

## Feature listing from July '97

**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 Porthcawl, 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

**October '98:** Saltex Review, BIGGA Retrospective, Stirling GC, Toro Awards Preview, Tree grants

**November '98:** Royal Opening, Ramside Hall GC, Gang Mowers, Hayter International report, Irrigation Systems

**December '98:** Toro Awards, Environment Awards, The Appliance of Science, Engines, Architects, BTME Preview

**January '99:** Pesticide Usage, Life in Colorado, Lyshott Heath GC, Worm Research, Stylo Matchmaker profile, Temporary Greens

**February '99:** Westerham GC; R&A questionnaire results; Finland; grass cutting; BTME99 Review; Bernhard and Co

**March '99:** Loch Lomond, Worm update, GrassRoots, Softspikes, Maintenance facilities, Environment review, Architecture

**April '99:** Carden Park, Telecommunications, Water Management, Rolawn, Seeds

**May '99:** Security, Bude and North Cornwall GC, Spraying Regulations, Jim Arthur, The Acid Theory, Amenity Technology profile

**June '99:** Thorpeness GC, Millennium Bug Busting, Irrigation, Scotts profile, Company adaptability



# Critical analysis



“If only we could teach the golfers to have a better understanding of the factors that affect course conditions, I am sure they would realise that the grass is not always greener on the other side.”

This month I would like to change track and talk about what I believe is one of the worst problems facing many greenkeepers today, that is, course comparisons by golfers who have little understanding of turf maintenance. I have lost count of the times someone has commented about this course "is better than that" - condition wise that is - or "these greens are faster than those". These comments are fine when discussed by greenkeepers who understand the reasons and conditions, but when it is the golfer, it usually has a totally different meaning. If only we could teach the golfers to have a better understanding of the factors that affect course conditions, I am sure they would realise that the grass is not always greener on the other side.

One of the most common comparisons made is to the professional tournament courses seen on television. There has been much talk about the Augusta syndrome and I don't wish to go over old ground, but television paints an unrealistic picture to the real world. Many factors come into play, such as staffing levels, equipment, finance, but most of all the soil structure and the grasses which we have to work with.

Most golfers play other courses apart from their home course. When he does he tends to see only the big picture around him, the scenery and the lay-out of individual holes. Back on his own course his head drops, he has already seen the sights and now he only sees the flaws such as an occasional weed or a small disfigurement on a green so he becomes more critical. He does not understand the circumstances. Every golf course is unique and it is difficult, if not impossible, to make like for like comparisons. The amount of play and the age of the course should always be considered before making comparisons about conditions. We, the greenkeepers know, but does the average golfer?

Golfers will continue to compare one course against another, but it needs to be stressed that each course is different in so many ways. The vast majority of Course Managers/Greenkeepers consider the condition of their course a very personal issue and when unfair comparisons are made, it hurts.

The golfer is far from unique. Like most of us, he or she rarely blames themselves for playing badly. If they hit a shot out-of-bounds it's because their partner, or something moved. If a putt is missed, someone spoke or the ball jumped on some invisible object. When the ball drops short of the target, the wind suddenly got up. We

have all said and heard similar comments, but by the very nature of our jobs the greenkeepers will always be in the firing line.

It may take a long time but I believe the only way to get more understanding is through education. Educating golfers at club level is a must. I am not sure how this can be achieved, but if everyone who played knew a little more about the cost and expertise required to care for their own course, then compare the resources available, they may begin to be more tolerant.

Gordon Child