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April 2000

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by May 5, 2000

Regulars

News

Pages 7, 8, 9 and 10

12 Letters

15 The Learning Experience

Heather Mackinnon, Head Groundsman at Murrayfield and a former greenkeeper, looks at some of the differences between the two jobs

18 Education

Ken Richardson promotes this year's Essay Competition; gives some help to people who may have missed out on this year's Learning Experience, in association with Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, and advises on on the job training

20 Membership Update

20 Finance File

42-48 Around the Green

53 Your money or your life

Brin Bendon gives some useful advice when it comes to negotiating salaries

80 Turning a blind eye

Sandy McDivot looks at some of the sneaky methods some players use to get round the rules

82 Features listing

Helping you track down some of Greenkeeper International's previous articles

82 As I see it...

National Chairman, Elliott Small, reports from his trips to the respective Show and Conferences in America and Canada



82 As I see it...

Greenkeeper

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Reader Reply Card

Advertiser	Ad ref	Page
AF Trenchers	203	37
Allen Power	126	51
Allett Mowers	55	29
Amenity Land Svcs	408	13
Amenity Technology	431	84
Arco	1	49
Aventis	59	19, 67
Barenbrug UK Ltd	172	35
Bernhard & Co	535	65
Driving Force Leisure	624	13
Eagle Promotions	549	17
Envigro	582	83
Etesia	644	22
Even Products	609	58
Evergreens UK	526	46
Flowtronex	635	55
Gardenland Growers	651	47
Golf Car UK Ltd	583	31
Golf Turf International	655	27
Green Releaf	563	52
Greensward	312	32
Heron Electric	637	61
Humate International	656	48
Intergrate	657	68
ISS Aquaturf	32	61
John Deere	103	21
Kubota	86	6
Lely UK	61	44-45
Logic Irrigation	545	62
Marlwood	501	42-43
Motorkov	658	31
North Staffs Irrigation	217	62
Ocmis Irrigation	360	61
Par 4 Irrigation	27	51
Par Aide Equipment	642	35
Rainbird	443	56
Rigby Taylor	127	2, 5, 27, 51
Rufford Soil	5	37
Scotts/Levington	161	11
Slazenger	2	71
Symbio	516	37
Textron	4	14
Tonick Watering	503	59
A F Trenchers	203	37
Weed Free	504	35
Ken White Signs	13	46
Whitemoss Amenities	606	41



72 Win £50 with our Buyers' Guide quiz

No news is bad news

Elsewhere in this issue, if you have not already done so, you can become involved in the great Daily Telegraph debate which revolves around an assertion from a well known golf writer that golf course standards have fallen over the last 20 years.

Overall the piece was a positive one about the wonderful work being carried out at Temple Golf Club, near Maidenhead, the current holder of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone Ground Care and Grass Roots, but it was this one statement which has put the cat among the pigeons.

Part of my job within the Association is to encourage journalists to write about greenkeeping matters and to raise the profile of the profession to the wider golfing public. In doing so it can lead to things appearing in the press which we don't altogether agree with. This happens in all walks of life and you have to learn to live with it so you can also enjoy the benefits you get from good publicity which is also generated.

The alternative is to try to manipulate the media and steer the press to write what we want them to write. This rarely succeeds. Look at the trouble the Government gets into in its supposed attempts, through Alistair Campbell, to dictate what the media writes or broadcasts.

It is far better that the subject is carried, warts and all, than be ignored totally because what tends to happen is that even negative comments ignite a lot of more positive feedback which is ultimately to everyone's benefit.

I do know that the Daily Telegraph received a load of mail after the piece appeared. They may not have appeared in the letters' pages, but I know that the response impressed the powers-that-be on the Telegraph Sports Desk and I'm assured that we will be seeing more greenkeeping issues being covered in the forthcoming weeks and months... hopefully highlighting the great work that is being done out on the nation's golf courses to keep on top of the modern stresses and strains.

I also know that the article in question is currently on noticeboards up and down the length and breadth of the country and you may be tackled about it by members.

In most cases it shouldn't be something to worry about. Take it as an opportunity to pass on some words of wisdom to individuals or groups who may then educate some of the other members in the club.

It may be a catalyst for Open Nights or Workshops at clubs which have never previously held such occasions and it will give many a chance for the first time to see what a great job is done by the nation's greenkeepers.

If that does happen and relationships are improved between greenstaff and golf club members how much better it will be all round.

We will then perhaps look back at The Daily Telegraph article and see that out of some negative comments a real positive advance has been made.

Editor:
Scott MacCallum



Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

Features

- 23 Coast to Coast**
Scott MacCallum visits Fortrose & Rosemarkie, a golf course with water on three sides which also boasts some flipped friends
- 28 Off the Beaten Track**
Roland Taylor looks at the latest ATVs and utility vehicles on the market.
- 33 Fields of Dreams**
David Rhodes looks at the current advances in seed breeding
- 36 Wonder Web**
BIGGA's newly revamped Website is well worth a visit
- 39 Questions and Answers**
A recent Daily Telegraph article created quite a stir. Read it and make up your own mind
- 50 Once in a Lifetime**
Arne van Amerongen describes his work on a course where nose bleeds are an occupational hazard
- 57 Cruise Control**
Kevin Shaw looks at the latest aids to assist irrigation
- 63 Next Time Around**
Kerran Daly turned dramatist to win the Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager category in last year's Essay Competition. Tom Stoppard should be becoming a little uneasy
- 69 A Gem of a Company**
BIGGA's latest Golden Key Supporter, Gem Professional, is a company long in history with a bright future ahead of it



23 Coast to Coast
This month, our front cover features Fortrose and Rosemarkie GC



28 Off the Beaten Track



50 Once in a Lifetime

activate

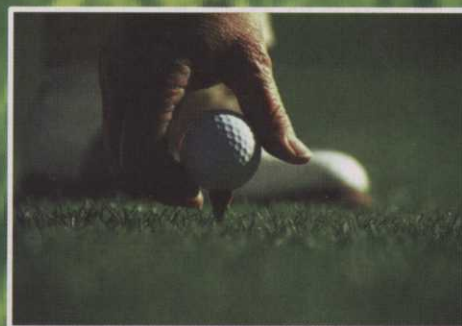
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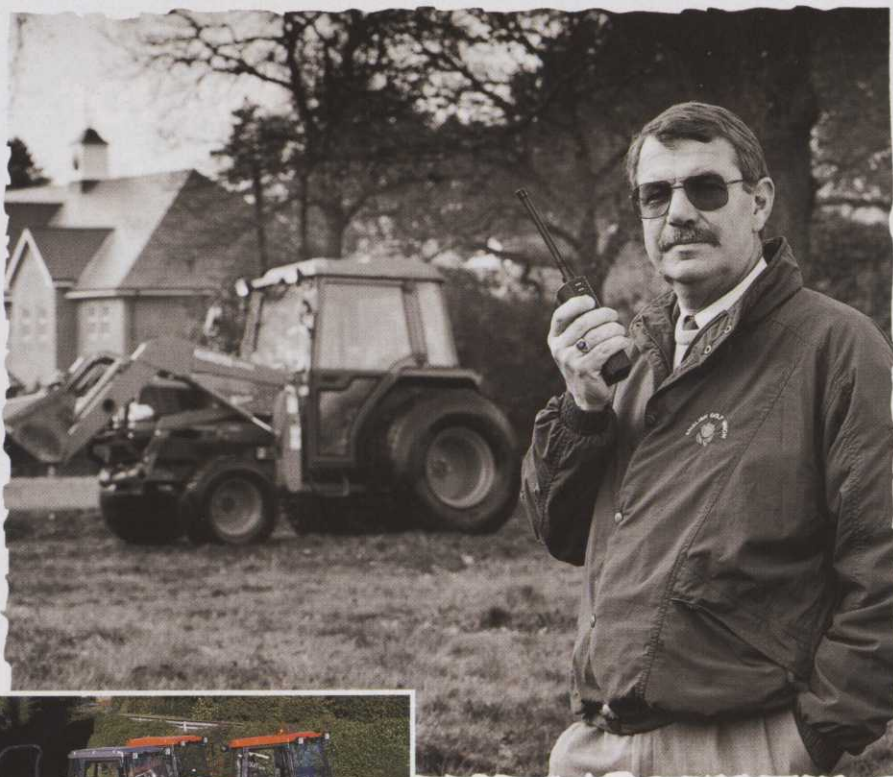
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– Peter Wisbey, Courses Manager,
The National Golf Centre, Woodhall Spa



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Big payout to dismissed Head GK

A golf club has paid out the equivalent of a year's salary to the Head Greenkeeper who was dismissed by the Club Captain without prior warning.

Sam Morrison, a past Scottish Chairman, returned from a two week holiday just before Bothwell Castle Golf Club's AGM and was dismissed by the new Captain on the following Monday with the words, "I don't think you're the man to take us forward."

"The AGM had been fairly uneventful. There were a few little things raised about the course, but nothing more than you would expect at an AGM," explained Sam.

"Three greens had gone a bit sour in October with thatch but the STRI had looked at them and agreed that my approach was correct," he revealed.

"However the new Captain had called a meeting of all Conveners immediately after the AGM and announced that he was going to dismiss me the following day. It caused uproar and the Greens' Convener resigned," he said.

The Captain had presented Sam with a draft settlement on that morning and made him a tax free offer to walk out of the door but Sam refused to accept and took a couple of days off to enable him to consult lawyers.

"I went home and immediately called the BIGGA Legal Helpline and explained what had happened. I was told I had a 99.9% chance of winning a case if I went to tribunal but the lawyer was not sure what I could be expect to win in compensation, so contacted a Scottish law firm on my behalf," said Sam, who prior to joining Bothwell Castle two years ago had been Head Greenkeeper at Royal Aberdeen.



Above: Sam Morrison

"My son, who is also a Head Greenkeeper, and I visited the law firm and the lawyer worked out what I could expect to receive from a tribunal. We left absolutely shattered because it was less than I had been offered at the original meeting with the Captain."

Sam had agreed to meet with the Captain on the Wednesday evening but prior to that meeting his Greens' Convener, Andrew Braidwood, a respected local businessman, advised him not to accept the Captain's offer.

"He said it was his first offer and that I should argue for more. That made me feel better and more valued. He also suggested that I take someone with me into the meeting and I called Scottish Regional Administrator, Peter

Boyd, and, at short notice, he agreed to come along.

"His presence made me feel better and I believe unsettled the Captain. He asked Peter if he was going to say anything. Peter said he wasn't but that he would be taking notes on my behalf," said Sam.

"I said that the original offer was not enough because of the loss of face and the damage to my reputation not to mention the fact that the likelihood would be that I would have to move house. I asked for a year's wages and after further discussions it was agreed I would receive one year's nett salary, plus a month's pay, plus all my pension contributions paid in full," said Sam.

Since being dismissed Sam has been heartened by the number of calls he's received from Bothwell Castle members who have been extremely supportive towards him.

"They are appalled about what has happened and the fact that so much of their money has been spent dismissing me. Not to mention the damage that has been done to Bothwell Castle's reputation," said Sam.

Fortunately Sam has been given a job by two old friends, Alex Cruickshanks and David Happel, partners in Daval Products, and he has been selling industrial products and clothing to local golf clubs.

"I am extremely grateful to Alex and David for giving me this opportunity and I am enjoying the work. I would also like to express my thanks to the Bothwell Castle members for their support and in particular to Andrew Braidwood for all his help and advice," said Sam.

Mark takes stock of his new role



Mark Ellis, for the past eight years Course Manager at Mentmore Golf and Country Club, has moved to a similar role with nearby Stocks Golf and Country Club, in Hertfordshire.

"In my time at Mentmore I have seen the two courses develop from the grow in to full maturity and have been involved in all aspects of the evolution. I felt that it was time for me to move on and I believe my new position will be an exciting and demanding one," said Mark, who is a regular member of the BIGGA Greenkeeper Support Teams at The Open at at Wentworth for the Volvo PGA Championship.

GreenLink to distribute GreenReleaf

Following the world-wide acquisition by Milliken Chemical of the marketing & distribution rights for the Green-Releaf product range, GreenLink International Ltd has been appointed the exclusive UK and European distributor.

GreenLink International Ltd is a new company specifically formed to introduce and develop a range of speciality products to the turf industry. Green-Releaf products will join other brands such as Blazon spray pattern indicator and the soil conditioner, Integude.

Tim Earley, previously with Green-Releaf Europe, has joined GreenLink to further develop the range and will be providing commercial and technical supporting to the mainland UK distributors, Avoncrop Amenity Products, Richard Aitken Ltd and Aitkens Sportsurf and in Northern Ireland, John Lindsay Professional Sportsturf.

"The year 2000 heralds a new era in the amenity industry. Customer requirements are changing and today's technology quickly becomes tomorrow's accepted practice. With the move away from some of the 'quickfix' practices of the past, there is an exciting opportunity for a more environmentally aware approach to the management and maintenance of our sportsturf surfaces and amenity landscape," said Richard Fry, Managing Director of GreenLink International.

Super achievement for Clever Trevors

A remarkable family double was celebrated at Welwyn Garden City Golf Club last month when Course Manager, Trevor Smith Snr and his son Trevor Jnr, now Deputy Course Manager at South Herts GC, were recognised for two magnificent achievements.

Trevor Snr has recently achieved NVQ Level 4, one of only around 30 in the country, while Trevor Jnr has become the first Modern Apprentice in the country to have completed the framework.

Trevor Jnr started as an apprentice at Welwyn Garden City under his father and they worked through their respective education under the watchful eye of the GTC and Ian Merrick, of Oaklands College.

"Trevor Jnr has progressed through the profession from an Apprentice to being Deputy Course Manager at the age of 22 so the Modern Apprenticeship has worked for him while his dad had a very good understanding of work based training having become D32/D33 qualified and completing his NVQ Level 4," said GTC Education Director, David Golding.

"I am very honoured on behalf of



the GTC to be able to present Trevor with his Certificate," he added.

Trevor Jnr had no idea he was in line to be the first to complete his Modern Apprenticeship until a call from David.

"That was about eight months ago and David told me that if I got a move on I could be the first. At that stage I just had a First Aid course to finish off," said Trevor.

The Modern Apprenticeship scheme has been a great benefit to golf clubs looking to train staff.

"It meant I could send my staff on any course I felt they were capable of

doing and it wouldn't cost us a penny. We would pay up front and then be refunded on completion of the course. It takes the pressure off the golf club as long as the employee works hard at it," said Trevor Snr.

Trevor Snr took two years to complete his Level 4.

"Oaklands College was important in my achieving the standard as, when I was putting my portfolio together, they could say if I was going over the top or not doing enough," he said. Pictured L-R. Trevor Smith Snr, David Golding, Trevor Smith Jnr and Ian Merrick.

Assistant GREENKEEPER ASSISTANT 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: Stuart Hayes

Club: Glencorse GC

Position: Second Assistant

Age: 22

1. How long have you been a greenkeeper?
Five years

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
None. I have recently completed my apprenticeship

3. Which one task do you most enjoy doing?
Cutting fairways

4. Which one task do you most dislike doing?
Divoting fairways

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

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
My boss, Ian Bell, Glencorse GC

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
Give smaller clubs the same technology as larger clubs

8. What are your hobbies?
Golf, fishing, American football and reading

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
A social Section and the chance to meet other greenkeepers

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
I hope to have won the lottery and be lying on a beach somewhere hot!

Management changes at Textron

In line with internal management development plans at Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, Peter Bell has been promoted to the position of Sales Director. He succeeds Andrew Sunaway who has left the company to pursue career interests outside the turf maintenance sector.

Neil Woodfin, the company's Product Manager has also been promoted to Marketing Director, reporting directly to Managing Director, Harold Pinto.

Also joining the management team is Ian Campbell, who joins Textron as Finance Director, International. With a background in the textile industry he has worked for Courtaulds Textiles Plc and Liberty Lace in the UK, Spain and the United States.

In addition Sharon Jenkins has been appointed Communications and Promotions Manager. In this newly created position Sharon will be responsible for the planning and implementation of Textron's marketing activities throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Rupert Price has been promoted to Business Manager reporting directly to Neil Woodfin, the recently appointed Marketing Director.

Part of his brief will be research into new technology especially in the area of the Internet and e-commerce, together with supporting the planning and implementation of sales and marketing strategies across the Textron brands.



Clockwise from top left: Peter Bell, Neil Woodfin, Sharon Jenkins and Rupert Price

College awards top honour to Toro

Myerscough College has presented Toro with a special commemorative plaque in recognition of the company's sponsorship support for its high-profile turfgrass conference.

The college, the only place in Europe that runs turf science degree courses, used Toro's cash support to host a two-and-a-half-day keynote conference on the microbiology of turfgrass systems.

The event attracted speakers from as far afield as the United States, and was attended by more than 150 delegates made up of students and turfcare professionals.

Toro's support also enabled the college, in Preston, Lancs., to fund a subscription to the Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information File. This internet databank contains thousands of helpful research papers on turfgrass science.

"We are grateful to The Toro Company for its generous cash sponsorship to support our activities. It enabled us to host a high-profile conference, which we are repeating in November, and to access information on the internet, which is proving vital to our students," said Martyn Jones, Programme Leader of Turf Science.

"We thought it would be a nice gesture to show our gratitude by presenting them with a special plaque," he added.



Northern Section Seminar's success

Cutting every day doesn't give grass time to recover

That was one of the messages delivered by Martyn Jones, of Myerscough College, at the Northern Section and Rigby Taylor Seminar held at Bingley Golf Club at the beginning of March.

Martyn explained to the gathering of around 60 that grass requires 24 hours to recover so to cut every day doesn't give it a chance to recover. He reminded those old enough to recall the 60s that greenkeepers, of whom he was one at the time, cut Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

He was talking on the subject of cutting heights and posed the question of whether there was an inevitable conflict between the greenkeeper and the player.

Earlier John Holt, of Rigby Taylor, urged greenkeepers to look at ratios when purchasing product and reminded delegates that a 5-0-10 was actually the same as a 1-0-2.



