

# The green, green grass of home?

Avid followers of this particular column may recall that last year I gave you just a little insight into the work that was going on in preparation for the move my wife, Elaine, and I were making to live in the York area.

Well, with just a few hiccups, we made it and we moved into our new home at the end of July.

It was while the pair of us were still unpacking that a young man came along and laid our lawn. We thought it was great. It made it look like a home...on the outside anyway.

We were given our instructions - make sure it gets plenty water - and, as it was in the middle of a drought, rushed out to buy a hose.

While it was bedding in, you wouldn't have found a more caring couple when it came to looking after that small area of grass and it seemed to be establishing itself well.

Then it started to go wrong. Mushrooms began to appear and then bare patches. Through the winter it got worse, until it looked more like a well used football goalmouth at the end of a long season.

But I haven't worked for the Greenkeepers' Association for three years without picking up a few ideas on how to look after grass.

I aerated, then scarified and overseeded using a couple of these boxes which involve you doing an al fresco version of the "shake 'n' vac." I then topdressed using a product a painful trawl of the garden centre had assured me was ideal for the job. This task I completed by carefully brushing in the sand. After that I waited for my labours to bear fruit.

Just this morning I looked out of our bedroom window, down upon the scene of all this industry to see...a well used football goalmouth at the end of a long season. Worse, the sand gave it more of a look of a desert.

The lesson it has taught me is that it is not what happens above ground that matters, it is what going on underneath and if the area hasn't been prepared properly there are always going to be problems. While we were delighted to see a lush, green lawn so soon after our arrival we would have been far better putting a hold on it until we'd broken up the hard pan of soil upon which the turf was laid and generally prepared the ground.

It makes me think about those of you who work on courses which either have old, worn out greens or ones which have not been particularly well constructed. No amount of tender loving care is going to prevent problems and not everyone is going to accept the rational explanation for what has gone wrong.

As for us, unless there is a drastic improvement I reckon it'll be back to square one.



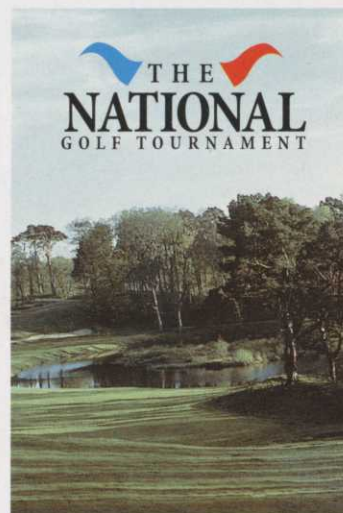
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# Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

## Features

- 17 Would you scythe your green?**  
Roland Taylor looks back at how greens used to be cut and to the present day and what to look for when buying a sophisticated greens mower
- 21 Kept in suspense**  
Dr Stephen Baker takes the mystery out of suspended water table green construction
- 23 Home on the Grange**  
Letham Grange is preparing to welcome members to the National Tournament, in association with Scotts/Miracle in August. As Scott MacCallum found out, those who decide to compete are in for a real treat
- 29 Taking the strain**  
Gerard van 't Klooster describes what it takes to produce a new grass and what we can expect in future
- 33 All donations welcome**  
BIGGA President, Viscount Whitelaw, is retiring from the position but his last task was to invite golf clubs to contribute to the Association's Building Fund. The first club to make a donation was Ham Manor in Sussex
- 36 A Machinery Charter**  
Charterhouse are the latest Golden Key Supporter and, as Scott MacCallum discovered, the company has always been keen to promote greenkeeper education
- 46 Digging deeper**  
A look at natural occurring soil bacteria
- 48 Daylight robbery**  
Hugh Tilley gives some advice to help reduce the chances of some unwanted visits by some uninvited guests
- 51 The Learning Experience**  
Taking the rough with the smooth. Should we be so obsessed with green speed? Surely we are looking for smooth putting surfaces



**23** National treasure: Will you be there?



**17** Would you scythe your green?