - John Mathis and Robert Schofield;

Runners-up - Kevin Boxall and Gareth Roberts.

Brian Willmott

Kent

The Christmas AGM/Turkey Trot was called off due to snow and was rearranged the week after.

Despite it snowing as we started everybody got round and enjoyed the day. The course was in excellent condition considering the weather and thanks must go to Darenth Valley, Nigel Stapely and his staff. The food was, as usual, plentiful and I hope everyone had a good day.

Results: 1. L. Sayers, 43 pts; 2. P. Biscoe, 37 pts; 3. E. Elliott, 36 pts; 4. R. Purll, 36 pts; 5. H. Morgan, 35 pts; 6. D. Clements, 34 pts; 7. C. Moor, 34 pts; 8. E. Grant, 34 pts; 9. J. Fullager, 32 pts; 10. T. Hindmarsh, 32 pts.

Trade Prize. G. Sidders. King's Nearest the Pin. H. Morgan. Longest Drive. N. Gillham.

Sponsors on the day were Scotts and Avoncrop Amenity.

The Kent Section would like to thank all the companies who agreed to sponsor us last season. Without your support we wouldn't be able to survive.

The final of the Ritefeed Matchplay was played at Sundridge Park.

Results: 1. P. Biscoe and J. Edwards; 2. D. Clements and J. Cocker; 3. S. Ellis and J. Fullager; 4. T. Hindmarsh and R. Jackson.

We are currently looking at our venues for for this year. The fixture card will be sent out in March.

In May it is the Kent Section's turn to host the Regional Seminar. This will be held at Hadlow College on May 19. Please attend. You might learn something.

I have a request to all the people who moan that there is nothing in the magazine for Kent. Please send me a few lines or phone me with any news. I cannot report on nothing.

Our thanks must go to Ray Day and Sundridge Park for courtesy and to Ritefeed for their generous hospitality on the day.

Huw Morgan

South Coast

Our Christmas Turkey Trot, AGM and Christmas Dinner was once again held at Royal Winchester GC. The weather was great for the time of year with just a little nip in the air, in other words a nice December day. The course was as ever in its usual immaculate condition all thanks to Phil Hanks and his staff. Unfortunately I was not able attend the day however I am told that the Christmas Dinner was out of this world consisting of a carvery. Thank you to all of the catering staff for making the meal so delicious. We would also like to thank Mike Ring, of Rigby Taylor, and Nick Clarke, of New Forest Farm Machinery, for their generosity in sponsoring the days events. Last, but not least, we must thank the Captain, committee and members of Royal Winchester GC for once again allowing us the courtesy of the course and the clubhouse facilities. To this we are very much indebted.

The results of the Turkey Trot were very close. The first three were all on a countback on 39 points, the results being:- 1. Joe Newman; 2. Ian Noble;

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Duncan Peddie, Alloo GC

3. Ed McCabe; 4. Steve Kitry, 37 pts. Steve caused quite a bit of excitement out on the course. He managed to get a two on a par 4 hole so well done Steve.

After the Turkey Trot we held our AGM. This was attended by 66 members with the Turkey Trot having 57 members competing, the maximum the club could accommodate so well done to the extra nine members who attended the AGM. At the AGM we were graced with the presence of our new Regional Administrator, Paula Humphries. This was a good opportunity for a lot of the members to meet Paula for the first time.

The AGM went quite well, there were one or two changes to the committee. Our Chairman, Alan Mitchell stood down from Chairman and decided to leave the committee. This is a sad loss to the Section. Alan has done some stirring work on education and he has been mainly responsible in keeping our Section in the solvent position it is in. Thank you Alan for all the hard work you have put in, we wish you well in the future. As a lot of you know Alan is still continuing in the education of greenkeepers at all levels and is working closely with Sparsholt and the GTC.

Our newly elected Chairman is Tony Gadd. Tony has done an excellent job as our Tournament Organiser and fully deserves the honour of holding the position as our Chairman. We wish him all the best. Ed McCabe also stood down from the committee. Once again Ed is very committed to the education of greenkeepers. He has done a lot of work in organising our seminars and pushing for more members to achieve their D32s. Thank you Ed for all your effort. Two new members were elected to the committee - Phil Wentworth, from The Army GC, and Ian Noble, from West Moors GC. We wish them both well. It was proposed by Ken Lodge that Eric James and Bob Dennis should be made Honorary Vice Presidents of the Section. Eric was the Chairman of the Section back in the BGGGA days and had a big hand in the setting up of BIGGA in 1987. Eric is now retired from greenkeeping however a little bird tells me he is still keeping his hand in on a particular golf course. Bob was our Secretary for 9 years, he took over when we were struggling to find someone to fill the position. His contacts with Sparsholt College over the years have been priceless with seminars and committee meetings having been held at Sparsholt and liaising between BIGGA and the colleges regarding education. This is a small way of showing our gratitude for the work that Bob and Eric have done over the years.