In the afternoon there was a joint presentation on Golf Course Design, Construction, and Environmental Issues delivered by Chris Peel, of Grass Science; Nick Wright, of Fairhurst Environmental; Geoff Hodson, a golf course constructor and Andrew Mair,

of GBG Golf, who was joined by his partner and last year's Ryder Cup Captain, Mark James.

Between them they talked through the stages of a new project and highlighted the appropriate time at which each element should be introduced.

Old Course refacing work now complete

All 112 bunkers on the Old Course have now been refaced in preparation for the Open Championship in July. The work has been carried out by the Links Trust's Old Course greenkeeping team over the last 12 months.

From the notorious Road Hole Bunker on the 17th to the innocuous-looking Kruger on the 9th hole, every individual bunker was stripped down and the sides were refaced using layer upon layer of turf – a process known as revetting. Three of the largest bunkers – Hell, Shell and Cottage – had more extensive work carried out. They were rebuilt using railway sleepers sunk into concrete to create a template for future repairs. Around five and a half acres of turf from the Links Trust's turf nursery were used in total.

"It is a major achievement for the greenkeeping team," said Alan McGregor, General Manager.

"This is the first time in the history of the course that all the bunkers have been revetted in one go – usually bunkers are repaired and renewed on a five year rolling programme."

BIGGA presents donations to charity

Right: BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas, presents Louise Stimson from Imperial Cancer Research with donations totalling £500. Proceeds were raised from the sale of raffle tickets at BTME.



A presentation was made at the recent South Wales Seminar, to Peter Gillard, of Pencoed College, on behalf of the South Wales Section by Ken Richardson, in recognition of his dedication to greenkeeping and assistance to greenkeeping in the south Wales area. Also pictured are Tony Webster, of TIS Ltd; Malcolm Davies, Chairman of Education; Dennis Archer, Course Manager at Whitchurch GC, and Peter Lacey of the South Wales Section.

Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship qualifying details

The following venues and dates have been chosen as the Section Qualifiers for the 2000 Charterhouse/Scotts National Championship, for the BIGGA Challenge Trophy.



- Ayrshire
Wednesday 26 April, Western Gables GC
- Central Scotland
Tuesday 11 April, Jubilee Course, St Andrews
- East Scotland
Wednesday 26 April, North Berwick GC
- North Scotland
Thursday 25 May, Buckpool GC
- West Scotland
Thursday 27 April, Ranfurly Castle GC
- North East
Thursday 13 April, Bamburgh Castle GC
- North West
Wednesday 3 May, Bury GC
- Northern
Tuesday 11 April, Bradley Hall GC
- Cleveland
Tuesday 11 April, Ramside Hall GC
- Sheffield
Tuesday 9 May, Wheatley GC
- North Wales
Wednesday 5 April, Frodsham GC
- East Midland
Wednesday 10 May, Chilwell Manor GC
- Midland
Friday 28 April, South Staffordshire GC
- East of England
Tuesday 25 April, Canwick Park GC
- Berks, Bucks & Oxon
Monday 17 April, Wokefield Park GC
- Mid Anglia
Thursday 20 April, The North Hampshire Country GC
- Surrey
Thursday 4 May, Merrist Wood GC
- Kent
Thursday 8 June, Faversham GC
- Sussex
Thursday 4 May, Royal Eastbourne GC
- London
Wednesday 22 March, Hanbury Manor GC
- East Anglia
Wednesday 26 April, Haverhill GC
- Essex
Wednesday 12 April, Forrester Park GC
- South West
Tuesday 18 April, Clevedon GC
- South Coast
Thursday 11 May, Alton GC
- Devon & Cornwall
Thursday 24 February, Trevose GC
- South Wales
Wednesday 3 May, Southerndown GC

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



Andy is Rolawn's Depot Manager of the Year

The Rolawn Depot Manager of the Year award is made in recognition of the contribution made to the business by Rolawn's depot managers. This year it has been given to Andy Boaler, depot manager at the Company's Nottingham Depot.

Andy, who joined the Rolawn Turf Company as Nottingham's depot manager in 1990, has won the coveted award for the second time in his ten year career with the firm.

Andy is married with twin daughters. He is a keen footballer and supports Nottingham Forest. The family live in the Arnold area of Nottingham.

Gift vouchers and a certificate of recognition were presented by Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director to Andy at the Company's recent Conferences held at the BIGGA Headquarters at Aldwark Manor, York.

"Rolawn has 18 turf depots situated throughout the UK, all manned by Rolawn Employees. It is always a difficult decision to make but I am delighted to present the award to Andy this year who has proved himself to be an excellent depot manager by building excellent relationships with our customers in the Nottingham area," said Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales and Marketing Director.

New support role for Ged at Biotol



Cardiff based environmental solutions company Biotol has appointed Ged Cunliffe to the position of Marketing Support Manager.

Ged joined Biotol in 1986 shortly after leaving Cardiff University with a BSc Hons degree. Initially employed as a laboratory technician, he progressed through the company building a comprehensive knowledge of its products and customer base. In his new job Ged will concentrate on broadening the understanding of microbial and natural products.

"The scope for biological products in the global marketplace is enormous, but we have to educate potential customers on the wide range of benefits that can be realised from using them. My job will involve talking with users and potential users about our existing product range as well as managing the introduction of new products," he explained.

BIGGA exhibits at GCSAA conference



Above: Chairman, Elliott Small and Executive Director, Neil Thomas chat with visitors to the BIGGA stand, at the recent GCSAA Conference and Exhibition in Orlando, USA

2002 Amateur Championships to be hosted by Royal Porthcawl

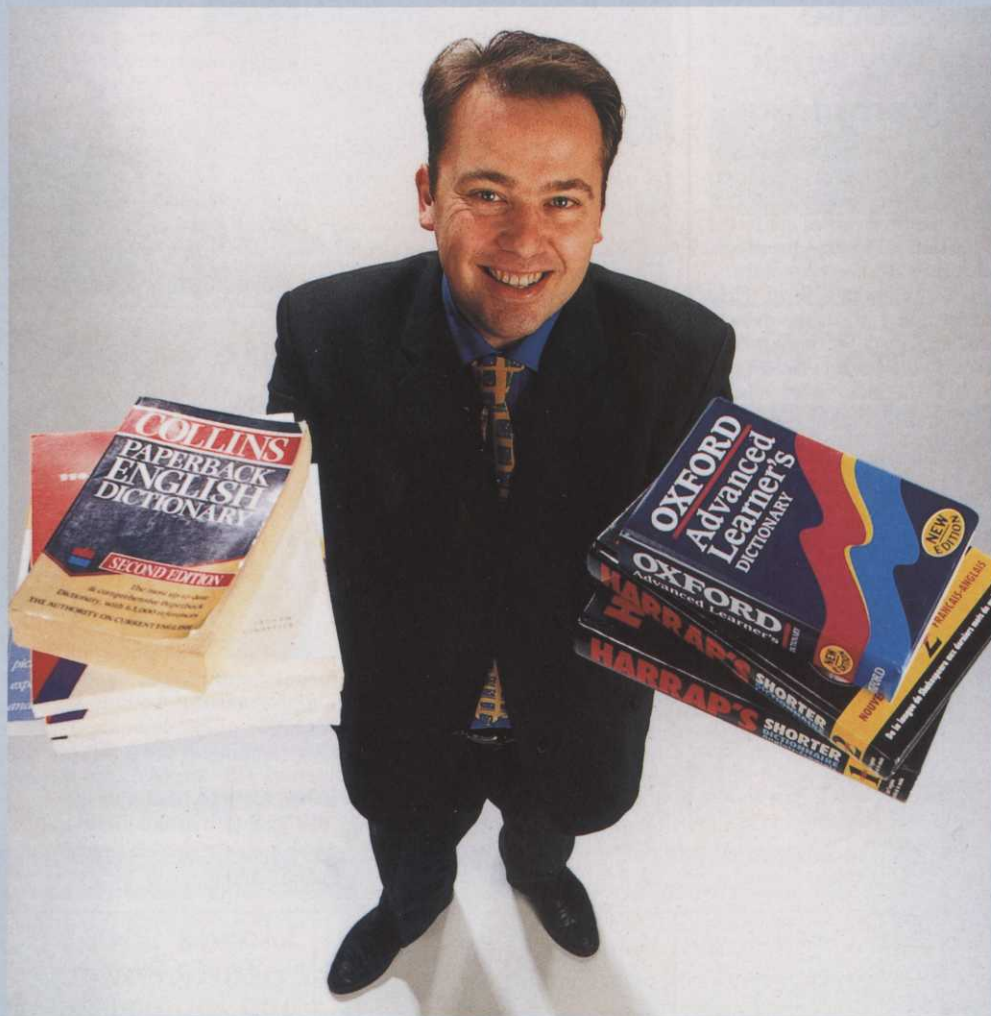
In February's magazine, under the heading "Raymond on the move", we mentioned that new Pyle and Kenfig head man, Raymond Hunt, was preparing for the 2002 Amateur Championship.

We would like to point out that Pyle and Kenfig is hosting two of the qualifying rounds for that Championship while the event is actually being hosted by neighbouring Royal Porthcawl.

Apologies for any confusion caused.

Greenkeeper
INTERNATIONAL

Barenbrug's Ben achieves NVQ success



When Ben Petitjean, Barenbrug's Area Manager, was first shipped off to England from his native France, life was far from easy for him as he didn't know his 'grass' from his 'elbow' (without the help of a dictionary!) But four years on, he's every inch the British gent and his English is so fluent that he has just completed a Diploma in Management NVQ4. Ben's studies form part of Barenbrug's overall training strategy which is now focussed on the Investors in People programme. Ben's arrival in England was itself a result of Barenbrug's worldwide commitment to employee integration across its international network. Paul Johnson, Barenbrug's Managing Director said: "We are delighted that Ben has grown so well with us and are very proud of his achievement."

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Great praise for Honorary award

My reason for writing to you is two fold. Firstly, I would like to congratulate Mr Jim Arthur on his award of Honorary Membership of BIGGA. For some of us the name of Mr Jim Arthur is British and international golf greenkeeping and as such this is a most fitting award.

Secondly, I would like to thank the association for giving this award.

During my time in greenkeeping I have noted on many occasions that either verbally in discussions with or when I have read interviews with some of our most respected Course Managers, they would be very strong in their praise and respect for Mr Arthur. This respect I believe comes from their many years working with Mr Arthur and watching their courses improve under his guidance.

We, as an industry, are very fortunate and owe a huge debt to Mr Arthur for writing his book for all of us to study and benefit from. Now with this award, I hope we will have many opportunities to discuss greenkeeping for many years to come with the man in person.

Gordon Irvine MG,
Mill Ride GC

Experience of a lifetime in Canada

Gordon and I have just returned from Ottawa. Because we made so many friends at the CGSA in Toronto last year, we were determined to return and renew our friendships. Now, we are equally determined to visit Vancouver in 2001. I shall start saving up now because for me the trip is well worth it.

The ladies' programme is an extremely good way to meet people and at the same time enjoy new experiences. They are a great bunch of people who make you feel very welcome. If you have the opportunity try to get on the trip with your partner. I am told that the education programme was excellent and would be very good for UK greenkeepers, largely due to the fact that the Canadian Superintendents are working with the same cool climate grasses as we do. As for Vancouver, I'm told it's a very beautiful place and quite spectacular, definitely an extremely popular venue with all the regulars from around Canada and America, and now the Swedish. The dates are February 24-27, 2001.

Marion Child,
Churston

Environmental: Not eco-warriors

With regards to the Environmental Summit at Valderrama and the world attention in general on green issues, I believe we, the golf industry, are at the centre of what is a very important and emotive subject.

It is generally accepted that controls over chemical usage are being tightened and will continue to be so, therefore one must accept a need to use other means. An environmental approach is an avenue that may serve all parties; by encouraging wildlife which in turn can be incorporated into an integrated pest management programme and so be seen to be doing the right thing.

However, management of this style

does come at a cost, and with budgets becoming ever tighter, environmental issues seem to be placed well down the list of priorities. The general planning and carrying out of such actions are left to enthusiastic individuals who use their own time and efforts to achieve results. This situation must change for us to go forward.

For these changes to become mainstream, we have to embrace a wider environmental educational programme, not just for greenkeepers, but for the golf watching public. The media are quick to show the negative side of golf courses, maybe this can now be turned around and golf seen in its true light.

We can, and should, embrace a more environmental approach and not think of it as long haired hippie types, in open-toed sandals, waving peace banners, but as a sound practical tool that can be used to great effect. Whether we like it or not, things are changing environmentally and we have to adapt to the challenge.

There are many programmes on TV about wildlife, but how many feature a golf course? Perhaps the powers that be would like to redress the balance.

Well who knows?

Simon Coles, Greenkeeper,
The Kendleshire Bristol

New Canadian friend offers BTME thanks

I can't express my thanks for the hospitality that was extended to Dean Piller and myself at BTME 2000 in Harrogate. It was truly an unforgettable experience. The Conference itself was educational and professionally managed in its entirety. The BIGGA Staff could not have been more accommodating, and the genuine friendliness of all the BIGGA members, both Superintendents and industry personnel, was overwhelming.

The invitations to all your social activities really made me feel like an

honoured guest. The wind up banquet could not have been more fun (what a party). When I returned home I could not believe the collection of business cards that I had from many European countries. Truly your conference is an international event. I will tell everyone to find a way to make the trip to participate in future BTME's. The value this experience gave me will help guide me through the next three years of service with the CGSA.

I look forward to seeing the many

new friends I made and please extend my thanks to the rest of the BIGGA staff for looking after me. In closing, I would just like to say how optimistic I am about the challenges that face our associations and its members when we discuss things together and the direct result of the trip for me is that the world has become a much smaller and friendlier place.

Jay Leach, Secretary/Treasurer,
Canadian Golf Superintendents
Association

Icy solution to winter greens damage

I have just glanced through this month's edition of Greenkeeper International and saw Peter Broadbent's letter regarding spike problems. I wrote to him direct and included details about myself that may have been of interest to him. Below is my answer to his query.

Playing in frosty conditions is an emotive issue, but I never found any damage of green surfaces which were frozen hard, that could be attributed solely to such play. Although blackening of turf was noticeable on semi rough, fairways and tees etc I very rarely found any such marks on green surfaces. It is my view that as golfers walked on spikes and the surface was usually hard, their shoes stayed clear of the closely mown sward of a green. I never mowed higher than 3/16" (5 mm) I could never see the point. However the sward on a fairway for instance, is mown at 1/2" (12 mm) or more. A golf shoe therefore does come into contact with individual grass blades, thereby causing bruising damage, which is manifested as blackening.

I have also noticed the phenomenon of rapid (sometimes within 2 or 3 steps) build up of slushy frost and

ice on golfers shoes. Especially one morning last winter, whilst playing in the winter league at Willesley Park GC. I noticed the build up of ice on my shoe studs and I had to tap my shoes regularly to remove it. On reaching the green I was horrified to notice large stud sized holes and immediately realised what was causing them. By this time however it was past nine o'clock and a large number of golfers had already gone out. To suspend play now would be pointless as; 1 The damage had already been done. 2 It would mean contacting all the golfers on the course and asking them to stop play. 3 I could imagine the outcry, as most golfers resent any interruption to their game and rarely understand the reasons you give for such a request. 4 As the phenomenon would only be short lived, would it be a lot of effort for very little gain.

I also noticed that it only seemed to happen when the frost was not severe i.e. - the temperature was hovering at, or just below, freezing point. This could be because of (*see note) water's unique property of expanding (or becoming less dense) between 4 and 0 degrees centigrade. Therefore it has far more bulk than would other-

wise be the case and builds up rapidly on golfers' shoes. As you mention it forms a lump of soft ice on each stud, and, unless golfers remove all traces of it, before walking on the golf green, it can, as you say, cause severe damage.

It is worth noting that the slush can still form on studs whilst on the green. In my experience it seemed to form readily on metal studs and I cannot think of a reason for it to form more readily on plastic studs. Unless of course it is linked to the fact that plastic is not as good a conductor of heat as metal. This could mean that the warmer plastic initially adds to the thawing of the frost.

P.N.Bettenshaw

(*Note) As far as I know, water is the only liquid that has such properties. All other liquids become denser until finally solidifying at their respective freezing points. The only other exception to this rule is Helium, which only liquifies at 4.2 degrees Kelvin (-269 degrees Centigrade). It never solidifies even at absolute zero, unless subjected to high pressure, i.e. 25 atmospheres.

Erosion issue questioned

I am surely not alone in questioning the dogmatic forecasts of impending doom on our links courses as expressed at the St Andrews' Conference 'On course for Change,' let alone statements which are debatable, such as that sea levels around our coasts have risen 15-20 cm in the past twenty years ie; less than one centimetre per year. I am sure that someone will tell us how such minute rises are measured – on the same lines as greenkeepers stating that they set their height of cut in terms of fractions of a millimetre!! Even in these computerised days, how can they measure such microscopic differences?

One thing is certain – that such pessimistic forecasts that climatic changes will destroy our famous links are made by "experts" on weather who know nothing about golf and less about coastal protection. No one denies that there are changes in weather patterns but there always have been for centuries. Prophets of doom and gloom all throughout the ages have virtually always been confounded by events. At regular intervals over the past 200 years we have been told that there will be mass starvation as this earth of ours cannot produce enough food to feed exploding populations. Yet, today, the problems are all to do with distribution and very little to do with production. Whatever happened to the millennium bug?

The most sensible comment on weather changes was made to me by a senior officer at the Met office who said that we were dealing with imponderables and that rash forecasts of disaster based on straight line graphs were certain to be proved wrong by events.

Coastal erosion, by wind as well as waves, has been going on for centuries as for example at Dunwich in Suffolk where no less than eight churches lie beneath the advancing sea – the first going back to 800 AD and clearly that had nothing to do with global warming.

