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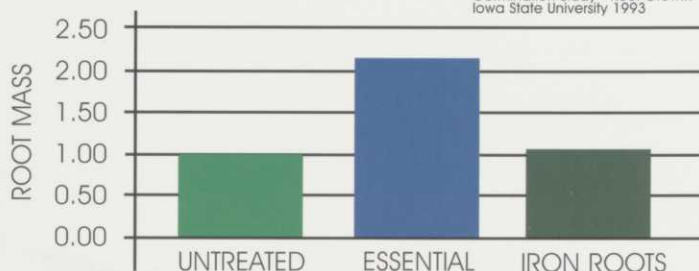
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Germination Study - Root Growth
Iowa State University 1993



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Education & Training Manager
Ken Richardson
E-mail: ken@bigga.co.uk

Sales & Marketing Manager
James McEvoy
E-mail: james@bigga.co.uk

Membership Services Officer
Tracey Maddison
E-mail: tracey@bigga.co.uk

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

Post: BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, YO61 1UF

Tel: 01347 833800

Fax: 01347 833801

E-mail: reception@bigga.co.uk

Internet: www.bigga.org.uk

Greenkeeper

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Editorial

Editor: Scott MacCallum
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833801
E-mail: scott@bigga.co.uk

Advertising

Sales & Marketing Manager: James McEvoy
E-mail: james@bigga.co.uk

Sales & Marketing Assistants:
Jenny Panton, Cheryl Broomhead
Tel: 01347 833800 Fax: 01347 833802
E-mail: sales@bigga.co.uk

Design

Design & Production Editor: David Emery
Tel: 01347 833800 ISDN: 01347 830020
E-mail: david@bigga.co.uk

Printing

Hi-Tec Print, Units 9-10, Houghton Road,
North Anston Trading Estate, North Anston,
Sheffield S25 4JJ
Tel: 01909 568533 Fax: 01909 568206
ISDN: 01909 550561

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March 1999

Your next issue of Greenkeeper
International will be with you
by April 1, 1999

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to reserve your place at BTME2000!

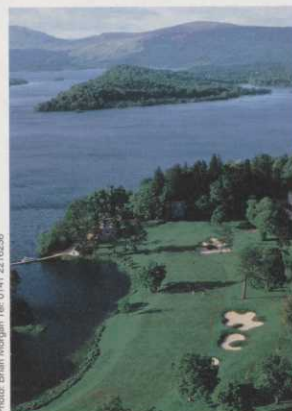


Photo: Brian Morgan Tel: 0141 2216238

23 Our cover photo this month is a stunning
aerial shot of the 17th at Loch Lomond.
This feature continues on page 23



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Getting it off my chest

Reading the papers recently has got me really mad. It doesn't often happen so I thought I'd take this chance to share it with you and get it off my chest. It's all about Nick Faldo and his well-documented decline in form. It was topical because he only just made it into the field for the first World Championship event by the skin of his teeth. It was open to the top 64 players in the world but the former World Number 1 only made it as first reserve.

People were lining up in the press to declare that Faldo, the man who'd won seven Major Championships and is arguably this country's top all-time golfer, had lost it and would never be the same player again. The fact that he was still pounding away on the practice range trying to rediscover his form, and obviously still thought he could be a force in the game, made it all the more tragic.

This was a man who had been at the game's sharp end for almost 20 years, who'd made more money out of golf than we could spend in a series of lifetimes, yet he was still striving hard to succeed. Still willing to work hard to get back to the top. But it was almost as though some people were licking their lips and revelling in his demise.

It's an unfortunate British trait. We hate the thought of success. We distrust anyone who has a naked desire to be the best. It's much too vulgar. If we're honest we hate favourites... in the betting sense. We will always root for the underdog, cheer on the little guy. But surely a favourite only becomes so because of personal sacrifices, hard work and a desire to make the most of a talent. It's not cheating, and surely they deserve support too.

Other people's success is something to celebrate, particularly if it is on the world stage, not despised. Heaven knows, as a nation, we only share in it occasionally. Success shouldn't be a stick to beat someone with just because their form takes a dip or their long and illustrious career enters the back nine.

But deep down we are suspicious of winners. It's the same in other walks of life. Someone who achieves success at an early age "will learn that it's not so easy as he gets older"; someone who is a little too brash "will get his comeuppance", someone trying out new ideas is "doomed to failure". As a nation we should applaud such things. Taking a chance is not wrong; sticking your head above the parapet is not wrong; being a little bit different is not wrong; wanting to be a success is not wrong.

But it is wrong to have a pop at those who do. In the meantime Faldo will have to take solace from the fact that when his supposed slip back into mediocrity is complete he'll become everyone's favourite.

Editor:
Scott MacCallum



Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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Dr Stephen Baker and Daniel Binns, of the STRI, continue their look at the problem of worms on golf courses



44 Eco warriors



55 Course closed

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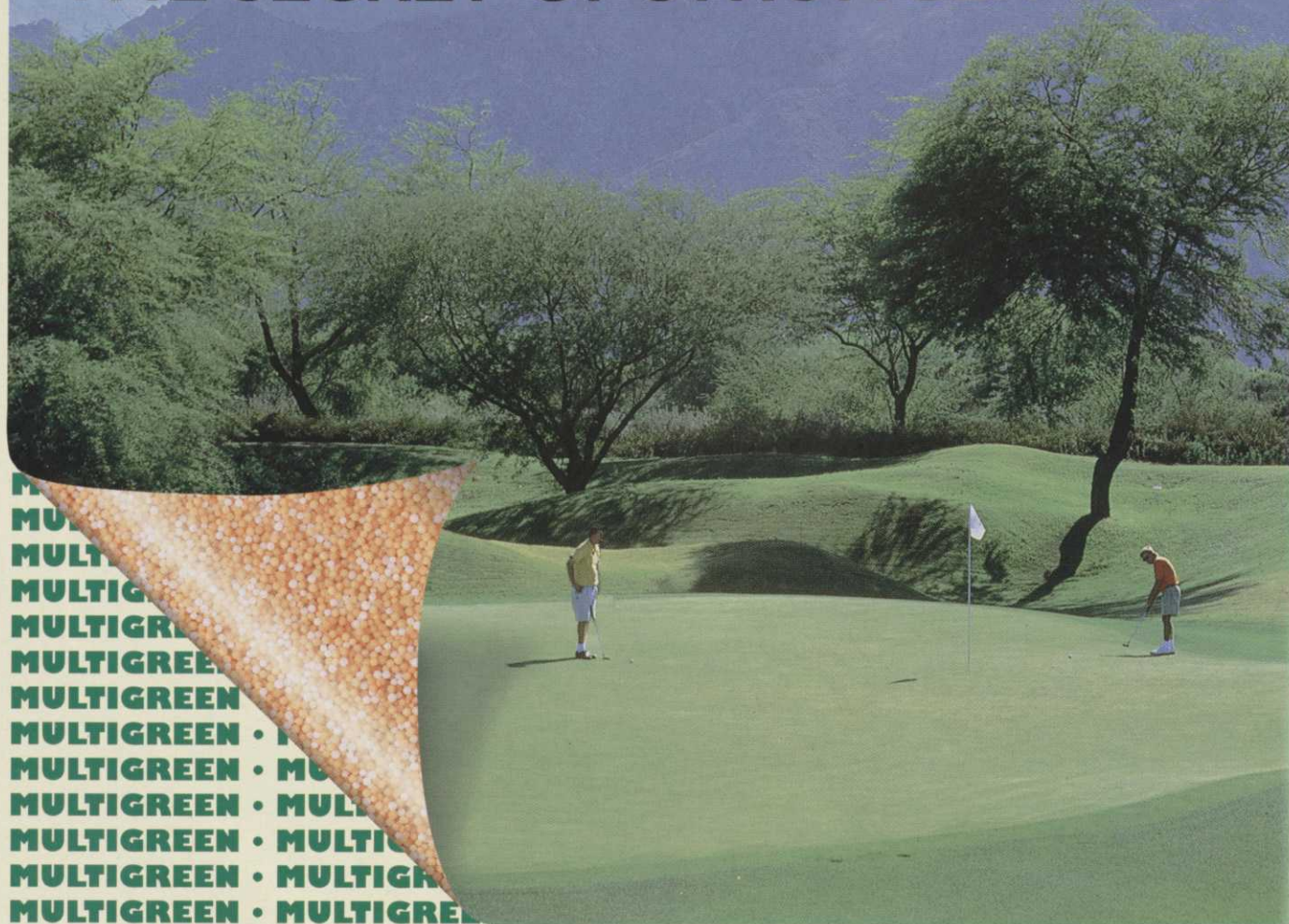
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New education conference at Myerscough

Myerscough College, under the drive of Martyn Jones, is hosting a three day Education Conference in April under the guise of the Myerscough Turf Club.

The Conference will run from April 14-16 for the all-inclusive cost of £230 for non-Myerscough Turf Club members and £184 for members.

The price includes accommodation for the Wednesday and Thursday nights, meals and refreshments for the three days and attendance at the Conference Dinner.

Prior to the Conference itself, the college is holding a two day workshop on micro-organisms, their

functions, their requirements, the factors affecting populations and communities and will identify beneficial species as well as those which may be harmful. It is being held on April 12 and 13.

Speakers at the Conference include Jimmy Kidd, of Gleneagles Hotel; Dr Eric Nelson, of Cornell University; Dr Michael Boehm, of Ohio State University; Dr Bill Adams, of University College of Wales; Dr Joe Vargas, of Michigan State University; Dr Anne-Maria Brennan; Dr Kate Entwistle, of STRI; Dr Kark Danneberger, of Ohio State University; Dr Alan Gange, of University of London; Professor Noel Jackson, of

University of Rhode Island; Dr Graham Lewis, of IGER; Dr Bruce Martin, of Clemson University; Dr Michael Kenna, of the USGA, and Peter Wisby, of the National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa.

Cheques should be made payable to Myerscough Turf Club, and the event is being sponsored by the Toro Corporation, Grass Roots, Inturf, Rigby Taylor, Kubota, GTC and the GCSAA Student Chapter at Myerscough College.

For further information contact Martyn Jones, Head of Turfgrass Science, Tel: 01995 640611 Fax: 01995 640842. e-mail: mjjones@myerscough.ac.uk

Survey at St Andrews

All six courses at St Andrews Links are being surveyed using the latest satellite technology in the largest project of its kind in Europe. The result will be the most accurate record to date of the size and location of features on the ground as well as the position of installations under the ground.

The survey is being carried out by Adrian Mottram from Robin Hume Associates, the company overseeing the installation of an extensive irrigation system on the six courses managed by St Andrews Links Trust.

He is making the most of the latest Global Positioning System (GPS) which uses a constellation of satellites to track him as he walks round the courses and records the exact co-ordinates of different locations to the nearest centimetre.

Adrian will be surveying every tee, fairway and green on the Links logging their dimensions as well as the positions of sprinklers, underground pipelines and cables.

The results will be transferred on to the greenkeepers' computers who will be able to use the scaled maps to identify routes and sizes of pipework and cables as well as the location and types of valves and sprinklers. They will also be able to calculate the size of a particular area they may be planning to work on to a remarkable degree of accuracy.

"This is probably the first time GPS has been used on this scale for any golf course in Europe and represents a major step forward for us," said Ian Forbes, Links Manager with St Andrews Links Trust.

"The advantages will be tremendous in helping greenkeepers pinpoint problems and improve effectiveness. Such detailed maps will also make life easier for the organisers of major events such as the Open Championship and the Alfred Dunhill Cup."

A speedy delivery for John

John Beattie, foreman greenkeeper on Carnoustie's Championship Course, may have expected to be in the public eye when The Open returned to his course in July, but his appearance on the front page of his local paper recently came as a big surprise.

The reason was the dramatic arrival of the latest member of the Beattie family who decided to make her debut en route to, rather than in, Dundee's Ninewells Hospital.

As John explained to the Dundee Courier: "By the time we were on the the Arbroath Road heading for the city it was clear that things were moving ahead and we weren't going to make Ninewells."

When it became apparent that mum-to-be Arlene couldn't hold off any longer they stopped at the first house they came to and by luck Heather Lindsay came to the rescue.

"The baby's head was already showing when I got the car so it was obvious that it was going to happen right there," Mrs Lindsay, secretary at a local Heath Centre, told the Courier.

Despite the unusual circumstances everything went smoothly and the Beatties were soon celebrating the birth of the eight pound 13oz sister to Jack.

Jack's arrival two years before had been a more drawn out affair and it had been that which had lulled John and Arlene into thinking they had more time.

"I'm just happy that everything worked out all right and both of them are safe. We don't know how to thank Heather for coming out and helping us like that," said John.



Above: Hold the front page!

Above: John pictured with Heather, wife Arlene and family

BIGCA to get library

The world's first library dedicated to the subject of golf course design is to be established by the British Institute of Golf Course Architects at Merrist Wood.

A grant of £5,000 from the R&A has made this possible.

A call for contributions of books, technical literature and financial support has been made by the BIGCA and the shelves are beginning to be stocked with authoritative works from around the world.

The library will be formally opened in April at the Institute's General Meeting and will be open for members, the Institute's students and colleagues from the golf industry.

Full CD-ROM and Internet facilities will be provided so that the maximum opportunity is gained to browse the world's information bank.

Photo courtesy of DC Thomson & Son Ltd

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Profile

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

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



Name: Bob Butfoy

Club: Mount Pleasant GC, Lower Stondon, Beds

Position: Assistant Greenkeeper

Age: 32

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
Approximately 10 years

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
NVQ Level 3

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
Hand mowing greens for competitions

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Flymowing and strimming ditches

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

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

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Create awareness of our professional abilities ie. We're not just grass cutters

8. What are your hobbies?
Football, music and golf

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
Up to date information and good golf and social events

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
If I'm not a lottery millionaire I'd like to be in charge of a course in the south of England.

Leatherjacket numbers on increase



Leatherjacket numbers are at their highest for five years - and that means turf is at risk this spring unless greenkeepers act now. That warning comes from Dow AgroSciences' Andy Cawley, who says that the company's Pestwatch monitoring service shows a 30% rise in numbers compared with last year.

"That increase can be attributed to

the relatively mild weather this winter, and fine turf could suffer significant damage this season if populations are left unchecked," said Andy.

"Leatherjackets attack grass roots just below the soil surface, which can reduce the plant's drought tolerance, and may cause it to die.

"The first signs of damage will be

seen as straw-coloured patches of turf. With drier conditions later in the year, these become bare and are then invaded by weeds. Groundsmen should also look for birds feeding on turf for the crane fly larvae."

Andy urges greenkeepers to consult their local adviser for further advice on leatherjacket control, and to look out for signs of leatherjacket activity.

Tim finds a top prize in the bunkers

After months of attempting to establish a day when three busy people were free, the top prize for the 1998 Great BIGGA Bunker Competition was presented to Tim Glover, of The Independent on Sunday, by Kim Machie, Sales and Marketing Director for Hayter, at Mill Ride Golf Club.

Tim was the member of the Open Championship media who was closest in his estimation of how many bunkers would be found during the course of the four days. In the end the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support team raked 1140 bunkers - the second highest total since statistics began being kept - and Tim's estimate of 1160 was only 20 out.

As a reward he received a Hayter Harrier lawn mower - recently voted the Machine of the Decade - worth £700.

The presentation took place at Mill Ride Golf Club, Ascot, not far from Tim's home in Datchet, on the tee of the 15th hole where several months earlier Derek Lawrensen, a golf writing colleague of Tim's, won a £180,000 Lambourgni for a hole-in-one in the company of the England football squad.

While not quite in that class, Tim was more than delighted to win his prize.

Thanks go to Kim and Hayter for donating the prize for the fourth consecutive year and to Gordon Irvine, of Mill Ride, for his hospitality.



Greenkeeper Training Committee

Following a meeting between the R & A and English Golf Union, it has been decided to commission an independent review of the work undertaken by the GTC.

In the meantime, the EGU will continue to fund and remain a member of the GTC.

Commenting on the press

release, BIGGA Chairman Gordon Child who represents the Association on the GTC said, "A meeting of the GTC due to be held on the 25th of February was subsequently postponed. I have requested that this meeting be held as soon as possible in order that members of the GTC can be consulted with

regard to the independent review. Until this happens BIGGA is not in a position to comment on the merits of the proposed review or to indicate its support or otherwise for such a review". Readers of Greenkeeper International will be kept informed of matters in relation to the GTC as they develop.

New scheme launched for Deere dealers

A new service evaluation scheme has been introduced to commercial & consumer equipment (C&CE) dealers in the UK and Ireland, underlining the company's commitment to first class parts and service support for the full John Deere product range.

A total of 42 C&CE dealer service departments will have been evaluated by spring 1999. Each can achieve a Gold, Silver or Bronze award, after being assessed on a range of important service features.

Areas under the spotlight number 16 in all, and include specialist equipment, workshop condition and size relative to the number of staff employed, service vehicle presenta-

tion, technical training, warranty procedure, marketing and service management.

Full dealer training on all aspects of parts and service support is available at John Deere's new training centre at Langar, Nottingham. Upwards of 5000 training days are provided each year for dealer personnel, including around 3500 days for service technicians - all designed to ensure the best possible service to customers throughout the UK and Ireland.

"Our aim as a business is to provide the most advanced and reliable machines possible, backed by efficient and knowledgeable product support," says Managing Director, Alec McKee.

"The John Deere brand name means quality, combined with industry leading investment in research and development, manufacturing facilities and spare parts distribution... all aimed at providing customer satisfaction and genuine value right across the product range.

"The new service evaluation scheme is designed to encourage good working practice throughout the dealer network.

This means that customers can always obtain modern, efficient, safe and cost effective equipment, secure in the knowledge that both John Deere and the dealer are fully committed to keeping their machines working."

Iain goes West

Iain Richardson, (right), has recently been appointed by Scotts UK Professional to represent the company in Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Powys, Somerset, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

Iain joins Scotts from Avoncrop Amenity, where he worked in sales for two and a half years. Iain has a City and Guilds in Motor Engineering and his hobbies include following Formula One Racing.



Sheffield to host seminar

The Sheffield Section are hosting an Educational Seminar on March 16 at Rotherham Golf Club.

Included among the speakers are Bob Taylor, of the STRI; David Golding, of the GTC; Dr Kate Entwistle, of the STRI; John Coleman, of Abbeydale GC and the current Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping winner; Ken Richardson, of BIGGA, and Iain Macpherson, a golf course project manager.

The cost of the Seminar is £15 inclusive of coffee on arrival and a buffet lunch.

Further information can be obtained from Section Secretary Ron Ullathorn, Tel: 01405 765322

Well versed after BTME

BTME 99 inspired one member of the trade to break into verse. Now I know the position of Poet Laureate is still vacant...

The Last Bus to Harrogate

On the annual trip to Harrogate

Two of the boys appeared to be late Which, to the gang, was a hell of a pity

As Stevie Dunn was the one with the kitty

So he got in his car, a determined man

To try and find those who had foiled his plan

To go to the show for a bit of a roam

Then party on the bus, all the way home

But they really did feel a wee bit sad

As they all know he's a bit of a lad

But never mind Stevie, they enjoyed the beer

And they're sure you'll make up for it next year!

Carol Quinn,
Thorntrees Landscapes

High praise for Jacobsen

Martin Hucklesby, recently appointed as Head Greenkeeper at Nigel Mansell's Woodbury Park Golf and Country Club in Devon, believes that the Jacobsen golf machines used by the Club for some time will help him take it successfully into the Millennium.

As Head Greenkeeper at Five Lakes Course in Essex for four years, Martin built up a strong relationship with Ransomes, where he used a Fairway 250 machine. He is delighted that Ransomes has lined up alongside Jacobsen under the Textron Turf Care banner as this will offer a total product and aftersales service to discerning greenkeepers such as himself.

"The golf industry is incredibly competitive, with players becoming more and more demanding when it comes to the quality of a playing surface and what a club has to offer. If these don't come up to scratch, they vote with their feet. Woodbury Park is renowned for its facilities so that isn't a problem, but the quality of the playing surfaces is down to me, and to offer the best, I have to work with the best," said Martin.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



Ian assesses his new qualification

Ian Willet, Course Manager at Thorpeness Golf Club and Hotel, has been awarded his City & Guilds National Vocational Qualification in Training and Development 7281 Level 3.

"This means that I am qualified to train my staff and assess them up to level 3 and also it enables me to have stronger ties with my local colleges in the area and help out with the work based assessing at other golf clubs in East Anglia," explained Ian.

"The course was very tough and I put a lot of work into providing the evidence and demonstrating my teaching abilities in front of other trainers, teachers and assessors on the course.

"Although very apprehensive at first, after a few weeks settling in, it proved to be very enjoyable, worthwhile and very satisfying.

"I would totally recommend it to an Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager to further their careers in greenkeeping and the Amenity Industry, especially in light of the recent press release from the EGU," said Ian.

Top role for Trevor



Trevor Smith has been appointed Managing Director of Canford Magna Golf Club in Dorset. It is due reward for the man who has been responsible for the designing and building of the new nine hole course which has turned the Canford Magna into a 45 hole pay-and-play complex unrivalled in the area.

A staunch BIGGA supporter, Trevor becomes another of the growing band whose education has carried him off the golf course and into the Board Room.

Fond farewell to Norman Sheddton

It was with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of one of life's gentlemen - Norman Sheddton. He always had time for everybody and anyone who came into contact with Norman will testify to that fact.

For many years Norman worked for Supaturf and in the latter

years worked for Aitkens. He was always seen at BTME.

Norman was a regular at greenkeepers' golf competitions in the Cleveland Section. He invariably looked after entries and sorted out the meals but never stayed. He always had to rush off to go and play squash or go tap dancing.

Our deepest sympathies go to Joan and the family as they mourn their sad loss and we would like them to know that our thoughts are with them. We, in the greenkeeping industry can say that one of the leading lights has gone out.

Ian Holoran

New manufacturing position for Mark

Mark Cooper has been appointed manufacturing engineer by Staffordshire-based grass and grounds maintenance equipment specialist, Turfmech Machinery Ltd.

Bringing to the position an honours degree in engineering and 14 years' manufacturing experience, Mark will be focusing attention on improving every aspect of Turfmech's production processes. This will start with the timely ordering and planned intake of bought-in components and raw materials, through to their managed storage, handling and distribution within the Turfmech factory and the efficient

machining, fabrication, assembly and testing of the finished product. His goal is to raise the standard and cost effectiveness of Turfmech's entire manufacturing systems, bringing continuous improvements in the quality, reliability and consistency of the finished product.