The next event to take place is our Regional/Section seminar at Sparsholt on Thursday February 26. You should all have received the list of speakers for the day. For those of you who have returned your cheques and booking forms there is still time if you hurry. Contact:- Jeff Drake, 9 Villiers Walk, Newbury, Berkshire. Alternatively you can contact Ken Lodge on 01329 282362 or Tony Gadd on 01590 643746.

At this point I must inform you that Jeff Drake has moved to pastures new

as you can see by his address). Jeff has taken up the position of Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Newbury and Crookham GC. I am sure you will all join me in wishing him the best of luck in his new position. Until we get Jeff's new telephone number confirmed you may contact Tony or myself and we will try and point you in the right direction.

Our final winter lecture will be held at Crane Valley GC on Wednesday March 4. Did you sport the deliberate mistake on the programme? The speaker will be Gary Parker from ISS Aqua Turf Systems. This should be an interesting talk since so much depends on irrigation and its correct usage and it should create a good discussion platform. This will be followed by lunch and 9 holes of golf in the afternoon.

Another reminder for Westurf at Long Ashton GC on Wednesday April 29. This year we must be due for a nice sunny day. The last few years have been a bit on the damp side but to put the record straight I must say when Westurf first started the weather was glorious. My prophecy for Westurf 1998 - a fine sunny day with all attendance records smashed. Please don't prove me wrong. Bring along your Club Captains, Chairman of Greens, Club Owners etc. See you all on the day.

Ken Lodge



South West and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01363 82777

Devon and Cornwall

Our P J Flegg Christmas meeting was held at Okehampton GC, on Wednesday December 10, and was once again a sell out. The day started as always with our golfing members competing in a greensome format for the P J Flegg Trophy. Our non-golfing members were as usual treated to the guided course walk by head man Richard Wisdom. Both golfers and non-golfers were delighted to see the P J Flegg refreshment tent by the 6th green and inside Patrick and his staff treated members to snacks and drinks which set the Christmas atmosphere for the day.

After an excellent Christmas lunch our afternoon entertainer back by popular demand was Tank Sherman who entertained us for over an hour and he was superb. The day then continued with the mornings golf prizes for the P J Flegg Trophy being presented by Patrick Flegg to:- 1. C. Pine and S. Cresser, 33 pts; 2. S. Harris and P. Gross, 32 pts; 3. G. Tamblin and D. Manley, 30 pts. The Presidents prize for nearest the hole on the 14th was presented by J. Palfrey to the winner, A. White. A special prize was donated by Laurence Davis, Deputy Head at Okehampton, for the best triers and was presented by Chairman S. Evans to M. Pike and E. Barber. Following our golf presentation we held two raffles, the first being for hampers kindly donated by Avoncrop and Peter Andrewartha and won by C. Rawlings and T. Gooch. The second raffle consisting of over 40 prizes concluded our day. The Section would like to thank Okehampton GC and all their

staff who made our day so special with a special mention to Richard Wisdom and his crew as they seem to improve the course each year.

A big thanks to the day's sponsor Patrick Flegg of P J Flegg and to our President John Palfrey who supplied the wine at lunch and also to all of you who donated prizes for the day.

Dates for your diary:- Avoncrop March meeting, Tuesday March 3 at Staddon Height GC; Rhone Poulenc and Supaturf April meeting, Wednesday March 1 at West Cornwall GC; Westurf Trade Show at Long Ashton GC, Bristol on Wednesday April 29.

Richard Whyman

South West

Despite the somewhat suspect weather forecast we enjoyed a Christmas competition in relatively dry but windy conditions around delightful Minchinhampton GC on December 10. This is a great venue for our winter tournaments as despite everywhere else being close or waterlogged, Minchinhampton remained puddle free and firm underfoot and a pleasure to play. I managed to team up with our new Chairman, Chris Sealey and we were given a lesson in how to play golf by Course Manager, Paul Wester and the Club President, Julian Gardiner. They managed to go round in a gross 72 as a foursome and not surprisingly took the top honours with 38 points. Second equal were J. Keenaghan & P. Greenway and M. Ford & D. Dobbie, 3rd were A. Parker & N. King and joint 4th were K. Green & M. Freeman and P. Baynton & D. Calvert. Thanks to the caterers Jim and Georgina, the Secretary Dave Calvert and of course Paul and his gallant band of men and indeed women for presenting the course in such fine condition. A special mention must be made for the trade who religiously support us at these events year in and year out. On this occasion it was Roffeys who very kindly supplied us with the wine on the table and the prizes. Other prizes were also given to us by Avoncrop, B S Mowers, Rigby Taylor, T H Whites and Vitax. Thanks to you all, it is very much appreciated.

Coming up we have an Abrasive Wheel course at Cannington on February 20. This is the re-arranged one from November. I will contact anyone that was previously booked but if anyone else would like to go on this essential course then give me a ring on 01380 828380. The Winter Tournament is to be held at Sham Castle GC on February 25. Please be there as we need all the support we can get.