Virtually all coastal erosion is due to man's activities, varying from destabilisation of dunes by pedestrian traffic and scrambler bikes, to off-shore or estuarine dredging, the construction of long jetties; uncoordinated defence schemes (which merely transfer the problem along the coast) and to altering the course of rivers. Global warming simply does not enter the equation.

It is simply not true to say that properly planned and comprehensive protection schemes are ineffective, though gales breach them. As someone who has been involved in such golf links schemes for over thirty years, I am the first to admit that in

some cases I had to say that there was no answer, eg; where a huge jetty had been built 20 miles away so altering the set of the tides that little could be done to save the sand, while in other cases the astronomic expense of a fully comprehensive scheme ruled it out, but in the main most schemes have worked well – especially where pedestrians have been banned.

One statement that our famous links will inevitably lose holes and have to migrate inland is demonstrably utter nonsense! In many cases there is nowhere to go. Furthermore our links courses have stabilised the dunes – and where this has not occurred, fairways have been buried in wind-blown sand. Talk of courses migrating inland as new dune structures cover the old are fiction, because not only would the courses be covered but also agricultural land and even housing.

Nearly all the evidence produced by these experts is capable of different interpretations is nothing new and will be contradicted by events. Almost always, unforeseen inter-related balancing influences reduce extreme effects.

Congratulations are due to those practical men who observe the effects of wind and tide and devise schemes which trap blowing sand or stop it being washed away and which work despite the scarcely concealed derision of the boffins. Admittedly, such schemes have to be planned on a broad scale and need regular attention but they work. The biggest worry is the sheer cost, though chestnut paling is far better than gabions in many cases and vastly cheaper. Here's a toast to such eminently practical stalwarts as George Brown at Turnberry and Cyril Sutherland at Brancaster whose effective measures have harnessed those very elements which threaten their courses. I have always valued the ideas of practical men and experts should do the same instead of dismissing them as amateurs. They should remember the first precept of problem solving namely correct observation, followed by correct deduction.

Many are good at the first but hopeless at the second. Of course we must note what is going on but the doom and gloom brigade need to accept that nature is a very tough and resilient old bird and can be constructive as well as destructive. I speak from a lifetime of working as a team with practical men on the ground as well as learned academics, some of whom were man enough to go round with me and admit that an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory!

J.H Arthur, Budleigh Salterton
East Devon

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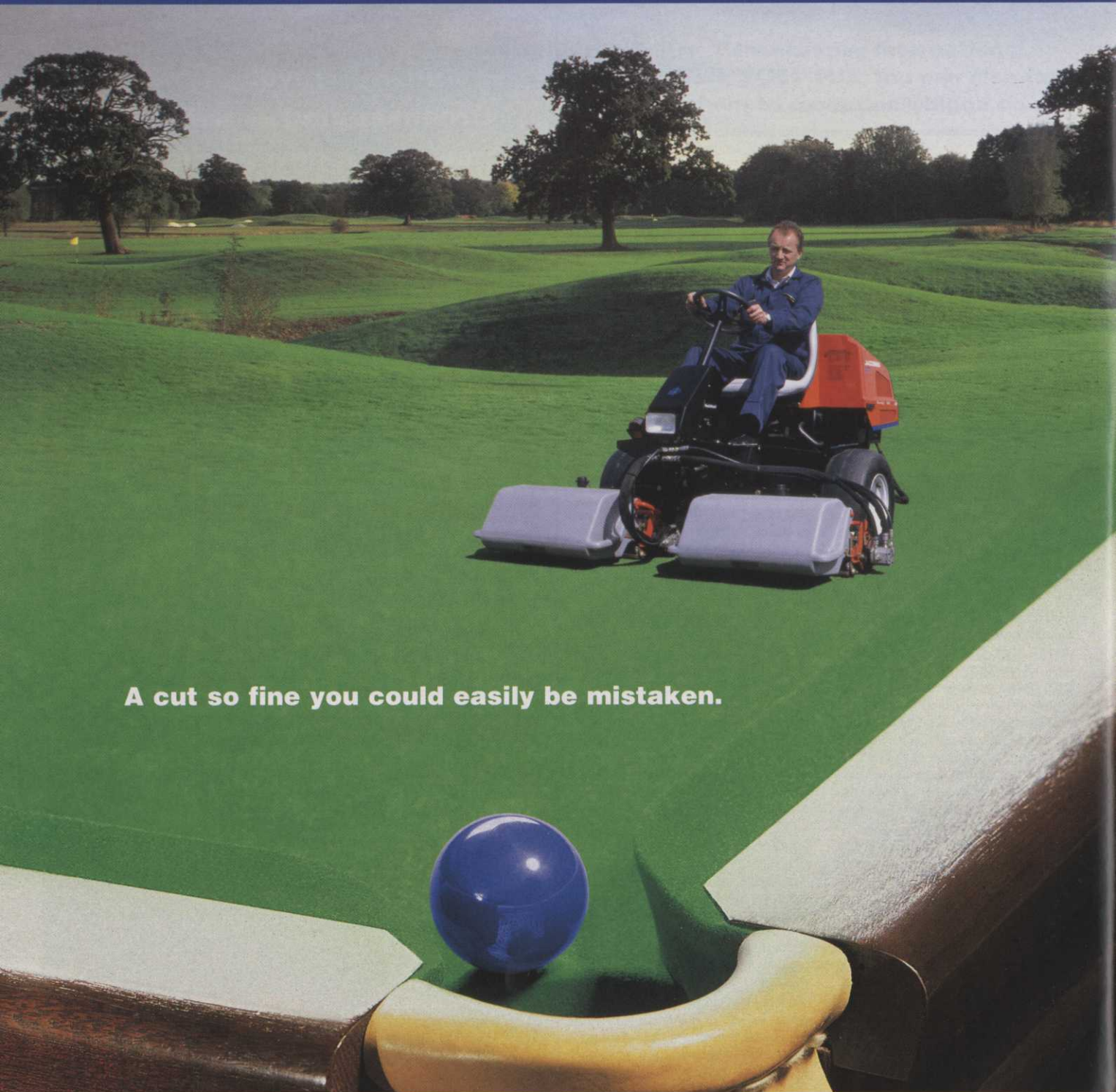
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Heather Mackinnon is Head Groundsman at Murrayfield in Edinburgh, the home of the Scottish Rugby Union. Here in this Learning Experience article she compares her work at one of the world's leading sporting arenas to that of her colleagues in the golf sector



This way that way



Above: Although the turf maintenance regimes are similar to golf, on match days, Murrayfield gets some concentrated wear and tear

The Scottish team have just finished training and are packing their bags ready to travel to Italy for their very first Six Nations Championship match. It has been rather hectic for the last few days with extra training sessions for the under 18's, under 19's, under 21's, the A squad and the National squad. It's a great challenge; never did it occur to me when I was working at Ratho Park Golf Club as a youth trainee greenkeeper that I would aspire to such a prestigious job.

When at school I detested the thought of working in offices or any form of indoor vocation. I wanted to work on turf, especially on a football ground. Unfortunately, when I left school, I could not find any opportunities in groundsmanhip but was

informed of a trainee greenkeeper position at Ratho Park Golf Club. Walking up the drive for the first time was rather daunting but it looked very impressive. The straight lines on the greens, the general presentation, I was hooked, I wanted to learn all about it and do all the operations a greenkeeper was expected to do.

I worked at the golf course for a year and found the job extremely varied and interesting. However I wanted to gain more knowledge and after making enquiries at my local college, Oatridge, I elected to go on a full time course for a National Certificate in Golf Course and Sportsground Maintenance and Management. While at Oatridge I was introduced to the Institute of Groundsmanship

through Beverly Stevens, one of my lecturers. She encouraged me to attend the local branch meetings, which is where I first met Bill Elwood, the former Head Groundsman at Murrayfield, now the Facilities Manager. It was through attending meetings and showing an interest that I was given a chance to continue my career at Murrayfield after completing my studies at Oatridge.

Working at Murrayfield I was able to compare the practices that were carried out previously at Ratho and I found them to be very similar. Demands are very similar, although the games of rugby and golf are obviously very different; the principles of management, maintenance and presentation will be equally high on both



Right: The immaculate playing surface at one of Scotland's premier sporting venues - Murrayfield

the Head Greenkeeper's and the Head Groundsman's agenda. Both managers will be striving to ensure that their turf is at its absolute best at certain times of the year. Perhaps for greenkeepers it revolves around the club championship or the open week and for Groundsmen it may be towards an important cup match. More often than not a rugby Groundsman's life is spent trying to produce a quality pitch in the most adverse weather conditions, due to the season in which the sport is played. At the end of the season there follows an early summer renovation period, which is not without its difficulties.

The Greenkeepers event calendar, however, mainly majors around a busy summer with renovations in the spring and autumn. The principles and practice of aeration and feeding continue for both sets of managers throughout the year, although as you would expect differences have to be allowed for, such as sward composition, pH levels, soil type and so forth.

After three years at Murrayfield I thought I needed to broaden my knowledge and gain experience in varying aspects of the industry. I have been very fortunate to work not only in maintenance of golf courses, but also in golf course construction and had the opportunity to work with some very large equipment. I was involved with the development of Elmwood College golf course and the initial maintenance of Strathmore Golf Centre. I then returned to main-

tenance with an appointment at King James VI Golf Course.

My time at Stewarts of Dalkieth was beneficial in realising the huge range of materials that are available for our industry. It also emphasised the value of communication and record keeping which is vitally important in my present role.

Murrayfield consists of 54 acres of land near the centre of Edinburgh where the climate is fairly dry compared with other parts of the country. I returned to the stadium in November last year and am enjoying the fresh set of challenges and problem solving. Since the introduction of professional contracts there has been a huge increase in the use of the training facilities, which in turn places increased demands on the staff. We regularly work many hours above a normal working week to meet the demands placed upon the ground staff.

The work schedule includes the maintenance of five rugby pitches plus an international pitch within the stadium. The outside pitches were rebuilt in 1995 using the Netlon reinforced turf system to facilitate car parking on match days or when concerts are held at the stadium. Three members of staff, including myself, maintain the pitches. The maintenance staff for the whole complex totals 14, made up of plumbers, joiners and painters.

The international pitch sits within a 67,500 all-seater stadium, which creates its own problems such as shade, airflow and humidity. As well as Rugby



Union, the pitch is to be used for the Rugby League finals, American Football and concerts. Indeed, between March and May, out of nine weekends, only two see the International pitch not being used. The variation of events requires a great deal of line marking and blanking out depending upon the fixture. Posts require erecting and removing due to the alternating games from week-to-week between League, Union and American Football. The accuracy required for marking the American football pitch will be very demanding but the final presentation of the marked out pitch, complete with logos, will make it very worthwhile.

The available machinery and equipment has recently been given a terrific boost since the recent agreement between the Scottish Rugby Union and Textron. This means that we have the latest range of equipment with modern technology and engineering at our fingertips. We have access to a full range of Textron equipment whenever we require it. The machinery we keep at Murrayfield includes a 45 BHP Iseki tractor; two 25 BHP Iseki tractors, one with a front loader. Other equipment includes a Jacobsen LF-3810; a Jacobsen Triking; a Cushman Turf-Truckster with a range of attachments; a number of E-Z-GOs; two new Ransomes Mastiffs and a range of aeration equipment. We also have a 55 BHP Renault tractor complete with turf tyres and loading bucket. We com-

plete all our own pesticide control, using a Hardi sprayer for fungicides, insecticides and herbicides.

The responsibility of the international pitch is a big challenge but I am very fortunate in having Bill Elwood, the Facilities Manager, with his vast knowledge of groundsmanship and especially Murrayfield, should I have any queries. In the run up to an international match we start preparing the pitch two weeks before by single rolling every day, using the Ransomes Mastiff mower. This operation produces a resilient surface suitable for the game of rugby. The week before the match the pitch is double rolled each day. On the day before the match the pitch is double rolled, as usual, and then all the cross markings, solid and broken lines are marked in. On the morning of the match a single roll is given across the pitch. The two touch-lines and the five and fifteen broken lines are marked in. All lines are put in using a string line to ensure accuracy. The broken lines are marked in with a board and strings. The pitch is then flagged and the posts padded and sand buckets placed out for the kickers and that completes the preparation.

Throughout the match we stay on hand to deal with any emergency that may occur. After a match there will be repairs to the pitch. This is completed immediately the match has finished so that the divots repair easier and heal quicker, which is crucial with a busy

Below: Head Groundsman, Heather Mackinnon with members of her team





fixture list. On the day after the match we will use the soil reliever onto the pitch set to a depth of 150 mm (6 inches) to ensure we do not reach the under soil heating pipes. This will aid the recovery by removing the compaction caused by the rolling.

I am very fortunate to be able to drive into work and feel a great sense of pride, to be involved with the preparation at an International stadium and view the pitch in all its glory. The continuous increase in fixtures and demands upon the pitch ensures that we cannot sit back. The pressures are

always there and we have the challenge to provide the best possible pitch for every occasion. My job as Head Groundsman to the Scottish Rugby Union, like any groundsman or greenkeeper, is extremely rewarding, though not without its pressures and difficulties.

It has taken me a couple of days to put this article together, the Scottish team are back after a defeat in Italy - I've heard it was the fault of the ball! I'm sure I have a great deal more to learn about rugby groundsmanship... and rugby players.

Below: Training plays an important role with the SRU/Textron agreement



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This month, Ken Richardson, promotes the BIGGA Essay Competition 2000, gives details on Learning Experience transcript options, and advises on 'On the job' training

EDUCATION UPDATE

BIGGA Essay Competition

The winner of the Head Greenkeeper/ Course Manager category in the BIGGA Essay Competition 1999 appears on page 63 of this magazine. This year could be your turn to win £500 and have your essay published in Greenkeeper International.

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**BIGGA
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The Manager: Trainer and Coach

Regular readers will remember that I wrote several articles during 1999 on the Management Responsibilities of Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers and one area of responsibility was training. Most training that takes place on the golf course is 'on the job' with many Golf Course Managers already running training session for their staff and, in some cases, assessing competence on the completion of training.

What is involved in 'On the Job Training'?

The first thing to ask is What do my staff need to know? This involves the use of a technique known as a Task Analysis. This simply means breaking the job down into its component parts and may be simple or more complex depending on the job. For example, Cutting a new hole is a straightforward process which requires few decisions except where to cut the hole. On the other hand, applying fertiliser can require a number of decisions to be made eg. when, how, what, why.

There are some basic steps that you need to take when you are conducting a training session. These are:

Introduction

1. Put your staff at ease. Conduct training in comfortable surroundings (if possible). Encourage them to ask questions and take part in any discussions. Let them know that training is taking place and not assessment.
2. Tell them why the training is taking place and how your training session relates to other training sessions and other jobs.

3. Check what they know already and identify gaps in their knowledge and skills.
4. Get them interested by explaining why the training is important.
5. Show them all the new tools, equipment and materials that they will use and give them a list of 'buzz' words.

Content

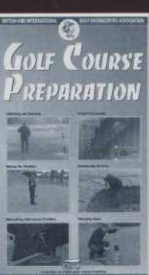
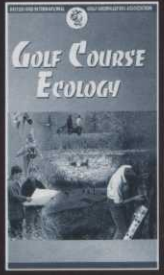
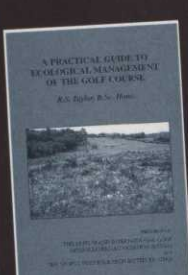
1. Show your staff how to complete the task, using the procedure that you identified in your task analysis.
2. Put all of the component parts into context and try to give your staff a mental picture of what is required.
3. Explain the critical points as you progress.
4. Keep checking that they understand.
5. Show staff how to do the first stage of the job, stressing key points as you progress.
6. Let staff practise the first stage and make sure that they can explain their actions.
7. Continue until each stage is mastered.
8. Let staff complete the whole process, giving feedback and encouragement where needed.

Conclusion

1. Summarise the whole procedure
2. Issue any notes, manuals, operating procedures
3. Point out the best method of doing the task and why
4. Review the required performance in terms of time, standards and safety requirements
5. Check if there are any questions.

If all of the above seems to be common sense then think about what can and does happen in training sessions or, far worse, in the use of untrained staff. How many of you have been told to 'Go out and cut the first three greens' when you have not been trained on the mower, do not know the height of cut, do not know what to do if players approach, have not been given health and safety brief etc? Watch out for further articles in future editions of Greenkeeper International.

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A fantastic figure of over 270 joined the Association in February. Tracey Maddison, BIGGA's Membership Services Officer, would like to welcome them on behalf of the Association and highlights how YOU could be a winner!

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May's edition
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new members!



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(The weekend break is subject to availability and excludes Bank Holidays)

Good Luck!



Trevor Downing of J Rothschild Assurance examines progressive unit trusts

Progressive trust hits top spot!

Launched ten years ago, the St James's Place UK & General Progressive Unit Trust has provided investors with consistent, above-average long-term performance and is ranked first out of 151 similar funds over the ten year period to 1 October 1999. An investment made at the launch of the fund would have shown an exceptional return of more than five times the initial sum invested.

The table (right) illustrates the return from investing £10,000 on 2 October 1989 (launch of the fund) compared with the average UK savings account. The sum of £10,000 has been inflated in the first column to reflect movement in the Retail Price Index (RPI) over the period.

Not only has the fund achieved outstanding performance over the ten year period, out-performing the relevant sector average by more than double, but it is also ranked in the top quartile of all similar funds over the one, three and five year periods to 1 October 1999.

The fund aims to maximise returns,

comprising of both income and capital appreciation by investing principally, but not exclusively in the United Kingdom. The manager of the fund, Taube Hodson Stonex Partners Ltd (THSP) operate a thematic approach to investment. Put simply, this means that whilst stock markets in individual countries are often efficiently priced, significant valuation anomalies continue to exist between comparable companies quoted on different stock markets. With ever cheaper and better communications, these anomalies will increasingly come into focus.