Turfmech products for which Mark will be responsible include Tornado debris blowers, TurfVAC vacuum collectors, the Seed-Air pneumatic turf seeder, the V800 vehicle-trailed vacuum unit with wander hose, as well as new products currently in development.



New MD for British Seed Houses

Roger Saunders will become managing director of British Seed Houses Ltd, the Germinal Holdings subsidiary, from July.

He takes over from Neville Bark who is retiring.

Simon Taylor will be promoted to replace Roger Saunders as unit manager at Warrington, and also joins

the British Seed Houses board.

Mr Saunders has considerable experience of the amenity and agricultural sectors of the seed industry, having initially been involved with the production of a comprehensive range of agricultural species before moving into the retail sector.

He joined British Seed Houses in

1977 to manage the Warrington unit and has been largely responsible for the development of the company's amenity section. He was Chairman of the Amenity Grass Marketing Association (AGMA) and currently serves on the Sports Turf Research Institute Breeders' Representative Committee.

On top form

To help reduce the burden of postal charges on BIGGA Sections Greenkeeper International has produced a universal Golf Event Application form which can be used by all Sections. Having established the events in which you wish to play, via your Section fixture list or information contained in your Around the Green Notes, simply fill out the form and return to your Section or Competition Secretary with the appropriate entry fee(s). Of course you can photocopy the form if you don't wish to cut your magazine. Once this system becomes established it should avoid your Section having to mail an entry form to each individual member. This form will also be reproduced later in the year.

Name	_____
Membership number	_____
Position	_____
Handicap	_____
Club/Company	_____
Entry Fee (enclosed)	_____
Please enter me for the	Section _____
	competition _____
to be held at	_____
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The Scotts Company is the leader in research, manufacturing and marketing of products for professional turf care, ornamental horticulture, field and vegetable production and domestic use. From bases in the U.S.A. and Europe, Scotts sells its products in more than 50 countries worldwide.

Marathon man's race for charity



Gay Hill Assistant, Andrew Kite, is currently in training for one of the country's biggest sporting events and his efforts should go a long way to assisting with rare Metabolic disease.

Andrew, 35, is running in the London Marathon on behalf of the RTMDC charity and the money raised will be given on behalf of the golf club.

"Andrew has run marathons before but never the London Marathon and he is delighted to be doing so on behalf of the charity," said Andrew's Course Manager, former BIGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver.

Metabolic Diseases are rare, inherited and incurable, although some can be treated by diet, drugs and organ transplant.

The film *Lorenzo's Oil* was based on a Metabolic disease while, just before Christmas, it also claimed the life of Rhys, the brave little boy whose parents fought to have him treated after the Local Health Board had initially turned him down.

Anyone wishing to sponsor Andrew in the marathon should contact him or Dean at Gay Hill Golf Club Tel: 0121 430 8544.

Sharp new idea from Bernhard

A new machine from Atterton & Ellis, part of the Bernhard Group, created quite a stir on their stand at the recent BTME exhibition at Harrogate.

The RAPID THINNER has been

introduced to allow machinery operators to quickly and easily restore the manufacturer's original relief to cutting cylinder blades. Explaining the concept, Bernhard's Managing Director, Stephen Bernhard said "We

have proved through exhaustive trials, particularly in the United States, that grass quality can be dramatically improved, and stress on mowing machinery reduced if cylinders and bottom blades are regularly sharpened."

"Mowers perform best, and grass is healthier, if the cylinders are performing a scything action when cutting, rather than the more brutal scissor-action which occurs when cylinders and bottom blades are back-lapped and in constant contact between the two components."

The RAPID THINNER is a high-speed device that attaches magnetically to the bottom blade. A specially developed air grinder is then guided across each blade, ensuring that the correct blade relief - as intended by the manufacturer - is returned to the blades, quickly and easily.

The new machine is an ideal companion to Bernhard's RAPID FACER 1000, a magnetic attachment for high-speed re-facing of the front edge of bottom blades. Machinery operators can save money by buying the individual grinding heads of both the RAPID THINNER and RAPID FACER 1000 to fit the same attachment frame.

In recent years, Bernhard's have pioneered the concept of better grass quality and reduced costs through regular cylinder and bottom blade grinding.

The company are manufacturers of the best selling EXPRESS DUAL reel grinders and ANGLEMASTER bottom blade grinders, used now by most of the USA's top 100.



Allen Power take command of new 4x4

Allen Power Equipment has launched a four wheel drive version of their Commander out front rotary ride on mower.

Drive is via hydraulic motors to each wheel and the 4 x 4 performance is ideal for bank work where the ability to stop and start on slopes with the improved traction reduces scuffing and wheel slip as well as improving the safety aspect for the operator.

The new mower is designed for ease of access for maintenance and servicing and a high forward speed for travelling between mowing sites coupled with a large capacity stainless steel fuel tank improves output.

Powered by a 18 hp twin Briggs & Stratton Vanguard engine the new Commander has a 44in. (1122mm) three blade mulching cutting deck which cuts outside the width of the wheels and a height of cut from 12.5mm - 100mm adjustable from the operators seat.

With rear steering and rear engine the operator is free from exhaust fumes and manoeuvrability is second to none.

This new initiative in safe mowing retails at just £5995 + VAT



New Vitax range advances after BTME

Vitax launched a new range of fertilisers named Vitax Advance at BTME. This new range, specially formulated for UK conditions, contains controlled release fertilisers that give a 4-5 months release pattern, and immediately available micro-prills to give a quick response early in the season. Three formulations are

available, including two for Spring and Summer use to allow the Greenkeeper to decide whether his regime requires phosphate or not, and a high potash Autumn analysis. The use of Polyon "Reactive Layer Coating" materials from the USA as the controlled release part of this new range, brings a high tech

fertiliser which uniquely releases nutrients through osmosis. This gradual diffusion of turf nutrients through a polymer coating is controlled by soil temperature alone. In times of heavy rain, this would prevent surges of growth, common to most fertilisers, and the leaching of valuable nutrients in surface water.

Kubota's walk-behind rotary mower

Kubota is introducing three new self-propelled walk-behind rotary mowers for the 1999 grass-cutting season.

Designed and built to commercial quality standards, the Kubota W521 TC, W521 HTC and W621 HTC models are all four-wheeled machines with a 53cm (21in) cutting width and a choice of two lever-selected forward speeds. A blade brake clutch is a standard safety feature on all three models.

Both the W521 TC and W521 HTC mowers are powered by 5hp Kubota petrol engines while the W621 HTC has a 6hp petrol power unit. The HTC suffix on the latter two models is used to designate a rugged, professional quality mower, suitable for everyday grass-cutting duties in the hands of local authorities, contractors, ground staff and those responsible for maintaining parks, estates and the largest gardens. Although making no compromise on build quality, the Kubota W521 TC model is a lighter-weight, lower-priced machine suited to both commercial and domestic mowing applications.

All three mowers have a six-position cutting height adjustment from 16mm to 76mm (0.63in - 3in), altered manually by a hand lever on each wheel. A standard feature across the range is a light and easily emptied bag-type grass catcher with rear-emptying and a capacity of 75 litres. The three new Kubota walk-behind rotary mowers are priced at £670, £800 and £899 respectively.



MM brand is core product for Mommersteeg

Mommersteeg's MM brand of grass seed mixtures is to be a core product of Advanta Seeds' amenity portfolio, following the formal merger of Mommersteeg, Sharpes International, Advanta and Sinclair McGill, into one trading company.

The MM range, in particular the winter sports mixtures MM60 and MM25, and the golf course mixtures MM22 and MM12, are well known and trusted by groundsmen

and greenkeepers across the UK.

"We recognise how strong the MM brand is in this country, and will invest in its future development and marketing to the top quality end of the sports and amenity markets," says Advanta Seeds' UK Commercial Manager John Akers.

"With direct access to Advanta's breeding programme and the recently expanded production and research facilities in Lincolnshire,

the MM brand can only go from strength to strength."

Advanta was created from the merger of Mommersteeg's parent company Van der Have with the seed interest of Zeneca two years ago. It breeds and produces the full range of agricultural arable and forage crops, as well as being a significant player in amenity market world-wide. It has 35 operating companies in 20 countries.

New Pro-Tee divot box

The Shropshire-based golf course equipment manufacturer, Links Leisure, has extended its PRO-TEE range of accessories with the introduction of a brand new divot box.

The new divot box is the latest addition to a range of specially designed products which already includes accessories such as all-weather mats and practice nets, plus an array of course furniture such as golf signs, tee markers, litter bins and the like.

Marketed under the trade name The PRO-TEE COLLECTION, the range has become increasingly popular with operators who realise the need to provide on-course facilities such as directional signs, hole information, etc., but, at the same time, want to include a corporate identity element for their own particular golf course.

After reporting that it had recently doubled its sales of signs both in this country and overseas, Links Leisure believes that the success of the PRO-TEE range is due in no small way to the fact that each product - whether it be an elaborate sign incorporating a club name, logo, and hole detail, or the humblest tee marker, litter bin, or divot box - is tailor-made in detail, style, and colour to meet the individual requirements of each golf course and that many of the products can also be used for sponsorship or advertising.

Robert's new venture

Robert Cowley, formerly Contracts Manager with Watmation, has set up Chedworth Trading Company, an irrigation company which can design, cost and buy any type of sprinkler required as well as having maintenance engineers who can provide servicing.

In addition the company can supply golf course fittings and furniture including flags, netting, range balls and is an agent for Club Car.

For further information contact Robert Cowley Tel: 01285 720259.

Contact us

You can contact The British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association in any number of ways:

Post: BIGGA HOUSE,
Aldwark, Alne, York,
YO61 1UF

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It can prevent wars, family strife and the collapse of a business. It's as old as language itself, yet we still struggle to make full use of its power. It's a major part of our daily lives, but we often have difficulty doing it with our next door neighbour. Bruce Stanley listens to the art of communication...

Speak *easy*



Inform golf club members about new machinery purchases, what they will be used for and how they will improve standards

Communication. What is it? An action which most people understand, but very few properly utilise.

Take the golf club environment. Anyone having any involvement with a golf club knows that regular communication is essential between the staff, officials, members, visitors and the owners, managers or shareholders. Yet how often have greenkeepers been asked the same question time and time again about the reason for a specific maintenance programme which could have been answered by means of a timely bulletin pinned to a notice board in the clubhouse bar, locker room or pro's shop?

No matter whether you are responsible for raking the bunkers, planning next year's competition programme, stocking the bar, chasing subscriptions or giving golf lessons to beginners, there is a fundamental need to communicate continuously with other people. The result will be a sustained improvement in the efficient running of the club and the understanding and education of all involved with it.

It is a fact that most golf clubs are very good at informing members and visitors about future competitive and social events. Yet how many give their greenkeeping staff the opportunity to tell players

about current or forthcoming maintenance programmes and how they might affect play?

One simple solution is a special notice board headed Course Maintenance or Greenkeeper's Report, devoted to relaying news on seasonal work and developments taking place on the golf course. Alternatively, those clubs that publish a regular newsletter could consider giving the head greenkeeper space for a course maintenance report. Invite feedback, suggestions and questions and you will be taking a big step towards improving communications at the club.

Such actions can all make a huge difference to golfers' understanding of what is going on, when and where it is taking place and why it is necessary.

If the club does not have a regular members' bulletin or space for a dedicated notice board, then a neatly-typed information sheet, photocopied and placed in the bar or by the visitors' book in the pro's shop, will go a long way to dispelling the mystique that surrounds the greenkeeping profession in the mind of the layman.

It is very important that any published information is put together with the full co-operation and input of the course manager, the head greenkeeper, the chairman of greens and any other club officials sharing responsibility for



A regular greenkeepers' bulletin can be used to highlight seasonal maintenance programmes, explaining why they are necessary and what their effects will be

course maintenance matters. It can be helpful on any bulletin or report to list the names and positions of the staff responsible for looking after the course, including any external advisers. They deserve credit when it is due, but should also be prepared to answer criticism when it arises, as it always will.

The look of any publication is most important. Few people have access to sophisticated desk-top publishing (DTP) facilities of the type used to produce award-winning magazines such as *Greenkeeper International*, but one can still do a very good job on a computer loaded with word-processing software, outputting to a colour printer.

If you do not have ready access to a computer, enlist the help of the club's secretarial staff and ensure that if a regular report is promised, that the words are delivered on time.

Keep the text concise and to the point. There is no need to write pages and pages. In many cases, a series of bullet point headings - as in the style of the box within this article - will suffice. Provide sufficient detail to tell the reader what they need to know without slipping into technicalities. If the subject particularly interests someone,

then they can always seek out further information.

A word processor allows a range of type sizes and styles to be used which will attract and hold the reader's attention. The introduction of headlines and sub-headings will also add interest to a page, for example, when listing the various work programmes being carried out on different parts of the course. However, make sure that the type size is legible to someone standing maybe two foot away at a notice board.

Never be afraid to ask for assistance. If the club produces its own newsletter, seek help or advice from the person who puts it together. Alternatively, look for ideas in the trade magazines that land each month on your desk. You could always phone the editor or designer of *Greenkeeper International* who will be able to provide ideas on style and appearance.

Content should not be too difficult thanks to the wide ranging work programmes taking place on a golf course throughout the year.

- List the members of the greenkeeping team and their specific responsibilities on the course. Provide updates on training or further education.

- Describe any special maintenance programmes planned over the coming months, why they are necessary and how they might affect play.

- Provide updates on course developments such as new bunkers, reshaped fairways, additional tees, tree planting, new pathways, etc

- Give advance warning of any seasonal changes that may be introduced on the course, highlighting special measures affecting any specific area.

- Describe any new machinery purchase, why it has been bought, how much it cost and what it will help achieve on the golf course.

- Detail the environmental attributes of the course, highlighting features such as wildlife habitats and rare or unusual plants, birds, insects and trees.

- Reinforce the importance of replacing divots and repairing pitch marks by detailing the cost of employing staff to do the job.

- Explain why seasonal tasks which cause the most aggravation to golfers are needed and what the alternatives might be. Start with hollow coring, top dressing and liquid fertilising of greens.

- Give a run-down of the typical daily and weekly course maintenance routines, and why staff have to be out on the course during the day.

- Forewarn golfers about seasonal variations to the condition or position of greens, tees, trolley paths and the route between tees and greens. It is far better to alert golfers to changes in advance of them taking place.

- Remind golfers of the various safety aspects which need to be observed during play, especially when staff are out on the course.

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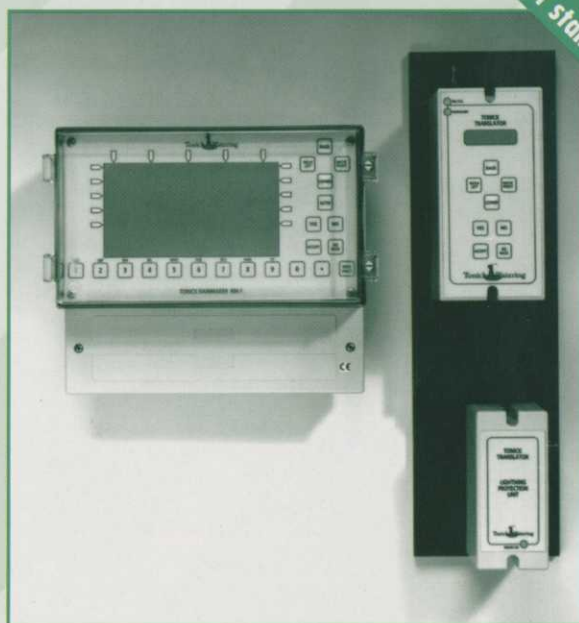
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The movement to convert golf courses to non-metal spike environments is gathering speed rapidly in Europe. Bill McGuinness keeps track of the progress...

Puncture • repair

As often happens with a contentious issue involving a commercially-motivated element, the pros and cons of the opposing positions have been debated vigorously during the last two to three years, but the growing number of European golf courses converting to non-metal environments appears to be heading for the "critical mass" that will accelerate into an accepted industry trend.

The non-metal movement has a number of well-publicised positive benefits relating to the health and general well-being of golf courses, but two negative aspects have until now slowed the pace of acceptance here in Europe - the traction and the durability of the plastic spikes normally chosen to replace metal, with particular emphasis on the traction performance in wet European course conditions.

The traction issue is often framed in terms of the legal liability the golf club might face should it ban metal spikes. A third, often unspoken opposing position, is more one of principle - the idea of being told what you cannot wear on your feet if you are to play at the golf club you've finally been allowed to join after five years on the waiting list.

Listening to the debate only three years ago, when virtually no courses in Europe had banned metal spikes, a bet against the movement's success in Europe would have seemed a safe one. "Fine for the U.S., but for one thing our grasses are different and for another, plastic cleats don't work in wet conditions."

But such a "safe bet" would ignore the weight of the benefits which await courses which do take the decision to create a non-metal environment. Whatever your position on the issue, the facts are that without metal spikes the greens are much smoother all day, there is less grass plant damage, and

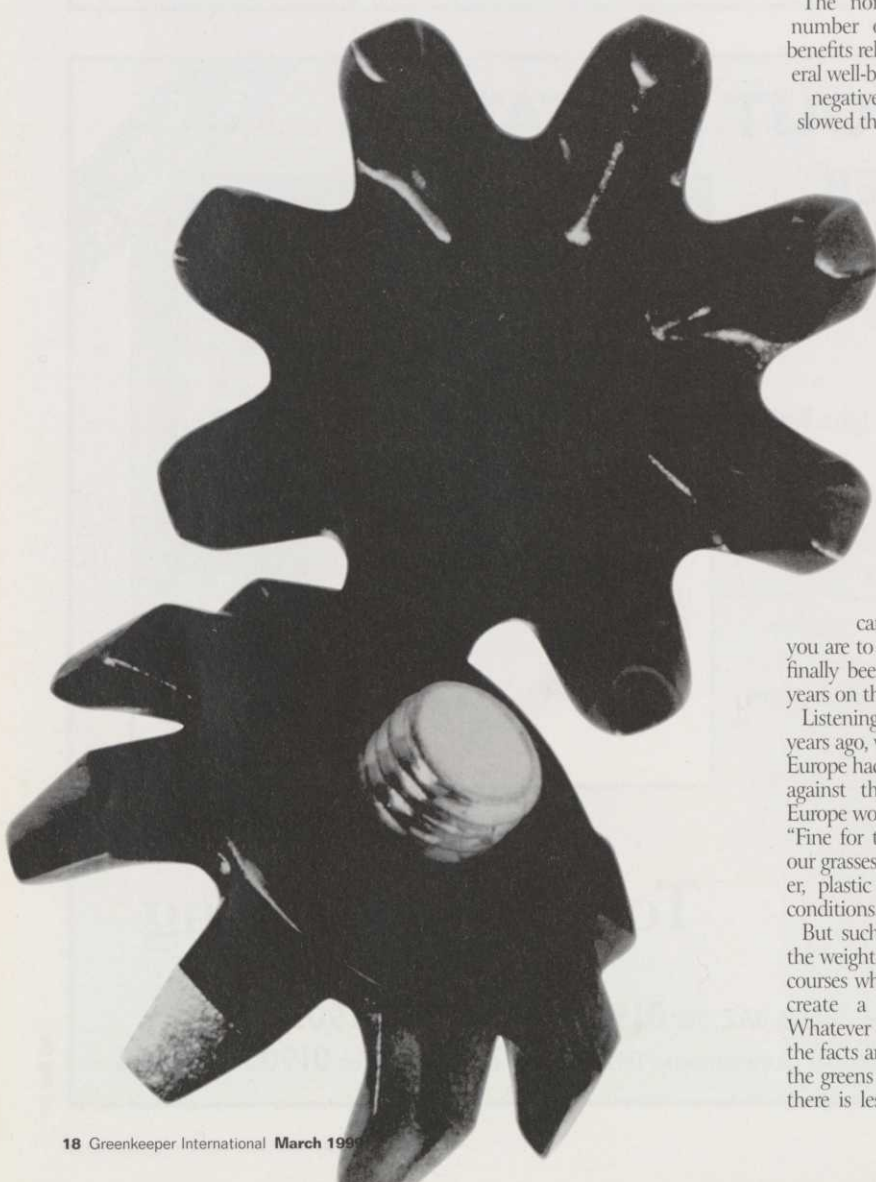
less damage to clubhouse, bridges, and walkways - all commercial issues difficult to ignore totally.

The 'safe bet' would also ignore the determination and product development inventiveness of companies like pioneer Softspikes, Inc., which started the whole U.S. movement in 1994 and obviously has a vested interest in the movement taking hold in Europe as it has in the U.S., where metal spikes are now heading for extinction. (FootJoy no longer produces any golf shoes factory-fitted with metal spikes for the U.S. market.)

Going back to the movement's inception in 1994, the original plastic "cleats" (as they are known in the U.S.) were shaped like frosting swirls, and were designed by an inventor in the U.S. state of Idaho to enable golfers to obtain traction on the often icy surfaces prevailing in this inhospitable winter climate. But in normal golfing weather, on grass, they gave only about 75% of the traction of the standard 6mm metal spikes. However, the fact that they substantially improve putting surfaces and noticeably reduce other types of course and clubhouse damage were sufficient factors to enable them to gain a foothold despite their traction shortcomings. And as luck or fate would have it, it was an unexpected and untouted benefit which kept the movement alive during its beginnings - golfer comfort.

Golfers found that the tired feet, aches and pains which they often experienced after 18 holes were either eliminated or substantially reduced by wearing plastic cleats. Quite simply, golfers that otherwise would have been unwilling to put up with some traction loss from the early plastic spike designs were willing to trade it off for the comfort gains, with the added bonus of getting smoother greens in the bargain.

Seeing the potential for large volumes of plastic spike sales, a number of companies jumped into the market to join Softspikes, and sparked a wave of product development innovations which still hasn't peaked. In early 1998, Softspikes finally cracked the 'better traction than metal' barrier and introduced a spike which was independently shown to have 14% better



traction than the standard 6mm metal spike, even in wet conditions. Admittedly, it was traction-tested on the Bermuda grass relevant to much of the U.S. market, but it was a vast improvement over the then-existing plastic spikes, and created a surge of product acceptance and course conversions.

But in the highly litigious U.S. market, the question of a club's legal liability became a more hotly debated issue than the traction itself. What legal exposure would be incurred by a club banning metal spikes? With opinion initially divided, it became a question of letting the legal issues take their natural course as events unfolded; large numbers of courses evaluated the risks and decided to ban metal spikes. The U.S. course experience speaks for itself. Over 7,500 (almost half of all U.S. courses) have now implemented non-metal policies, and not a single one has reverted back. There have in fact been lawsuits regarding injuries, but not one has been decided in favour of the complainant. In virtually all cases, it has been a situation of golfer carelessness, and in general the same injury would have occurred were the golfer wearing standard metal spikes, or no spikes.

