

Plenty of birdies at John O'Gaunt

Stephen Thompson, of John O'Gaunt Golf Club, who was featured in the magazine three years ago installing bird boxes on the course, has since seen them well used.

"The 'A' frame box was used almost straight away by Barn Owls but when it was checked later it the year two dead chicks were found," recalled Stephen.

"In the second year when it was checked it was just eggs that were found. Then last year Kestrels nested in it and raised three young and again this year Kestrels used it and raised four young."

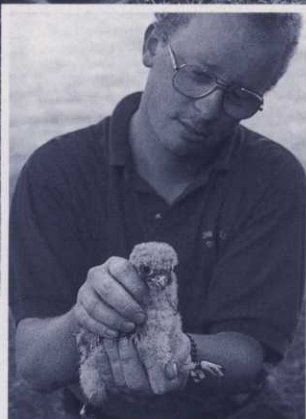
Ironically the open fronted box which was designed for Kestrels was not used for the first two years except for squirrels and in the third year in was used by Jackdaws and a Stock Dove. This year it has remained empty.

"We're aiming this winter to put up more boxes for some other birds that are to be found at John O'Gaunt like the Blue Tit, Great Tit, Robin and Spotter Flycatcher.

"Peter Wilkinson, from Birdlife International, and I took a walk round both courses last year with the intention of finding suitable places for nest boxes and compiled a list of suitable sites and the number of boxes required," said Stephen who does a regular article in the club newsletter on the birds and wildlife on the course.



"There has been a lot of interest in my articles from members who say they read them every month and often ask questions and report sightings to me."



A Hawkhurst retirement

Rex Baldock, 65, who has been the Head Greenkeeper at Hawkhurst since the course opened in 1968, has retired.

Rex started with the club two years before it opened when work first began to create a golf course at Hawkhurst.

He has been so dedicated to what he calls his as his personal garden, that back in the early days of the club, he could often be seen on his hands and knees weeding the greens. And when there was a Sprinkler and Watering Restrictions in the summer of 1976, the then secretary of the Kent Golfing Union wrote to the club congratulating the green staff on the magnificent greens, which, he stated, "were the best he had played on all summer".

On receiving this accolade Rex was asked how he had managed to keep

the greens in such good order. It turned out that unbeknown to anyone, he had gone out each night after midnight and hand watered the greens with a watering can commenting, "I'm not going to let the buggers spoil my greens."

Rex's retirement was marked with a Testimonial Competition, and presentation of cheques by the club's General Manager, Brian Morrison, and Veterans' Captain, Les Dadsell.

Sadly Rex's retirement has been totally overshadowed by the recent loss of his wife Naomi (known to most as Pat). He has two sons Philip and Stephen and a daughter Rachel.

He now intends to spend his time visiting relations at home and abroad and, of course, tending his own garden.



DTI support for overseas exhibitors

Through British Trade International, the ABA has been offered financial support from the DTI under the SESA programme (Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad) for UK companies to exhibit at the GCSAA Trade Show in New Orleans 18-20 February 2000.

More than 700 exhibits will be in place for the annual GCSAA trade show, the largest of its kind in the

world. From blowers to drainage systems, to mowers and utility vehicles - everything to oversee the operation of a golf course.

To be eligible for the grant companies must be UK based and exhibiting goods and services of UK origin.

● Companies can claim back 60% of expenditure on stand space and stand construction up to a total of £2,300.

● A free First Time Exhibitors Package is available to all companies exhibiting with DTI support for the very first time in any market.

Further information and grant application forms are available from the ABA. Deadline for receipt of grant applications 15 November 1999. Tel: 01733 371381

Oliver Seeds invest in the future with new award

Oliver Seeds has been awarded 'Investor in People' accreditation after fulfilling the scheme, a comprehensive evaluation of its business and employee training and development programme.

The company currently employs 17 at its Lincoln head office and some 70 agents operating throughout the UK.

"Investor in People accreditation is excellent for the whole company and an important stage in its evolution. Such development is vital if we are to keep ahead of our competitors and for customers to be assured they are working with a professional company with personnel who are fully trained in responding to the needs and issues of their business," said Roger Peacock, Amenity Product Manager, who spearheaded the successful application for Investor in People.

ESGA and AFAG join forces to form new Euro association

The European Society of Golf Course Architects (ESGA) and the Association Francaise des Architectes de Golf (AFAG) met in Paris on July 10, and decided to merge into one association.

The legalities of this merger are presently being drafted and the new organisation is expected to be operational by the Autumn of 1999.

The Association will group 46 members representing eleven countries with first office in Vienna and will be called the "European Association of Golf Course Architects" (EAGA).

A previous attempt to amalgamate with the British Institute of Golf Course Architects (BIGCA) failed earlier this year, in March.

The EAGA is a truly European Association and will not pretend or have the presumption to dictate style. It will, however, promote high standards of construction and safety, especially in conjunction with the ever increasing legislation caused by escalating ecological constraints coupled with project viability.

The EAGA will maintain the strict entry requirements needed to join as a full member but will encourage a larger and more representative association by asking new members to join among the qualified architects operating in Europe which will hopefully and eventually also include the British Institute (BIGCA).