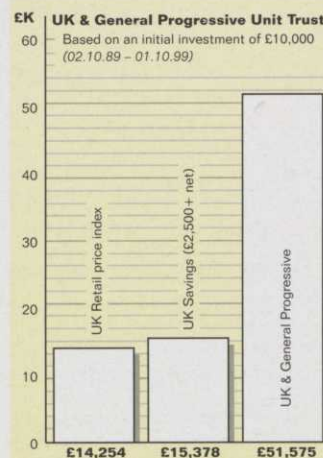
Cable & Wireless is a stock which fits in with the manager's telecommunications theme which they apply on a global basis. Cable & Wireless is the biggest cable company in the UK and the second biggest telephone company (incorporating Mercury). With the onset of digital television and a variety of options available through fibre optic cables, the market is strong for cable

companies and relevant stocks, such as Cable & Wireless, have done well and are expected to do better still.

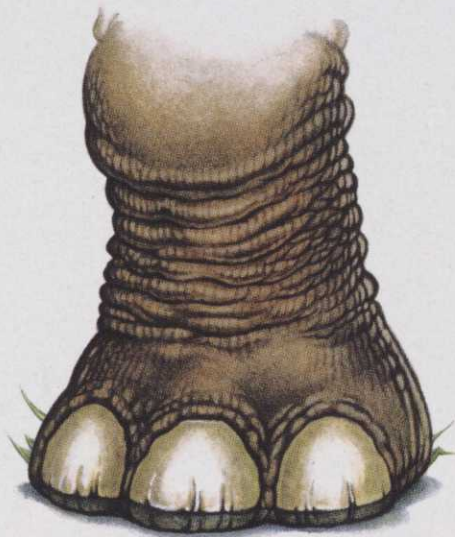
Another current theme is media stocks, with companies in the portfolio including Hit Entertainment, which produces children's TV programmes such as 'Bob The Builder' and related merchandise, BskyB which is at the forefront of digital technology and Eidos which is responsible for the highly successful 'Tomb Raider' computer games featuring 'Lara Croft'. The managers feel that entertainment, and particularly the Internet, is one of the few areas world-wide where consumers are spending more of their disposable income.

The UK & General Progressive Unit Trust is also available within the St James's Place Individual Savings Account and to those investors wishing to transfer accrued General PEP holdings to the St James's Place Unit Trust Group.

If you would like more information or advice relating to this or any other investment matter, please contact Trevor Downing on 01959 500427.



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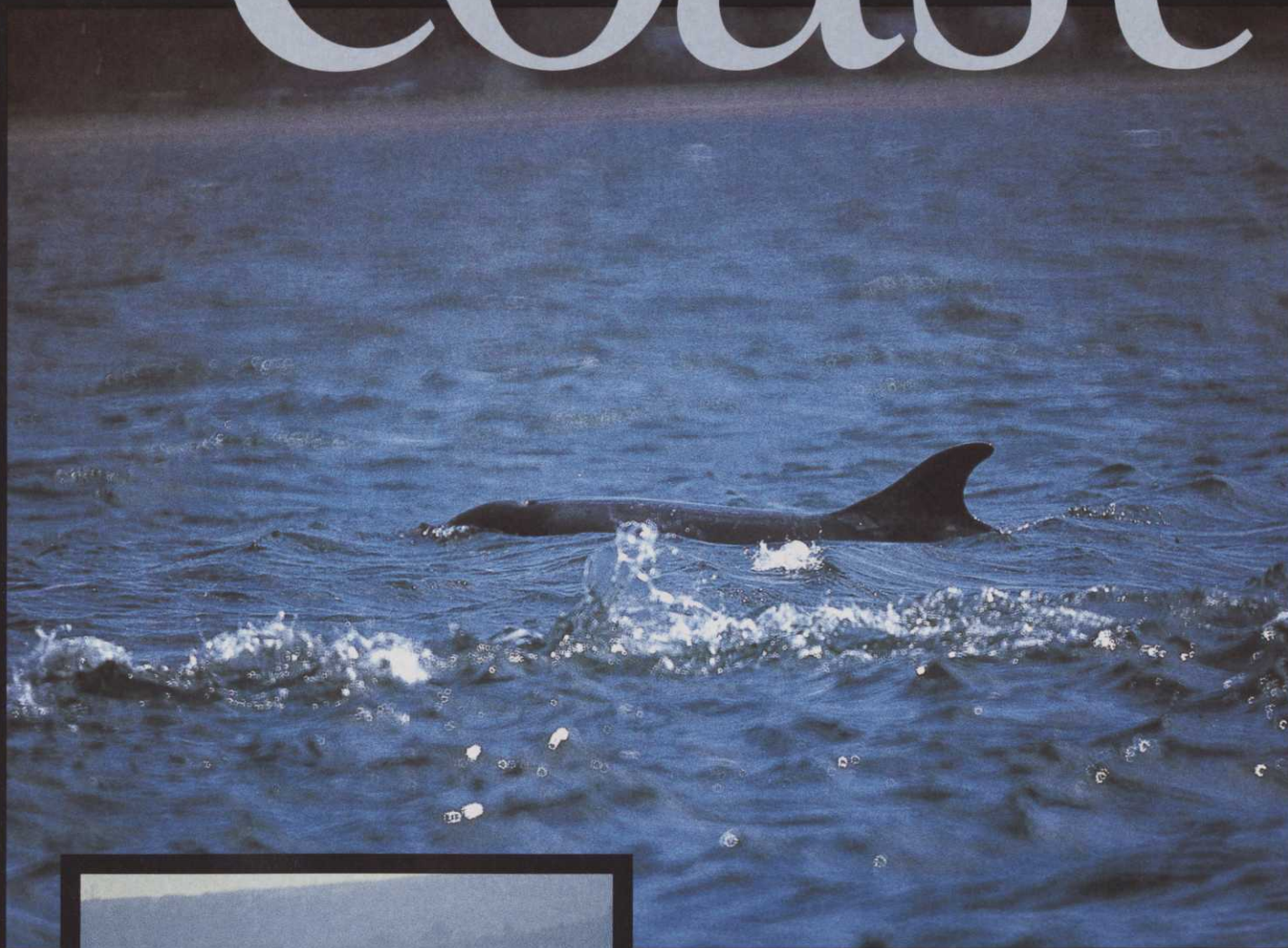


Etesia's unique patented anti-clog cutting and collecting system celebrates ten years of challenging other makes of mower.

**10
years**

Scott MacCallum visits Fortrose & Rosemarkie, a golf course with water on three sides which also boasts some flippered friends...

Coast to coast



Picture the scene. You arrive at the course early on a sunny morning with just a hint of breeze in the air. Half an hour later you're sitting aboard a triple, cutting a tee out at the far end of the course and something catches your eye. You look up and there, not 40 yards from you, is a dolphin splashing and diving about in the water.

Now such an experience is not exclusive to those greenkeepers who

ply their trade off the Florida Keys, the coast of Queensland or some other tropical paradise, it happens on a regular basis to Stuart Hogg and his team at Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club, a few miles north of Inverness.

The dolphins, which are taking advantage of the Gulf Stream which passes right by the course, are not the only reason to mark Fortrose & Rosemarkie out from the ordinary. No, it is also one of the few, if not



Above: Stuart Hogg

Below: The Fortrose & Rosemarkie team



the only club, to claim an entire peninsula as its own. The 18 holes, designed by James Braid, have been fitted into the 90 acres available and is about 600 yards at its widest point and 160 at its narrowest.

"The dolphins are the icing on the cake," explained Stuart Hogg, 28, who has worked at the club for the past eight years and been Head Greenkeeper for five.

"To go out onto the course, see the sea, the sea views and then, all of a sudden, have a dolphin pop up makes it so special. It's nature and how lucky am I to experience it. When people come to see the course they always say they would love to work up here," said Stuart, who started his career much further south, working with

BIGGA Board of Management member Jim Paton at West Kilbride Golf Club on the west coast of Scotland.

Having the Gulf Stream dispels one of the myths about the North of Scotland - that the further north you head the colder it gets.

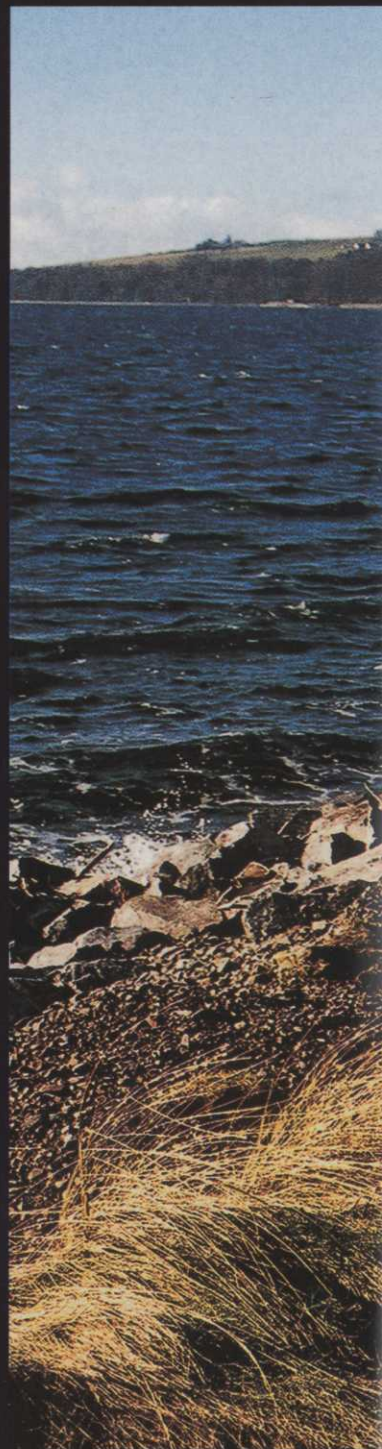
"One thing we are blessed with is good weather. We're in the Gulf Stream, which comes up the west coast and down the Moray Firth, so the water temperatures are warmer and it has an impact on the weather. I've seen it rain in Inverness, along the coast towards Nairn, even up the street, but it would be sunny on the golf course," he explained.

"We've already got a top dressing down and guys couldn't believe we were doing it. I was on the phone to a colleague in the west of Scotland who said he'd just got the frost coming out of the ground and I was telling him that we'd just cut our greens," said Stuart, as he spoke in the middle of February.

"We've cut our greens every week and tees every six weeks through the winter and even cut my fairways this year which we've never done before. There's been a big change in the climate," he said.

So, we've identified great scenery and dolphins, we've talked about the great weather. What's the down side of life at Fortrose & Rosemarkie?

Well, it goes without saying that the golf club is a little detached from huge population centres. Sure Inverness is only 20 minutes but most deliveries must come from Aberdeen and Glasgow, which are quite some distance away.



"Carriage is expensive," explained Stuart.

"I try to order all my needs at once to get a good deal and cut down on the delivery costs. For example I perhaps order a tonne of fertiliser because I know roughly what I'm going to need."

If such an approach is to be taken decent storage is essential and Fortrose & Rosemarkie's - the name comes because the public road which bisects the course down the middle is also the boundary of the two villages - maintenance facilities are second to none.

"The club used its VAT money on the sheds and they speak for themselves," said Stuart, as we sat in the mess room of the stone built, pine clad, building.

"We now hold our greens meetings in here and I'm quite proud of that



fact. I believe if you have tidy sheds it sets the tone.

"The club has done us proud and hopefully we can do them proud by producing a golf course that is up to standard," said Stuart, only the seventh Head Greenkeeper at the club since the early 1900s.

As well as the need to be well organised when it comes ordering materials the club's geography has led to other innovative thinking when it comes to cutting costs.

"We bought a Juno grinder in 1995 because ever time we sent away a cylinder it cost us £100 because it had to go Aberdeen and we could lose it for up to a week.

"We've got something like 24 cylinders which we do at least once a year so at £100 a cylinder it paid off within two years.

"We also take in other club's cylin-

ders and they lend us machinery in exchange. It's all about saving money as I don't have a big budget," said Stuart, who along with First Assistant, Chris Cumming, and Assistant, Kevin Fowler, are all qualified to use the grinder.

Having sharp blades is fundamental to Stuart's approach to greenkeeping.

"I have always told the boys that if the blades aren't sharp to get them done because it makes such a difference. Cut yourself with a Stanley knife and you get a clean cut but use a bread knife you get a hellish cut. That's the way I look at it and I believe it has a bearing on the fact that we don't get much disease here."

The team use a four stage plan to keep their blades sharp.

"We will go out with sharp units and regularly recheck and reset the

height and check if they can cut a single piece of paper. If they can't, they are back lapped, if they still can't, a front edge will be put on the sole plate and if then they still can't they are put in the grinder."

Working to a budget means that it has taken about 10 years to build up the machinery stock and replacement of key kit must fit into the club's financial constraints.

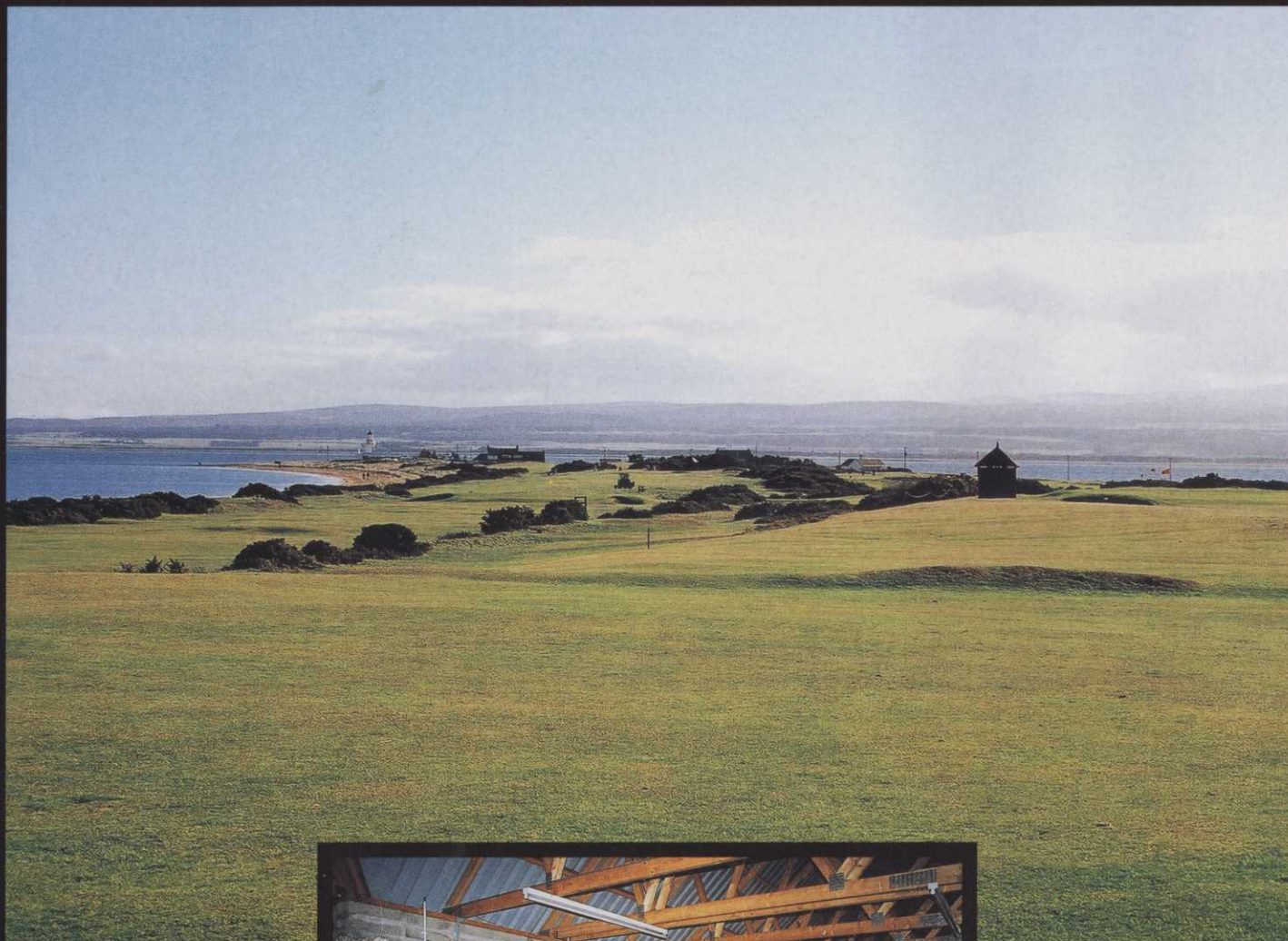
The servicing is also done by Stuart who, topping up a longstanding interest in cars and engines, attended a Toro course on greens mower maintenance.

Having the sea on three sides of the course does give ideal vantage points for dolphin spotting but it also has added course maintenance complications.

"We have a difficult golf course to manage because we have six sand

greens, six pure soil greens and six shingle, gravelly greens. The soil greens are there because they were rebuilt after the war - the course boasts some tank turrets along the left hand side as well as an underground concrete bunker - while the fact we are on what is essentially a raised beach means we've got one side of the course which is pure sand and the other shingle. It's down to the tidal effect," said Stuart, who added that at particularly windy times the peninsula grows by about 10 to 15 metres in length purely by sand and shingle being washed up by the tide.

"We've got to manage the greens in a sensitive manner to get the speed the same. I'm a firm believer that speed is not a necessity as long as you've got a consistency and a true putting surface. We get the wind here and its never up and down the course,



Above: Water on three sides. A view of the peninsula with the lighthouse at the far end.

Right: Maintenance facilities



Machinery Inventory

- 1 Allman 200 sprayer
- 1 Huxley Soil Retriever
- 1 John Deere Gator 4x2
- 1 Hydraulic 5
- 1 Kubota 2150 with cutting deck and front bucket
- 1 Sisis, Powaspread Topdresser
- 1 Royer 30 Powascreen
- 3 Super Certes 51cm
- 1 Juno Grinder
- 1 Ford 2120
- 1 GM 3100 Greens
- 1 GM 300 tees and aprons
- 1 GM 3 verticut
- 4 Flymos
- 2 Stimmers
- 1 Hedge Trimmer
- 1 Sisis Autorake
- 1 Amazone Groundkeeper 150
- Various spikers and tractor attachments

across every hole bar two, so that's tough enough."