But what these events have done is to make course managements more aware of course conditions about which golfers should be either safeguarded or warned - regardless of whether they are wearing metal spikes, plastic spikes or street shoes. As a point of reference, there are still far more U.S. lawsuits relating to golf balls hitting players, food poisoning, car park injuries, and injuries from course equipment than there are spike related litigations. In short, the question of a club's liability on the non-metal issue has quickly and quietly become simply one more legal/administrative issue which a club has to deal with in the course of normal business.

A point often missed in the legal debate is the fact that a club banning metal spikes is not telling the golfer what he must do (ie wear plastic spikes), but rather what he must not do. He can wear plastic cleats, or trainers, or street shoes, or emulate Sam Snead and play barefoot. But he must not wear metal spikes. (And he must not wear a shirt without a collar, or shorts which are too short, or appear in casual dress in the dining room after 7pm.)

Commercially-minded clubs were also very concerned about "being the first" to ban metal spikes. The perception was that golfers would stay away in droves and green fee revenue would decrease. Here again, the opposite proved true in the U.S. where courses turned the tables and began to actively and successfully promote the improved course conditions. Quite quickly, the issue became moot. Here in Europe, the same trend is developing. "The Business Golfer," a U.K. publication catering to the 15,000 organisers of corporate and society golf days, recently reported that metal-free courses are now becoming favoured venues for events because of the improved course conditions.

Another unexpected and pleasant surprise awaited courses fearing rev-

enue decreases. Clubs found that their bar revenue was increasing. With no need to visit the locker room or car park to change their spikes before entering the spikeless bar (and therefore less time to feel guilty that household projects needed doing), more players headed directly into the bar from the 18th green.

This year has the makings of a watershed for the metal-free movement in Europe, with some prestigious names now getting behind it. While not imposing an outright ban on metal spikes, the St Andrews Links Trust is now actively encouraging all players to shed their metal spikes before playing any of its six courses, and The Belfry has implemented an identical policy for its three courses. Both organisations are fundamentally in favour of an outright metal ban, but were reluctant to take the step without a phasing-in period. Both anticipate converting to firm non-metal policies in 2000.

Adding to the metal-free impetus will certainly be the latest development in plastic spikes from Softspikes (pictured). Called the "Black Widow," it incorporates cantilevered "legs" rather than the rigid points or rings which characterise most of today's plastic spikes. As the golfer walks, the eight legs actually move slightly outward, getting their traction from a sideways "bite" on the surface grass. According to Softspikes European Manager Bill McGuinness, "This pretty much eliminates any indentations or depression-producing action completely. And the traction is much greater than anything we've produced to-date, and is far better than metal spikes."

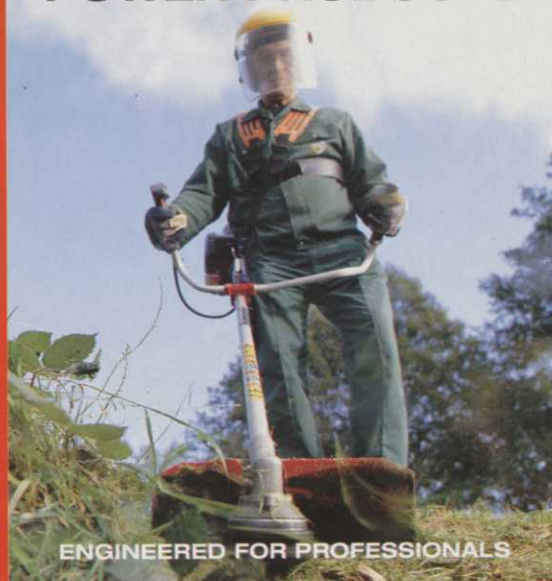
He added, "I recently gave a prototype set to one of the leading U.K. European Tour pros to test. He called me last week from Dubai just to tell me he'd tried them at Chart Hills in the pouring rain before heading for the Dubai tour event, and they were 'awesome,' adding 'You could climb trees with these things!' I don't know about the tree-climbing, but we did try to establish a 'new level' of cleat performance with the Black Widow, and I think we've accomplished it. And we've already had six Tour wins with it in the U.S. while it was still in prototype."

Whatever the outcome of any tree-climbing efforts, 1999 looks to be one of major growth in the movement. As McGuinness says, "It's largely committees which decide whether to ban metal spikes, and it can be a vocal issue. But when committee members see the likes of St Andrews Links and The Belfry joining the ranks, with probably another 200 mostly prestigious courses converting this year in the U.K. alone, the many arguments in favour of non-metal policies are going to start carrying far more weight than they have to-date."



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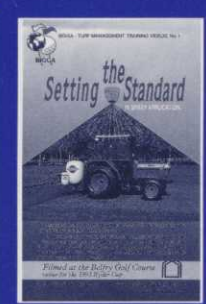
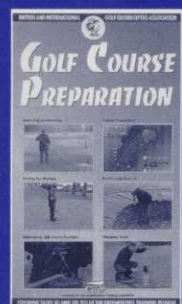
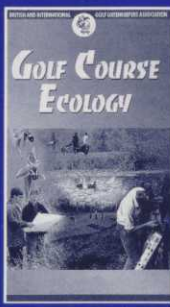
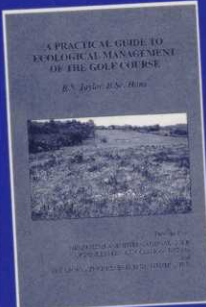
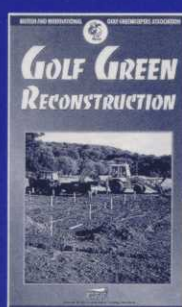
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Education Time

Sami is back from her trip to the GCSAA Show and Conference, in Orlando, and I am fully recovered from the bug that laid me low for some three weeks, when I discovered for the first time in more than 30 years of work what a sick note looked like. Although we are busy sending out videos, written transcripts and thank you letters for the Learning Experience 1999, we are starting to plan for the Learning Experience 2000 which will have the title Past, Present and Future. If you have any ideas on what should be included then please let me know. With the continued support of Textron Ground Care and Specialty Products we hope to make the Learning Experience 2000, to steal Scott's words, 'the Best Ever.'

The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

If you wish to emulate the success of Lindrick Golf Club, who won the 1998 Golf Course Environment Competition, you must be thinking about your entry NOW. Amazone Ground Care and Grass Roots Trading Company are joining us again to run the Competition for 1999. The competition is designed to reward those clubs that integrate ecological management with normal golf course management practices to ensure that golf and the environment are compatible. Full details have been sent to all golf clubs and head greenkeepers. However, if you have not received your copy then contact BIGGA HQ and we will send out full details by return of post. Entries must be returned to BIGGA by 3 May 1999. Why not enter and your club could win the first prize of £5000. All clubs visited by the judges will be offered the chance to purchase a copy of the detailed report on their course, which will also include an action plan.

The TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

With prizes like a TORO Greens master triplex ride on mower and a two week trip to the USA, and prizes for the winner's greenkeeping team and prizes for the runners up, this competition proved to be popular with both greenkeepers and their golf clubs in 1998. John Coleman, from Abbeydale Golf Club in Sheffield, last year's winner, has just returned from the USA where he visited the GCSAA Show and Conference and the TORO factories. This year could be your turn. Nomination forms have been sent out to golf clubs and head greenkeepers but if you need a copy then contact BIGGA HQ. Get your nominations off as soon as possible and we will send out entry forms to all nominees. All entry forms must be returned to BIGGA HQ by 28 May 1999. The National Final will take place, in Harrogate, on 24 and 25 October. Please note that Master Greenkeepers and winners of the ICI/Zeneca/Miracle Premier Greenkeeper Competition are eligible to enter.

The TORO Student of the Year Competition

Now in its tenth year, the search to find the TORO Student of the Year has begun. Competition details and entry forms have been sent to colleges and training providers and all entries should reach BIGGA HQ by 28 May 1999. The main points of the competition are:

1. The winner receives the TORO scholarship to the USA and visits to the TORO factories and to the GCSAA conference and show in New Orleans.
2. The winner's greenkeeping lecturer wins a visit to the GCSAA conference and show in New Orleans.
3. The two runners-up win an all expenses paid visit to the Learning Experience 2000 at Harrogate.

This month, Ken Richardson gives a timetable of which educational items are up and coming

tables

4. Regional finals will be held in six locations during late July, and up to eight students will be selected for the National Final which will take place on 24 and 25 October 1999.

Refund of Education/training fees

Funds are still available for those wishing to claim a refund of education/training fees. To be eligible for a refund, you must meet the following criteria:

a. You must be a member of BIGGA and have been a member for at least two years.

b. You must have paid your own fees and be able to provide proof of payment eg receipt/credit card slip or statement.

c. You must have completed a course or component part of a course and be able to provide evidence of completion eg certificate/end of course report etc.

d. If you are starting a course in 1999, you may apply for a refund to be paid on course completion as in c.

e. The Course must not be subsidised, already, by BIGGA.

f. The Course must be relevant to your job as a greenkeeper.

Members will be able to claim 80% of fees paid up to a maximum of £200. Contact BIGGA HQ for an application form.

Health and Safety

New Health and Safety regulations continue to be published. Two of the newer sets concern the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER 98) and the Lifting Operations Regulations 1998 (LOLER). Both PUWER 98 and LOLER relate to work equipment in all work sectors.

They maintain and improve existing standards eg. there is now an absolute requirement to carry out lifting operations safely. The additions to PUWER 98 include:

- Minimising risks from roll over

- Preventing startup from unauthorised persons

- Providing a device for braking and stopping

- Providing adequate devices to improve a driver's field of vision, where necessary for safety

LOLER require that lifting equipment has adequate strength and stability; requires risks from positioning and installing of lifting equipment to be minimised and requires that lifting equipment be marked with its safe working load. Safe Use of Work Equipment: Approved Code of Practice and Guidance and Safe use of Lifting Equipment: Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, are available from HSE books or from the BIGGA Library.

Stop Press

Andy Campbell, Course Manager at Carden Park has arranged a visit to Carden Park, by Thomas Maloney, Senior Extension Associate in Human Resources at Cornell University. Mr Maloney, who is the co author of the GCSAA's book Human Resource Management for Golf Course Superintendents, has agreed to conduct a seminar on Leadership and Motivation at Carden Park, on Monday 26 April 1999.

The Seminar is free to all BIGGA members but will of main interest to Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers.

Watch out for further information in the next edition of Greenkeeper International or contact Ken Richardson at BIGGA HOUSE.

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Ken Siems invited Scott MacCallum to visit the stunning Loch Lomond Golf Club and took the opportunity to explain some of the hurdles which he and his staff have to overcome to keep it looking its best

Myth and magic



Above: A picturesque bridge spans a brook at the 17th

Nothing is ever quite as straight forward as it would seem. But then why should it be? It would only make for a boring life and very few of us would want that. Certainly not Ken Siems, Course Superintendent at Loch Lomond Golf Club, and a man who knows better than most that things aren't ever straight forward.

Take his golf course as an example. Loch Lomond would be a strong favourite for any golf course beauty pageant it ever entered. It is absolutely gorgeous, but it's located in one of the wettest, duller parts in all of Britain.

And there's more...

Myth and magic

Right: A spectacular
aerial view showing the
clubhouse and the Loch



Above: Ken Siems

Below: Beauty
wherever you look



If you visit the course you'd be hard pressed to find a blade of grass out of place and greens so smooth you could play snooker on them, but look beneath the surface and you'd find conditions which would have the groundsman at a municipal putting green wondering how he'd ever produce anything playable.

As I said, nothing is ever as straightforward as it might seem.

"This site is unique in many many ways," explained Ken, in his distinctive Canadian accent, as we sat in the Loch Lomond Mess Room.

"It's probably one of the wettest areas in the UK for a golf course. Last year we had close to 93 inches of rain, and that was continuous throughout the entire year."

Think about that for a second. That's nearly eight feet! They could just about employ the services of Jacques Cousteau as a greenkeeper.

Ken continued.

"Sunlight is another thing. This is one of the most overcast, cloudy areas in the UK. There is a submarine base over in Helensburgh and one of the reasons it's there is that

the cloud cover prevents the spy satellites from seeing them. You can count the number of sunshine days we had last year on both hands and sunshine is one of the most critical elements in growing turf grass."

While you are making a mental note not to bother packing the Factor 15 next time you head to the west of Scotland let Ken give you some more information about the conditions in which he and his nine full time greenkeepers, two mechanics, a conservationist, arborist and administrator work.

"There is a lack of wind because of the shelter from the mountain, while the highest soil temperature we got last year was 58 Fahrenheit and that was in August. This is also a tree site so air circulation is poor."

But to produce such fine results in such unfavourable conditions everything else must be spot on. Mustn't it?

Well not exactly.

"One of the most important factors we have to deal with is the poor soil and the inconsistent construction."

What. Loch Lomond? The course which has been voted the finest new course in the country? Tom Weiskopf's masterpiece?

"All I do is look at the lab tests results which I have - I don't like guessing on this. Just to give you a rough example the percolation rate on the greens average out at 1.5 to 2.5 millimetres per hour. A USGA green should average at 250-300 millimetres per hour. That gives you a rough idea."

To give themselves as much chance as possible of mastering such a difficult set of circumstances Ken and the team conducted a greens' audit to provide as much information as possible to help them.

"We got the hole changer and took cores all the way down into the gravel on about seven or eight areas of a

green and measured how fast the water would move through it.

"In some cases we couldn't find any gravel, but in others it would take 30 minutes for the water to percolate through. In some cases it went straight through," explained Ken.

Then, as if to reinforce the point that he'd made so eloquently over the previous few minutes of the conversation, he added.

"If there is a site where you'd want fast draining greens, it would be this site."

Like so many courses built around the same time the baton of ownership has passed through more than one pair of hands. In this case the Bank of Scotland ran one of the legs before passing on to Ken's employer, The Lyle Anderson Company, whose other golf developments include the prestigious Desert Mountain in the States.

"For one reason or another what the new owners have are greens that don't drain."

In an ideal world the greens would be relaid but while that is the preferred option it is not one that be put



into practice in the short term. Not with an overseas membership which pay large sums of money to be able to play the course when they want and an annual European Tour event which holds the sought after slot of the week before The Open.

Instead, remedial measures are undertaken to make the very best of a poor job.

"We drill down to the gravel, create channels and backfill with dry sand and we vertidrain them. In the summer we top dress lightly every second week and in the winter we do it as frequently as we can without damaging the turf. We also work under a dome which helps to put some heat into the greens. It has been marginally effective."

A great deal is made of the fact that the course is closed for much of the year - from November 1 to March 31 - but as Ken says it's not the ideal time of year to do much of the work they'd really like to do.

"Every golf course in the area is closed for much of the time during the winter and most of our members wouldn't come to play even if we

were open in the months that we do close.

"We keep a record of how many potential golf days we would have in the time we are closed - occasions when we consider people would actually go out and play golf - and it would not be economically viable for us to open."

The "closed" period allows the staff to carry out the jobs that would ordinarily affect play.

We aerify fairways, spread sand on the course - we had a heavy top dressing programme either by machine or if it's too wet by hand - and we continually work on drainage. We have a drainage technician who does nothing but inspect pipes and desilt them because that's critical. We will always be putting in new drainage here."

While Loch Lomond may have inspired some of Scotland's finest song writers to some of their greatest heights Ken says that one of his biggest jobs is to keep people stimulated.

"It's not a fun place to work when it's raining all the time and I have to

work very hard to keep their interest up.

"We can rake leaves here by hand for three to four months a year when it's wet. That isn't normal for most golf courses but here, with the number of trees, the wet conditions and the expectations of the membership there is no other way to do it. It's different here and a lot of other clubs don't realise that."

But surely Ken and his team have survived one of the wettest years on record with their high standards intact.

"We maintained standards but maybe not as consistently high as our owners would have liked," he confessed.

"The owners want their greens to be at nine and a half feet daily with upright growth, but to get that you need a good draining surface and if you don't it's very difficult to achieve."

Ken believes that conditions he and his team face on the day-to-day basis have turned him into a better greenkeeper.

"We are always working with the

weather and we generally prepare two to three work schedules depending upon whether we've had a tonne of rain overnight and can't cut greens first thing in the morning, or if there is a high pressure system coming in. You have to take each day as it comes. I can't go to the membership as happens in some parts of the world and say 'On September 15 we're going to aerify the fairways.'"

One rumour that Ken would like to blow out of the water is that he operates with an open cheque book.

"At the end of the day we're a business and the owners are in the business to make money. So everything we do has to be accounted for and justified. I try to work as though it's my money we're spending and I have a pretty good picture of where we stand financially. As the club grows and becomes more profitable we'll be able to grow as well."

Given one of those mythical cheque books Ken knows what he would do with it.

"I could use double the staff here, do more jobs by hand and have a team out there throwing sand on the

Myth and magic



Right: A magnificent Rhododendron display at the 9th

course. I'd have our car park and all the roads tarmaced and none of the equipment would sit outside," he said, wistfully.

However, things have moved on from when he arrived in July '94 when there wasn't even a maintenance facility.

Ken had been in Britain working at East Sussex National for four years before going back to Canada to work for the same developer.

"Then this opportunity came up and I weighed up the risks and went for it. It was the challenge that attracted me to Loch Lomond."

It's a challenge he feels they're overcoming.

"We're making improvements and if the owners didn't feel that they

wouldn't hesitate in getting someone else. My boss is an Augusta National member and extremely knowledgeable about golf and has a good comprehension of what's involved in golf maintenance."

The project that is taking up much of his time at the moment is converting the rough grasses to Rye which he feels will provide a better protection from the Poa Annua and recover more quickly when the galleries leave after the tournament. The greens are Penncross and the fairways are predominately Highland Bent.

"People talk about Creeping Bent going dormant but I've never seen it go dormant yet. In fact it performs wonderfully.

"I believe, as a manager, that the grass is just one little tool. When you build a course you've got to seed it with something and you've got many things to consider.

When have they got to be ready? What are members' expectations? What speed to I have to keep them at? How many rounds of golf are they going to get?" he said adding that at Loch Lomond they had 15,000 rounds, not forgetting the additional 7,500 caddie rounds a year.

"We also have small greens and have been lucky we haven't had a disease outbreak in over two years," he said adding, "and we don't preventive spray and we don't hand pick poa."

Another rumour quashed.

"We could produce great poa annua here but you'd get seed heads and things like that and the owner said 'Let's see what we can do not to have it.' That's our philosophy."

Always willing to experiment and change Ken has set out a trial site alongside the Maintenance Facility in conjunction with the STRI to test grasses and is keen for other greenkeepers to become involved in monitoring their progress.

"I'm intense in what I do here. I communicate with people who I feel are going to be helpful. I like to learn and I like the guys to learn because if they're learning I know they're still interested."

At Loch Lomond you know they'll learn a lot. After all it's not as straight forward as it might at first seem.

Below: Bunkers get the creative treatment on the 15th



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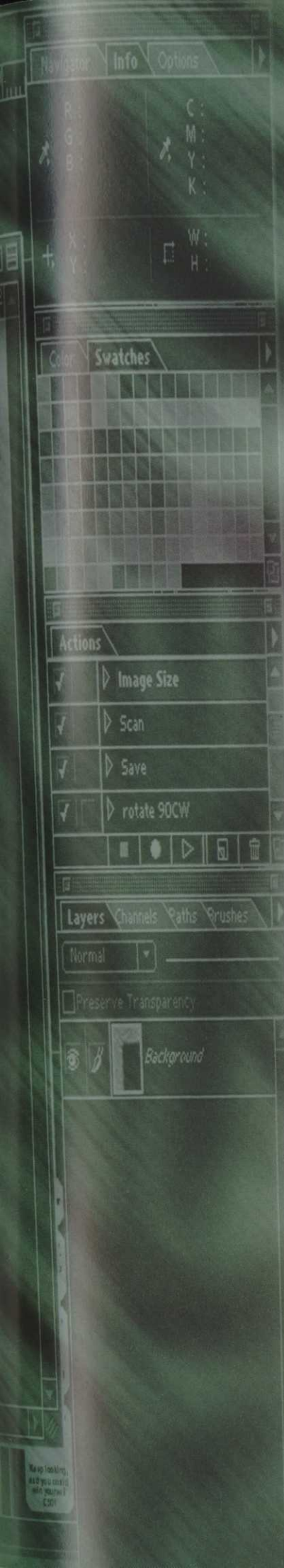
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Two years on from his last **Greenkeeper International** series on computers and computing, Ken Richardson catches up on the many developments in a fast moving and exciting industry.

A second byte

Part two

What to buy

If you are considering buying a computer, for home or office use then the first question to ask is; 'What sort of computer should I buy?'. This is a very difficult question to answer as it depends on several things, eg. what do you want the computer to do and how much money do you have to spend. There is a wide range of dealers hoping to sell both hardware and software and they will try to sell you what they think you need. Therefore, before setting off to your local computer shop or picking up a computer magazine, you need to decide what tasks you want to perform using a computer. This is not easy to decide as you can only begin to see what computers are capable of, when you become familiar with them. However, with some thought, you may be able to formulate a plan. The most critical factor is cost ie how much are you or your golf club willing to pay, although you could convince your club to spend a little more money if you made a good enough case. Let's look at some of the points to consider.

Which applications do I want to run?

All applications state their minimum requirements of processor, memory, hard disk and monitor specifications on their packaging. You must decide which and or how many applications you wish to run. Remember that the operating system selected ie Windows or Windows 95/98 also determines processor, memory and hard disk requirements.

Price

You don't have to buy the most expensive system on the market to get a good deal. For example, a reasonable 'middle of the road' system based on a 300/333 Mhz Pentium or AMD K6-2 processor can be bought for around £600 plus VAT. If you are thinking of multi media operations then go for a 350 Mhz or faster Pentium or K6-2.

Memory

Insist on at least 32Mb of RAM and consider a minimum of 64 Mb if running Windows 98. A hard drive of 4 Gb to 6.5 Gb is the norm. If you need to back up large amounts of data then consider a Zip, Jaz or LS-120 removable storage option.

Graphics

Your graphics accelerator should include 3D acceleration and at least 4 Mb of display memory.

Peripheral Devices

When considering applications, you must also consider peripheral devices such as printers, plotters, compact disks and sound systems and 'add ons' such as modems and Internet

Printers and Plotters

Most computer packages sold today include a simple, bubble-jet printer. This type of printer is suitable for most home and basic office printing. However, if you anticipate that you will need to print large amounts of data then you would need to include a higher quality printer.