Before signing off if anyone would like to put pen to paper or as is more often the case these days finger to computer and write something for the magazine then contact Robin Greaves, of Thornbury GC. I am sure there are many out there who have got stories to tell and things to say. Also if there is anything that you would like me to put in the Section report then just give me a ring. I always welcome a bit of help!

Marc Haring



North East

Seventy-seven year old Bob Walker BEM has now completed 50 years service with Cairndhu GC. Bob must be one of the oldest active professionals in the world of golf. At a dinner held in Bob's honour the Club marked the occasion by presenting him with a plaque. The dinner was attended by a number of local professionals including Peter Hanna-Fortwilliam, Colin Farr-Whitehead, Jim Robinson-Ballyearl and Bob's playing partner, Dai Stevenson, Royal Portrush. Five years ago he was awarded the BEM medal in recognition of his services to the Club. Jim Robinson also presented Bob with a special award, honorary membership of the PGA. Bob received the award for 50 years long service having joined in 1936. Bob started with Cairndhu GC in 1947 as the professional of Larne Town GC as it was known then based at Craigyhill. After about ten years the club moved to its present location and became known as Cairndhu GC. "It was only a nine hole course when I started initially. I only came here for a week or two, I was hoping to progress in the game but I fell in love with the place - it's so special" said Bob. Until a few years ago Bob was Jack of all trades. Besides the golf he was also the Head Greenkeeper and part-time barman. Now he just looks after the Pro-shop and gives lessons. "I still play the odd game, but don't take it too seriously now. I certainly don't feel like retiring at the moment. I intend carrying on for another year or two or three or four" he added laughing.

In his younger days Bob played on the professional circuit and played in the 1956 British Open at Hoylake. He recalls it was won that year by Peter Thomson. It is a great achievement for Bob Walker to accomplish 50 years service with one club. Cairndhu GC members young and old know what a great character Bob Walker is.

Finally, congratulations to Clem Beattie and his wife on the birth of their first child, a boy named Jamie, 7lbs, 6ozs.

Eammon Farrell

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The Identikit Chairman

There can be few National Chairman who arrive in post better qualified to undertake the many duties the role calls for than Gordon Child. Of course he is far too modest to harbour the thought but he could be described as the Identikit Chairman.

He was a key contributor at the meeting in St Andrews in 1985 which agreed the amalgamation of the three existing greenkeeper associations into BIGGA; he was Regional Administrator for the South West and South Wales Region for ten years; he has vast greenkeeper experience gathered at among others this year's Open venue and also as head man at the then biggest golf club in the country where he prepared the course for many professional Tour events. Oh yes, he's still possesses a golf swing which gives clues to his prowess as a player in his prime. What's more, being retired, he can devote as much time to the role as he feels is necessary without worrying about what's happening back at his own course.

Not only is he one of the most familiar faces in greenkeeping, he is

also one half of the industry's most famous double acts. With Marion at his side the pair have masterminded the organisation of the successful Westurf Shows and ensured many of their Region's golf events ran smoothly.

"When Pat (Murphy) rang and asked if I would be his Vice Chairman, with a view to taking over as Chairman this year, I asked for a couple of days to think about it but there was really no decision to make," explained Gordon.

With his term in office stretching before him Gordon highlighted a few of the occasions to which he is particularly looking forward.

"I will enjoy going back to America for the GCSAA show while The Open is at Royal Birkdale and I haven't been to Birkdale since The Open in '65 when I played in it," he said.

The Lancashire course holds some extremely fond memories for the man who started work with his grandfather at Dore and Totley Golf Club.

"I was in my early 20s and had been in the forces and got to work one morning and my grandfather told me

I was leaving. He'd arranged for me to go to Birkdale to learn about a totally different golf course," he recalled.

"To go back as Chairman is great. Also, every time I go to Scotland I come back with superb memories and the National Tournament is in Scotland this year.

"It is almost as though someone has said, 'Well he's going to be Chairman so we'll have that there and this here.' It has all fallen into place," said Gordon, who can also look forward to the completion and opening of the new BIGGA Headquarters.

After four years at Birkdale he went to Colne, then Blackburn as Head Greenkeeper before going south to St George's Hill Golf Club in Weybridge.

"I have a real soft spot for St George's Hill. It was a wonderful golf course and the club itself, members and staff combined to make a really homely atmosphere. You felt as though you belonged. It was a real wrench to leave."

There is an obvious question following that and Gordon answers it before it is even asked.

"I only moved because at the end of the day you aim to get as high as you can and in those days Moor Park, where I went, was the biggest golf club in Britain."

There he had not just the two fine courses to maintain but also the municipal course which belonged to Rickmansworth Council. It was also just about the busiest tournament course in the country.

"I did the Uniroyal, the TPC, the Talisman, the first Bob Hope tournament and four or five ladies events and on occasion did more than one event a year.

"The worst year was when we had the Uniroyal at the end of June and then took on the TPC at the beginning of October when the new Foxhills course wasn't ready. It created quite a problem as we only had four weeks warning.