As you would expect the course does suffer from spray burn and the risk of being so close to the sea never leaves.

"We could easily lose a couple of tees if we were to have a bad storm so to counter that some rock has been installed to act as defence."

Stuart attributes his greenkeeping style to the two Head Greenkeepers he has worked under in his career, Jim Paton at West Kilbride and George Paterson, who was his boss at Fortrose & Rosemarkie before going off to County Sligo Golf Club.

"I've taken a bit from Jim and a bit

from George to mould myself into a Head Greenkeeper."

He has obviously been a good student because last year was an excellent one for Stuart and the club with him representing Scotland in the National Final of the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award and his work on the environment being recognised by the club being Highly Commended in the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots.

"The entire team should be proud of what we achieved in the Toro award. I'm proud of them because without them my job would be ten

times harder," said Stuart, whose four man team is completed by apprentice, Greg Smith.

The award also lead to some of the country's most respected greenkeepers making the trip north.

"We've had respected guys like Jimmy Nielson, Walter Woods, Cecil George and the late Harry Diamond up here and I've learned from them all while after Walter had judged the course for the final of the Toro Excellence Award he brought George Brown up for a weekend."

It is that sort of contact that ensures close touch isn't lost with the rest of the country, while Stuart and his team are keen BIGGA members.

"I was given the opportunity to organise the Bunker Support Team at the Walker Cup in Nairn last year using experience I gained from the Open Championship Support Team while I was at Harrogate as usual this year taking Chris Cumming with me for the first time."

Despite being an incomer to a close knit community Stuart and his family are well settled into the slow relaxed life in Fortrose and where else could you have Flipper as an early morning companion?

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OFF THE BEATEN TRAIL

Mention them, and most people immediately picture large four-wheeled motor bike-style machines being ridden at speed over rough terrain. Not an image to justify their inclusion amongst a fleet, yet on closer examination this type of vehicle could be a considerable asset on many courses.

Whether it is for carrying loads or transporting staff around the course, there is now a wide choice of suitable ATVs, utility vehicles, truckster and load carriers available. These introductions have coincided with more self-powered grass cutting machinery

being used and as a result the need for a tractor is diminishing.

When considering one of these workhorses it is a good idea to assess exactly what the requirements are and which, if any, existing equipment it may replace.

Do ATVs have a place on golf courses?

Mention them, and most people immediately picture large four-wheeled motor bike-style machines being ridden at speed over rough terrain. Not an image to justify their inclusion amongst a fleet, yet on closer examination this type of vehicle could be a considerable asset on many courses, especially links. Access to some areas is not easy, especially in the winter months. It can also be time consuming because of the route a conventional tractor and trailer has to take. This is one of the main reasons why this type of vehicle is so popular with hill farmers. With a trailer attached or as a model with its load carrying facility, they could take materials to sites that ground conditions make it impossible for any other transport to reach.

There is another feature that lends itself well to the golf course. While they have plenty of traction, the ATV is light on its wheels and the low-pressure tyres make for minimal damage to turf, even in wet conditions.

A disadvantage is that there is no power take off and although there are plenty of attachments available where power is needed a separate engine is fitted.

Recent years have seen the introduction of purpose-built utility vehicles or load carriers, which, although not ATVs, have incorporated many of their features.



Utility vehicles and load carriers

John Deere

In the latter part of last year, John Deere launched its Pro-Gator, which has been designed to be used for transporting materials and take a range of turf maintenance equipment. This two-seater unit is powered by a 24hp diesel engine. Power steering is standard and there is a choice



CK



of either two or four wheel drive. The cargo box has hydraulic lift and can take loads up to a estimated 875kg. When not needed the box can be quickly removed. The company has also introduced a top dresser attachment with a .54m capacity and a spreading width of 1.47 metres. This unit is run off the vehicle's hydraulic system.

Battery power is the main feature of the new E-Gator, which has a top

ground speed of 16mph. The cargo box can be electrically lifted and takes loads of up to 230kg.

Toro

A unique 'twister' Active In-Frame Suspension is said to be one of the main features of the latest utility vehicle from Toro - the Workman 2100.

The rear section, which contains the engine and cargo bed, is attached



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Nothing Kuts Like A Diamond





to the front platform by a rubber joint. This gives 15 degrees of flexibility in both vertical and horizontal planes. The company says it keeps the four wheels on the ground for added traction when travelling over uneven ground. The front axle has its own suspension system to provide a turning radius of 2.9 metres and the cargo box takes up to 681kg. There is an optional electric lift kit. Heavy-duty plastics have been used for the bodywork to minimise the weight and avoid rusting and rattle.

The 2100 joins the existing Workman range, which can be supplied in numerous specifications and configurations. These vehicles have a rear PTO and conventional hydraulic 3-point linkage as standard plus the option of a mid-mounted PTO. Two or four-wheel versions are available and power is provided by either diesel or petrol engines depending on the model. These units are designed to take a range of the company's own purpose-built turf care attachments plus most produced by other manufacturers.

Textron

Cushman is a name that has been associated with utility vehicles for over 36 years. Their latest range of Turf Trucksters from Textron are designed to accommodate the increasing number of attachments and accessories that are now available.

The three-wheeled Junior has a 17inch turning circle and dump box hydraulics are standard.

The four-wheeled version offers automatic or manual transmission, with independent front suspension and power steering. Hydraulics are standard and a heavy-duty PTO is optional on some models. There is a choice of petrol or diesel engines. Equipment including top dressers, sprayers, aerators and core harvester

can be operated with these machines.

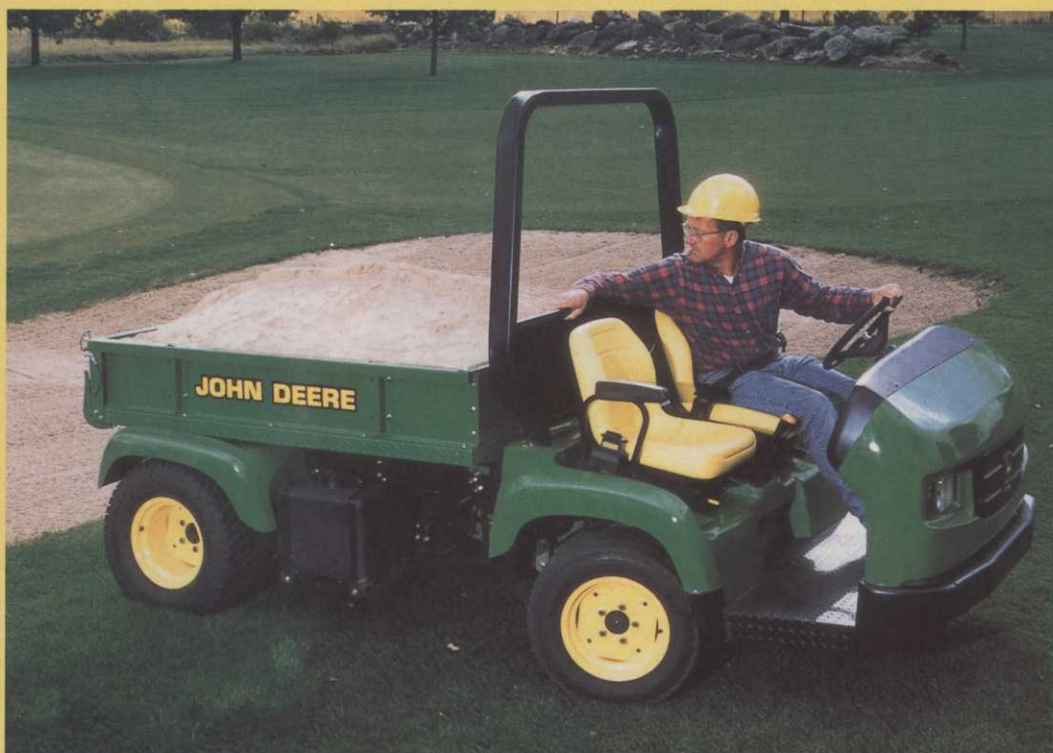
From Ez-Go there are the Workhorses which includes two petrol engine vehicles plus an electric powered model. The Workhorse ST350 is designed as all terrain vehicles and has a payload of 362kg.

When it comes to rugged terrain it is said the Cushman Hawk can cope.

It has a heavy steel constructed chassis and is capable of carrying up to 545kg.

Sisis

There are 30 attachments for the 32hp diesel Sisis 321. The unit is hydraulically driven to each of the wheels and a built-in differential





avoids surface marking when turning. A patented weight transference system on the rear three-point-linkage applies extra pressure to attachments when required, thus eliminating the need for extra weights. Low ground pressure tyres are standard. Power steering combined with a pivot steer chassis gives a tight turning radius on headlands and around obstacles.

Two or four-wheeled versions are available.

The Sis 21-1D has a 21hp diesel engine four-wheel hydraulic drive plus weight transference system and articulated steering.

Rear double-acting auxiliary hydraulic connections, pin and ball hitches are fitted as standard. Like the larger model this unit will operate a wide range of equipment.

Kawasaki

A diesel-powered version of the Mule is the latest addition to Kawasaki's range of low ground pressure trucks. Powered by a three-cylinder 23hp diesel the Mule 2510 is capable of carrying loads up to 500kg and has a towing capacity of 545kg.

Club Car

The use of aluminium throughout the construction of their Carryall is the big feature of their range of transport and utility vehicles, claims Club Car.

It is said to provide protection against the corrosive effects of surface spray from the turf. Two new models have joined the existing seven. The

total load capacity of the 272 is 545kg and the cargo bed takes up to 360kg.

The XRT is capable of carrying loads of 225kg and has an overall rating of 410kg.

Allett Mowers

Although designed mainly for bunker maintenance, the 18hp Diamond Versa Pro 2100 from Allett Mowers is said to have a range of groundcare attachments. These are operated from the hydraulic system and included is a 12-volt interface.

Power barrows

Allen Power Equipment's Sherpa is a four-wheeled self-powered barrow with a 200kg self-tipping hopper.

The 6hp DR Powerwagon Professional from Charterhouse Turf Machinery is fitted with wide floatation tyres and is capable of taking loads up to 362kg.

The Dennis Power Barrow has a load capacity of up to 250kg and there is the option of hopper, flatbed or skip. The unit also converts into a sprayer or water carrier.

IPU's Power Barrow takes and 0.5tonne payload and offers five forward and one reverse speeds.

Conclusion

From this feature it can be seen that there is plenty of equipment for moving material on the market. In addition, the utility vehicle can represent a cost-effective investment to which ancillary equipment can be added at a later date.

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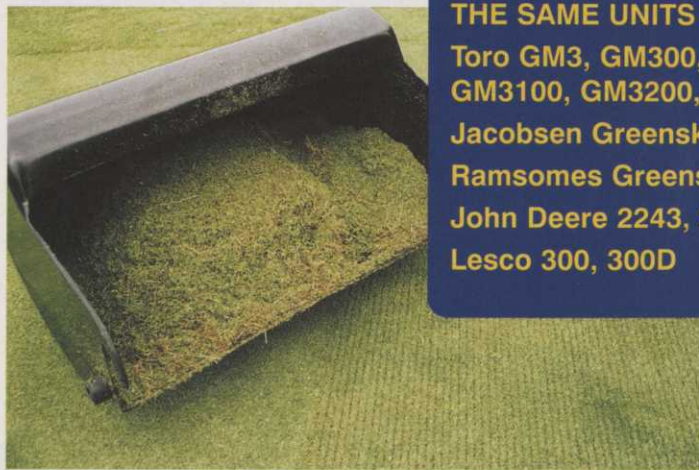
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Amenity grass breeding specialist, David Rhodes of Advanta Seeds UK, explains how breeders are giving greenkeepers a helping hand

1 Fields of dreams



Above: An aerial view of Advanta's breeding, research and trial facilities at Boothby Graffoe near Lincoln. The recently constructed reservoir, which holds just under 23 million litres of water, enables the company to replicate average rainfall in times of drought.

The stresses and strains we place on our sportsturf today, tests it to the limits. And these pressures are growing. Golfers, with more leisure time, want to play more rounds. Greens Committees want their courses to be in tip-top condition all year. There are also economic pressures on greenkeepers to cut labour costs, and environmental pressures to reduce chemical usage.

Amenity grass breeders recognise and understand these pressures. They

are working at the forefront of breeding technology, aiming to produce new cultivars that can cope with increased use, with less physical and chemical input.

Up until 1940, commercial use of amenity grasses in Europe was mainly restricted to trading of seed lots, collected from natural stands of species such as bent grasses and fine fescues. But in the 1960's a revolution took place in turfgrass breeding, when new varieties were developed

specifically for amenity use.

At the same time, the introduction of plant breeder's rights for amenity grasses, and the publication of cultivar lists – led to increased investment by breeding companies in this area. Over the past 20 years the number of cultivars included in the Common Catalogue of the EU – which lists all known, distinct varieties, has increased more than six-fold.

The traditional species sown on golf courses, are the red fescues and bents,

which have been in use since the 19th century. Red fescues make up the major part of greens mixtures where a smooth surface is a priority. Cultivars such as Mocassin now have good tolerance to close mowing, high shoot density, and fine leaves. This is a direct result of objective plant breeding over the past few decades. Newer cultivars of strong creeping red fescues are also finer-leaved, and produce denser swards, than they did ten years ago.

There have also been significant improvements in chewing fescues. Varieties like Center now produce high quality, dense, bright green turf, which stands up to close mowing, and has good resistance to disease.

Breeding improvements in ryegrasses have produced finer leaved cultivars, which produce a denser sward. Newer varieties such as the tough, hard-wearing Amadeus, which works well on ryegrass tees, also have a better resistance to crown rust and red thread, than previous varieties.

Breeding objectives

Seed breeders set clear objectives before they start the selection process, and find out from end-users what their expectations are, for the grass seed they will be using in the future. This understanding of the problems and aspirations of greenkeepers is essential to ensure that breeders develop appropriate varieties, which can help greenkeepers in their day-to-day work.

The objectives of our breeding programme, are to produce grasses that:

- tolerate high wear at low cutting heights
- recover quickly from damage/divoting
- grow slowly, which means less mowing
- are disease resistant
- establish quickly from seed – so that repaired areas are out of play for the shortest time possible.
- tolerate drought
- use less fertiliser

An overriding breeding goal is to encourage high reproductive capacity, for however superior the turf grass characteristics of a new cultivar are, if it is infertile, or fails to produce abundant seed, it will have no commercial future.

Linked characteristics

One of the greatest challenges for breeders is to select desirable characteristics, without adversely affecting other connected features. For instance selecting for less dependence on fertiliser, may increase a variety's susceptibility to disease.

Mowing is the most expensive aspect of turfgrass management. To

reduce the frequency of cutting, the growth vigour of the grass plant has to be curtailed. This can be done through breeding, and we are currently carrying out trials in Holland and Belgium, looking at the varying growth rates of a range of different cultivars.

However care has to be taken, as altering growth rate will have knock-on effects on speed of establishment and wear tolerance. Also, plants that grow more slowly are more prone to disease. The breeder's job is to try and combine these contradicting, but vitally important characteristics, into one and the same cultivar.

Twenty years ago, our breeders made disease resistance a top priority in their breeding programme. This foresight has now paid-off, with their latest varieties all showing very good resistance to red thread.

Our breeding programme is centred at state-of-the-art laboratories in Kapelle in Holland. Two senior breeders are supported by ten technical and development managers, working on both agricultural and amenity grasses. In some years the company will be able to launch three or four new varieties, in other years none – reflecting the element of chance inherent in conventional breeding.

The initial crosses are made in Holland. Seed from promising plants is multiplied up to give enough for trialling. This is carried out all over the world, depending on the species involved and the intended market.

UK trials

At our plant breeding station at Boothby Graffoe, in Lincolnshire, we establish merit trials on around 250 cultivars of amenity grass species each year. This is one of the largest set of amenity grass trials in the UK. We have been trialling amenity grasses here for 20 years, and provide our breeders with information about new varieties in relation to existing ones, under UK conditions. This data is also used to determine which cultivars are put forward for entry into subsequent STRI List trials. New varieties from other breeders are also tested here.

Currently varieties of perennial ryegrass, smooth stalked meadow grass and tall fescue are being evaluated in fairway trials, while cultivars of red fescue, browntop and creeping bent, hard and sheep's fescue are being assessed under a close mown regime.

The fairway trials plots are mown weekly during the growing season, at a height of 13mm, and as required at other times of year.

The close mown trials are mown two to three times a week, at a cutting height of 7mm from April to

September. This is relaxed to one cut per week, at 13mm outside this time period.

Both trials are sown in the summer and scored from the following March for two years.

Mixtures

As well as screening new cultivars, we are also trialling a range of commercial mixtures. When a greenkeeper buys a bag of grass seed it is usually made up of two, three or four cultivars, and we feel it is important to know how these varieties perform together.

We started these trials two years ago, and there have already been dramatic differences. When we look at shoot density, wear, tolerance to close mowing, cleanness of cut and disease resistance, the mixtures are out-performing the individual cultivars every time. This confirms the theory that the positive attributes of individual varieties, when combined in a mixture, produce a better sward than when they are sown in monoculture.

Biotechnology

It can take 15 to 20 years to bring a new variety to commercialisation using conventional breeding techniques. This time lag limits the rate of progress and precludes any quick response to changing market needs.

Biotechnology is changing this situation. Identifying favourable characteristics at genetic level, via gene mapping, allows more accurate selection. This takes some of the guess-work out of the system, and speeds up the breeding process.

This is a very exciting time for our breeders, who are anticipating that by using these new techniques, they can cut the development time by half or more – perhaps even down to five years. This would allow us to bring cultivars to the market much more closely suited to the users' current needs.