Compact Disk Drives

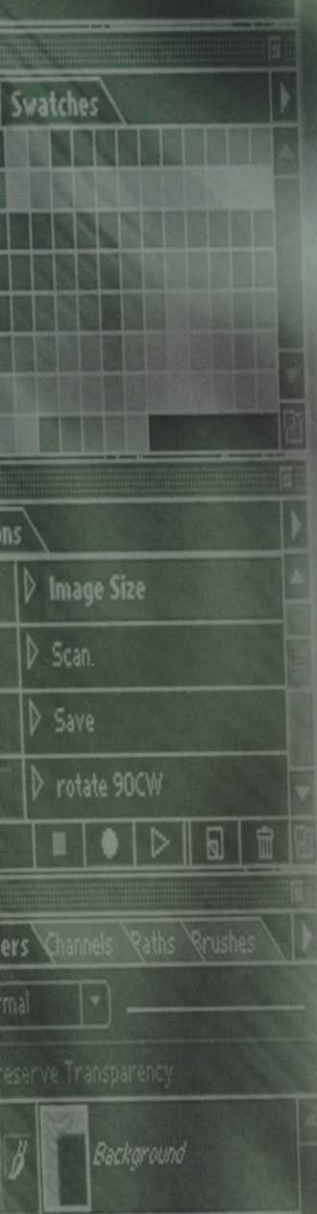
Compact disk (CD) drives are now available on most new computers. Many software titles are available on CD, especially those needing large amounts of data eg encyclopaedia. Reference data for turf science and turf management eg identification of pests and diseases is becoming available and the number of titles will increase with demand. You should look for a 12-speed or faster CD Rom drive.

Sound Systems

Most computers sold today include sound cards, loudspeakers and associated software. These computers can play back music from CD, provide a wide range of built in sounds and, with the inclusion of a tuner card, play television programmes.

Modems and Internet

If you are contemplating becoming a user of the Internet, you will need a modem and appropriate software. Modems allow computers to communicate with other computers via a telephone line. The Internet is an inter connected network. This means that you can connect your computer to a range of other computers, around the world. Moreover, as this connection is through a local computer, you pay telephone charges only at local rates. For example, you could access the pages for the Golf Course Superintendents of America from the computer in your office by telephoning the computer in the office of your Internet supplier which may only be



10 miles away. You can also send and receive E-mail, using the Internet. E-mail is electronic mail and allows you to type messages into your computer and send them to any part of the world for the price of a local telephone call. Modems are available that operate on different speeds eg 33600 bits per second(bps), 56000 bps.

Screen

Screens are available in a range of sizes but you should aim for a minimum screen size of 15 inches. A 17 inch screen is ideal for most users but consider a 19 inch screen if you are considering working with graphics.

Desktop or Laptop

If you really need your computer to be portable then you should opt for a laptop (notebook) system. However, you will pay more for a laptop than for a desk top of the same standard.

Once you have considered what applications you want to run you can then begin to look at purchase options. You should look to buy the highest specification computer that meets your budget. The next step is to decide where to buy and even whether to buy new, buy second hand or even use a computer from another part of the golf course. You may decide to lease rather than buy but I will consider the purchase option only

Where to buy

As I suggested above, the cheapest way of obtaining a computer is to inherit a system from an office which is buying a new system. This has many disadvantages, however. Eg. The software applications may not be what you want, the processor may be old and slow, the system may not be able to be upgraded, spares may be impossible to find and maintenance difficult to arrange. Therefore, if you have made a case for using a computer in your office then it should not be difficult to make a case to your club for buying the computer that is needed.

Computers can be purchased second hand. Indeed many companies sell out dated ie lower specification than current computers that have had little or no use. However, unless you are very knowledgeable and/or have a good relationship with a computer hardware technician then you could be buying trouble. If, however, money is limited and appropriate guarantees can be sought from the supplier then you might consider this option.

Buying a new computer can be even more daunting than buying second hand. There is a bewildering range of computers, a vast range of prices and many different outlets. You could visit your local high street electrical store, a computer warehouse, visit a computer specialist, purchase direct from a manufacturer or use direct mail. Before making a decision on where to buy, you should draw up a short list of companies that supply the system that you want. You should then contact at least three companies to obtain a formal quotation asking them to include:

Product name, model number and version of any software

Date of the quote

Extra items included eg printer, software, delivery, maintenance.

Method of payment including credit options

Availability of hardware and software support

Suppliers of computers include: High Street Stores

There are several High Street stores that sell or rent computer hardware, software and peripherals. The advantages of these stores is that you can see what is for sale, you can calculate the price of a system, you can see how the system operates and you can discuss your requirements face to face with the salesperson. The main disadvantage is price. High Street stores prices tend to be higher than warehouse prices or direct mail. Warranty can usually be arranged with servicing being done in the home, but check that this is included in the price.

Computer Warehouse

Most large towns and cities have at least one computer warehouse which sells the whole range of computers, software, peripherals, up grades, books and stationery. Prices tend to be lower than at High Street stores and you can view and try a wide range of systems. It can be a bewildering experience, however, if you do not have a very good idea of what you want before entering the warehouse.

Computer Specialists

Many towns and cities have at least one specialist computer supplier. These can be local suppliers of top brand name computers or small inde-

pendent suppliers, many of whom make up computer systems to order. Top brand names can be expensive but they can give you peace of mind. Small independent suppliers can give excellent service and good value for money. However, you need to be sure that they will remain in business, at least for the duration of your warranty.

Direct Mail

Computer magazines seem to contain more advertising than editorial and most adverts are for computer hardware and software. You can buy from a major manufacturer, from a direct mail supplier or from a small independent. The main disadvantage of buying by direct mail is that you cannot see what you are buying. However, prices are very competitive and you can compare a number of suppliers.

Practical Considerations

Let us suppose that your club has agreed to the purchase of a computer for your office and that you have decided what software applications you want to run. How do you compare what the different companies have on offer, when each company gives differing descriptions, supplies different software and has different prices for peripherals such as printers? Firstly, write down your needs: Eg.

Processor	Pentium 333 Mhz
Memory	32 Mb RAM
Monitor	SVGA colour 17 inch
Hard Drive	5 Gb
Floppy	3.5 inch
CD ROM	32 times
Soundcard	Soundblaster

Built in Modem
Windows 98
MS Office
Internet
E-mail

Colour bubble jet printer

Basic requirements

Secondly, determine the cost of the basic system (without software) from your chosen supplier or suppliers. You may also be given a great deal of other information which can be confusing, however, try not to let it confuse you too much. Once you have got your list of suppliers down to three or four, you can then start to see what else you get for your money eg Windows already fitted, MS Works already fitted, a range of software supplied 'free', extended warranty, at home or return

to manufacturer, is the system expandable, how many expansion ports has it got, does it have cache memory, does it have a graphics extension card etc.

Examples

Examples of specifications and prices are:

Computer warehouse

Pentium 333 Mhz Pentium processor - with MMX technology
32 Mb RAM
15 inch SVGA Monitor
32 times CD ROM
16 bit Stereo sound card and speakers
4Mb PCI 3D Graphics card
56000 bps Modem
Windows 98
MS Office
Bubble jet printer

£999 inc VAT

Specialist Computer Store

Pentium 333 MHz Processor
16 Mb RAM
5 Gb Hard Disk
32 times CD ROM
Sound Card
Windows 98
Colour Bubble jet Printer
Modem

£999 inc VAT

Small specialist store

Pentium 333 MHz Processor
32 Mb RAM
5 Gb Hard Disk
15 inch SVGA Monitor
32 times CD ROM
Sound Card
Speakers
Windows 98
MS Office
Bubble jet printer

£899 inc VAT

Mail Order

Intel Celeron 400 Mhz Processor
64 Mb RAM
8.6 Gb Hard Disk
15" SVGA Monitor
32 x CD ROM
8 Mb 3D graphics card
Hi Fi Sound
Speakers
Windows 98
56000 bps Modem
Lotus SmartSuite, IBM
Worldbook, FIFA 99

£880 inc VAT

As you can see from the prices on the left, there are a wide range of computers available from a number of suppliers.

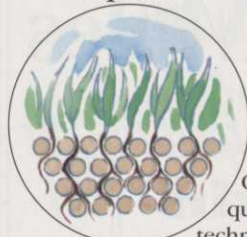
I have tried to give an idea of how computer technology has advanced in the past two years. Rereading this article and those produced in 1997 show that progress has been rapid in terms of hardware and software and that prices have tumbled. However, computers are not easy to handle, they need you to understand a special language and to have an ability to type. Voice recognition is, already available on some systems and is being introduced into quality cars and aircraft. What the next two years may bring is any body's guess. If you know what the future holds then please let me know and we can both make our fortunes. For further advice on hardware, software and training please contact Ken Richardson at BIGGA HQ.



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Thank you

Could you please express our sincere thanks to Toro for the generous prize both Paul (Shelley) and I received having won the runners-up places at the Toro Student of the Year Awards last year.



**STUDENT
OF THE YEAR**

We both enjoyed a full week at BTME, courtesy of Toro/BIGGA, which included valuable placements on the workshop programme and full participation during the seminars.

It was a fantastic week, both educationally and socially, and we both made many new friends.

Steven Myers
Bridge of Cally, Perthshire

Training responsibilities

There is no doubt that over the past 25 years greenkeeping has made great strides in course management, environmental management and greenkeeper training, with the introduction of City & Guilds phase 1, 2 and 3, and the HND, HNC courses and now with the National Vocational Qualifications being pushed by The Government.

It was with great regret that I read the press release from the EGU in the January issue of Greenkeeper International. I am sure that some members of the golfing fraternity do not understand the present greenkeeper training that is offered at the various colleges around the country.

I know that there are one or two greenkeepers that have gained qualifications by working at their golf clubs but this does not mean that their education is lacking in any way, everyone is working towards a nationally recognised standard and all have to be assessed by work based assessors with the D32 and D33 qualifications, who in turn had

to work for the qualification through the GTC or the colleges.

Long gone are the days of touching ones forelock on bended knee as members pass by. Golf clubs are demanding higher standards of their staff both inside and out and in return, the staff demand better training and conditions. I do not say that the present training is perfect, but everything must have a beginning, and the NVQ system has given our industry a very good start.

With any training six points should be worked towards:

1. Identify learning needs of your trainee; 2. Design training sessions for your trainee; 3. Teach training sessions; 4. Assessing trainees; 5. Evaluate training sessions you taught; 6. Evaluate and develop your own practice.

While all points are very important, points 5 and 6 are to me, key elements, by evaluating the training sessions you can improve the sessions and the information that you are imparting, then by evaluating your own skills and practice you can

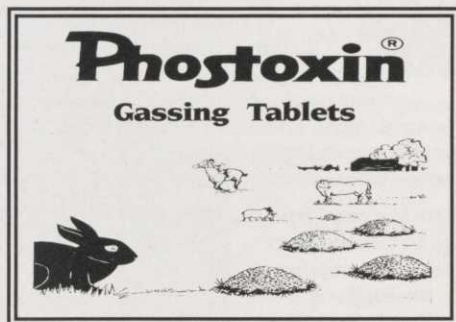
improve your teaching ability. In short from identifying learners needs through to evaluating your own practice it is possible to move full circle allowing training to progress.

I do not think that our industry needs another set of qualifications. The NVQ awards will progress and improve, as will the training and the trainees. We have a nationally recognised set of standards and we should all be working towards the same goal, and with the help of the GTC, City & Guilds, BIGGA and other affiliated bodies, we can make the present training programme work. It is every course manager's duty to improve his abilities and those of his staff by attending colleges and seminars throughout their careers and it is the Golf Club's duty to provide time and money for training of all its staff.

Ian Willett
Course Manager, Thorpeness Golf Club & Hotel Ltd

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Winners v Losers

The following appears on the Mess Room Wall of Loch Lomond Golf Club. The sentiments are very similar to the Mountain and Valley people whom Frank Dick talked about during his magnificent Keynote Speech at BTME99.

Winners v Losers

When a winner makes a mistake he says, "I was wrong."
When a loser makes a mistake, he says, "It wasn't my fault."

A winner works harder than a loser and has more time;
A loser is always too busy to do what is necessary.

A winner goes through a problem;
A loser goes around it, and never gets past it.

A winner makes commitments
A loser makes promises.

A winner says, "I'm good, but not as good as I ought to be,"
A loser says, "I'm not as bad as a lot of people."

A winner listens;
A loser just waits his turn to talk.

A winner respects those who are superior to him and tries to learn something from them;
A loser resents those who are superior to him and tries to find a chink in their armour.

A winner feels responsible for more than his job;
A loser says, "I only work here."

A winner says, "There ought to be a better way to do it"
A loser says, "That's the way it's always been done here."

Turf Machinery Ltd

I would like to take this opportunity to inform readers of Greenkeeper International that Turf Machinery Ltd, Morrison House, 3A Monument Way, West Woking, Surrey, is in no way associated, or wish to be connected, with another company of the same name which is offering a similar service and targeting the same potential customers.

Gerald Brookes, Director, Turf Machinery Ltd

Help required?

I am writing to ask for some help in finding me a paid or unpaid position at a Golf Club in the UK. I have been fortunate enough to win a four week scholarship to the UK. Any help the Association could provide me would be most appreciated.

Stephen Heskett, Federal Golf Club Australia, 59 "Melrose Mews," Medley Street, Chifley, A.C.T. Australia, 2606. shesket@atrax.net.au

With regard to the Sandy McDivot article 'Sand Green Destruction' which was published in January this year, and the comments in last month's letters page, Sandy has read all of your comments, and will be giving his reply in next month's magazine.

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Scottish Region
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East

The new Chairman of the East Section is Stuart Greenwood, Course Manager of North Berwick Golf Club, Stuart has been the Vice Chairman for the last two years and now takes over as Chairman from Jimmy Neilson.

Stuart has got some very good ideas for the future which he has already put into place, so all the best to you Stuart as Chairman of the section.

The Vice Chairman is Tom Murray, Course Manager Ratho Park Golf Club, not as previously printed in the January magazine that Tom Murray was the Chairman, but he will be Chairman in two year's time. So apologies to Stuart for any inconvenience caused by this last article.

Chairman S. Greenwood, Home/Fax: 01620 89 5074; Work: 01620 89 3765; E-mail: Stuart.Greenwood@btinternet.com; Vice Chairman T. Murray, Home: 0131 333 1403; Work: 0131 333 4126; Secretary/Treasurer S. Dixon, Home: 0131 660 3965,

Work: 0131 443 0235; Past Chairman J. Neilson, Home: 0131 538 0748

Match & Handicap Convener C. Yeaman, Home: 01620 842 037, Work/Fax 0131 445 7165; G. Wood, Home: 01368 863210; I. Bell Home: 01968 676143, Work: 01968 678031; G. Trotter, Home: 01968 679348, Work: 01968 678031; Social Convener S. Crawford, Home: 01620 89 3103, Work: 01620 89 3765; C. Pennycuik, Home: 0131 654 2913; S. Townsend, Home: 01506 824397; Education Convener A. Forrest Home: 01875 813 670, Work/Fax: 0131 445 7165; I. Bell; Magazine C. Yeaman

Well, we are only a few weeks from the new season, so hopefully we will receive some good weather! Since my last article in this prestigious magazine, I have attended the BTME at Harrogate in January, which seems to improve year by year, which can only be attributed to everyone at BIGGA HOUSE. Well done everyone for making this an immensely enjoyable show and conference. It was good to see an even bigger turn out of Scottish Greenkeepers than at last year's conference, so keep the invasion of Harrogate on your agenda for next year - as it is said that an even bigger and better show will be on offer for the Millennium. It was good to meet old friends and make new ones in what is one of the most important weeks of the year. Well done to Peter Boyd for organising the Scottish trip - the hotel was excellent!

Affiliation with BIGGA is always desirable, but has Craig Pennycuik taken it too far? With a tattoo of the logo on his body - or is this a new uni-

form requirement? Picture to follow later, once I have had it developed.

At our last committee meeting the final touches were put to our fixture card for 1999 - full details of outings, visits, social events etc., will be with you in the next few weeks. We have a visit to the Stewarts Top Dressing and Kelpie Plant in Dalkeith on 17 March. Hope we have a good turnout as we know that this will be an interesting day out.

We played the West Section in an eleven-a-side football match at the beginning of January on the astro turf at Almondvale Stadium Livingston. Thanks very much to Willie Blair, Stadium Manager, for all the organising of the pitch. A great game was had by all but unfortunately we were beaten 11-1. Even the goalkeeper, Brian Hillen, got in on the act by scoring a penalty near the end of the match. Because not all of our players turned up we had to borrow two players from the West Section, and guess who scored our only goal? Yes, you've guessed it, one of the West Section lads. Thanks boys, at least somebody could score. We hope for a better performance in the return match in Glasgow, when we will hopefully have a much stronger team and gain some revenge for the thrashing that was inflicted upon us. Well, we can dream! If any other sections wish to challenge, then give me a call. Sorry, there's not a lot this month but everything seems to be quiet. If anybody has anything that would be of interest for the magazine, please get in touch (01620 842037 - home) or (0131 445 7165 - work).

Chris Yeaman.

PS. Late News - People on the move. Andrew Forrest, my Deputy Course Manager at Swanston Golf Club is leaving to take up a position in the new golf course which is under construction at Oatridge College. He will be the Head Greenkeeper of this new course and takes up this position on 1 March 1999. Andrew has been at Swanston for nine years, where he started as an apprentice and worked his way up to his present position. Although we are sad to lose him we would like to wish him all the best for the future. The section would also like to wish him all the best in his new position. We would also like to wish the college all the best in their new adventure.

PPS. Andy, if you need any help or advice, call Stevie or Craig because I will be busy!

Chris Yeaman

North

Another healthy batch of new members for the Section this month. We welcome the following and hope to meet them during the course of the year. From Reay GC come Roger Martin and Michael Grant; James Smart from Inverurie; Alistair Macleod, from Stornoway; Andre Aitken from Newtonmore; Arran Mackenzie from Abernethy; Alan Black and Craig Watson from Royal Dornoch; Steven Herd from Strathlene and last, but not

least, Craig Beedie from Fraserburgh. At this rate membership could top 300 in our 50th year.

BTME, what can I say. Another excellent week spent learning and meeting friends old and new. I was delighted to see so many North members down this year, the most ever I am sure. It was good to meet up with Graham Scott formerly of Brora and hear he is working in the North of England again, this time on the trade side of the business.

I was not struggling around stiff for a couple of days this year as the Sunday night football was replaced by ten pin bowling, a much gentler sport, good fun all the same. It was great seeing Steve Cadenelli and Rich Hurley over from USA and meeting Linda and Nancy again who accompanied them.

The Keynote Speaker was one of the best so far and although Showaddywaddy were not one of my all time great bands I thought they went down brilliant and everybody seemed to be having a ball, I didn't realise what a mover our Chairman is!

I am glad that I put my entry for the new BIGGA golf championship at Carden Park in early as entries closed at the end of January, so the only way to be there now is by playing in the Spring outing and winning a free place. The remaining 56 places are up for grabs at Section outings, the best scratch and nett score at Inverness in May will win a place. So be there. There may be a chance of one or two on the waiting list getting in as people that have entered might win a place through their Section (like me!).

IA Macleod.

Ayrshire

Well that's Harrogate past for another year. It just seems to be getting bigger and busier every year. It was good to see many faces from our Section and the ones I didn't see I guess they must have seen me first.

I attended the irrigation workshop and I must say the workshop standard was as usual of an exceptionally high standard which is a tribute to our Education Officer Ken Richardson and his colleagues.

The irrigation workshop was very informative and interesting for all the other delegates I spoke with, so a big thanks to David Halford, Secretary of the BTLIA, who delivered the workshop along with some other personnel from the irrigation industry.

At a recent committee meeting our golf events were planned for the forthcoming season. The Spring Outing is at Ballochmyle Golf Club on Thursday 6 May with the Autumn Outing at the Pines Golf Centre on Thursday 30 September. The Spring Outing will be the new National Tournament Qualifier: more details to follow in next month's notes. It is planned to try and arrange a summer doubles knock-out competition, the format to be a team with at least one BIGGA member partnered with another club greenkeeper or official. All entries will go into a draw and be played either home or away. If

there is sufficient interest, details will be finalised and the draw can be made at our Spring Outing. Contact Derek Wilson on 01294 276177 or any committee member to make your entry or state your interest.

We are trying to organise a fund raising cinema racing evening with gentlemen's entertainment, around May or June time. More details to follow, so why not start a staff kitty now to enjoy a good greenkeeper social evening supporting your Section. We are also investigating possibilities of organising a seminar/conference day in the Autumn: watch this space or let us know any of your own ideas before our next committee meeting on 19 April.

We are trying to trace any SIGGA or BIGGA trophies. If you have any or know of their whereabouts please let Derek Wilson know 01294 276177. Any news, let me know 01505 683278.

See you next month.
Iain Barr.

West of Scotland

Firstly, on behalf of the Committee I would like to thank Stuart Taylor for his efforts in writing the Section news for the past few years. "Well done Stuart you deserve a well earned break after that." However, as past Chairman we have not put him out to pasture just yet, Stuart has volunteered his services to continue organising the Section and inter Section football matches. So anyone interested should contact Stuart on 0141-942-5554.

The eleven-a-side football match against the East Section was played at Livingston on Sunday 10 January. A bright sunny afternoon with a severe frost on the pitch creating extremely difficult and trying conditions. Players had to avoid slipping and were continually watching the bounce off the surface. A good professional performance by the West Section, after loaning the East two players. The team for West was Brian Hillen, Sandy Brawley, Alistair Smith, Stuart Taylor, Gerry Bruen, Steven McGeachie, Kevin Mcquire, Brian Bolland, Peter Cowan and Ian Smith. The match turned out to be a very one sided affair, 6-0 up at half time a similar story was evident in the second half. Goal scorers were Steve McGeachie, Gerry Bruen, Peter Cowan, Brian Bolland and a penalty by Brian Hillen. A consolation goal in the second half was scored by Robert Hossack one of the West's loaned players. A very good day, very good result, excellent company and hospitality, thanks for the sandwiches after the game, next time should be a better game. Next on the list is Central Section so where is Andy O'Hara, look out we're on form!

Our thanks go to the HQ for arranging the Patron awards again, this year Brian Hillen and Charlie Goodall have been chosen to attend the annual BTME conference, a terrific opportunity to attend one of the most renowned venues of the calendar. I hope you had an excellent time down there. Unfortunately Charlie Goodall was

unable to attend Harrogate this year, instead recovering from surgery. Our commiserations go to you Charlie and we wish you a speedy recovery.