"We managed it and got high praise, in particular, from Gary Player who took time to visit the staff in the rest room."

Gordon left Moor Park in 1981. "I couldn't see myself doing the job at the age of 60 because of the

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“ As recently as 20 years ago you could go to a golf club and it was quite possible that not one of the staff had any formal greenkeeping education. ”

pressure so I spoke to the club management and told them that if the right position came along I wouldn't let the club down. In fact I delayed going to Churston so I could do the second TPC in '81.”

Coping without a regular adrenalin fix at the friendly Devon club was not always easy but it was BIGGA which filled the void and in particular the demanding role of Regional Administrator.

“That took up a lot of time and gave me what I was missing from not having tournaments.”

Looking at the industry as a whole Gordon is convinced that the big breakthrough came with the advent of quality education.

“As recently as 20 years ago you could go to a golf club and it was quite possible that not one of the staff had any formal greenkeeping education.”

Gordon has a fund of stories to tell some about his own career and some about the industry in general.

“I remember subscriptions at Birkdale going up to £50 per year. The assistant secretary came out

onto the course and said ‘you'd think we'd robbed a bank. It's only the price of ten packets of fags a week’. Now stop and think about the price of cigarettes now - about £2.50? That would make membership £1,300 a year.

He also makes a valid point about golf club members and their perceptions of their own course.

“A member has played his own course so often that he knows it so well - the line and what the hole looks like and does so he starts to look at the little things - small marks on the fairway or indentations on the green. When he goes to a visiting course he's more concerned about the panoramic views and the layout of the holes. He'll come back talking about how superb this course was and all it is is a different way of viewing a golf course.”

It's that type of thought provoking conversation you get from Gordon Child and you can be sure that during his period of office many more people will get a chance to engage him in it.



Pat Murphy helps new Chairman Gordon Child into his new blazer



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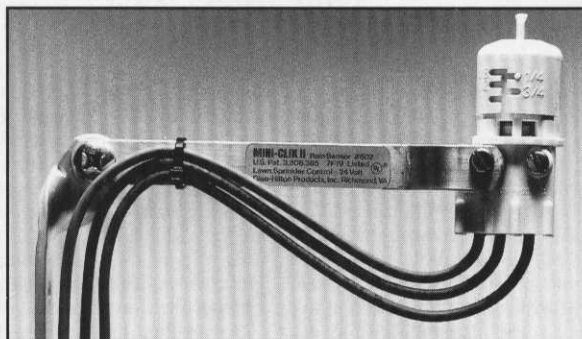
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LONG ASHTON GOLF CLUB 10AM - 4PM

New this year - come and meet the experts. Consultants include representatives from Symbio; Dr Brian Clifford from Astara; Peter Winter from STRI; John Mullins talking on water management and representatives from the colleges on education. Full list of consultants in next month's Greenkeeper International.

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Picture by: Charles Briscoe-Knight

Back in the Green

Historic Royal Mid Surrey suffered badly in the recent drought but some extensive work has brought about a transformation as Scott MacCallum found out.

Back in the Green

There is an old folk song which must make all publicans wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, before realising that it is no more than a horrible nightmare. I am convinced that the sad ballad, "The Pub with no Beer", must have that effect on the men who pull the pints.

Looking at other areas where equally horrific songs could bring about the heebiebies you might get "The Hospital with no Nurses", "The Cinema with no Films" or "The Football Team with no Players" - although, in the last case, there are supporters up and down the country who believe they live through such a case every Saturday.

In golf, the haunting refrain of "The Course with no Grass" would induce shivers up the spine of many greenkeepers and, until recently, one of these would certainly have been Allan McDougall, Course Manager at Royal Mid Surrey, who came close to facing up to the reality of just such a situation.

When Allan took over at the Richmond club a combination of drought and no fairway watering system had conspired to leave the two renowned courses extremely bare.

"When I arrived in July '95 we were in the middle of a drought, as it turned out, one this country had never seen before and maybe will never see again. Basically it lasted two years and that summer we had

temperatures in the 100s, the lowest it was getting was still in the 90s, and tees, greens and fairways were all suffering," said Allan.

"I must say now that the membership was very understanding because it was not the first time that Royal Mid Surrey had faced that type of problem," he explained, "My predecessor, Bill Lyon, had gone a long way to solving the fusarium and thatch problems on the greens but, while we still had patches of grass on the greens, there were large dead areas, the same as Royal Porthcawl experienced during the Walker Cup in '95."

If the greens were bad the rest of the course was causing just as much concern.

"At the time we didn't have a green blade of grass left on the fairways, semi rough or rough and the problem we had was, 'how do we bring it back?'."

"My view was that if we didn't have grass on the fairways there wouldn't be any point in having a greenkeeper. If you don't have grass no-one comes and plays, and there are 13 greens staff, and all the clubhouse staff, relying on the club for their wages. It would all go down the Swanney," said Allan.