Overall the aim is to introduce genes that will increase stress tolerance – be it drought, disease or wear induced – and reduce growth, while trying to avoid any negative effects on sward density, ground cover or disease resistance.

While breeders are working hard to produce grass varieties ideally suited to greenkeepers' needs, these new generations of cultivars will still need top class management, to keep fairways, tees and greens in optimum condition all year round. An integrated approach will always be needed. Only by working together will breeders and greenkeepers produce the fine turf qualities required, by the increasingly demanding golfers of the future.



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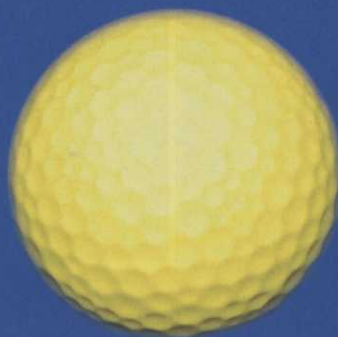
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Ad Ref 172

The BIGGA website has been extensively redesigned, both in content and style. Check out a whole host of new features at www.bigga.org.uk

Wonder Web

-  **Membership**
-  **Education**
-  **BTME**
-  **Latest**
-  **Directory**
-  **Links**
-  **Contact**

Above: A new colour coding system makes navigation easy on the BIGGA website

The new look BIGGA website was launched at the beginning of April and is active as you are reading this article.

Jam-packed with up-to-the-minute information about BIGGA, greenkeeping and the fineturf industry in general, the website will be an informative and invaluable tool to anyone connected with the industry, game or indeed, the casual visitor.

New features on the site include an enhanced membership section, with a secure access point for members only. Once you have entered your surname and membership number, you will be granted access to a secure membership area, specially reserved for our exclusive members.

Education has also received a major overhaul, with full details of regional and BIGGA HOUSE training courses, library and career information, salary recommendations, as well as details of all our major competitions and events.

Completely new for 2000, is our 'Latest' section. Here, as you might expect, are articles and features with only the most recent information in mind. There is also an event calendar, to help you plan your BIGGA diary. If you would like to publicise an event, seminar or outing you are having, follow the email link, let us know, and we will update the page.

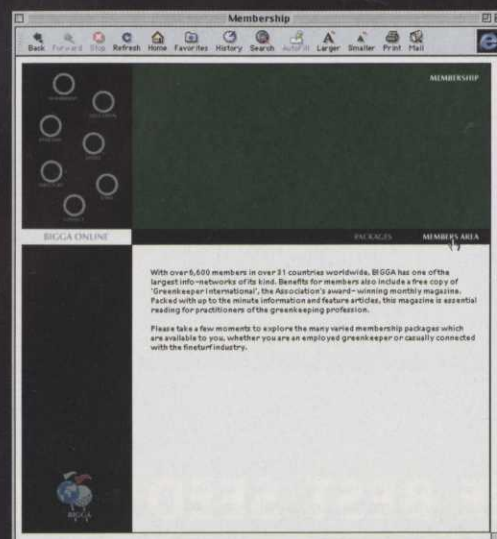
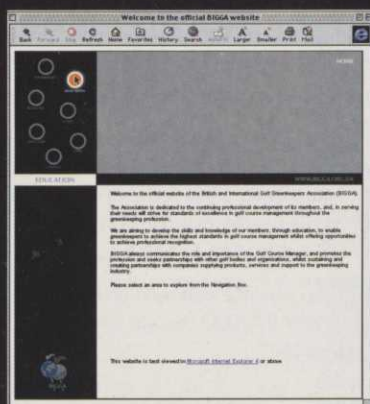
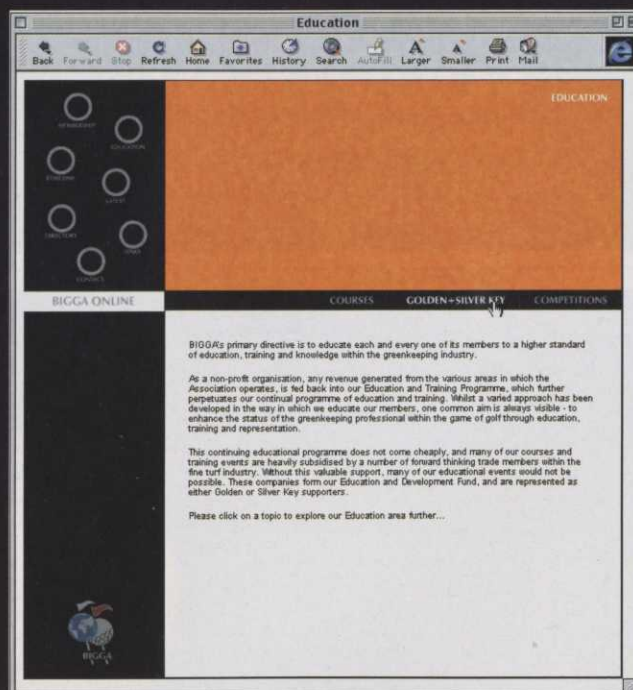
Also new for 2000, is the online BIGGA Golf Directory. Packed with industry links, products and services, the directory is searchable in both category and alphabetical orders. You can even link directly to a company's website, or email them instantly.

Keep checking this page regularly, as we will be launching our members directory in the very near future. So if you've lost contact with a colleague or friend, this is the place to get in touch with them!

There are also enhanced email and contact facilities for all of the staff at headquarters, so why not drop us a line!

<http://www.bigga.org.uk>

Please note: This website has been optimised to provide the best viewing experience when accessed using Internet Explorer 4 or above. Your browser preferences should also be set to accept cookies.



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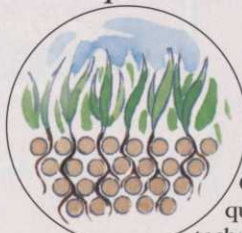
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Scott MacCallum looks at the recent controversial piece in The Daily Telegraph, the reaction to it and asks how best to move on from here

Q & A

Questions and answers

Many of you may have read, or perhaps heard about, the article which appeared in The Daily Telegraph, in February, which looked at the fine work being carried out at Temple Golf Club, the 1999 winner of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots.

Overall the piece was a positive look at the excellent work being done by Temple's Course Manager, Martin Gunn, and Chairman of Green, Malcolm Peake, but much of the attention the piece drew focused on the fourth paragraph which read: "Regular amateur golfers will be aware that during the last two decades course conditions throughout Britain have deteriorated alarmingly. This is particularly the case during the winter months, when the weather is at its worst."

At no stage does the writer, Colin Callander, until recently the Editor of Golf Monthly magazine, lay the blame

for this supposed deterioration at the door of the greenkeeper, but it is fair to assume that the golf playing readership of the Daily Telegraph will conclude that those responsible for the condition of the golf course are also responsible for any perceived drop in quality.

Now those within the greenkeeping fraternity know that, in the main, standards have indeed risen. How else could you cope with the demands for higher stimpmeter readings and increased play? But the fact that Colin Callander, a respected and knowledgeable member of the wider golfing community, feels otherwise should be a concern to us all.

Were the comments just the result of a short memory at the end of a long wet winter or is the problem more fundamental? Knowing Colin Callander well, I worked with him at Golf Monthly, I would give him more credit than the former option and having

spoken with him I know that he stands by his comments.

Therefore, should we be asking ourselves how do we get across to golf club members that course conditioning standards are indeed better now than they have ever been.

Should you be spending even more time talking with members and educating them in the job they pay you to do - the reason for aeration; why disease occurs; why the course needs to close and for what reason?

An exchange of information is important to clear up the misconceptions that can spread like wildfire and cause problems down the line.

John Ross, Course Manager at Laleham Golf Club, has already written eloquently on the matter and his letter is also printed but I'd be pleased to hear from any of you who have strong feelings on the problem, and indeed, ideas about how it can be solved.

Golf winning the battle against

Temple leading by example in the search for sustainable growth

By Colin Callander

When you first arrive at Temple Golf Club, near Maidenhead, there seems little to distinguish it from most other traditional British clubs. It has an attractive, but far from opulent, clubhouse which offers fare you might find at clubs all over the country.

It has its own professional's shop and even an obligatory pole on which a flag flies at half mast whenever a member dies. It all appears remarkable only because it is so unremarkable. Then you set foot on the course.

It is almost as if you have been transported back twenty or thirty years - to a time when British courses were in their prime. And never is this more apparent than if you visit in winter - when many other traditional clubs are so wet underfoot as to be almost unplayable. You can play here.

Regular amateur golfers will be aware that during the last two decades

course conditions throughout Britain have deteriorated alarmingly. This is particularly the case during the winter months, when the weather is at its worst.

Where once we could consider ourselves unfortunate to encounter temporary tees and winter greens even in the most inclement conditions, now they are commonplace for three months of the year.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that, at some clubs, golf is no longer a twelve month game. We might all fork out annual subscriptions which, on the face of it, entitle us to year-round golf, but the reality is that many courses are now in such a state of disrepair in winter as to dissuade all but the most enthusiastic golfers from venturing out at all.

Ten years ago Temple, like so many other clubs, was heading that way too. Then Head Greenkeeper, Martin Gunn, Chairman of Green, Malcolm Peake and Secretary, Keith Adderley

decided to transform the club's maintenance policy.

Their plan proved successful. So successful, in fact, that the club recently won the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association Golf Environment Award for 1999.

What Gunn, Peake and Adderley realised, was that the club, like so many others, had almost inadvertently, fallen foul of the "Green is Great" mentality. With grim consequences, it had become all the rage at clubs throughout the country.

Intent on replicating the verdant and lush conditions of Augusta National and other foreign Tour venues, Temple, and all too many other clubs just like it, began, little by little, to use more water and fertiliser than ever before. In turn, this began to encourage infestation of poa annua grass at the expense of indigenous bents and fescues.

Sadly, the process is self-perpetuat-

ing. The more poa annua, the more a club needs to water and fertilise just to maintain a reasonable playing surface. Put simply, the course becomes addicted to regular - and very unnatural - feeding. It is akin to agricultural land whose fertility becomes dependent on intensive farming methods, and which, in the long term, prove unstable and unsustainable.

Soon Temple was caught in a vicious cycle. It needed to spend more and more on maintenance, yet, inexorably, the condition of the course declined.

"It was a very real problem for us and one for which there was no easy cure", Gunn said. "It takes time to turn things round and you have to be prepared to face an awful lot of criticism along the way".

They had found, at the outset in particular, that they had to endure the wrath of their members - particularly when conditions first seemed to deteriorate rather than improve. Gunn

John Ross, Course Manager at Laleham Golf Club, took time to comment on the article

Concerning the achievements of Temple Golf Club

The journalist rightly is very complimentary about the policies of the Course Manager and the benefits that they are bringing to the golf course. The courage shown by Martin Gunn and those who stood by him is highly commendable and worthy of acknowledgement.

However the article made some generalisations, which were inaccurate and highly offensive to our profession, and these need highlighting. First, Temple did not win the environmental award because of an aeration programme, and cutting down on the use of water and fertiliser - if this were the case the award would be of little merit and many other clubs would also be able to claim the award. But because Temple has adopted a host of policies aimed at improving the natural qualities of their golfing environment. Because of this the award is a prized one and Temple is obviously a worthy winner.

Golf course conditions have not deteriorated over the last 20 years. In my experience

greenkeepers are now more educated than ever before, have available to them more machinery and resources than ever before, and have to cope with far greater volumes of traffic, and year round golf in a way never experienced before. The implication that golf was once a 12 month a year sport, and is no longer, is patently inaccurate.

Wide wheeled trolleys, large lightweight umbrellas, Gore-Tex suits and waterproof shoes (all relatively recent innovations) have led to an increase in the amount of winter golf played. Not to mention milder winters (certainly in the south). A statement like "Where once we would consider ourselves unfortunate to encounter temporary tees and winter greens even in the most inclement conditions, now they are common place for

almost three months of the year" is dangerous and has to be qualified. This statement sounds to me like a romantic vision of one's youth, which we all have from time to time, despite the austerity that may have been suffered. It is not fair on other Course Managers, in different situations to make generalisations like this in a widely read public newspaper. In fact it is irresponsible.

Green is great and the infestation of poa annua is not an advent of the last 20 years as intimated in the article. In fact Jim Arthur in Practical Greenkeeping states that the practice of over fertilising goes back as far as 1892. As for irrigation, yes this has only been around for the last 20 to 30, but only for summer use. And even a bent fescue green has a need of water in the summer. The primary benefit of irrigation has been to make poa manageable, and it has saved many greenkeepers their jobs

that did not have the luxury of the top-level support Martin Gunn has at Temple..

The article did seem to suggest that Temple had discovered a new formula for success, and not the application of fundamental greenkeeping principles as advocated by the vast majority of the industry. It did not mention that distinguished servants of our profession had been advocating these principles for decades. The paper also neglected to mention that the main source of pressure in the chase for over watered, lush surfaces (not just greens, but tees and fairways too) is golfers, often against the advice of qualified professionals like Course Managers and independent consultants. The paper also neglected to mention that when these policies (the golfers ones that is) result in diseased, saturated turf, temporary greens, and often closed courses, the person who pays the price is usually the individ-

addiction

said, "I know I was fortunate to find someone like Malcolm who was willing to take a few hits for me. I needed individuals support from some senior individuals within the club and that's what I got from Malcolm and Keith".

Gunn knew such backing was necessary because he was well aware it would not be easy to return Temple to its former glory. The only way was to kill off poa annua, a weak, shallow-rooted grass prone to disease, and, in turn, promote the return of native bents and fescues. This would have to be done by first starving the turf of water and fertiliser and then implementing an aeration policy designed to relieve compaction and promote root growth.

Neither is very difficult to achieve but both processes can cause short-term anxiety among members, particularly among those who fail to realise that the indigenous grasses will not return overnight. The greens, in fact, will look even worse before they

start to look better, which is why it is vital that a club talks to its members about what it is trying to do.

"I can't offer other clubs a simple solution, but what I would do is stress that communication is vital if they are to come through unscathed. Communication is king," Gunn said.

"You will never be able to appease the vocal minority, but what you can do is work on the silent majority. They are much more likely to be receptive if they know what you are doing and why you are doing it".

For a while at least even this determination to involve members was not enough to dispel all doubts. However, little by little, as the condition of the course began to improve and - of equal importance - as Gunn's natural maintenance techniques encouraged the return of indigenous species, the critics were silenced.

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ual whose advice was ignored in the first place, the Course Manager. And that point should have been emphasised.

The article also fails to mention that many of the recently built courses are on land once used for agriculture (or anywhere else the developer feels he can squeeze in a few holes) and not on the impoverished free draining soils of years gone by.

The problems faced by Course Managers on these sites have absolutely nothing to do with the situation at Temple. However, you can bet your life that members from these clubs read the article and drew their own conclusions. And the Course Manager will have to deal with the consequences. Again irresponsible.

Finally the article completely fails to mention the chase for speed on putting surfaces, and the intensity of cutting regimes, and the effect that this has on poa infestation. Another

missing fact of significance in the article.

Put simply, the journalist was trying to cover a huge subject, with years of history and research, and a massive diversity of opinions and situations and compare this with the success of Martin Gunn and Temple. The comments within the article about overfeeding and over watering were appropriate and useful (these were relevant to the situation at Temple and could be verified) The comments about the prime time of British golf courses, and the deteriorating state of British courses were dangerous.

At what point do we as an Association tire of these uninformed opinions that are being published in the public domain, and start to fight back? How many Course Managers and greenkeepers have to suffer the consequences of this ignorance before our voice is raised?

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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

East

Sorry there was no article last month but with moving to my new job, moving house, and my son being in hospital since before Christmas, I just didn't have the time to put an article together. But here we are this month.

I would like to thank everyone who has called me to wish myself and my family all the best as we wait for my son to go to Birmingham to have a liver transplant. He is now needing this as his liver is starting to give up and the operation will give him a better standard of life.

We were down at the Birmingham Children's Hospital the week after BTME for a week of tests and now he is on the liver transplant priority list, so all we can do now is sit and wait. Hopefully by the time you read this he will have had his transplant and be on the road to recovery. It has been a very hard time over the last few months but knowing people out there are thinking of us makes it a lot easier, so thanks to you all for your calls and thoughts.

OK down to business; the new season is here and the first major of the season is only a few weeks away. The Spring Tournament at the West Course North Berwick is on April 26 and is the second qualifying round for the BIGGA Championship in October, so get your entry form back and if you score well at North Berwick, and also scored well at Newbattle GC, at the autumn outing you could be on your way to the final!

We hope to see a BIGGA turnout for the millennium outing. The Section had a trip sponsored by Scottish Grass Machinery to the premises at Inverkeithing then onto St Andrews to meet Course Manager, Eddie Adams. We viewed the maintenance facilities and preparations for the millennium Open, I am told

it was a very good trip and worthwhile attending. Many thanks to Scottish Grass Machinery for the organising of this visit.

The Scottish Region Conference was exceptionally good this year and a very good turnout was in attendance to hear some very good speakers; thanks to our Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, for all his hard work in making this a great event.

Congratulations this month go out to George Purves and his wife, Sharon, on the birth of twin boys, Daniel and Jordan, who were born on February 18. Two brothers for Jamie! Well done to them and all the best for the future from all in the Section. Congratulations and all the best for the future to Swanston Head Greenkeeper, Richard Mullen and his girlfriend Claire, on their engagement earlier this year. (That reminds me, where's the 'phone number of the kilt hire shop?).

Well that's all for this month, hope to see you all at North Berwick at the end of the month. If anyone wants to drop me a line my new details are as follows: Chris Yeaman, The Head Greenkeeper's Cottage, West Linton Golf Club, West Linton, Peeblesshire, EH46 7HN. Telephone number 01968 661313 (home) I will inform you next month of my work number, 07901 846194 (mobile).

That's it 'till next time, cheers,
Chris Yeaman

West

Welcome once more to another round up of Section news. Let us hope and pray that by the time this reaches print, that the weather has improved dramatically and all of our courses are in great shape for the summer ahead!