I was reliably informed by Cecil George that the BTME exhibition was an excellent event with some great company. It was requested that I mention that Bob Moffat and his wife were in attendance at the show and I believe that Cecil may even have had a dram or two with Bob! I was informed also that there was a problem with Harry Diamond's legs, while attempting to vacate the coach! Something to do with lack of blood flow possibly after remaining seated for several hours! Who knows? Anyway, this is an event that every greenkeeper should attend if only once, a truly memorable experience, where greenkeepers can meet up with old faces and forge new relationships with people sharing a mutual interest in this Grand Profession.

Other news now, a challenge match, between Head greenkeepers and Conveners, has been organised and will take place at Cawdor G.C. on Wednesday 31 March, entry forms will be in the post soon. The Spring outing is to be held at Bothwell Castle G.C. on Thursday 29 April, tee off at 11:30am, entry forms will be sent out shortly, so be sure and return the entry slips as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. We'll keep fingers crossed for some fine weather on the day.

On to education news now, Robert Hogarth reported that the last moderators' meeting held in December '98 produced a poor turn out with only 26 bodies in attendance.

He went on to say that the meeting was unsuccessful due to confusion from points being raised that clouded the main issue, and bore no relationship to the intended itinerary of the meeting. Another meeting will be organised and assessors will be notified as soon as arrangements are complete.

We extend a warm welcome to three new members this month, Robert Rees, Dalziel Park G&CC; Sean Ward, Douglas Park GC, and Colin Shanks, Bonnyton GC. We look forward to seeing you all at future Section events.

On a final note if anyone has any news of interest, ie promotions, births, deaths etc, please contact me on 0141 7761532 or M 07050 173080

Gavin Jarvis

Central

We are really moving on recruiting new members to the Section with 18 joining this month. Hopefully this trend will continue throughout the year. Those joining us are Callum Simpson, William Swan, Steven Howie and James Atherton from Lundin Golf Club; Neil Banner and Lloyd Stevenson from Alva Golf Club; David Simpson from Crieff Golf Club; Alexander Drummond from Callander Golf Club; Robert De Rose and Allan McCullough from Dunfermline Golf Club; Mathew Baird, Patrick O'Sullivan, Christian Kitching, Gordon McFadyen and Patrick Brennan from The Dukes

Course, St. Andrews; Scott Mackintosh, Gary Todd and Alan Russell from St Andrews Links Trust. Once again we extend a warm welcome to them all and look forward to meeting them at some of our events in the near future.

Continuing on the whereabouts of the Section's Past Chairmen, this month's five are as follows: 1986/7 - E. Small who was at Tulliallan GC and is still at Tulliallan GC. 1987/8 - J. Cameron, who was at Callander GC now unknown, can anybody help? 1988/9 - I. Ritchie who was at Ladybank GC now at Portmarnock GC. 1989/91 - W. Steele who was at Grangemouth GC, now at Golf Course Construction. 1991/3 - D. Peddie who was at Alloa GC, still at Alloa GC.

I met up with numerous former Section members during the BTME at Harrogate in January and Ross Wilson (formerly Kinross) and Ian Ritchie (formerly Ladybank) send their regards to all their friends in the Section.

I won't go on about the BTME as the only way to appreciate it is to be there.

The Spring Tournament is at Lundin Golf Club on Thursday 29 March so if you wish to compete in the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship at Carden Park, in Cheshire, in October you had better get your entry in fast as the only places left are those who qualify from the Section's Spring Tournament.

Your committee are looking at ways of raising funds for the Section, details of which should be with you very soon and it is hoped that everyone will support our efforts and not the usual half dozen or so whose efforts are really appreciated by the committee.

John Crawford.



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North East

On January 28 we had our first winter seminar at the City of Newcastle Golf Club, the subject was the history of John Deere from the beginning to the present day. Our thanks to Mr. Richard Charleton area sales manager and to Greenlay for sponsoring the evening.

Not a bad turnout as we had 25 greenkeepers attending from as far away as Whitley Bay and Slaley Hall, a bit disappointing that there was only one person from the Newcastle area but at least there were apologies from Whickham and Hallgarth lads. Let's hope we have a better turn out at Tyneside Golf Club.

Congratulations to Ian Hutton, of Slaley Hall, on his appointment as Head Greenkeeper at Garesfield Golf Club, also to Geoff Mortimore moving from Haltwhistle to Hexham Golf Club.

Captain's Day is expected to be played at Garesfield in July probably the third or fourth week all persons will be notified.

Jimmy Richardson.

North West

Another BTME gone and another year passed, time seems to pass so quickly these days, (perhaps it's my age).

Anyway the show was once again great, and I hope those of you who managed to get there enjoyed it. This year it was bigger than ever, and I believe we reached record numbers.

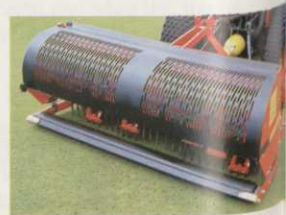
One of the stands that created a lot of interest was the Stylo, with a good selec-

tion of work and leisure wear. This workwear is good quality and reasonably priced and well worth looking at. I would like to see more golf clubs supplying their staff with good quality work wear, with a name tag on their overalls, so that members recognise the people looking after their course. Once again I must mention our HQ staff who did a great job, producing an exhibition second to none. By the time you read these notes you should

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Whilst it still features the unique, patented 'heave' action, there are many new improvements, including single point arm adjustment, a stronger tie support system and fewer working parts.



all have received your fixture lists for the year, and an application form for the seminar at Mere Golf & Country Club. The seminar should be of interest to all of you, and possibly your Chairman of greens, so please support the section and attend the seminar on 23 March.

The annual match against North Wales is on Thursday 8 April and I require a team of 16 to win the GEM Shield, and bring it back to where it

belongs. Any members interested please contact me as soon as possible. The Spring Tournament will be played at Fairhaven Golf Club on Tuesday 20 April. Please send your applications plus a cheque for £15 to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Liverpool, L4 9RB. Tel 0151 284 4416. No applications will be accepted after Tuesday 13 April.

One member on the move is John Turner who is moving from Keswick

G.C. to Bramall Park G.C. John tells me that Keswick G.C. was closed a record number of days last year, due to the amount of rain we had. Hopefully he will be able to mow his fairways this year with a tractor with wheels instead of floats. We wish him and his family good luck. That's it for now. If any member has not received a fixture list please contact me on 0151 724 5412.

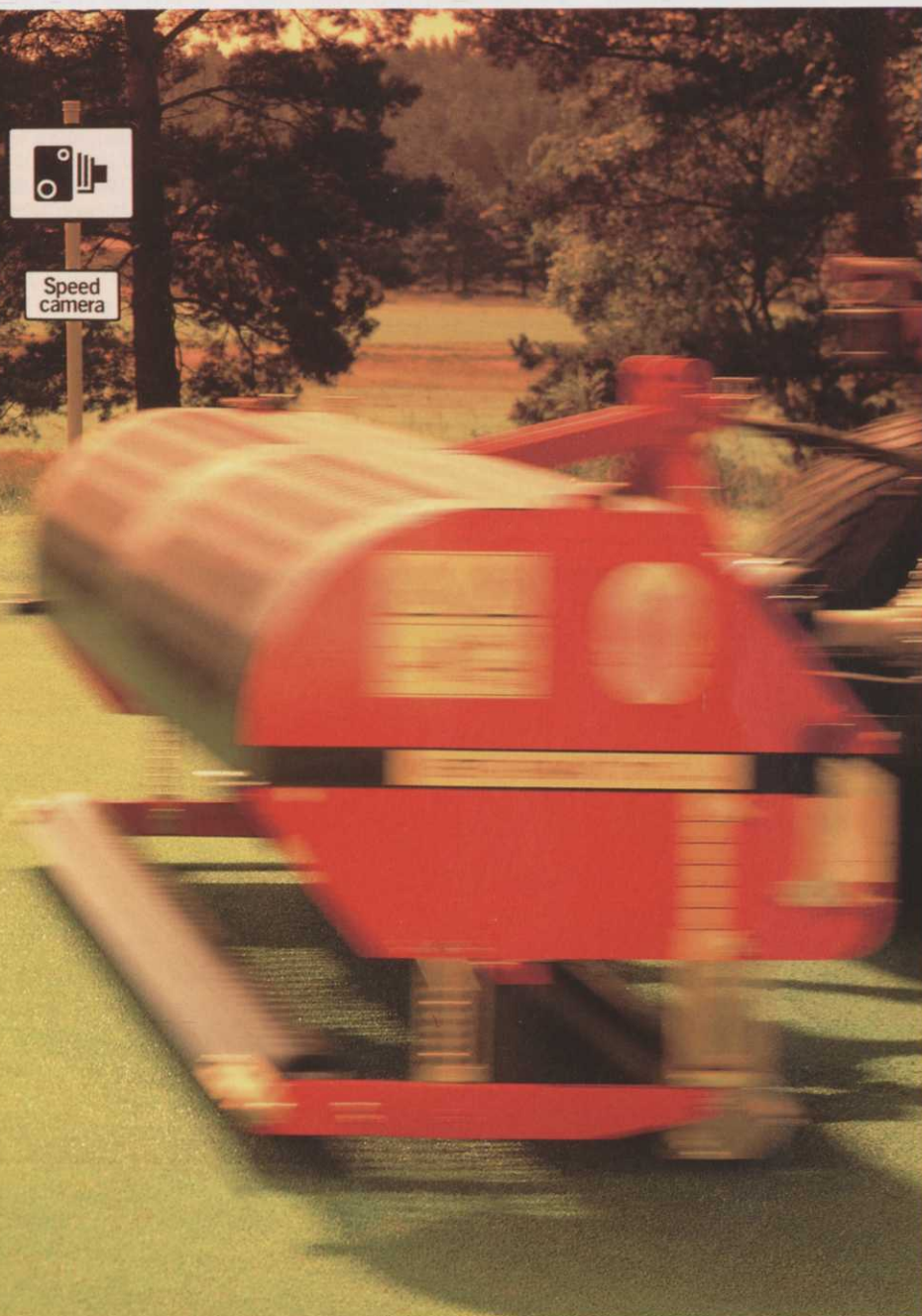
Bert Cross.

Sheffield

On 3 December we held our winter lecture at Rotherham Golf Club. Our thanks go to Mr David Truby, from Scotts Fertilisers, who gave a lecture on fertilisers, which was enjoyed by everyone present.

On 3 February we held our winter lecture at Sitwell Park Golf Club, who I would like to thank for letting us use their facilities while Rotherham was

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being painted. We had a very good turnout for the lectures.

The first lecture was given by David Stansfield, from PSD Agronomy who gave a very interesting lecture on Earthworms and their control. Our thanks go to David.

Our second lecture was given by Mr Frank Newberry, from Greenkeeper Training, who gave a very interesting lecture on "motivation". Frank's lecture was very different from our usual ones, but was very interesting and was enjoyed by everyone present, who I think may have gone home with a different view on things.

On the golfing scene the Section is running a knockout competition, which will be played as a fourball betterball. Teams will consist of two BIGGA members with a designated home course where courtesy will be given, there will be a maximum handicap of 18, there will be 3/4 allowance on all matches. Anyone who wants to play or wants more information should contact James Cooper Dunne on 0411 895852 or 0114 2830731.

J.V. Lax.

North Wales

It's the 2nd of February and the sun's shining, I was beginning to for-

get what it looked like. My members were starting to think we'd put in some permanent water features, the pro even enquired whether he could hire our dinghies. Still, these things are sent to try us.

BTME, excellent! I hope all of you that went on the coach enjoyed your day. I was there for three days, took in the seminars, sampled the local hospitality and generally soaked up the atmosphere. My club send me and my deputy on alternate years and even have it written into our contract and consider it excellent value, which it is. All of my staff attended the AGM and said it was a very rewarding experience. Try asking your clubs. You might be surprised and remember, you don't get it if you don't ask.

The annual North Wales v North West match is to be at North Wales GC Llandudno on 8 April. We require 16 players for this to enable us to keep the shield for another 12 months (sorry Bert). Please contact Gary Edwards on 01492 593646.

The spring meeting is to be held at Llanyrmych on 28 April which will also be the Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship qualifier to be held at Carden Park in October. Forms will be sent to everyone and must be returned by 12 April. Our

secretary, Gary, is in negotiations with a variety of clubs to hold our golf days. Some are completely new to our circuit, watch this space.

We have purchased a new computer for the section, which will make the running of the section easier and more efficient.

On the 10 March we are holding an afternoon seminar in the college on water management and the rudiments of water behaviour in the soil. I know that this might be too late in the magazine, however, all of you should have received notification in the post. If not, please let me know.

Again, anyone out there who wants to put on a day, half day or evening presentation, please let me know on 01824 710693, 01745 814931, 01745 816669 or 04108 96837 so we can arrange details and if you can't get me on any of those numbers, it means I have left the country.

We have had a large increase in membership to our Section this year and I feel that a lot of the credit must go to our Regional Administrator, Doug Bell. If you haven't met him yet, I'm sure you will. He is doing an excellent job. Thanks Doug.

New members since November are: Bryan Berry, James Haley, David Abbot, Mike Dimeloc, Stephen Williams, Martin Davenport, All

Vale Royal Abbey G.C., Mark Shaw, Alsager G.C., Robert Mathieson, Glyn Davis, Padeswood & Buckley G.C., Stephen Murphy, Alan Dowsey, Craig Kendal, Heowall G.C., Brett Coulton, Portal G & C C, Paul Barber, Chester G.C., Eurwyn Vaughan, Thomas McCulloch, Abergele G.C., Eyyen Owen, Odgellan G.C. I wish you all a warm welcome to the Section. If I have missed anyone out, please let me know.

Finally, back to the BTME, The Welsh College raffled a tiger (the cuddly toy type) at Harrogate. The raffle was a great success and raised £146 for the Hope House Hospice in Oswestry. Nice one Graham. See you.

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

Just like to say sorry for not getting the News Letter out for January, but I was laid low with that new 'flu. I would like to say thank you to all the greenkeepers and groundsmen for turning up for the Turfcare Quiz Night in December. The greenkeepers were beaten again. The groundsmen did not even bother bringing the trophy in. That's confidence for you.

I would also like to thank Terry

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Charlton, of Turfcare, for putting the free bus on to Harrogate and buying everybody a pint. Very much appreciated.

Short News Letter this month as I have not had any news. If you have anything at all to tell us, give me a ring or next month I will be forced to tell you about our bunker reshaping at Brancepeth G.C.

Kevin (Scoop) Heslop



Midland Region
Peter Larter
Tel: 01480 437507

East Midlands

This year's BTME again proved to be a highly enjoyable event. From visiting Trade stands, attending seminars, meeting old friends and listening to Showaddywaddy, all helped to make this a great week for everybody who attended. However as a Section we would still like to see more of our members supporting this fantastic event. At the AGM, Paddy McCarron was elected to the Association as a Life Member. Paddy has served the Association at Section, Region and National level with great professionalism, and he is

still involved with the Association through his work in the Midland's Region Greenkeepers' Support Line, and I am sure all members will agree that he fully deserves this honour.

This year's golf fixture list is now complete, and all members should receive their entry forms, four or five weeks before the date of each tournament. If you do not receive a form please contact me and I will gladly post a copy to you. When returning your entry form please ensure that the correct payment is made and it is returned before the closing date, which is usually two weeks prior to the competition.

Spring Tournament: Longcliffe G.C. May 13. Sponsor: E.T.Breakwells; East of England: Ramsdale Park G.C. August 18. Sponsor: Chandlers; Autumn Tournament: Erewash Valley G.C. September 6. Sponsor: Banks Amenity Products; AGM Tournament: Radcliffe-on-Trent G.C. November 3. Sponsor: Vitax Ltd; Christmas Tournament: Glen Gorse G.C. December 9. Sponsor: Rigby Taylor.

Finally if any member is interested in a visit to Aldwark in Mid-April, which will include an overnight stay in a local hotel, and either a game of golf or a lecture, could you please let

me know as soon as possible. This will require sufficient numbers before anything can be finalised. So it is hoped that as many members as possible will support the event, to help make it successful.

Antony Bindley.

Midland

I hope the majority of you were able to get to the BTME and experience what a great event this really is. Every year it just gets better and great credit must be given to the staff at BIGGA and everyone who is involved in the exhibition for making it the most prestigious week for greenkeepers in the year and something to look forward to year after year.

There has been some movement in the Section which I will now report on. Andrew Smith has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Shirley Golf Club and John Ganley has taken over from Andrew at North Warwickshire. Good luck to you both in your new positions.

If there are any of you that are interested in doing the NVQ Level 3 and cannot give the time during the day, the Warwickshire College at Morton Morrel are looking to run an evening class, depending on the interest shown. So if you are inter-

ested, please contact the college or Andrew Smith on 01676 530114. Finally I would like to introduce you to some new members of the Section - Dean Waldron, Sean Smith, Duncon Underhill and Lee Hitchman.

Jonathan Wood.

Mid Anglia

A visit has been arranged to the new course at Bocket Hall on 30 March. All are welcome to attend; we'll be meeting at the Greenkeeper's compound at 1.00 pm.

The entry fee for our three golf tournaments (Spring, Summer and Autumn) has remained at £20.00 for the last four years. Due to increased costs, however, this will rise to £23.00 from April 1999.

The Spring qualifier next month will be a thirty-six hole medal event, with the overall winner and best gross score going forward to the newly formatted National Tournament. Details of this have been sent to all members via the magazine.

The Lodgeway four ball tournament, which goes ahead again this year, will be drawn at the Spring Tournament to be held at Aldwicksbury Golf Club next month



on 28 April. Finally, I would like to welcome the following new members from Mentmore Golf Club: John Frampton, Bill Lewis, Jon Underwood, Harry Odone, Leigh Welford, Danny James.

Paul Lockett.

Bucks, Berks Oxon

At last the golfing season is upon us, time to dust all the cobwebs of the clubs and give them a good airing. It always amazes me how many hardy souls continue to thrash it round during the bleak winter months regardless of the weather. My own guideline for getting the clubs out is our Turfcat, strange but true! If I can cut rough in short-sleeves without getting goose bumps then it must be warm enough to play golf!

Simple system, no need to refer to teletext, works every time, except that is when we hold a greenkeepers golf day because it always rains! Getting down to more serious business, the first committee meeting of the year was held at the Springs Golf Club on 3 February. This proved a lively affair with some good healthy discussions taking place as to the forthcoming season. Thanks to Ross and Robert for their contribution in what was their first meeting. The main topic discussed was the forthcoming golf fixtures. The venues are as follows: Spring - Beaconsfield G.C., Summer - Donnington Grove G.C., Autumn - The Springs G.C., Winter - Lambourne G.C.

Confirmation of the above venues, along with fixed dates will be sent out with the first entry forms at the end of March.

Please make sure that all membership fees are paid as the mailing list comes direct from H.Q. so any lapsed membership will result in you being taken off the list. It did happen a couple of times last year so please take care.

With regards to payment for golf days, if you wish to play in any event then you must pay before the date, this allows us to bank the cheques prior to receiving the invoice, thus avoiding any bank charges. Finally the Rigby Taylor four ball Knockout is to be run throughout this season. I hope to have more details for next month's article. If you require any information on the above please give me a ring on 01491 578147.

Lindsay T Anderson



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01363 82777

Over 100 greenkeepers including eight from the Channel Islands attended BTME this year. With six pick-ups, two coaches and three hotel destinations it was a bit of a nightmare to organise. However,

everyone seemed to be on the coaches and end up with a bed. More than that they all arrived at their locations on the correct coach and with the correct suitcase. How about that!

The South West & South Wales Region is indebted to Amenity Technology for sponsoring the coaches to Harrogate and also for the excellent food and entertainment provided for the boys on the Wednesday evening. Everyone had a wonderful time.

Thanks also are due to Rigby Taylor who part sponsored five greenkeepers over from the Channel Islands. For many of them it was their first visit to the mainland and they thought BTME was just wonderful. It was great to have them with us.

Paula Humphries

South Wales

January's meeting with Richard Dixon of the Welsh Golfing Union with more than 30 attending was very informal but very interesting on course preparation and the rules of golf. Thank you for your time Richard and I am sure every one who attended would agree.

Last month I said I would report on the BTME. Once again it was an excellent exhibition with a good attendance from our Section. The feedback is that everybody enjoyed their trip to Harrogate, and that congratulations must go to the organisers for the Exhibition and Educational Seminars and to anyone who assisted in the show that gets better each year.

This month's meeting to be held at Pencoed College on Wednesday 17 by Derek Edwards, of Inturf, his presentation will be on the turf for the new National Stadium Cardiff.

Our Golf days will be starting shortly and we, being members of BIGGA, would look like a professional body that we are, if all golfers wore BIGGA shirts and would be encouraged to do so at a low cost of £14.95 as shown in the new collection of clothing in the last month's magazine.

Congratulations is in order for Tony Bull with his new official title of Head Greenkeeper of Clyne Golf Club. Also to Henry Fry for 1st prize in his local Horticulture Competition. Well done Henry.

Westurf is only a month away at its new location at Westpoint in Exeter on 27 April. The new location means we are undercover although there will be outside demonstrations. Also the new look Westurf brings Seminars and Entertainment. It's going to be bigger and better so don't miss it or miss out. A coach will be running from S. Wales to Exeter for delegates and their wives at a nominal charge. Contact Peter Lacey for details and to reserve a seat.

Richard Hatcher (01656) 742761.

Devon & Cornwall

The first event of the New Year for many members was to attend this year's BTME held as always in the lovely town of Harrogate. The Region's now annual trip to the show took on a new look as the trip was sponsored by Amenity Technology & Westurf which allowed the Region to offer an unbelievable price of only £99 per person. With this it was nice to see so many of the Section's membership taking advantage of the package.

The show itself just seems to get better each year and is now one that you can't afford to miss. On Wednesday night, Amenity Technology put on an evening for delegates which was simply buzzing with atmosphere. Before attending, a few of us visited the Kubota evening get-together, which was also superb, especially for John Mitchell as he won second prize in the raffle, a colour TV.

Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator, Paula, and Stuart Ashworthy, of Amenity Technology, who had organised the superb trip. Also I would like to congratulate all the staff at head office for all their hard work in organising BTME.

The Section's first meeting of the year was sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds and held at Bude and North Cornwall Golf Club on Wednesday 27 January. The day started with golfing members competing over the clubs links course for prizes kindly donated by Barenbrug UK, our non-golfing members were treated to a morning of looking at and operating the latest computer software which included the excellent Quest maintenance management programme presented by Guy Coleman, of Wessex Software, and the RainBird computer software covering irrigation systems to irrigation design which was presented by Mark, from RainBird, and Roger Davey, of Ocmis Irrigation.

