

Feature listing from September '96

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

February '98; BTME Review; Overseeding; Royal Mid Surrey GC; Drainage; Thatch

March '98; Trees, Golf Course Accessories, News from GCSAA, Leamington & County GC, Trevor Smith's BTME Talk

April '98; Gleneagles Hotel, Compact Tractors, Environment, Protective clothing, Rain bird, Internet

May '98; Greens Mowers, Suspended Water Table Greens, Seeds, Letham Grange Resort, Charterhouse profile, Security and BIGGA's Fund Raising Campaign

June '98; Interview with Nick Park, Earthworm special, ATVs, Royal Portcawl, Grinding

July '98; Aeration, Royal Birkdale preview, The importance of research, Architecture

August '98; Mill Ride, Fescue, Blowers, Textron, Open Review, Nematodes, Training

September '98; Nine holers - Tolladine and Fingle Glen, Turf, Steve Clement profile, Drainage, World Scientific Congress report



Keep them thirsty



The last few weeks have been on the quiet side. However, I did play at Celtic Manor in a Scotts sponsored day for Golf Club Management in South Wales. I was kindly invited to enter a Chairman's team, and just for once we were blessed with good weather. We had a very enjoyable day and it was nice to meet many old friends including Henry Fry, who was a B.G.G.A Board member for years and a member of my team, along with Richard Barker and Ken Richardson.

On September 8th Marion and I met up with the BIGGA team at Saltex, which proved once again how important it is for BIGGA to have a presence at such events. Our staff meet so many members who visit the stand, and the marketing team can talk and do business on the spot. Our Membership Services Officer also had a good few days signing up lots of new members. Our presence also strengthens the bond with the I.O.G.

The opening day of our new headquarters is fast approaching. A time for us to enjoy the efforts and take stock on the progress made since 1987. We have taken many big steps in that time, but I doubt if any means so much to the Association as having our own building. I, like other greenkeepers have at times been critical of the way some things were done, but I like to think that constructive criticism helps. The proof of the pudding however is in the eating, and this pudding tastes very sweet to me. I can only thank all of you who have helped in

any way to make this day possible. It is a great achievement and one we can all take pride in. I look forward to meeting those at the opening on October 21st, and hope over the next year or so most of you will find time to call and see your new home.

On the greenkeeping front I have noticed lots of written articles and papers lately advocating turning back to good old fashioned course management. Only a few weeks ago I read an excellent article in the S.T.R.I Turfgrass Bulletin by Alistair Beggs. He asked the question, "is golfing ignorance and media

glamorisation in danger of destroying the unique diversity and challenge of British golf?" He goes on to say that the time has come to provide a structure in which our heritage can be preserved and the traditions of the game restored. We should not allow young hopefuls to delude themselves into believing that good golf is a question of bashing a ball 300 yards down a fairway, hitting mechanically repeating wedges into pudding-like greens. Returning to traditional values will only be achieved slowly and with heart ache on the way. I also sat in on a paper a little time ago by Dr J R Hansen from Auburn University, Alabama, called The Passion for Green. The key words in the paper were; environment, golfer, psychology and aesthetics. The first and I quote, "hardly revolutionary, more environmental common sense." Then he turned to how passionate the golfer has become about ultra green carpet like playing conditions. He says, the amateur golfers who see tournaments played on lush golf courses, under artificial conditions develop unrealistic expectations. Dr Hansen argued, that golfers need to be educated in the fact that reduced chemical and water use may result in different turf appearance, but can produce fine playing conditions.

Scientists who explored the psychology of colour suggest that green is "soothing, peaceful and cool and has great healing power". On the negative side green represent selfishness and

laziness, (no points for recognising the golfer). You may ask - what has this to do with greenkeeping?, but it does offer us another reason for the passion of green and demonstrates the power of golf's primary colour over the mind.

For too long greenkeepers have been forced by the modern day golfer to sacrifice the quality of turf for looks and ease of play, believing everything that's green is good. As difficult as it may be for us to explain to the golfer that they must turn away from lush green playing conditions to ensure health of fine turf, and with it golf as we know it, we must also promote the basic principles of golf course maintenance to the young men coming into greenkeeping.

Water has not been an issue this summer, if we can call it summer, but you can rest assured it will be again soon. Some courses have unlimited supplies and think they have the answer, but we must recognise that water is an environmental concern and restrictions on its use will be imposed sooner or later no matter which source we use. So it is wise to take the necessary measures now, remembering fine turf does not need vast amounts of water to survive and allow proper golf to be played. It's the fine grasses such as bents and fine fescues which give the best playing condition, and they need very little water relatively speaking.

I suppose everything turns full circle given time, but I wonder how much the change of thinking can be put down to the changes in the pesticide laws and environmental issues. It may be that we have found an ally in the changing laws which could affect the attitude of the golfer. It could spell a return to the tried and tested methods which many old, and not so old, campaigners have preached for 50 years or more with great success.

Education is paving the way for young greenkeepers to be better managers, and more able to deal with the new golfer's demands to change traditional golf to the less skillful game, more akin to a game of darts.

Gordon Child