First this month Stuart Taylor pens a report on a football match played recently at Scotstoun.

Report: At the last moment the pre-arranged match between ourselves and the East Section had to be cancelled. Instead we decided to play an Inter Section friendly with any interested parties. Stuart Taylor did a lot of 'phoning to raise the desired num-

ber for the day and although it was at short notice 20 people were arranged. As usual the casualties came but no notification was given, as it turned out 13 turned up. So why does Stuart even bother!

Eventually things got under way and six-a-side was arranged which turned out to be a good workout for everybody who participated. The final result being a nose in front for Stuart Taylor's team and Charlie Goodall's select fought hard to make it a tight result. Thanks to all who participated and the next game is against Central when they will make up the team. Against: Stuart Taylor, Gerry Bruen, Davie, Peter Cowan, Eddie Devine and Graeme Shearer. Can I say thanks to Colin Scott for being the referee as he came in for some real stick, how people change on a football pitch! Well done Colin.

Thank you to Stuart for supplying the above report, your efforts in organising these events is greatly appreciated by the participants and Committee alike.

The games night at Claremont Bowling Club, February 24, went ahead on schedule, however it was a disappointing turnout with only 20 in attendance. The results for the evenings play were as follows: Winners - Ronnie Bunting, Kilmacoll GC, and John Corbrick, Nairn Brown. Runners up: Cecil George, retired and Denis Tweddell, Bonnyton GC. Special thanks to John Scott Snr for all his hard work in setting up the night and to Nairn Brown and John Deere for raffle prizes, very much appreciated by the Committee and the members in attendance. Lastly thanks also the Hugh Somerville and Claremont BC Committee for use of their facilities.

Onto the 100 Club now; I was disappointed at the poor response from the letters sent to all ticket holders. Apologies to those of you, whose letter may not have reached its intended destination.

However, by 29 February, the deadline for closing, only 35 forms had been completed and returned. Thanks to those of you who were

prompt in returning your forms and monies. Therefore, the system of ticket and number allocation will be reviewed for the year 2001.

Thanks go to Mike Dooner, Thorntrees Landscapes, for sponsoring the 100 Club this year.

The spring outing is nearly upon us, April 27, Ranfurly Castle GC, please let the sun shine and the rain not. Please remember to return your entry forms as soon as possible to ensure a place on the tee.

Finally, congratulations are in order to Callum Gordon, Lenzie GC, and his bride Shonagh Taylor, married on March 11.

And so another Section news closes, if you have any snippets of information do not hesitate to contact me.

H: 0141 776 1532 M: 07050 173080 email: Ryrug@Lineone.net
Gavin Jarvis

Ayrshire

The new season will be upon us by the time you read this month's notes, I hope the weather has picked up and we are enjoying a good spring. I can't remember the last good one. Ian Donaldson called in the other day to tell me he was leaving Routenburn en-route to the Shetland Isles where he will take up his second Head Greenkeeper's position.

Ian asked me to thank all his friends who had helped make his time in our area most enjoyable and of course the Ayrshire Section wish Ian all the best with his new job. On the subject of spring Ian, how do the Shetlands compare with Ayrshire!

As mentioned last month the spring outing will be held at Western Gables on April 26 which will be our National Tournament qualifier. The day is reduced to one afternoon medal round at a cost of £17. Derek Wilson will have letters out soon or just get your entry in now, give him a call on 01294 276177 to avoid disappointment.

The autumn outing has been confirmed for Largs Golf Club September 21 when I will look for-

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ward to your visit to Kelburn. As promised although not yet finalised the 2001 outings are being scheduled for Brighouse Bay in the spring and Prestwick St Cuthberts in the Autumn all going to plan. That's all for this month, any news call me on 01505 683278.

Iain Barr

Central

New members are still coming in thick and fast and this month we extend a warm welcome to Robert Meikle, Craile GC; Gary McCandless, Balfour Golf Society; Christian Kitchen, the Duke's Course; Scott McKnight, Stirling GC; Stuart Robertson, Gleneagles; Peter Stewart and John Cunningham, both from St Andrews Links. Paul Murphy and his staff from Downfield Golf Club has also transferred to the Section but at the moment I don't have all their names so I'll give you them next month.

The lucky winner of the March draw for "Club 2000" is A. (Sandy) Armit, with ticket number 007 and a cheque for £50 is on its way to him. It appears I have upset a lot of members (so what's new) by saying that I will put their names in the magazine to remind them that they still have not returned their allocation of tickets for the draw, despite numerous requests for them to do so, well starting next month they will appear, as I don't know if they have been sold or not!

Andy O'Hara is organising a football match against the West Section for next month and has already held trial matches to select the strongest team possible as the West Section take their football very seriously. I'm not permitted to say too much about Andy's team selections or the team he supports, as this also upsets some members, not Andy, as he now has a fan club which covers the length and breadth of the country.

I have conceded one thing to Andy and that is if he scores the winning goal in the match he can write the next column for the mag-

azine. Will that keep you happy ML?

At the beginning of March a two day computer training course was held in Perth by Ken Richardson from HQ and I can recommend this course to anyone wishing to learn about computing, so if anyone is interested, please get in touch with me and I will arrange it with Ken for later in the year. Six members are required for each course.

John Crawford



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North East

Tyneside Golf Club again played host for our winter lecture. Our thanks to

Ged Cunliffe and Gary Waters on their presentation on behalf of Biotol. Not a bad turnout with 25 greenkeepers who all seemed to enjoy the talk.

It was nice to see people travelling from afar as Swarland Hall and Warkworth and Wearside, just goes to show you we must be doing something right! Many thanks to Terry Charlton of Turf-Care for bringing Biotol to the Section.

Congratulations to John Hood, formerly of Swarland Hall, on his new appointment at Linden Hall. Hope everything goes well for him.

As three members have resigned for different reasons, we have vacancies on the committee should anyone be interested please get in touch or we will see you at Bamburgh on the 13 April. Ken Rutherford and Ronnie Read have offered help on the competition days so that's a help at least.

Jimmy Richardson

North Wales

I've just heard that this winter is the sunniest since records began, I don't know where that was because here at Oenbigh we've got webbed feet! Ah well statistics, lies damned lies.

Talking of statistics, considering the

amount of greenkeepers in North Wales only myself and my deputy attended the recent first aid course run at the college. Remember it is law to have qualified first aiders at work so remind your secretary, committees, etc.

At the college we had the annual golf seminar which once again was excellent, but again statistically where were you? A lot of thought goes into this event as well as a lot of effort, I would like to thank all the trade for their support yet again, the WGU whose President chaired the event and Graham Wright for putting the day together, also a lot of praise must go to the caterers for an absolutely fantastic buffet. Don't get me wrong there was a good turnout, however it could have been better. I'm going to sound a trumpet for my own club here and say all the greenstaff attended along with the Secretary, a member of the greens committee and our Greens Chairman, Jim Wren, delivered a paper to the seminar. I felt proud of the dedication shown by my club. All that I am trying to say is if we can do it I am sure others can - just ask them - right, I'm off my soap box now!

Steve Jones, of Pwlllelli Golf Club, informed me of a Health and Safety course he attended in Anglesey which he said was superb and covered all aspects of health and safety law. If any of you out there are interested give Steve a ring on 01758 730 784. That's all for now folks!

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

Very little to report this month, by way of a change hopefully there will be more next month as spring arrives and greenkeepers everywhere come out of hibernation and start to repair the damage caused by the swarms of winter golfers.

Bob Lawton, Course Manager at Billingham GC, has agreed to continue as Secretary of the Cleveland Section for another year, or until a replacement is found, anyone interested in taking over should come forward. We must thank Bob for his continued service, without his loyalty the Section may have folded, we

could do with a few more "Bobs". Please support your Section more by attending the events it arranges for your benefit. Events to look forward to this year start with the spring tournament on April 11 at Ramside, this is a magnificent venue and well worth a visit, if you would like to play there are still a few places left, the cost is £10 to include you meal; to book contact Barry (Macam) Walker on 0589 658161 or 0191 5200294 or myself on the number below, please note that spikes must be worn.

The annual golf match against the North East Section is pencilled in for later July early August at Brancepeth GC. The event is to be sponsored by Rite-Feed again, they put on a superb day at Beamish GC last year. Unfortunately we were beaten 3-2. This year we hope to get revenge on our own patch. Rumour has it that Ian Pemberton has been practising four hours a day for the match after his poor performance at Beamish!

Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, is organising an Inter-Section ten pin bowling knockout, watch this space.

Any news contact me (please) on 07808 196558

Steven Jaques

North West

The end of February and still the rain persists, most courses appear to have spent the first two months of the year more often closed than open. Speaking to a couple of North-West members in mid February, they were saying that the courses were so wet the winter programme of work is way behind. Where have all the old fashioned winters gone? At least when the ground is frozen you can get machinery onto the course. Anyway the daylight hours are getting longer which is a good sign that possibly better weather is to come. The programme of events for the Section are complete and by now you should have received your fixture list. The first event is the Mere seminar, and with only 16 days to go from me writing these Section notes, the numbers are very low, I am hoping for a deluge of applications in the next few days. All the other events are: North

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West V North Wales; Hazel Grove GC; Thursday, April 20. Spring Tournament; Bury GC; Wednesday, May 3. Summer Tournament; West Derby GC; Wednesday, June 28. Regional Final; Fishwick Hall GC; Thursday 28 June. Roses Match; Longridge GC; Wednesday, August 16. Autumn Tournament; Denton GC; Thursday, September 7. Cumbria Cup; Penrith GC; Wednesday, September 13. Stewards Match; Stand GC; Monday, October 2. Presidents Cup; Wilmslow GC; Thursday, November 30.

Finally congratulations to Alan Jackson on his retirement. Alan has been a greenkeeper at Prestbury Golf Club for 25 years and officially retired on the February 25.

Alan was off work for the last ten months, after major surgery, and the golf club paid his wages right up to his retirement. We hope you enjoy a long and happy retirement Alan.

For the spring tournament at Bury Golf Club on 3 May you need to register with Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool, L4 9RB, enclosing a cheque for £15. Entries will not be accepted after 28 April. Lunch will be served from 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm. Tee off from 1.30 pm.

Any news, views, please contact me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

Northern

Unfortunately the Annual Dinner Dance had to be cancelled at short notice due to cancellations and a lack of support.

With better news the Northern Section & Rigby Taylor Seminar sponsored by Rigby Taylor at Bingley St Ives GC was a success with places having to be restricted to 80 people. This was a most informative day with speakers Martyn Jones on grass cutting - Myerscough College, John Holt on fertiliser - Rigby Taylor, Andrew Mair, Chris Peel, Nick Wright and Geoff Hodson on Golf Course Design, Construction and Environmental Issues - International Golf Design Practice and Associates.

Many thanks to Mark James for his attendance and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring and arranged the event. Thanks also to Bingley St Ives GC for their hospitality and catering.

The Spring Meeting will be held at Bradley Hall GC on Tuesday, April 11.

This event is kindly being sponsored by Whitemoss and SportsWorld and not by Rite feed as stated in March's issue. I apologise to both companies for this error on my part. Sorry.

Other confirmed events are as follows:- President's Day, Wednesday, 21 June, at Hollins Hall H&CC, Roses Match, Wednesday, August 16 at Longridge GC; Invitation Day, Wednesday September 6 at

Cookridge Hall G&CC.; Autumn Tournament, October 18 at Hornsea GC. Winter Golf, Wednesday December 6 at Huddersfield GC. All entries for the golf events are to be sent to myself and must be received along with the FULL amount of £17.50 no later than 7 days before the event. Entries will be on a first come first in basis, so book early to avoid disappointment. For the Roses Match if you want a hand in beating the old enemy then let me know of your availability so a winning team can be picked.

We welcome this month as new members:- David Griffin, Waterton Park GC; James Hewitson, Scarcroft GC; Gareth Butler, Knaresborough GC; Jamie Hainsworth & Nigel Graham, Shipley GC; Ed Carter, Calvery GC; Michael Pinfield, Painthorpe House G&CC; Lee Garrad, Otley GC; Frank Marshall, Boothferry Park GC. You can be assured of a warm welcome at any of our section events. If you have any queries don't hesitate in picking the phone up and giving us a ring.

There is no other news at the moment. If anybody has any information or ideas for section events either Educational or social then let me know. It is your Section. My address is 67 Asquith Avenue, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9QS or telephone at home 0113 2383188/mobile 07790 678572.

Andy Smith

Midland Region

East Midlands

On February 16 the Section held another Go-Kart evening at The Wymeswold Industrial Estate. The evening was generously sponsored by Toro-Lely UK, who not only subsidised the evening but also provided us with three great prizes! The evening consisted of a formula 1 format, of five races each and a semi-final and final.

After some eventful races, which included several shunts and near misses, the eventual winner was Andy McGreal, of Lingdale GC, with Adie Porter, of Greetham Valley, finishing second, for the second year running (third time lucky Adie!). Thanks for the evening should be extended to Andy Humble of Toro-Lely UK for the sponsorship and entertainment, and also to our Chairman Gavin Robson for organising the evening.

Also a trip to Toro-Lely was attended by 10 greenkeepers on 23 February. This consisted of a tour around the Toro-Lely premises escorted by Andy Humble, and the rest of the Toro-Lely staff. Unfortunately there were seven greenkeepers who failed to turn up for the visit. As meals have to be

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booked it is important to inform the Secretary if you find that you are unable to attend. However, on a brighter note those who attended the day were well catered for and received an excellent tour of the premises and were also rewarded with a free gift. Once again our thanks go to Andy and Toro-Lely.

By the time you read this article you should be in possession of your spring entry form, which is also the qualifier for this years Scotts/Charterhouse National Championship. If you have not received a form, please notify me as soon as possible and I will gladly send you one. Please remember that late entries will not be accepted.

Antony Bindley

Mid Anglia

Our first Section talk of the winter took place in late February, at South Beds GC. Mark Hunt, of Headland Amenity, gave an excellent presentation on "Understanding Fertilisers" and with so many different types now available on the market, I'm sure the people who attended were clearer on which types to use and when. Our thanks go to Mark and the 25 or so members who turned up and gave their support.

Our first golf fixture of the year is to be held at Northants County GC on April 20. This will be the usual qualifying event for the National

Tournament and the final format for the golf will be decided nearer the time. Entries by the usual form to Richard Saunders in good time please, should you wish to participate.

Paul Lockett

Midland

All the entry forms have now been sent out along with all the information regarding tournament. If you have not received your copy please do not hesitate getting in touch.

There is one error on the entry forms, this is regarding the price for the Rigby Taylor knockout. The correct price per pair is £5 not the £20 as advertised.

I will be able to report more news on the tournaments in future reports and if any of you are still unsure about playing in any of our tournaments please get your applications in early as they do tend to fill up very quickly.

Regarding information about this report, I will again ask for your input and news that will be of interest to the members.

My contact telephone numbers are as follows: Home 01562 861434 or Mobile 0370 956238

Jonathan Wood

Berks, Bucks and Oxon

First of all I would like to echo the committee and indeed the members'

thanks to Tony French for the time he spent working hard to help make the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Section what it is today.

Tony is leaving the Lambourne Club for pastures new and we wish him all the best in his new venture.

It seems only a short time ago we were preparing for the last competition of the season and yet the start of another season is almost upon us, the winters seem to be getting shorter every year!

Golf Days have been finalised for the forthcoming season and are as follows: Spring Fixture, Wokefield Park, Monday, April 17. Summer Fixture, Richings Park, Thursday, August 3 Autumn Fixture, East Berkshire, Monday, October 2. Turkey Trot, Frilford Heath, Wednesday, November 15.

The Rigby Taylor Knockout is in the process of being arranged.

Could all members be reminded that membership should be renewed when due and any changes of address forwarded to the Head Office.

It has been agreed at committee that a fee of £20 will be charged for all the Golf Days and we hope that a good turn out for these events will continue in the coming season.

Congratulations to Kevin Tilly who has been appointed as the new Head Greenkeeper at Bishopswood GC. Kevin worked with me at Newbury

and Crookham Golf Club and I am sure he will do very well in his new position.

Once again I ask for feedback for this monthly report - tell us what is going on in your Section and in turn it will be relayed to the rest of the members.

Wishing you a good start to the season and look forward to seeing you at this years events.

Ross Wilson



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Westurf - April 12 at Westpoint, Exeter

All registration cards of those present on the day will be entered into a free draw. the prize will be a round of golf for four on the Nicklaus Course at St Mellion, two buggies and lunch. The total value of this prize is £200.

Again indoors at Westpoint in Exeter. Bigger and better than ever. Four Education seminars this year; Shaun Simones PhD "The benefits of Microbials in Turfgrass Management" David Shelton "Sportsturf Drainage - now affordable for the majority?" Nigel Church "Maintain to save"



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There will be first aid demonstrations and of course all the leading suppliers and manufacturers will be represented. This is the only show in the South West where you can see and compare all the latest machinery, technology and amenity products.

Paula Humphries

Devon and Cornwall

More than 70 members attended the Section's Avoncrop-sponsored meeting held at Trevose GC on Thursday, February 24. With heavy rain forecast for the day we arrived at Trevose Golf Club to a very pleasant morning which was a relief to the fifty members competing for the Avoncrop Trophy and a place at this year's Scotts/Charterhouse National final.

Martin Townsend of Scotts was in attendance and kindly donated three bottles of port, two for our golfing members and one for our non-golfing members.

It was also nice to see 15 green-keeping members on the guided course walk. Our guide was Course Manager Trevor Bennett, as always when you are in Trevor's company the banter was excellent.

After a superb lunch John Palfrey representing the day's sponsors, Avoncrop, presented the Avoncrop Trophy and prizes on behalf of Avoncrop Amenity:- 1. M. Tucker, Saunton, +6; 2. T. Ramsden, Budock Vean, +5; 3. K. Yeoman, Dartmouth, +3. National Championship Qualifiers:- T. Ramsden, Budock Vean, and M. Tucker, Saunton.