After operating the software our non-golfing members were treated to a course walk by yours truly before returning for lunch.

After an excellent lunch, members were again invited to try out the computer software before our company and prize presentation by Darren Wilding, of Barenbrug UK. 1. Alan Gawman, St Mellion, 39 pts; 2. Gary Foster, Tavistock, 38pts; 3. Terry Farkins, Dartmouth, 37pts on back 9.

The Section would like to thank Guy, Mark and Roger for setting up their excellent software programmes for our educational presentation. Also, our thanks must go to the day's sponsors, Darren and Barenbrug, for without them this meeting would not have taken place.

Thanks also to my crew of Jason, Polly and Greg who always work so hard to present the course at its best. Last but not least our thanks must

go to Bude & North Cornwall Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their facilities and all their staff who made our day run so smoothly. Our last meeting of the winter programme will be the Rhône Poulenc & Supaturf meeting which will be held at Dartmouth Golf & Country Club on Wednesday 24 March. The day will start as always with golfing members competing for the Supaturf Trophy (Head Greenkeepers) and Rhône Poulenc Trophy (Assistants). This event will also be the Section qualifier for the Charterhouse/Scotts Golf Championship with the best net and gross score going through.

Westurf is now just around the corner. With the show moving to Westpoint at Exeter this must be a show you can't afford to miss, so let's see a big attendance from the section and support the Region so the region can support you.

Remember that Westurf is now at Westpoint, Exeter on Tuesday, April 27.

Richard Whyman.

South West

The "Cream" of the South West greenkeeping industry once again made the annual pilgrimage to the Mecca of Harrogate for the 1999 BTME. This superbly organised event produced a mind boggling amount of information for members to digest including the very latest theories and technological advances that will give you the perfect greens.

There was also a mind boggling amount of fine foods and beverages consumed which helped members keep their minds focused on all of the knowledge being passed around. Yet again, all the speakers at the seminars were highly entertaining and were greatly appreciated. Paula Humphries is given many thanks for all of her hard work in organising the South West Region's trip to Harrogate. A great week was clearly had by all those who attended.

Meanwhile, the rest of us who weren't allowed to taste the high life of Harrogate, carried on trudging through the wind and rain in a desperate bid to get the course into a playable state. Alas the rain won again with the month of January being one of the wettest on record. However, it appears that spring has now arrived and the time has come to put away the darts board and start greasing up the mowers ready for another grass cutting frenzy.

The next golfing event on the calendar is the Spring tournament which will be held at Wells G.C., on 22 April. The Charterhouse/Scotts Golf Championship will take place in October this year and there will be two free places available for members from this Section. The qualifiers will be selected from a tournament later on in the year, probably the Summer Tournament.

Also coming up is the Westurf Exhibition being held at Westpoint

in Exeter on 27 April. For any information, please contact Paula Humphries on 01363 82777.

Hopefully you should have received BIGGA Education and Training sheet, which outlines the various courses that we can offer. This includes information on course content and prices. If you would like to attend one of these courses, please telephone me on 01249 783382.

Paul Cunningham

South Coast

Our January lecture at Canford Magna went off very well. There were just over 50 members in attendance. It was very gratifying to see so many there. It was also nice to meet up with Eric James again. Well done to all those who attended.

The day started off with a talk by Stuart Ashworth, from Amenity Technology Products Ltd. Stuart gave us an insight into the uses of all the latest technology into the biological and organic approach to reducing the bacteria in the soil. In so doing, reducing the use of fungicides. This does seem to be the way forward. Judging by the questions and answers there still seems to be a long way to go. None the more for that, it was a very interesting subject and gave us plenty of food for thought.

This was followed by a talk from Ian McMillan who I am sure needs no introduction. His talk was "Taking Golf Courses Into The Year 2000 And Beyond". Ian showed us some brilliant slides of his golf course at Hankley Common. This included all the conservation work that has been done to his heathland course. A lot of the heather has been rejuvenated, and a number of trees have been removed. This has brought back a lot of the wild life and improved the golf course no end. Once again the question and answer session was very lively. Two very good talks. Those of you who didn't make it were the losers.

On completion of the talks we sat down to lunch. This was provided by Amenity Technology and Sheerwater Leisure. We would like to thank them both for their kind hospitality.

The afternoon was a bit of a wash-out. We were supposed to have gone out for a game of golf. However the weather was atrocious. I'm not sure whether there were any brave ones among us. There was no other word for it, it was just "chucking it down". Once again thank you to our sponsors and our speaker for a wonderful day.

Unfortunately I could not make it to BTME this year. By the reports that I have had it was better than ever. However Kerran Daly has made a report on the Region's trip.

The South West region trip to BTME was once again a roaring success. Ninety six people signed up for the trip, the highest number ever, and two coaches were required. The

coaches were sponsored by Amenity Technology and we thank them very much for their hospitality and support. One of the most exciting things was the number of new faces present and it was particularly pleasing to have eight members from the Channel Islands along for the ride. I hope they did not find us mainlanders too strange!

Delays on the M1 due to road works and accidents, combined with geographical difficulties for one of the drivers led to the abandonment of the scheduled visit to the new HQ building at Aldwark. This was a shame but most were relieved to get to the hotel in time for a shower and some refreshment before hitting the town for the food and entertainment which Harrogate has in abundance.

The BTME show was very busy with attendance up on last year. The highlight of the seminars was the opening address by Frank Dick OBE which was truly inspirational. The AGM passed off relatively quietly with Gordon Child elected for another year as Chairman and Kerran Daly replacing Robin Greaves as the South West's representative on the national board. The banquet on the final evening was enjoyed by all who attended. The dance floor was very crowded with all sorts of unlikely rockers strutting their stuff to some rock and roll classics.

All too soon the exhibition was over and it was time to take the long trip home. The South Coast Section wish to thank all involved in the organisation of the show and a special thank you to Paula Humphries for all her hard work arranging the trip and the excellent hotel accommodation. Highlight of the week was surely the Imperial Hotel breakfasts. They alone will ensure that I will be visiting Harrogate again next year. I urge all who have not yet been to put it down in your diary for next year. It is planned to be a special millenium BTME. You will not be disappointed.

Kerran Daly

South Coast

One more reminder for Westurf. I mentioned in last month's magazine that a coach will be laid on for all of you who wish to attend. At the time of writing this report we have not had a lot of calls. The coach is sponsored. All you have to do is phone Jef our Secretary, myself or any other member of the committee to book your seat. Westurf has a new venue, and it looks very exciting, it is an enclosed venue, so no matter what the weather, the show will go on. There will also be seminars during the day on Water Management. It should be a very busy day and plenty to see.

Date for your Diary: 4 May 1999 Spring Tournament Canford Magna Golf Club.

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Surrey

Surrey Section committee's last meeting was on 11 January 99 and there are some changes which all members should be aware of.

Firstly, we must thank our good friend Ted Stiles for the magnificent job he has done over the past years as Section Secretary.

Unfortunately for us he has decided to step down and really get to grips with his retirement. Ted, we wish you all the very best and look forward to seeing you at the Gentleman's Dinner in March.

Other changes to the committee include Dave Delderfield's appointment as the new Chairman and Ian Sellars has taken over Ted's role as Secretary.

If you have any queries regarding any event or if you are not receiving information through the post contact Ian on his mobile phone 0976 709145.

Spring Meeting 28 April: Malden Golf Club: Sponsors Turfcare Supplies Ltd.

Charity Shield. Surrey Section won this last year beating Sussex, Kent and Essex teams. Mike Kirkham is arranging this and needs a Surrey venue.

If you can help, please phone Mike on 01483 428650; July 2 Effingham Golf Club: B.B.Q.: Sponsors Rigby Taylor; August: Sunningdale: McMillan Tankard; September: Royal Mid Surrey: Sponsors Mommersteeg; September 30: Richmond Sudbrook Park: Sponsors Gem; October 3,4,5 National Championship; Carden Park.

And lastly we congratulate Kevin Boxall who started at Guildford Golf Club on 4 January as the new Deputy Head Greenkeeper.

Brian Willmott.

Essex

Well it looks like it's stopped raining. It's about time.

We had a very interesting talk from Billy McMillan on his views and experiences on Golf Course Management sponsored by Gem. Thanks to John Sinclair for organising this event and to Writtle College for the use of the room. The 35 members present had a good evening. The next evening lecture at Writtle College is on 23 March: Jon Albutt talking on Health and Safety. One not to miss.

We have six new members: Gordon Scott, North Weald G.C., Peter Cannon, Colchester G.C., Mark Singleton, Abridge G.C., Jamie Steele, Chelmsford G.C., Kevin James, Chelmsford G.C., and James Winslaw, Chelmsford G.C.

We have a confirmed date of 19 October 1999 for Wanstead Golf Club.

I'd like to wish Mick Fance all the best in his new job with the Greenkeeping Supply Company. Better go and see how the fairway cutting is going. See you soon.

Dave Wells.

Kent

In December we held the annual Christmas Turkey Shoot at Darenth Valley G.C. I'd firstly like to thank Darenth Valley for the courtesy of the course and for the Turkey they donated as first prize in the raffle. Secondly I'd like to thank Nigel Stapely and his staff for the excellent condition of the course which we greatly appreciated. The results were as follows: 1. A. Howarth, 2. C. Marsh, 3. B. Farnham, 4. J. Fullager, 5. D. Wood, 6. S. Jones, 7. K. Diamond, 8. P. Biscoe and the trade winner was N. Pullen.

The AGM was held at Wilderness G.C. on 10 December for which there was a good turn out and a few new faces which is nice to see. There will be four golf venues to be announced in the

near future and there were two new members elected to committee, they were G. Debenham and myself K. Diamond. The Kent Section of "Around the Green" is to be written now by either K. Diamond, B. Farnham or S. Jones all of whom can be found at the London Golf Club.

Everybody should by now have received a fixture mailing list, if not, then contact me asap. With the form there was a section for any comments or recommendations you would like to make.

It was nice to see a few of you at Harrogate and I hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did. Hopefully it might stop raining soon and we might be able to get out on the course again. If you know of anybody on the move or have any news or comments, then contact us on 01474 879200.

Kneale Diamond.



North East

At present we are enjoying quite a mild spell and getting plenty of work done. Things here have been fairly busy for the first few months of 1999. In early January we enjoyed a day out courtesy of John Lindsay Professional Sportsturf, who held a seminar at Stakis Park to launch his new range of Scotts Products. The event was very well attended by all sectors of the Amenity Market. We would like to thank John for inviting all BIGGA members and for letting us put up a BIGGA stand at his event. The following week NIGGA invited us to a computer seminar at Greenmount College. This was also very well attended. Shandon Park GC won £1000 worth of software

that day, well done to them. Thanks to Terry Crawford and Ian Harrison for organising the event. In January we also held our first ever cross-section meeting. This went extremely well and there were plenty of ideas for events.

Eamonn Farrell

South East

February 1 saw our second workshop day at Cyril Johnston Ltd. A fantastic turn out of 120 people attended again as last year the weather on the day was dry and sunny, so thanks to those who attended.

The speakers were Dave Sturgess Hayter, who gave an interesting presentation on why cheapest is not always best. Clive Pinnock, Toro, spoke about quality of cut and Brian Daley, also from Toro, introduced the new Reelmaster 3100d and the new "sidewinder" and Alan Strakon spoke about the changes at Royal Co Down since he commenced his position there. David and Dolway Johnston were keen to launch their agency for Toro machines and their back up. Many thanks to Graham Wylie, S/E Chairman, and David Johnston for organising the event and to all the speakers and Cyril Johnston Co Ltd. for an excellent day and lunch.

Other news is our first golfing event of 99 which will also be the qualifier for the BIGGA challenge. This will be held at Royal C Down G.C. on the last week in March 1999 and letters will go out to members with the exact date of that day.

Jonathan McCabe.



See you all next month!

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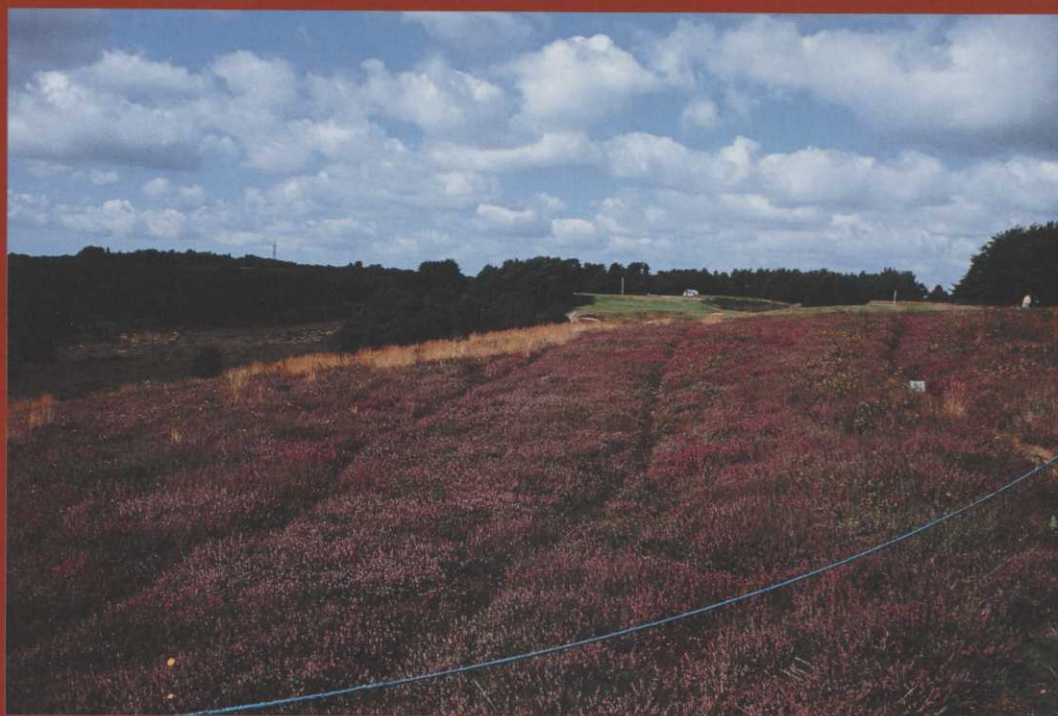
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eco warriors



Bob Taylor of the STRI, was armed with his camera when he undertook judging at last year's BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone and Rhône-Poulenc, and he produced some stunning results. Bob is looking forward to this year's competition which sees The Grass Roots Trading Company join Amazone as co-sponsor.



Above (top): A fine example of a heather-dominated carry at Broadstone Golf club. The Course Manager is keen to ensure the conservation of the heath and is undertaking steps to control bracken, manage the gorse and improve the gradation of the grassland rough. The course supports nightjar, nightingale, adder, slow-worm and sand lizard

Left: Cardross Golf Club - mutually beneficial, mycorrhizal fungi growing in the semi-rough

Above (immediate): Dougall Ray, Lindrick Golf club, receives a cheque for £5,000 and award from Brian Richardson of Rhône-Poulenc and Rod Baker of Amazone UK Ltd.

Right: The walls of an old castle at Pennard Golf Club support several extremely rare plant species, including *Draba aizoides* (yellow whitlow grass) as well as more common species such as the cinnabar moth and the *Asplenium* fern (wall-rue) top right of picture

Facing page: A comma butterfly rests within the grassland at Oulton Park Golf Club



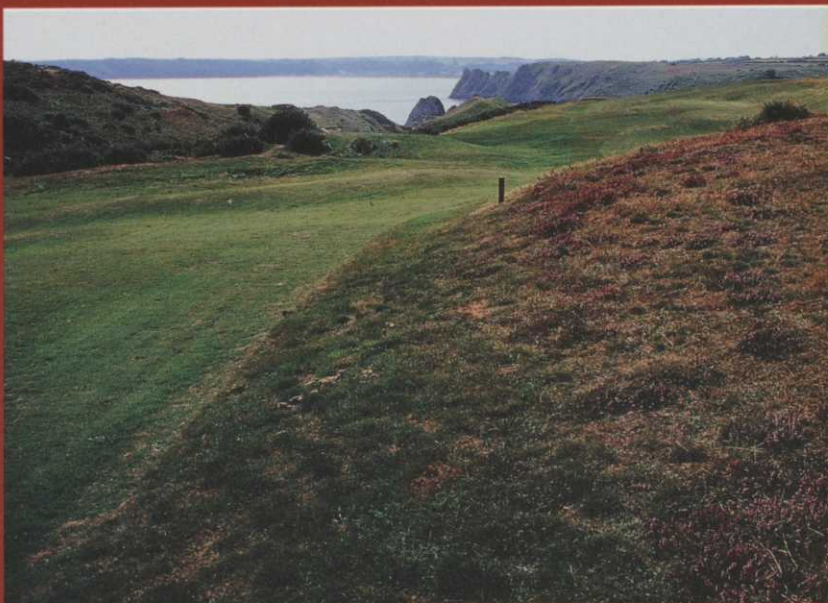


Above: Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club supports a vast and very fine series of fixed dune mounds, the management of which is largely geared to bracken control

Left: Epiphytic lichen grown on oak at Cardross Golf Club

Right: Frinton Golf Club has been designated a Grade 1 site for Water Vole, these being particularly common during my inspection. Interestingly, a marsh harrier flew directly overhead, possibly hunting for these small but quite rare rodents

Below: Pennard Golf Club has been described as one of the most impressive and beautiful golf courses. It is a fine example of a clifftop links being dominated by coastal-type grasslands and heather



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TEES TURF

The 70th GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show was held at the impressive Orange County Convention Centre in Orlando, Florida between Monday 8 and Sunday, 14 February. BIGGA's Sales & Marketing Manager, James McEvoy reports from...

Over there

Considered the largest fine turf exhibition of its type and hosted by the largest representative green-keeping/ supervisor Association in the world, over 25,000 visitors were expected at the exhibition.

The BIGGA party, totalling twenty one, travelled together from Gatwick on Sunday 7 February. Included in our group was the winner of the Toro Excellence Award John Coleman and the winner of the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award Sally Doherty. The Association would like to take this opportunity to thank Toro for their continued support of both of these awards.

Above right: Gearing up for a busy show at the BIGGA stand

Below: Time to relax!

The Association travels to the show and takes a complementary stand which is reciprocated by BIGGA at Harrogate. During the course of the show we met a great many of our international members, we recruited a number of new members and generally used the opportunity to promote BIGGA. A special thanks must go to Bill Montague MG from Ohio who helped man the BIGGA stand. We were amazed at the number of Brits who took time out to come and say hello.

The show and the GCSAA generally are the closest comparison that we have to gauge ourselves.



Admittedly their show is 4 times the size of BTME and the GCSAA is similarly 4 times the size of BIGGA. It was therefore interesting to observe, at first hand, how the GCSAA organise their show as well as investigating some of their other current projects.

The GCSAA Foundation Silent Auction was the third produced by their Association. The beneficiary of this year's event was the GCSAA's Historical Preservation Effort. The goal was to raise \$100,000 for this cause. The concept is simple - companies are asked to contribute their products as a donation, the members are then offered the chance to bid for the said products. All proceeds from the auction go directly into the fund. The most expensive piece of kit on offer was provided by a company from the UK, Bernhard & Company Ltd, who donated an Express Dual 2000 spin grinder - estimated value \$19,000. Altogether, over 110 companies provided donations varying in value from £19,000 to £1,000. Although still unconfirmed, it is believed that the final figure for bids made will be in excess of \$150,000.

The GCSAA made its web site available at the show for any visitors to browse. A number of terminals were positioned for peo-



& INTERNATIONAL GOLF KEEPERS ASSOCIATION



ple to operate in a relaxed and friendly environment. The site is huge and offers a wide range of services and points of interest. I was advised that over 1,000,000 hits had been made on their web site in January alone! BIGGA is still at an early phase in the development of its web site and I found it of great interest to see how our American counterparts have seized upon this medium as a form of communication and education.

Having spent much of January in a state of blind panic preparing for our own exhibition, BTME, it was a pleasure to be able to walk around the show meeting many of the company members who had been exhibiting at Harrogate. It seemed a greater number of British companies were exhibiting in their own right or sharing stands with their US producers and distributors. There were also a great many companies who were attending the show in a visitor capacity.

One of those companies attending were Barrenbrug, a BIGGA Golden Key Company who also have offices in the USA. Michel Mulder, who for many years worked for Barrenbrug in the UK and now works for the company in the US has great experience of both BTME and the GCSAA show and explained to me his views on both.

"Overall the GCSAA show is, an impressive and well organised national event. One has to bear in mind that comparisons between the BTME and GCSAA event are difficult because BIGGA caters for 2,500 golf courses compared to 15,000 golf courses in the US. One also has to be aware that this show is always organised in one of a number of popular locations therefore one is encouraged to take your family for a short holiday as well".

The show attracts a wide variety of British interest including many of the suppliers and distributors who trade in the UK. Richard Fry, who distributes Blazon in the UK for Millican, was at Orlando and he explained why it was so important to have travelled thousands of miles to meet with his US counterparts?

"They used to say that what took place in America would happen in the UK some 10 years later. Well, the result is still the same but the time frame has changed, it's now almost instantaneous.

A visit to the GCSAA is a must for any supplier who is serious about selling products to the UK golf course industry. With over 16,000 golf courses in the USA, the pressure on suppliers to come up with new ideas, concepts and themes is enormous. Even if, as this

PHOTOCAST TEE SIGNS

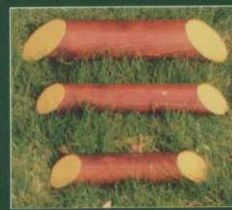


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Over there



Above: Just one of the many GCSAA exhibition halls

Below: BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child gets an extra guest at his table in the Hard Rock Café

year, the number of truly new products was lacking, there are tremendous opportunities to see a different approach to the way products are promoted, displayed and even advertised.

Over the last ten years a number of products, first seen at a GCSAA show, have been introduced into the UK and many such as Blazon have become market leaders".

As with BTME, the education conference starts on the Monday and continues through the show. For the greenkeepers in our party the conference was the prime reason for being in Orlando and it was

interesting to hear their views on the seminars available. The seminars were well received by the majority of British Greenkeepers and Golf Course Managers that I spoke to. The major criticism being the difficulty that they encountered when attempting to book to attend.

One disappointment with the education conference was the lack of UK speakers; Ian Macleod was our only representative. Ian gave an excellent and interesting presentation and was a credit to himself, his golf club and BIGGA. I hope that the GCSAA will consider inviting more of our members to speak at future conferences.

