

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, Ramside Hall GC, Gang Mowers, Hayter International report, Irrigation Systems

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

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

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



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