A native of the Isle of Bute on the West coast of Scotland, and the son of a greenkeeper, Allan's arrival in the affluent stockbroker belt came at the end of a journey during which he had picked up a wealth of experience. It start when he helped his father, Robert, at Clydebank and District GC as a youngster a time when he also picked up the golf balls of a young Bernard Gallacher who practiced there.

He started properly at Killermont, in Glasgow, under Jimmy Kidd, before working at Hilton Park - with his father who had move there - and then Cawder, before getting his first Head job at Eastwood in Glasgow at the age of 21.

From there he went to Stirling before venturing south to Sandwell Park, then to Roe Park, in Ulster, his last job before arriving at Royal Mid Surrey, a club steeped in history.

Among the five club professionals have been five time Open Champion, JH Taylor, three time Open Champion, Henry Cotton, one time Open

Champion, Max Faulkner, while the only other two pros the club has had were Ryder Cup player, Jimmy Adams, and current incumbent, David Talbot, a former PGA Champion.

HRH The Prince of Wales (later to be the Abdicating King) was Club Captain in 1926 and the club history is littered with famous names.

Faced with the problem of managing such a historic venue back to tip top condition Allan went to the committee and said that he wanted to do some things to retrieve the situation which wouldn't be popular. He introduced the Sub-Air, something he had first used at Sandwell Park in the late 80s and early 90s.

"The ground was so hard there was nothing else we could do. The course had been vertidrain every year but it had just bounced on the top so really was pointless. The Sub-Air broke it up and all of a sudden the verti drain went in eight inches and we could slit."

In the spring of '96 Allan decided to oversee the fairways and, through Jamie Bennett and Grass Roots Trading Company, used Barenbrug mixes.

"We overseeded but got no water behind it - just two showers between the end of March and July. We had moor drilled three inches apart and the lines kept opening. It was paper dry and I had dead divots coming out.

"People were saying that I'd wasted their money but I assured them that the grass was in there and that it would come. Once I'd taken the decision I was up there to be shot at... and I was being shot at. I just had to wait.

"I knew the soil temperature was high and that the seed would take right up to the end of October, so it was a case of sitting there, believing in myself and knowing that the job had been done the proper way."

If Allan had been praying his pleas were finally answered at the end of September when they got a week of rain.

"In the first week in October we had lines of grass as thick as your finger. We had pinstriped fairways. I had proved that the system worked and that if we had the right conditions we could improve the quality of the fairways. I felt justified."

That same month the club sat down and signed the contract for a new wall-to-wall irrigation system to cover both the Inner and Outer Courses.

The original system greens only system had been installed in 1974 and extended to cover the tees.

"It was never upgraded and as a result we found ourselves in an ever decreasing circle. We had a 17,500 storage tank and while originally we could water the greens every night and the tees every second night latterly we couldn't afford to water the tees and they died. It was a case of overseeding them more or less every autumn," explained Allan, who in his golfing prime played off 1.

The new half a million pound TIL system covers greens, tees fairways and surrounds, there are two new bore holes and the club has a 100,000 gallon capacity storage tank.

The system was up and running in April last year and Allan has already enjoyed the fruits of the control he can now exert.

"We are able to control our own ecosystem. Last summer we were putting on anywhere between 70,000 and 160,000 gallons a night."



Before and after:
Allan McDougall highlights the difference in his fairways





He seeded using a 25% Barcrown (Slender Sleeping Red Fescue); 25% Baroxi (Chewings Fescue); 15% Limousine (Smooth Stalked Meadowgrass) 15% Baron (Smooth Stalked Meadowgrass) and 20% Highland (Brown Topped Bent) mix in September last year to make use of the heat and is recommissioning the irrigation system in March so he is ready to reseed again in April. We also Sub-Aired, hollow cored and vertidrain every fairway and when I can get a tractor on them without marking I'm going to slit them four or five times.

"For the next three years this will be an on-going programme and I have warned the committee that this is not a one-off cost.

"Once we've completed and got a density of sward we'll back off and verti drain every year, Sub-Air every second year and hollow core every third year," said Allan, whose own son has joined him on the staff to become the third generation McDougall in greenkeeping.

The effort that Allan and Royal

Mid Surrey has put into its fairways is something which is being replicated throughout the country while a number of nearby clubs are in the process of installing new irrigation systems.

"More attention is now being paid to fairways and it is great in this instance to see that work being combined with a new irrigation system which brings about more reliable results," said John Bradley, UK Sales Manager for Barenbrug.

In conjunction with the fairway work Allan has devoted a great of time to improving the greens which had suffered in '95 - and been identified by David Stansfield - as suffering from Thatch Fungus.

"The greens had tended to be wet and very susceptible to disease and Bill (Lyon) had a problem with a film of white lead under four or five of the greens," revealed Allan, who added that Bill had been good for the club as he had improved the machinery provision and encouraged the committee to think along the right lines.

"When I took over I upped the

regime and hollow cored, vertidrain and verticut a lot more often.