The GCSAA is blessed with having a wide choice of venues that, even during the winter months, provide a temperate climate. The average temperature during the week at Orlando was a warm 80 degrees. An excellent programme of trips and social events

were available, utilising Disney Land and other well known holiday attractions to entice families to attend. There were also the usual evening functions, the highlight being the banquet on the Saturday evening. I may be biased but I still believe that our own banquet evening, sponsored by Stylo, has the edge.

So with the two major shows in the world of fine turf over for another year we can all go back to prepare for our respective millennium spectacles. Harrogate will once again host BTME and Education Conference between xx and xx January, with a new hall (Q) and a few surprises in stall. The GCSAA show in 2000 will be held in New Orleans between the 14 and 20 February. BIGGA will again be attending and we hope you will be able to join us for what promises to be memorable event. Watch this space for details.



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TALKING

This month, Greenkeeper International's bi-monthly series featuring Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers from every Region profiles Maintenance Facilities

Maintenance Facilities

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Paul Seago
Course: Gullane GC,
Region: Scottish Region
Course type: Links
Number of Holes: 54
Staff: Course Manager, mechanic and 14 greenkeepers



Paul Hobden
Course: Chart Hills GC
Region: South East
Course type: Mixture of woodland and parkland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Course Manager, Mechanic and seven greenkeepers



Marcus Phelps
Club: Marlborough GC
Region: S West & S Wales
Course type: Mixture of heathland and parkland with downland grasses
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus four greenkeepers



Kevin Hodges
Course: Ryston Park GC
Region: Midland
Course type: Parkland
Number of holes: 9 (hoping for 18)
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus one (we run most of the time!)



John Waite
Course: Scarthingwell GC
Region: Northern
Type of course: Parkland
Number of holes: 18
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus three greenkeepers

1. What difference have you seen in the quality of maintenance facilities over the past ten years?

A vast improvement, with the staff looked after a lot better. We have locker rooms, heating, shower, and proper washing facilities. We have spent because of Health and Safety regulations. There are new concrete floors with wash bays and a workshop. I think we also need to convince many clubs about the importance of Health and Safety.

Facilities have improved with us but I have seen some which are very poor. The course has been open for six years and we originally had agricultural buildings. These have been redesigned with a storage area with a place to wash of machinery. We have two toilets and a shower.

A big improvement. We used to have sheds, but now we have a new brick building with washing facilities, toilets, tea room and storage space for every item of machinery. There is room for seed inside, but we have to keep top dressing outside. It's getting better everywhere due to the Health and Safety regulations.

Not to many here but ranging from good to poor at the three courses I have worked on. We have three up and over garages (all locked) but no shower or toilet. We have a work bench. We've spent £43,000 on a Jacobsen greens mower and a John Deere fairway mower and other items.

Facilities have had to change for the better because of Health and Safety regulations. At one of my previous clubs there was no electric light and we had to wait each day for daylight before we could see anything in the maintenance facility! We have a toilet but no showers and a Portakabin for eating lunch etc. We are trying to improve all the time.

HEADS

2. When did your maintenance facility last have a major make-over?

About eight years ago when wooden sheds were knocked down and we put up a prefabricated steel girder construction with steel cladding. We are looking to extend at the moment in three phases 1. A workshop and fertiliser store 2. Pesticide store and 3. A staff building.

As we are only six years old there hasn't been a lot of time for improvements, but there have been some small ones and we have excellent storage facilities.

A year ago when I believe something in the order of £80,000 to £100,000 was spent on an update.

About four years ago I believe, before I joined the staff. I understand one shed was rebuilt and a concrete bay added.

We have had no major overhaul since the club was opened in 1993, but a few minor improvements including better machinery.

3. Is your facility close to the clubhouse, or out on the golf course?

Out on the golf course. It's about three quarters of a mile from the clubhouse, but ideally situated as it is bang in the middle of the three courses.

Our maintenance facility is 300-400 yards from the clubhouse and just before you go into the club car park.

It is away from the clubhouse, about a quarter of a mile and with easy access to the course near the 9th green.

Close to the club, about 30 yards away in fact. They may change the Secretary's office into an office for me when they rebuild the clubhouse.

It used to be next to the clubhouse but was moved three years ago to about 200 yards away. It is now next to the 18th fairway.

4. What would you like to see in your maintenance facility that isn't there at the moment?

Better facilities for staff. We have improved but there is still room for further improvements. Greenkeepers do the work out there in all weathers and need a place to clean up, be able to prepare something hot to eat, dry clothes, shower and change. This should happen at every club.

We would certainly like some more storage in the sense of a covered area for top dressing and sand, but having said that we are quite happy with most things and you might say we are more fortunate than some.

We could do with some lifting equipment for servicing machinery and a covered area for top dressing inside. I would also like to have showers in the building.

An awful lot! We could do with a complete range of John Deere equipment, which I think is the best. Also a big building with ample storage space, a place to wash down machinery, changing accommodation, drying room, shower, toilet and somewhere to eat.

I would have better catering facilities for the staff, showers and improved toilet facilities... and perhaps a computer link-up as I am now learning computer skills at night school. I would also like to be able to use the best pieces of machinery for the various jobs from all the different manufacturers and have improved storage and maintenance sections.

5. Outside of your own, whose maintenance facilities do you admire the most?

Undoubtedly St Andrews. They have state-of-the-art facilities and have got the lot. We have three courses and they have five and a half so our complexes work in similar ways. I have been to St Andrews three times now and have taken my staff there as well. They are an example to a lot of places.

London Golf Club at Brands Hatch. They are purpose built and a lot of thought and consideration has gone into the building with proper eating facilities etc. Many clubs could do to copy this sort of complex.

East Sussex National. They have a purpose built complex which is almost as big as an aircraft hanger rather than a shed. It's superb.

St Andrews, without a doubt. I was told they spent £600,000 on a maintenance facility just for the Old and New Courses. I go there each year while taking an HNC course at Elmwood College.

Gleneagles where everything was set up properly. There was a place for the mechanic to do his stuff and there was plenty of space. Alwoodley is also very good if we are looking for a place nearer home.

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Everybody has seen the sign 'Course Closed.' While it can often be down to the adverse weather it can also be an indication that a golf course needs improvement. Bettina Schrickel, student member of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects (BIGCA) and BIGGA examines this regular occurrence...

1 Course 1 closed



Above: Quality drainage should always be a priority

During the past years, the number of new courses has been rising faster than the number of golfers in many areas. This means that golf clubs now have to compete for members and green fee players and many clubs are having to improve to make themselves more attractive to potential customers.

The demand on the design and condition of golf courses has definitely changed since golf was played on natural Scottish linksland and maintained by grazing sheep. However, there are no rules for the perfect golf course and much depends on the individual golfer, whose opinion can be influenced by subjective reasoning - courses he has played in sunnier climes while on

holiday, or his own playing performance on a particular day.

It is often the greenkeeper who is blamed if the golf course at home does not look as green and beautiful as the courses overseas. Some golfers can't accept that it is not possible to achieve a perfect all-year-round quality of golf course in locations where temperatures can drop below 8°C for several months each year.

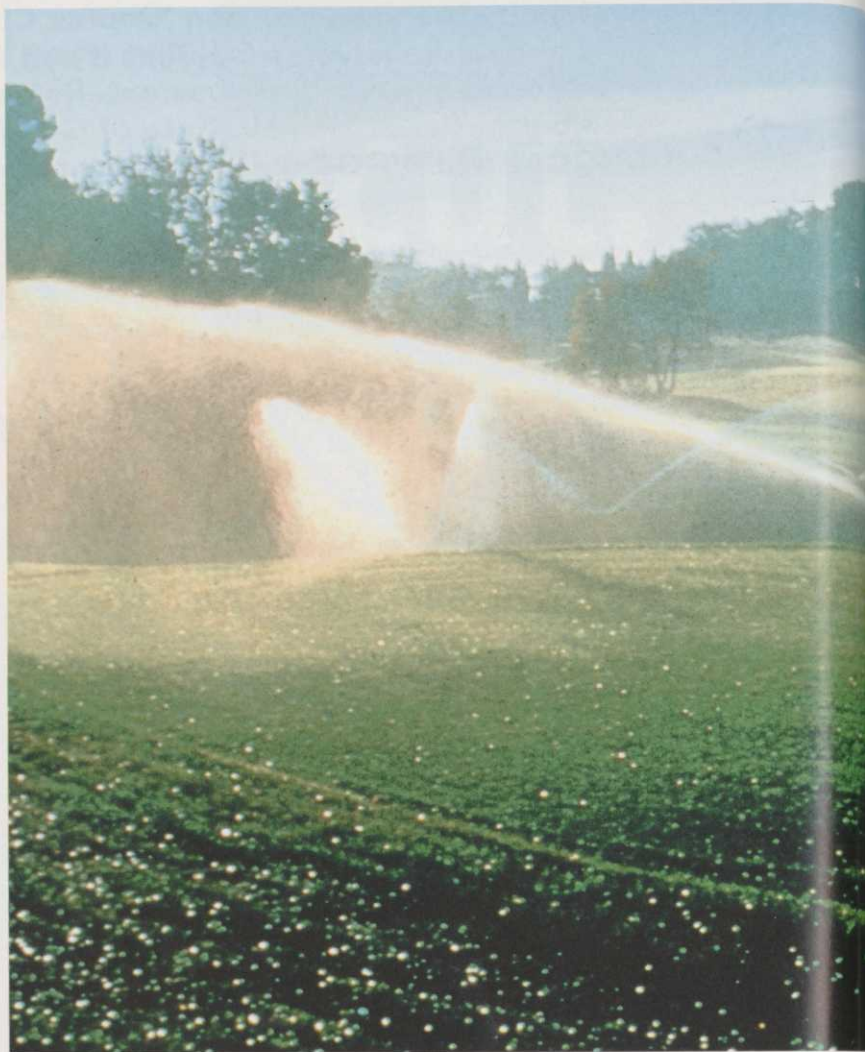
Reasons for improvement

The question may arise why improvements and alterations do become necessary, even though money has already been spent for development and maintenance. A golf course is not a static entity; it is

a dynamic organic complex in a steady process of growth, decline and change, that we can notice over the years. Trees grow and change their sizes, as do the shapes of water edges. Formerly defined shapes and contours of fairways, greens and bunkers blur almost unnoticeably. Diseases and vegetative succession change the quality of the turf. Human factors also change the performance of a golf course.

Since the number of golfers started to increase enormously about 20 years ago, the number of rounds played each year increased as well. It was only in the 1960s that golf courses began to be constructed to specific construction standards. Until that time, greens consisted of

Course closed



Above right:
Irrigation in action

Below: Poor bunker
drainage leads to
problems



soil or humus-based rootzones that were directly applied onto the subsoil.

The recent high volume of play and the replacement of hand mowers with heavier ride-on machines exceeded the capability of such greens. As a result, the greens compacted, the drainage ability and oxygen supply of the soil became insufficient, and the surfaces became spongy. A reduced turfgrass growth, diseases and wet spots are the final problems that can only be solved in the long term by the reconstruction of the whole green complex.

Renovation can also become nec-

essary when flawed maintenance practices have been carried out over an extended period. This can be down to poor irrigation; the use of heavy machinery in sensitive areas; the choice of unsuitable sand grain sizes for top-dressing and the filling of aerification holes and infrequent verticutting and deep aerification.

Compaction of the ground, naturally heavy soil and poor surface water drainage make the installation of an extensive drainage system essential.

Dry areas on the course require an extension or modernisation of the existing irrigation system.

The development of golf clubs and balls from hickory clubs and featheries to Big Berthas and Balata balls caused a significant increase in shot distance. That means that previously demanding golf courses have become too short, because hazards do not come into play anymore, or punish only the weaker golfer. It may be necessary to relocate the hazards or look to add length top the course in certain areas.

Repair work and technical improvement

Repair work and technical improvements do not affect the design of the course and should not interfere with play. Minor repair works, such as the maintenance of drainage and irrigation systems or

the repair of bunker washouts, do not require outside contractors or a special budget, as long as they do not demand special technical skills or a great amount of working hours.

The greenkeeping staff is usually able to carry out minor repair work, and to include it into their maintenance schedule.

Technical improvements, such as major drainage and storm water management works, as well as irrigation renewal or expansion, are usually more time-consuming and require specific technical knowledge. A special budget is therefore necessary to cover the costs for outside contributors and materials.

Renovation

Renovation serves to restore the complete functionality of a course and damage that has been caused by maintenance errors or the effect of wear and tear. Renovation often includes alterations that change the nature of the course or an individual hole. Greens, tees or other features that require improvement are often in such bad condition that an intensive maintenance programme would be ineffective, so that rebuilding is the only solution to achieve a high quality result, lower maintenance costs and to provide enjoyable golf.

When rebuilding a feature, the design should also be adjusted to



modern standards, while it is essential to preserve the harmonious appearance of the entire hole.

Drainage problems are a major issue in golf course renovation. They are just as large a factor in determining the quality of golf courses as the greens. Therefore, architects give priority to the construction of a sufficient drainage system, if the budget is limited, rather than make changes to the design of a hole.

Restoration

More and more historic golf clubs aim for redeveloping the original style of their courses. As we preserve other historic features in the world, we should also respect the historic value of those golf courses that were designed by the great architects of the past, because they document an epoch in the development of golf.

Such golf courses are often masterpieces, of which, unfortunately, the design of the majority has often been altered by less sensitive hands over the years.


A good architect will develop a plan which is coherent with the original style of the course, by analysing objectively the alterations and additions that have been done over the years, and providing design guidelines on how to restore the course to its original state.

Tree thinning

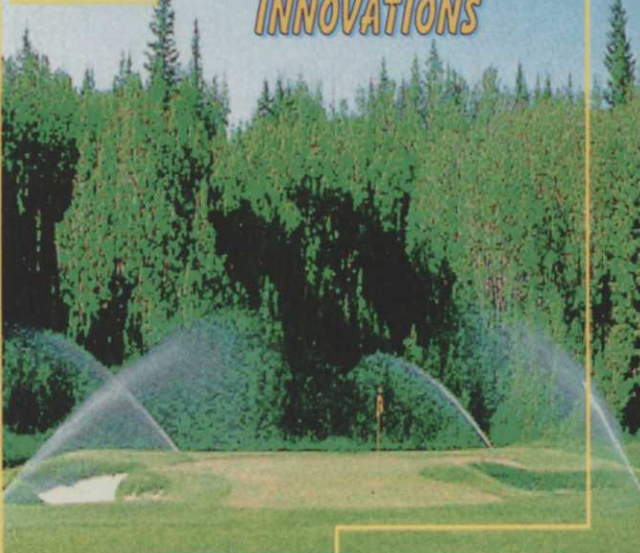
Overgrown courses with insufficient drainage do not allow the ground to be playable soon after heavy rainfall. Providing an extended drainage system is a fundamental step to solving the problem to a certain extent, but it is also necessary to revise the influence on air circulation and sunlight penetration caused by tree cover.


Mature trees are a gift to every golf course. They enhance the appearance of the course, determine its character, and form natural hazards. However, it may become apparent that trees need to be cut down, either because the shadow they cast impairs the growth of the turf, or because the formerly defined character of the hole has been lost due to their growth over the years.

These trees should be selected very carefully. The most sensitive way is to develop a tree cutting plan, in which those trees to be cut or pruned are marked. Not all marked trees should be cut at the same time because sometimes minor changes may lead to results that are greater than expected. Selective thinning of a tree can be preferable to removal in some cases. It is understandable that a tree cutting plan causes great discussion in a green committee's meeting. It might break some golfer's heart to see a beautiful tree go, but if the




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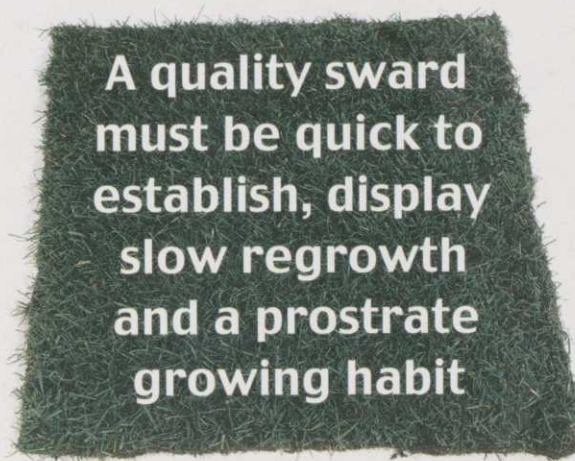



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Right: Fregate Golf Club, France

Below: A detailed architects drawing

purpose and the expected result is explained to him correctly, he will be able to understand and to be supportive.

The role of the golf course architect

The architect has the creative abil-

ity and technical knowledge to provide a golf course that combines interesting play and high aesthetics, that is open for the longest possible playing season and that is easily maintainable. Co-operating with the greenkeeper is very helpful, as he knows his course and members from long term experience.

The architect can assess objectively what improvements should be done with regards to geographic site conditions and the nature of the course. He or she is able to evaluate which problems have the greatest impact, and to identify the best solutions with which to use the available budget most effectively. He will provide the club with a report describing the actual state of the course, an improvement-masterplan, detailed working drawings to site-specific construction standards, and the most effective work schedule.

To ensure a high quality product, it should be agreed that the architect also supervises the construction. A golf course architect can also form a link between green committee and greenkeeping staff.

Work schedule

For financial reasons, and to offer an uninterrupted playing season to club members and green fee golfers, it is essential to keep a course in play while alteration work is carried out. Most golfers will prefer to play a different routing and on temporary tees and greens, rather than not being able to play at all. If there are alterations to be carried out on the entire golf course, it is recommended to work on no more than three holes at a time, and to provide winter greens if the green complex is being rebuilt.

To minimise the intervention, a realistic timetable should be established in which each working stage, the number of staff, and the required materials are listed. To avoid delays,

ensure that appointments with external specialists are made well in advance and that the materials will be ordered sufficiently early to be delivered according to the schedule.

The construction should always be carried out according to recommended construction standards. The quality of the materials should be regularly checked in a soil laboratory during construction.

The maintenance aspect in the design

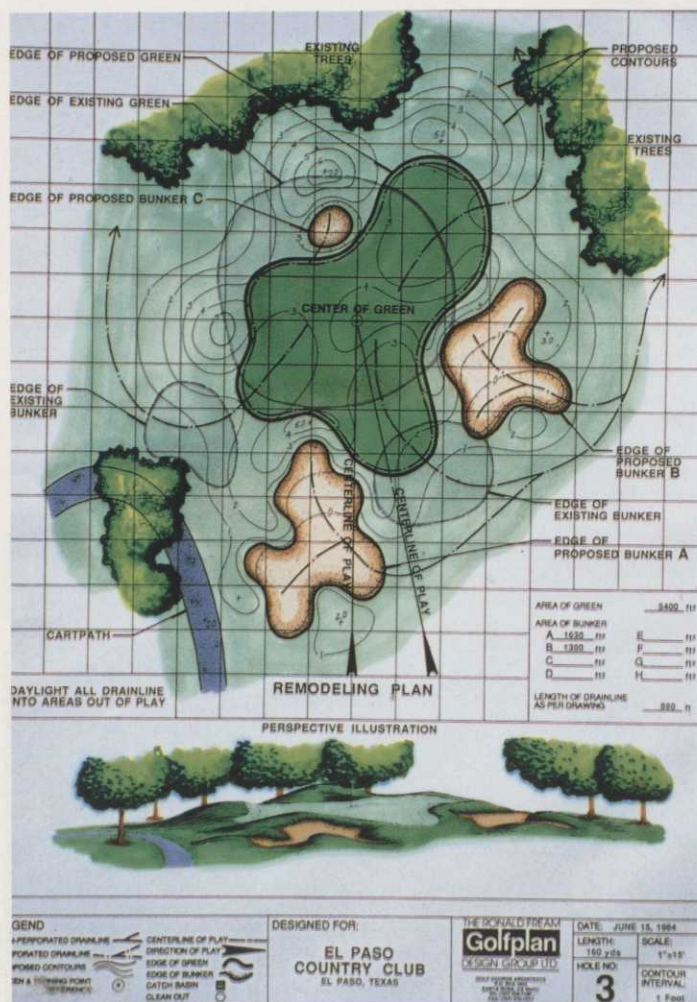
The appearance of a golf course greatly depends on the maintenance quality. I strongly agree with Robert Trent Jones who said: 'We can build the greatest golf courses in the world, but if they are not properly maintained, they are nothing.'

A professional golf course architect develops a design for which he takes the future maintenance budget into consideration and evaluates how much hand labour is suitable.

Steep slopes to be mown with fly mowers should be minimised on golf courses with low maintenance budgets, or be located in rough areas. Replacing sand bunkers or water hazards with grass hollows, rough, trees or other natural features reduces maintenance costs, but should be decided by the architect himself.

I recommend that the architect and the greenkeeper together develop a contour-mowing plan, as it can greatly increase the appearance of the golf course by emphasising the course of fairways or manipulating the perception of the severity of hazards.

The closer the relationship between greenkeeper and architect becomes, and the greater the understanding and respect for one another's knowledge and ability becomes - the sooner we will be able to create a 'course beautiful', and the less we will see the sign 'Course closed'.





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Scott MacCallum slowed Jamie Bennett down long enough to learn about The Grass Roots Trading Company, past, present and future

Onward and upward



GRASS ROOTS
— TRADING COMPANY —

The name Grass Roots is perhaps a bit of a misnomer. Things are so fast moving at the Wokingham-based company, who have just become both a BIGGA Golden Key supporter and co-sponsor of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition along with Amazone, that there is scarcely time for the grass to grow under their feet never mind have a chance to take root.

The day I visited Jamie Bennett, Managing Director of the Grass Roots Trading Company, had just returned from inspecting the premises the company were due to moving into in the first week of this month (March), having spent much of the previous few weeks recruiting new staff for a major company expansion.

"I think we've probably been the most talked about company in the industry over the last few weeks," joked Jamie, the catalyst being a two page recruitment advertisement in the December issue of *Greenkeeper International* asking for applicants for an array of posts, including a veritable army of Business Development Managers, all on attractive salaries with enviable benefits.

"The answer to the question of 'what's happening at Grass Roots?' is the launch of the Genesis range of natural microbial products. That's where we have focused our investment and planning," he revealed.

Grass Roots has linked up with Symbio which has 10 years of experience in the microbiological field.

"They have become the research and development arm while we're concentrating on the sales and marketing for all the products they produce," explained Jamie.

"The Genesis Range is an extensive range of natural products which provides everything a greenkeeper could need and which will assist the microbes we put into the soil to function to their best ability. It is a totally natural approach to turf management."

Warning to his theme Jamie outlined his doomsday scenario.