"When I came in, the verticut reels were non-existent. I bought new ones and went out to the 10th green and emptied the boxes 32 times - that's 96 boxes of grass I took out of the 10th green," said Allan, who is a great believer in the hands-on approach, spending the vast majority of his time out on the course and keeping his paper work to the end of the day.

"Every green got the same treatment. Now we verticut every Monday it is possible to do so and we've bought another set of reels so we can work with two machines. It is that important to get the thatch under control.

"They are not the best draining greens in the world and this spring I'm going to have to hollow core again, and really attack them with the verticut reels, because they haven't drained well again this winter."

Allan is acutely aware of the problems which will arise should legisla-

tion rule out the use of pesticides in the not to distant future.

"There is no point in saying we'll go back to the old methods because they are not going to be available either. There won't be Lead Arsenic or Mercury. We're all going to have to learn the job again...on the hoof."

Troubled with worms and with an ever decreasing armoury a company told him recently that they were looking at curry powder because worms didn't like it.

"The biggest problem is how to get rid of the smell and if by doing that it has to go through a process which makes it also chemical it will fall in the same category as the others."

He is working, and having success, with organics through Symbio and Soil Life.

"This autumn while everyone has been spraying we've only had to do it once. So we are hopefully getting fusarium under control."

It all means Allan can sleep relatively soundly knowing that now-days the grass is greener on his own side of the fence.

Royal Mid Surrey trivia

A word which could lay claim to being the most widely used worldwide came into being at the King's Observatory which is a recognised feature in the park as you play Royal Mid Surrey.

The universally used word which came out of the King's Observatory was OK. The building was used to determine true north with two posts one on what is now the golf course and the other at nearby Twickenham.

Among the jobs performed there was checking the accuracy of time pieces. Those which passed muster were stamped "OK" for Observatory Kew.

The history of Royal Mid Surrey by Peter Ryde is a magnificent book featuring all manner of anecdotes. Also listed is a piece written by the daughter of JH Taylor, Phyllis Taylor, on Peter Lees the first greenkeeper. There follows an extract.



The Royal Mid Surrey team under the famous century old Cedar Tree which attracts regular attention from Kew Garden's

"There was a time when Mid Surrey golf course was internationally famous for the excellence of its greens. No royal lawns were ever more cosseted than these, being cut daily (twice in summer), rolled, swept, dressed and nourished with fanatical zeal by a dour Scot named Peter Lees. He affirmed that he could turn it into a first class course in five years provided he was given a completely free hand. Wisely, the committee recognised a maestro in the art of green-keeping, and gave him the go-ahead. Acting on his advice the club arranged for a flock of sheep to graze the course every

summer. Their droppings contributed to the rich texture of fairway and green...

"Being a Scot, Lees was no mean golfer; he and JH played regularly together, and during the round they would decide on certain policies for the greens, then inform the secretary who saw to it that the committee endorsed them. In 1915 after a disagreement with the committee Lees resigned and went to America to a similar post with a much higher salary. He was responsible for laying out and maintaining five courses round New York. Sadly, in 1923 he died from pneumonia."

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- 6 Lloyds Palladin 20" Mower
- 1 Toro Hydro-Ject Aerator
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- 1 Major Verti-Drain



Picture by: Charles Briscoe-Knight

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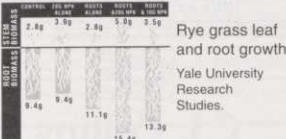


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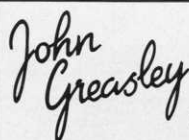
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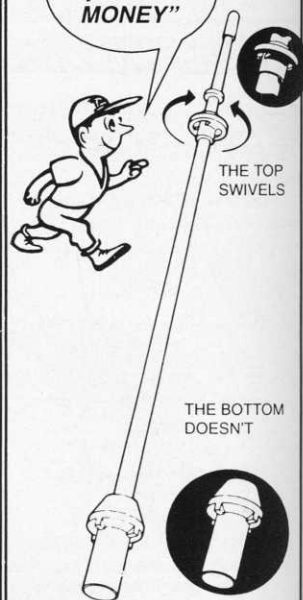
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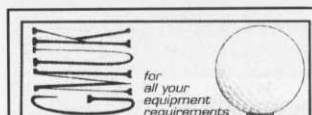
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accompanied by full CV, should be sent to:

The Secretary, Stoneham Golf Club, Monks Wood Close, Southampton SO16 3TT

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Applications are invited for a

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Applications in writing with current CV to;

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Golf Club Ltd.*

Applications are invited for the position of

**FIRST ASSISTANT
GREENKEEPER**Applicants must possess recognised
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Applications with CV to;

The Secretary, Blackwell Grange Golf Club Ltd.,
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An attractive remuneration package is negotiable

No accommodation is available, but re-location expenses will be considered if applicable

Applicants should, in the first instance, apply in writing before 28th February 1998 with a full C.V. to :-

The Hon. Secretary, Moor Hall Golf Club Ltd, Moor Hall Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6LN

Bangor Golf Club

HEAD GREENKEEPER FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

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Telephone 01247 270922

Bangor Golf Club, Broadway, Bangor, Co. Down, BT20 4RH

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EMPLOYMENT TO COMMENCE 4 MAY 1998

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The ability to lead and motivate staff, organise and control work programmes and maintain budgetary control is essential.

Salary and pension will be offered, commensurate with the post and attributes of the successful candidate.

Accommodation may be available

Please apply in writing before Friday, 20th February, 1998 enclosing your C.V. to:

Wilma Erskine, Secretary/Manager, Royal Portrush Golf Club
Dunluce Road, Portrush, BT56 8JQ

It is anticipated interviews will be held at Royal Portrush Golf Club during week beginning 9th March, 1998

Scrabo Golf Club

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Applications in writing, enclosing a full CV by
28th February 1998 to :-

General Manager, Scrabo Golf Club, 233 Scrabo Road,
Newtownards, BT23 4SL, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

Crow Wood Golf Club Limited

Applicants are invited from suitably qualified greenkeepers for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

In order to obtain an Application Form and Job Description, applicants should contact:-

Mr I McInnes, Secretary, Crow Wood Golf Club, Garnkirk House,
Cumbernauld Road, Muirhead, Glasgow G69 9JF

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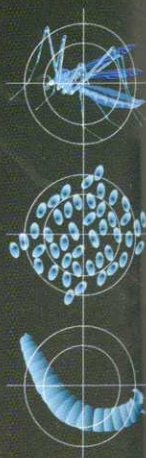


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The South Staffordshire Golf Club Ltd

Applications are invited from qualified greenkeepers for the position of

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At this prestigious 18 hole parkland golf course situated in Tettenhall near Wolverhampton

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The successful candidate will have strong working knowledge of
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*Salary and conditions of service negotiable depending on
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Please send curriculum vitae by 28th February 1998 to:

The Secretary, Upminster Golf Club Ltd, 114, Hall Lane,
Upminster, Essex, RM14 1AU

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We currently have a vacancy for a

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The Secretary, Boxmoor Golf Club, 18 Box Lane, Boxmoor,
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January '96: Greens Mowers; National Survey of Golf Greens; Stress Management

February '96: Newbury Race Course GC; Health and Safety; Machinery Maintenance; Sprayers; Trees

March '96: Industrial Tribunals; Irrigation; Health and Safety; Seed Technology; The Dukes Course, St Andrews; Temple Golf Club; Grass Cutting Technology

April '96: Brush Cutters; Ear Defenders; Forest of Arden Golf & Country Club; Golf in Asia; Turf Production; Environment

May '96: Aeration; Lingdale GC; Pumps; Security and Vandalism; Furniture and Fittings; Risk Assessment

June '96: Compaction; Seacroft GC; Education; Health and Safety; Architecture - East Herts GC; Fighting Annual Meadow Grass

July '96: Loaders, diggers and excavators; Royal Lytham GC; Protective Clothing; Modern Apprenticeships; Irrigation

August '96: Turf Tissue Analysis; Environmental Communication; Assessors; Tee Mats

September '96: Budgeting; Greenkeeping in Finland; Kings Acre GC; Grinding; Role of Training Providers; Blowers

October '96: Drainage; The Wentworth Club

November '96: Irrigation Equipment; St Andrews; The Oaks GC; Engines

December '96: Maintenance Facilities; History of the Mower; Mentmore Golf and Country Club

January '97: Trees; Tenby GC; Communication; Addressing the imbalance in Sports Turf; Hiring Equipment

February '97: Attending to the Details; Computers; Fertilisers; Ridding Park

March '97: Making Machinery Last; Computers; Irrigation; Musselburgh Old Links; STRI; Defining Playing Performance; Compact Tractors

April '97: Turf Quality; The London Club; Computers; Electric Greens Mower; Course Accessories; Ecology; Aerators

May '97: Data Tagging; Naunton Downs GC; Alternative Spikes; Suspended Water Table Greens; Shallow Aerators; Working in Germany

June '97: Drought Survival; Cooden Beach; Monitoring the Weather; Slitters

July '97: Royal Troon GC; Speed of Putting Surfaces; Mowers

August '97: Maintenance Facilities; Heather Management; Bunker Rakes; Workshops; Architecture; Kedleston Park GC

September '97: Accident Reporting; Greens Mowers; Valderrama GC; Links Courses

October '97: Environment; Recruitment; Abbeydale GC; Rough Mowers; Soil Analysis

November '97: Environment Competition; Bank Cutting; Risk Assessment; Pumps

December '97: Seed Development; Longhirst Hall GC; Toro Awards; Fertiliser Spreaders; Communication

January '98: FEGGA Conference; Buying Power Equipment; Elmwood GC; Mobile Phones; Traffic Management; Spraying; Environment



Building on solid foundations



Just over twelve months ago when Pat asked me to be his Vice Chairman, I took a deep breath and asked for a day or two to think it over. I had just got used to thinking about the time I would have spare having decided to stand down as Regional Administrator a few weeks before.