"I believe that a lot of golf greens and managed turf is on the edge of disaster due to the intense maintenance practices in place combined with the amount of chemical that is presently used and this has pushed grass, and the soil it lives in, right to the limit."

"If I were to take a bacteria count from a domestic lawn and another from a golf green the lawn would be up here and the green down there," he asked as he held one hand at about eyebrow level and the other somewhere around his knees, adding, "When did you last see *Fusarium* on your lawn?"

"In simple terms the natural bacteria in the soil which are there to compete with the disease pathogens have been dramatically reduced by the chemicals which are not selective in what they damage."

However, Jamie feels that changes are taking place with legislation forcing turf managers to look at different ways of working - "We've lost 20% of our chemicals in the last two years and there will be a snowball effect" - and people are becoming a lot more socially conscious about the environment and recycling things."

Jamie is genuinely excited about the prospects for Genesis and the direction in which Grass Roots are now heading.

"In 18 months time we won't be selling anything but Genesis," he predicts.

Each of the 18 Business Development Managers, who include some extremely well known Course Managers, have been equipped with a car, mobile phone, laptop and modem so that they can download information from head office.

"They all being trained in Business Development and information technology," said Jamie who has also employed a team of five in the accounts department, an operations team also of five as well as a manufacturing team.

The company has come a long way since it was set up in Jamie's home in November '94.

"It was a family orientated business involving my mother, brother and wife while my other brother set up a sister company in the Midlands," recalled Jamie.

He had arrived in this particular

industry after having owned his own telecommunications company which he sold, before investing in the property market...in March '89 which, with painful hindsight, was exactly the worst time to make such a move.

"It was the peak of the property market and the start of the recession and within 18 months I'd lost everything."

"I think in a way that's what drives me, I've had it all and then not had it all and I'll tell which I like better. I suppose my motivation comes from fear, not wanting to be there again, while the lesson I've learned is not to put all your eggs in one basket."

Grass Roots was born - or should it be seeded? - through Jamie's desire to get into the leisure industry which he'd highlighted as a growth industry.

"I'd read the R&A report and I'd seen all these golf courses being built and saw it as a developing market," he explained, coupling this objective reasoning with his general love of sports. "I was a physical training instructor, swam for Great Britain and played rugby for the county."

He then set about finding out more about the industry and discovered that he genuinely liked greenkeepers and their attitude to their work.

"It is totally different from the telecommunications industry. Here you can make 100 calls and get 100 appointments. You do that in telecommunications and you'll get one appointment."

Having earmarked golf as the area in which he would make his business comeback Jamie crossed the pond to see how the Americans operated.

"Superintendents in the States make many more demands on their suppliers. If something goes wrong here we used to be fairly laid back about it - if an order didn't come for a week or so it didn't really seem the supplier would lose business over it."

Jamie set about introducing some of the things he'd learned in the States as well as others from the telecommunications industry.

"I wanted to make greenkeepers realise they could have a much better service and should expect much better."

As its name suggests Grass Roots



Above: Jamie Bennett,
Managing Director, Grass
Roots Trading Company

Below: Stella Inglethorpe,
Technical Director, Grass
Roots Trading Company





Above: The Genesis Sales Team take delivery of their Honda fleet, aiding in Grass Roots' guaranteed 48 hour order turnaround

Trading Company was initially a trading company.

"We introduced a product base and then when a customer asked for a specific product we'd set up the deal. We'd source the product, ring four or five companies to get the best price then give a definite time for it to be delivered. If it didn't arrive the customer would get a discount for every day that it was late," explained Jamie.

"Over a period of a year we started with 800 products but now we have 18,000 in our product range which, on the whole, we can supply within 48 hours."

As you can imagine, with over 1200 suppliers, it is an administration headache.

"We have a financial controller who came from a company which turned over £60 million. We turn over a fraction of that but there is more paper work with us. It is an administration nightmare but it set us up in business."

Among the other innovative approaches taken by Grass Roots was to operate some unusual business hours.

"We were the first company to operate the same hours as the greenkeeper and we do more business between 7 and 9 in the morning than in the rest of the day."

To reinforce the benefits of the "one-stop shop" philosophy employed by Grass Roots they asked a greenkeeper to note how much time he spent talking to suppliers on the phone, chasing products, making

enquiries and distributor meetings.

"Over a six month period he spent over 180 hours doing this which, worked out over a year, relates to a month and a half worth of work.

"Clubs are under enough pressure as it is without this additional burden and they know that if they phone us we can get them any product they need, in the time that they need it."

As well as products Grass Roots also supply manpower and this was particularly vital to one club a couple of years ago.

"Just before a big competition the greenkeeping staff went out for a meal and all came down with food poisoning. I got a call, put a team together and we set the course up and sorted everything out," recalled Jamie.

Having operated from the Bennett home, and a old pig farm which was used for storage, Grass Roots moved to new premises in April '96 on an industrial estate in Finchampstead, near Wokingham. Such has been the rapid rate of growth these have become overly cramped for the company's latest expansion hence the need for more new premises.

"We smashed our first year target by 300% and achieved our first three years of objectives in the first 18 months. Our success was recognised by winning the Lloyd's Bank Small Business of the Year Award of which we were very proud!"

The company always has and will continue to spend a significant proportion of its marketing budget on hospitality events.

"Reps from other companies were very well known by their customers - they'd become friends, so it was difficult to pull customers from them.

"So we put on go-karting events, five-a-side football competitions, take them to top sporting events anything just to get to know our customers better," he said.

They also sponsor many of the local BIGGA Section events and run educational seminars free of charge.

"This will continue and each of our Business Development Managers will have a budget to spend on market relations in their area."

The company also made strides when it took on Standard Golf at the beginning of last year.

"While were were predominately South East based, Standard Golf were national and had a data base of 2700 golf clubs.

Standard Golf products are being used as incentives to companies who take on the Genesis products.

"We will go into a golf club and take soil, tissue and water analysis and find out everything we need to know. Then we'll put together a programme in conjunction with the greenkeeper using the Genesis range which are all natural products and totally beneficial to everything else you're trying to do in the soil. The package is bespoke and we've priced it so that it will save the club money. Having agreed a programme we will guarantee results from the initial objectives having mutually agreed the quantitative criteria"

Jamie sees this as the springboard to Grass Root's next phase of development.

"We are clear about where we intend to go as a company. In 2002 we intend to float the company and within that time we will have developed the Genesis range from which is currently about 62 products to around 200. We know exactly what we need in that range and we know in which areas to invest money in research and development to achieve that.

"We want to venture into Europe and then maybe global," said Jamie, who doesn't rule out the purchase of other companies to assist in this expansion.

It may be that they will sit down and think of a more appropriate company name. "Fast Track" perhaps...



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Continuing the research into the cultural control of earthworm activity, Dr Stephen Baker & Daniel Binns of the STRI, conclude their studies with their most recent findings...

Worm food

In the February 1999 issue of Greenkeeper International we reviewed recent research work at the STRI on the effectiveness of chemical control in tackling earthworm casting. To an extent chemical treatments are a last resort and the number of materials that can be used has been substantially reduced, a trend which is likely to continue as pesticide legislation becomes more restrictive.

An alternative to the use of wormkillers or lumbricides is cultural control. Environmental manipulation to reduce earthworm activity has of course been carried out for many years and is well documented in early STRI publications from the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's. As lumbricides become less persistent and increased application frequency makes earthworm control more costly, our research (funded by the R&A) has increasingly looked at the ecology of earthworm populations and cultural control methods.

Earthworm Populations

Knowledge of the distribution of earthworm species on golf courses is important if we are to gain an understanding of how environmental factors and management practices affect earthworm populations. Table 1 shows species identified from over 8000 earthworms collected from 59 sites at 32 golf courses throughout Britain in a joint study carried out by the STRI and the University of Lancaster. It is an unfortunate fact that the three earthworm species that are most closely associated with casting

activity are by far the most abundant species on UK golf courses. *Aporrectodea longa* is a large, lightly pigmented earthworm, with adults 90-170 mm in length. It constructs permanent burrow systems to a depth of about 0.5 m and is common in gardens, pastures and cultivated soils.

Lumbricus terrestris is another large earthworm, brown to purplish red above but pale beneath with a flattened, paddle-shaped tail. This is the species that is regularly seen on the surface on mild, moist nights when it emerges either to forage for plant material or for reproduction.

Aporrectodea caliginosa can be both variable in colouration and size. Small individuals are common in the upper 70 mm of the soil from where they can produce some cast-

ing, but it is the larger, deeper burrowing "nocturna" form that is associated with large surface casts.

In our survey, significantly higher rates of casting were recorded on areas with higher soil pH, higher soil moisture content and more vigorous grass growth.

These relationships suggest that manipulation of pH, food supply and soil moisture content can all be used as mechanisms to reduce earthworm populations, particularly of casting species.

Soil Acidity

Two of the main casting species, *A. longa* and *A. caliginosa* are intolerant of acid conditions and the use of acidifying fertilisers has long been known to reduce casting activity. On some courses it may be appropriate to reduce soil pH using

FIG 1. Rates of casting in relation to mowing treatments with return and removal of clippings (the vertical bars show the least significant difference).

Species	Percentage of all earthworms collected	Percentage of samples containing species
<i>Aporrectodea longa</i>	39	98
<i>Lumbricus terrestris</i>	22	98
<i>Aporrectodea caliginosa</i>	26	88
<i>Allolobophora chlorotica</i>	3	56
<i>Aporrectodea rosea</i>	3	54
<i>Octolasion cyaneum</i>	3	42
<i>Lumbricus rubellus</i>	2	27
<i>Lumbricus festivus</i>	2	24
<i>Lumbricus castaneus</i>	<1	10
<i>Dendrodrilus rubidus</i>	<1	5
<i>Aporrectodea icterica</i>	<1	3
<i>Octolasion tyrtaeum tyrtaeum</i>	<1	2
<i>Satchellius mammalis</i>	<1	2

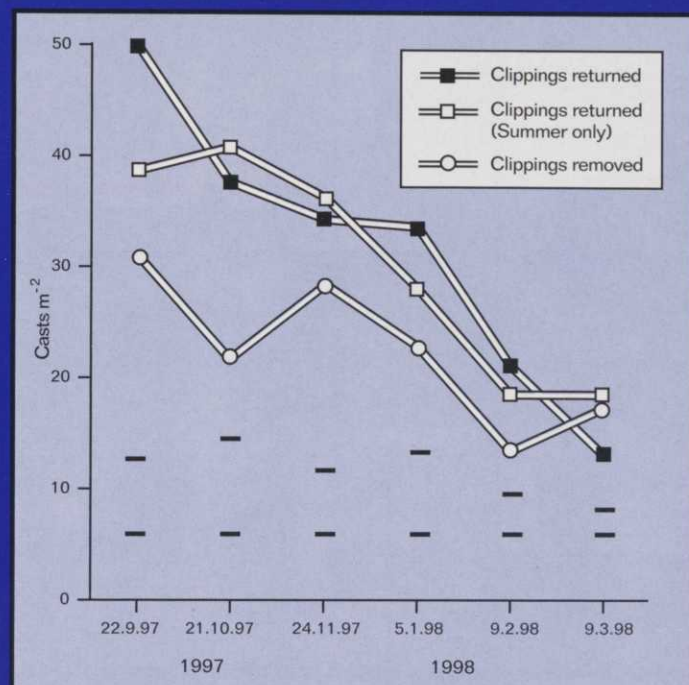
sulphur based compounds and in a previous article in Greenkeeper International initial trials with sulphur and aluminium sulphate were discussed. In this work (on a sandy clay loam soil with an initial pH of 5.7) a total application of 65 g/m² of sulphur and 360 g/m² Of aluminium sulphate applied in up to four dressings was sufficient to reduce casting by 50%. In our most recently reported work, carried out on a clay loam soil, 40 g/m² Of sulphur, applied as an aqueous suspension, reduced the pH of the surface 25 mm from 5.8 to 5.2 and the pH at the 25-75 mm depth fell from 6.7 to 6.4. Casting was substantially reduced by sulphur and one year after the initial application, rates of casting relative to the untreated turf were 48% and 36% respectively for total sulphur applications of 20 g/m² and 40 g/m².

The use of sulphur is not without its risks and problems of scorch were recorded when sulphur was applied as two dressings of 20 g/m². In addition over acidity may in the long term impair healthy grass growth. In consequence a series of trials have been established this autumn at eight separate sites to help us predict with greater certainty, the effects of sulphur on a wide range of soil types.

Mowing Practices

All animals need food and earthworms are no different, with the organic matter produced by golf course grasses seemingly providing delicious fare. If the food supply is reduced the size of the earthworm community that can be supported is also reduced and in management terms this can be achieved by collecting clippings and disposal away from the main playing areas on the course.

Organic matter production, even on relatively infertile golf course soils, may amount to 0.5-1.0 tonnes per hectare dry weight per year and this is a considerable amount of material to be collected and disposed of. We have therefore been looking at the timing of clipping removal to see how this affects



casting rates. We have considered three possibilities; (a) letting clippings fly all year; (b) boxing off all clippings; (c) an intermediate treatment whereby clippings are removed during the spring and autumn, when earthworms are most active, but allowed to fly in the summer when earthworms are dormant, especially in very dry conditions. This latter strategy would in theory substantially reduce the amount of clippings needing disposal but still allow some nutrient recycling associated with the breakdown of mown leaf tissue.

This trial started in October 1996 on fairway type turf mown at 13 mm growing on a sandy clay loam soil with a pH of 5.7. Results for the main period of casting from September 1997 to March 1998 are shown in Fig. 1. Apart from March 1998, when casting activity had already slowed down, the boxing off of clippings consistently reduced the rate of casting, by an average of nearly 30% over the whole year. Selective removal of clippings in the spring and autumn only brought about a significant reduction in casting on one occasion.

Unfortunately, it would therefore appear that the overall productivity of organic material is more important than the time when clippings

are added or removed from the surface.

Removal of clippings means that nutrient cycling is reduced so we included light fertiliser dressings of 25 and 50 kilogrammes per hectare per year of nitrogen in the experiment (applied as two dressing in the spring and summer). This compensated for an estimated loss of about 30-45 kg/ha per year of nitrogen through clipping removal. Ammonium sulphate was used because of its acidifying effect, which as we have seen earlier can help reduce earthworm activity. The use of ammonium sulphate at 50 kg/ha per year reduced casting by 26% when averaged over all mowing regimes. However when comparison is made of the use of 50 kg/ha per year of ammonium sulphate on turf where the clippings are removed against turf with no acidifying fertiliser and clippings returned the reduction in casting was 48%. Some care is needed in this policy as acidification can go too far, but adjustment of mowing regimes and fertiliser practices will certainly influence casting actively. It may not be practical to remove clippings on all parts of the course but it should be considered where possible for more sensitive areas such as landing zones and approaches, as well as tees and greens.

Soil moisture content

Earthworm casting falls rapidly in dry conditions but at the same time earthworms have considerable ability to survive drought, either moving into moister soil lower in the profile, by curling up in a mucus lined chamber or by ceasing feeding and existing in a dormant state. Our work has shown that wet areas on a golf course have higher earthworm populations.

Furthermore, the effects of casting are probably more severe in wet areas because the cast soil is more easily smeared. In consequence improved drainage may reduce the effects of casting problems.

Turf needs at least moderate rainfall or supplementary irrigation for its survival and it is unlikely that moisture content is one of the main factors limiting the presence of earthworms on golf courses.

However the consequence of factors such as fairway irrigation in areas with potentially high earthworm populations must be considered because of the twin effects of higher moisture contents and greater organic matter production. Both properties are associated with increased earthworm populations and casting. More research work in this area is required.

The outlook

In the absence of persistent pesticide materials such as chlordane (now withdrawn from use) no single factor is going to bring about total control of earthworm casting. Indeed it is highly unlikely that even in combination the good management practices discussed above can bring about a complete cessation of casting. However it should be possible to bring about reasonable suppression of casting using cultural control techniques, so that only the worst areas on the course need pesticide applications for casting control.

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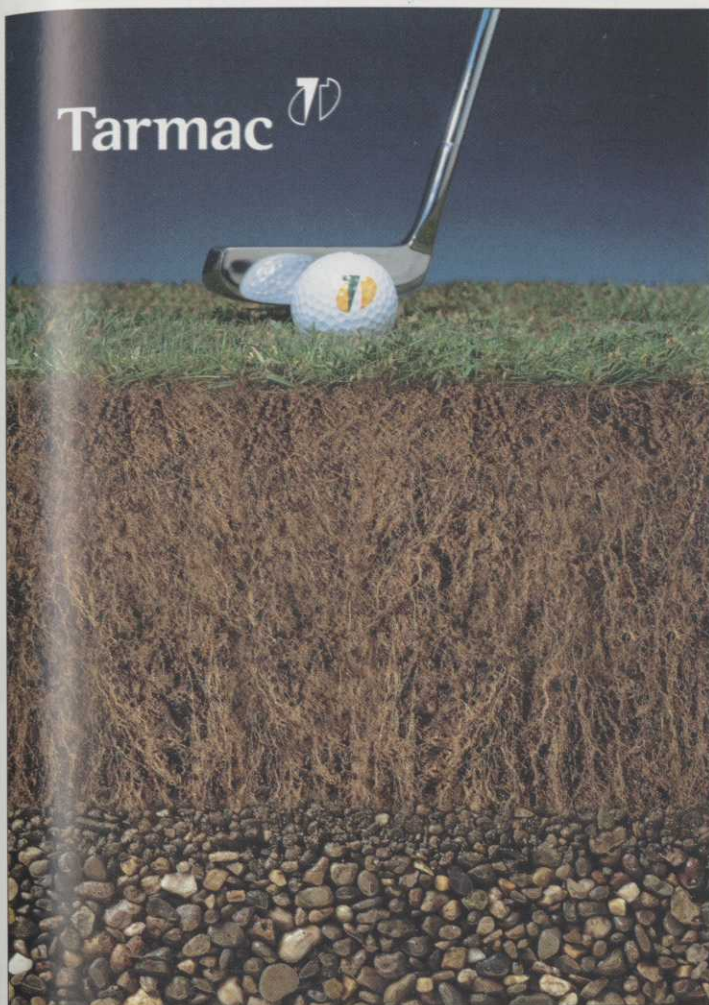
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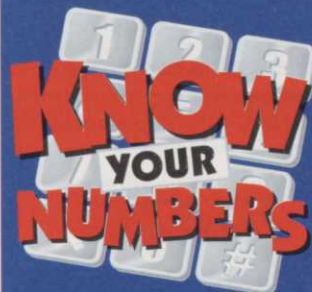
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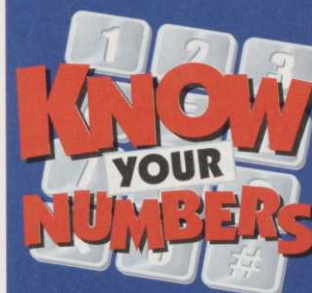
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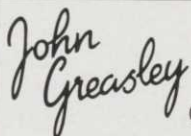
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Position

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Entry forms and full details will be sent to nominees by return. You may photocopy this form.



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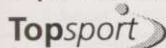
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Feature listing from March '97

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 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, Ramsdale 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



Expand your horizons



Over the past few months there has been a lot of discussion about education, partly triggered off by the extraordinary decision by the EGU to withdraw its funding for the GTC. I hope by the time you read these notes much will have been resolved in this area.

What is needed, is for the GTC to become a strong independent body, properly constituted and with the constituent bodies including BIGGA working in harmony and effectively, to take the training of greenkeepers to higher levels. The crisis caused by the EGU presents us all with the opportunity to do just that. The GTC has made great strides in implementing N/SVQs, which is the government based education initiative and one which we must support for the good of golf.

It's worth just taking a look at achievements made by greenkeepers in the N/SVQs. We now have over 1000 each year achieving at Craft Level 2, based on doing the tasks required to maintain the golf course. There are 534 registered on Levels 3 and 4, with over 1000 already achieved at Level 3 who are looking to go on to Level 4. This includes

over 100 Assessors with D32 - 33 qualifications. Not bad, for what one gentleman recently referred to us as just grass cutters.

Education like all structures must have a sound foundation and N/SVQs provide that foundation. Some will say there is not enough technical training, but what is wrong with HNC, which can be taken on a distance learning programme. Also, BIGGA has a big part to play at this level

through its Management Courses, Conference and Seminars, and if you wish to go for the highest level why not enroll for the Master Greenkeeper Certificate. There are 104 studying at different stages, with 20 having gained their Certificates. BIGGA Management Courses at Aldwark and out in the regions are on average taken up by around 400 each year. If you wish to have information on the 1999 - 2000 courses they will be ready in May, so write or phone Ken or Sami to be put on the mailing list.

Education today is a far cry from my younger days and covers all areas from trainees to Course Managers, so I get a bit annoyed with anyone who sees certificates of attendance better than certificates of achievement. Greenkeepers of today are better equipped to deal with modern demands, and much of this is down to better education. I can only applaud the high standard of golf courses which are being presented for the golfers, sometimes under pressure, and maybe we need to try and educate club management, and in particular the Green Chairman, so that they understand a little more

about the management of golf courses. The STRI, in conjunction with BIGGA, runs just such a workshop at BTME every year. It would be interesting to hear the views from anyone who attended.

I am not going to write too much about the BTME week because this will be covered by others, but I would just like to say that both the Conference and Exhibition was better than ever. We keep saying this but it's true! I would personally like to thank first, all our staff who worked so hard and just as important kept smiling. The organisation was first class.

I don't like to pick out individuals but I feel I must mention Ken, who put the whole education programme together for the entire week, only to fall ill at the last minute and so was unable to see the fruits of his labour. I would also like to thank all the traders for their support, along with all the helpers. It was a great week! Last but not least, thanks to all the members for coming along and making it such a success.

If you remember last month I talked about the value of BIGGA membership. I have just saved myself £40 on car insurance, for myself and Marion by using the Association's insurers, and you can all do the same!

Gordon Child

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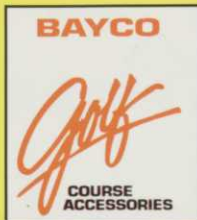
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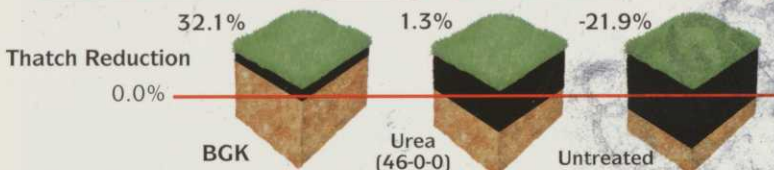
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