May I say now my answer was never in doubt. How could it be? There is no greater honour for a member of BIGGA than to be your Chairman. I only hope I can do the job half as well as all our Chairmen in the past. I am lucky to be asked at a point in my life when I can give as much time as is needed, but I am also very mindful of how it will affect those who follow. Every greenkeeper's job must come first so I intend to look very carefully at how some of the workload may be shared by National Board members, particularly in their regions. We must never put members jobs in jeopardy by expecting too much from them or their club.

I am very fortunate to have men like Walter Woods, Pat Murphy, my Vice Chairman George Brown, along with the Board members who I am sure will give me all the help and advice I need. However I also have Neil Thomas and his staff to rely on through the year.

1998 will see the building of our new HQ at Aldwark. Many of you will have seen the plans or model

on view at events over the last few months and now look forward to seeing the real thing later this year. It's all very exciting and a far cry from the portacabin sized building start just eleven years ago. I, like many of you can only marvel at the progress made on our behalf which would have been impossible without the support of the R & A and trade companies but also impossible without the dedication of our staff along with National, Region and Section Board members. It just shows what can be achieved when

we all pull together.

My first function as Chairman was the BTME banquet and what an extravaganza it turned out to be, it just has to be the best yet. The entertainment was superb with Lee Hurst and Linda Nolan giving us a night to remember. The food and service was excellent only to be surpassed with the company I was in. The night ended on a real high note with our very own Executive Director trying to keep up the tradition of Welsh vocalists by singing 'my ding-a-ling' with Linda sat on his knee. Well done Neil! The only sad part for me was that my wife Marion was unable to attend owing to ill-health.

The greenkeepers week in Harrogate each January just seems to get better and better. The National Education Conference which starts the week off running along side the fully booked workshops give the whole week real impetus. The exhibition was once again a big success, what more can I say which hasn't already been said about the BTME. It was fantastic! I only heard high praise for the seminar programme which runs in conjunction with the exhibition.

No praise is high enough for our staff and helpers who put the whole week together for us so efficiently. Anyone who has not been to the BTME week should really make an effort to come along next year

because you don't know what you are missing.

I had a pleasant task at the National Conference of launching the 'Buy a Brick' campaign through a grand raffle. The tickets and badges were sold by the National Board members who will continue selling them until the draw, which takes place at our Anniversary Tournament at Aldwark in June. All monies raised will go into the Building Fund for our new Headquarters and Education Unit which will be a real asset to us all now and in the future. If you haven't already taken part please try your best to do so at your earliest opportunity. I would like to thank those who have already bought their tickets and badges and I would also like to add a big thanks to the South West & South Wales Region, the North of Scotland, East Midland and Sussex Sections for their donations to the Fund. Their generosity is very much appreciated and when the dust settles we will bring you up to date with all amounts raised.

Before closing I would just like to pay tribute to Dean Cleaver and Barry Heaney who stood down from the Board at the AGM. They have both given us real service and dedication for many years and at the same time been true ambassadors for BIGGA. They are a credit to the Association and themselves. Taking Dean and Barry's place on the Board, I wish to extend a warm welcome to my Vice Chairman, Mr George Brown and to Mr Ian Holoran representing the Northern Region. Meanwhile the National Board and myself, along with the staff will do our best to serve you well this coming year, and wish all a successful season ahead and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

Gordon Child

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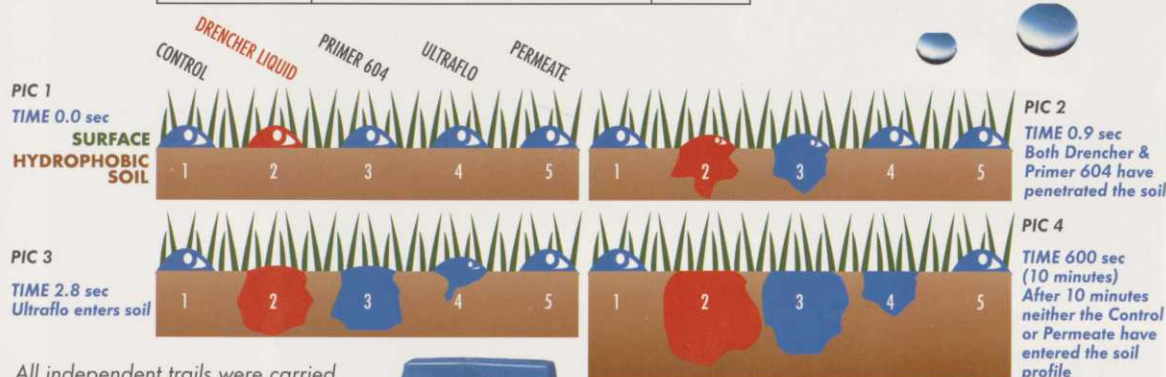
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All independent trials were carried out on products marketed and sold in 1997



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