Our afternoon educational talk was presented by solicitor, Julian Parry, on Employment Law which completed an excellent day, the Section would like to thank Trevose and all their staff who made our day so special, with a special mention to Trevor Bennett and his staff who had the course in excellent condition.

A big thanks to Avoncrop for sponsoring the day, also to John Palfrey and Martin Townsend, our starters.

Your attendance is required at this year's Westurf at Westpoint, Exeter on April 12, you will be able to view all the latest machinery and products available, there will be an excellent seminar programme and also there is a large demonstration area which is likely to be BIGGA than any company day!

Richard Whyman

South Wales

On February 9 our evening lecture at Pencoed College was changed from guest speaker Peter Johnson to Jack Wheeler and Dave Nichols, part of the H20 Group Watermatation 2000. Jack gave us an insight into the types of sprinklers, use and their positioning. Also, which was most interesting, the different types of pipes, sizes and the flow of water through them. For what was a short notice, on behalf of the Section I would like to thank Jack and Dave for their informative but very interesting evening which was yet again well attended, keep it up!

I'll bring you up to date with the Annual Quiz on the fifth of this month with the IOG, also our lecture on March 8 and this month's WESTURF at Westpoint next month.

A date for your diary - May 3 our golf tournaments begin at Southerndown GC so when you receive your flyer fill it in and be set to win.

Last but not least, congratulations to Ian Dixon, who works at Royal Porthcawl GC, and his wife, Jennifer, on the birth of their second child and to Lance Evans, also from the Royal Porthcawl and fiancée Liz on the birth of their first child - who knows they might have green fingers too!

Richard Hatcher

South West

The Winter Tournament sponsored by Lawson Products, was held on February 23 at Painswick GC.

At 4,780 yards, it is not the longest of courses, but it is by no means the easiest. The course is set high on the Cotswolds, with some stunning views across the surrounding countryside. It is also located on common land, which creates some unusual hazards and obstacles in itself.

As we were about to send our drives off the second tee, a lady riding a horse pulled up alongside us, appeared lost, then cracked her whip and shot off straight up the middle of the fairway with huge turfs flying everywhere. She never even bothered to replace her divots! The third hole was also quite amusing with walkers and families rambling over the fairways with their unleashed dogs grabbing our balls and running off with them!

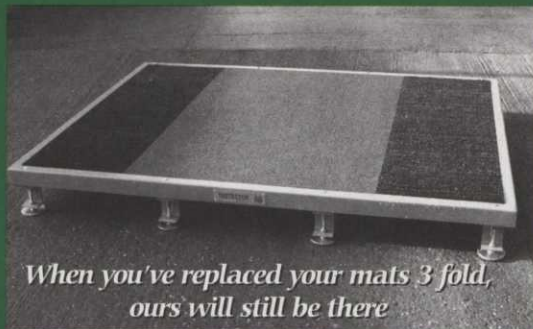
Despite all of this, some excellent scores were achieved on greens that were true and fast. Usually on common land the greenkeeper is restricted in their input of fertilisers, water, pesticides, etc to the absolute bare minimum; maybe this explains why the greens were so good.

Our new handicap officer, John Keenaghan, was also on hand at Painswick, and he was cutting people before they had even teed off. This I'm sure will result in more fairer and

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competitive tournaments. The actual results were as follows:

1. J. Keenaghan 40 points (best back 9); 2. M. Freeman 40 points (better back 9); 3. R. Darcy 40 points (better back 6).

Nearest the pin was won by M. Freeman. Best gross was J. Hamlet with 72. Winner of the "Hidden 9" was G. Ackerman and the best trade score was won by Mr Sinker Junior.

Once again our thanks go to George Sinker, and Lawson Products, who loyally sponsor this tournament year after year, and give particularly generous prizes.

Head Greenkeeper, Dean Roberts, and his staff are also congratulated for the set up of the course, the Secretary for allowing us courtesy of the course, and also the clubhouse catering staff for the meal afterwards (although I'm still wondering what ever happened to the pudding!).

The next event is just a couple of weeks away, and this is the Spring Tournament at Clevedon Golf Club on 18 April, so make sure you enter that one.

I've arranged a number of training courses that you may be interested in, which include the following: A Foundation Spraying Module on Thursday 11 May with two spaces left. A PA6 Knapsack Spraying course on June 8, which also has two spaces left. A one day First Aid course at The Southern Ambulance College,

Chippenhams, on Wednesday, October 11. My telephone number is 01249 78332.

I am still receiving different views on how we can increase numbers attending Section events, and these will be passed on to the Committee. As I stated in last month's article, I am stepping down from this position at the next AGM in November, so please contact me if you would be interested in taking over. This position will look excellent on your CV and will seriously enhance your career (well that's what my predecessor told me!).

Paul Cunningham

Northern Ireland

This time last year a blocked drain on the course flooded most of the first fairway and such was the depth of water we needed a small boat to unblock the drain and as I sit writing these notes, the rain for the third day this week thunders on the shed roof - better get those oars polished!

Well, as I'm sure most of you are aware, two have become one. No, I'm not referring to a Spice Girl record, but the very successful merging of the North and South-East

Sections of BIGGA. An EGM was held at Greenmount on February 16, on a dreary winter's night and it was amazing to see so many people turn out and show a good interest.

The amalgamation got a definite yes vote and it was generally felt that this will strengthen and entice more people to join the Northern Ireland Region of BIGGA. This swells the numbers to over 80. This year's committee is aiming to double this figure, so if you're not a member please join and see the benefits for yourself. Education was high on the list with a series of golf events thrown in for get together and socialising. Hopefully a full agenda will have landed on your doormat before these notes reach you, giving you full details on what's planned.

The new committee remains somewhat unchanged from the old South-East section, but the line up is as follows: Chairman - Graham Wylie, Vice Chairman - Jonathan McCabe, Secretary - Ken Henderson, Handicap Secretary - Eamon Crawford.

I retained my position and gained a helpful assistant in the shape of Charles Edgar, from Castlerock GC. Hopefully between the two of us we can cover most of the province and keep you up to date as to what's happening.

Stakis Park GC has received another huge boost by the notification that a new centre of excellence is to be built. This will comprise of indoor practice facilities ie; chipping greens, putting greens and driving range and also outside three new greens will be built - all sown out with different cultivars. The centre will be home also to the GUI who will set up office there. This is a great lift for golf in the province backed by investment from the Sports Council and we have no doubt it will pay off.

Congratulations to Darren Clarke on winning the World Match play on February 28 - a stunning victory from home grown talent. Darren's father Godfrey, Head Greenkeeper at Bally Castle Golf Club, I'm sure couldn't be more proud. This is an excellent achievement, won by an extremely great ambassador for the sport.

Iain Harrison.

Around the green

Overleaf, Derek Farrington's review of The Gentleman's Evening at Waltham Heath

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South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

Firstly let me apologise to all those greenkeepers who sent off applications for the Annual Gentlemen's Evening and were unable to be on the start list as the event was a very early sell-out.

Invitations were sent out on 1 February 1 and by the 8th all available places had gone. Walton Heath do in fact ask us to keep numbers to 100. Don't tell them but we actually teed off with 108!

Talking of which, the intervals between each four-ball was reduced from eight minutes to seven and our Starters, Dennis Smith, of Rigby Taylor, and Allan Stow, of Vitax, did a great job getting everyone off on time.

The weather was marvellous, warm and dry with no wind to speak of and really should have prevented the five and a bit hour rounds that the back of the field had to contend with, but it did lead to some very good scoring.

Good scores for Walton Heath that is!

What a magnificent golf course and in such superb condition that Clive Osgood and his team really did deserve all the praise that was heaped on them at the end of the day.

I'm sure that I say it every year, but the reception that we get from Walton Heath is incredible, nothing is too much trouble, be it on the golf course or in the Club House.

The evening meal was superb and served with very generous portions of wine!

We were joined by the Captain of Walton Heath, Reg Hutchinson and Chairman of Green, John Jessop, together with lots of trade members who were unable to play as spaces were limited, but whose generosity helped provide such wonderful prizes. Sponsors of this event are listed below.

Robert Ryder, the professional from Ashburnham Golf Club in South Wales, replied to the Toast to Guests and proceeded to entertain all present with golfing stories and some very good impressions of well known personalities.

The problem now will be to find after dinner speakers as good as Robert! We could of course use Reg Hutchinson after his year as



Above: Reg Hutchinson, (right) Captain at Waltham Heath GC presents Mark Harvey of Epsom GC with the Shulockie Putter

Below: Dave Wall, of Rigby Taylor, and Allan Stow, of Vitax, have been linked to this event for over 16 years. As they announced their retirements, both were presented with a memento of the day.



Captain is over because his reply was very entertaining.

Next followed a presentation by the Chairman of the South East Region, Raymond Day, to two stalwarts of this event. Dave Wall, Rigby Taylor, has been measuring short holes at this event for 16 years and Allan Stow, Vitax, starting the event for just as long.

Both are retiring and each received a memento of the occasion presented to them with grateful thanks for services rendered.

With dinner and speeches over it was time for Reg to present the prizes, the winners being: 0 - 9 Handicap and the Shulockie Putter, Mark Harvey, Epsom GC. 10 - 18, Ray Clark, Channels GC. 19 - 28, Malcolm Smith, Regiment Way. Guests and Trade, Tom Henner, The Drift GC. Greenkeeper playing with Club Official, Carl Crocher

and John Cook, Orsett GC. Sisis Putting, Mick Burton, Rigby Taylor Short Holes, Mike Gould, Copthorne GC, Ian Willett, Thorpeness GC, George Brown, Deansgate Ridge. I would add that the Toro Workman 2100 put up by John Shaw as a prize for a hole in one at the 11th was unclaimed!

As promised, here is a list of our sponsors for the day: Aventis Environmental Science, CMW Equipment Ltd. E & S Sports Grounds Ltd. GEM Professional Ltd. The Greenkeeping Supply Co. The Scotts Co Ltd. Sheerwater Leisure Ltd. Sisis Equipment Ltd. Uap Ltd. Avoncrop Amenity Products. Ernest Doe and Sons Ltd. Farmura Ltd. Rigby Taylor Ltd. Rolawn Ltd. John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd. Sheriff Crop Care. Tacit. Vitax Ltd.

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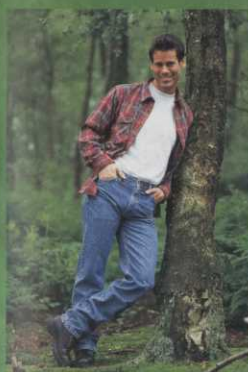
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Arne van Amerongen describes his work on a course where nose bleeds are an occupational hazard...

Once in a lifetime

The opportunity to build a golf course at an altitude of 1900 metres (well over 6000 feet) comes but once in most people's lifetime so naturally I was very pleased to be asked to supervise the extension of the golf course at Arosa, a small skiing resort not far from Davos, high up in the eastern Alps in Switzerland.

The original nine holes were designed as long ago as 1941 by Donald Harradine, an English golf professional who, pre-war, became Golf Course architect in Switzerland. However, the golf course was not built then but opened in 1946. Fifty three years later Donald Harradine's son, Golf Course Architect Peter Harradine, re-designed a complete new layout to extend the Golf Course to 18 holes.

Co-incidentally, Jim Arthur, advised on maintenance at Arosa during his regular visits to many of Donald Harradine's courses in the late 1940's.

It goes without saying that this site produced many unusual problems – not least being the rarified atmosphere at this altitude. This was a particular problem to me, as it was not possible to use vehicles on this mountainous terrain if damage was to be avoided, and it took me some three weeks to become acclimatised.

Walking as opposed to riding has, of course, one major advantage familiar to all greenkeepers, namely that you see far more on your feet than on wheels, and so can avert problems by timely detection.

A major problem in these mountains is, naturally, the weather. Even in summer (June until September) you can expect at least one day of snow in every month. However, during this construction, rain, rather than snow, was our major problem. We had suffered 237 mm in August and 270 mm in September! We had only four to five months for construction so such heavy rain was a considerable hindrance and, over and above this, snow started in earnest in the first week of October.

Fortunately, we were blessed by having more than 40 cm depth of good top-soil over most of the site and there were no big boulders to move. We "used the land we were given," retain-



Snow stopped construction in October, last year

ing the natural contours as much as possible, with virtually the only earth-moving on green and tee sites.

Ponds were also constructed, both for ecological reasons and attractiveness and, indeed, throughout the whole construction we had to be extremely conscious of conservation restraints.

For earth movement we used smaller machines, such as the Cat 215 and the Akkermann II 14, but one machine which we found to be especially useful on such steep slopes was the Mezi Muck. This was nicknamed the spider because it works on four independently operated legs, rather than tracks, giving it great stability.

In addition to conservation, restraints we had to cope with cows which graze the Golf Course in Summer. Greens and tees have to be protected by electric fencing when the Golf Course is in play, but luckily during construction the cows were moved elsewhere!

Greens, tees, fairways and surrounds were seeded with a higher percentage of highland bent (*agrostis castellana*), which is much tougher than the so-called creeping bents which were judged not to be satisfac-

tory under these testing conditions. Construction was to full perched water table standards, with particular attention to intercept drains on the perimeter of greens to intercept both surface flow from surrounding steep slopes and also sub-surface lateral drainage, as well as a conventional herringbone system.

This attractive course, set in spectacular Alpine scenery, with a

wonderful flora and wild life, may have a very short season, as well as high rainfall and snow, but it dries remarkably quickly and one can play (and work!) only three days after the snow thaws.

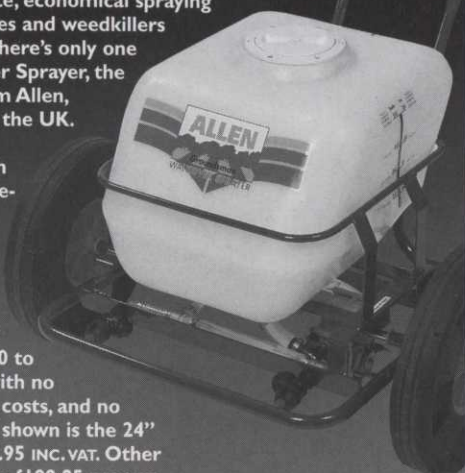
My view is that the future trend of architectural work will be in renovation, re-modelling and extending existing golf courses rather than in building new ones.



The new 18th green showing herring-bone and perimeter drain lines

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'Let us never negotiate out of fear - but let us never fear to negotiate.'

John F. Kennedy

Salaries - a sensitive issue

Despite the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers Salaries and Conditions of Employment, Golf Greenkeepers often feel that many employers ignore these recommendations and prefer to negotiate with their employees individually. If greenkeepers wish to avoid disappointment they should learn to negotiate. That said, the thought of negotiating one's salary appears as a daunting prospect for some. However, with a little research and preparation, it need not be.

Salary discussions will probably be part of your selection interview, but they may also form part of your meetings with network contacts or recruitment consultants.

Of course, salaries are a sensitive issue and should be handled courteously and professionally, with both sides feeling they have reached a satisfactory agreement. We should not view these discussions as confrontational.

When to raise the subject

The keys to successful salary negotiations are timing and knowledge. Mention salary too early in the process and you will appear to be more interested in money than the job. But if you delay until the offer is in writing, the employer may be reluctant to negotiate.

It is important to distinguish between simple questions about the salary offered ('what range of salary do you think is appropriate for this

job?') and negotiating your salary. You will have to judge when it's appropriate yourself, but these points may help you.

If you already know the salary offered

- recruitment agencies, public sector jobs such as with municipal golf courses and advertised vacancies tend to state the salary, so there is no need to ask for information
- only mention it at the end of the interview if you think they are likely to offer you the job and it is appropriate to start negotiating
- you cannot normally negotiate with a recruitment consultant or agency, but you can find out salary bands

If you don't know the salary

Timing will vary according to the type of interview. What you should do will depend on the stage of the interview.

If it is just a screening interview

- you can ask for information about the salary range at the end of the interview
- it is not appropriate to start any kind of negotiation

If it is the main interview and they give you the salary range up front

- knowing their intentions puts you in a stronger position
- do not start any negotiations unless you are sure they are keen on you

If it is the main interview but they do not mention salary

- ask for basic information about the salary range at the end of the interview
- find out what the next stage is
- they may start negotiating with you. This probably means they are keen; start negotiating

Whenever you are sure that you are their first choice

- you can start to negotiate
- your strongest bargaining point is when they want you, but before they've got you
- if they say they will put their offer in writing don't wait! Broach the subject in detail and start negotiating
- if the employer asks directly 'How much?' try referring the question back by enquiring what range they have in mind; alternatively, state your requirement and gauge their reaction.

Your money or your life

Knowledge is power

You don't want to appear aggressive by being too firm, but you need to be assertive and have the confidence of standing on firm ground knowing what you need, what the market will bear and, ideally, what the employer can offer.

Know your needs and your value. Make a fair claim and back it up.

- you need to avoid over- or underpricing yourself
- review your financial needs and compare them with your current or ideal salary
- work out the total value of your package, before and after tax, so that you have figures ready for comparison
- include benefits such as pension bonus, car, shares, health cover etc
- weigh up their worth against factors such as job satisfaction, prospects, location

Know the market and know your worth...

- research the market value of someone with your skills and responsibilities
- BIGGA, network contacts, and job advertisements can provide this information
- if the employer asks your salary expectations you can then give a realistic range

Know the employer's limitations, and what they can afford

- public sector and some private sector employers may have defined salary ranges tied to a grading structure, possibly with defined starting salaries
- this means there may be little room for negotiation, although the salary is probably fair with a clear review policy
- more informal employers often do not have pay scales for jobs, and individual salaries and reviews depend on individual negotiating skills, management decisions and peer group salaries
- many of these types of employer want to obtain your services for as low a salary as they can negotiate.

Negotiating techniques

If the salary package is lower than

your expectations, try negotiating rather than rejecting it immediately, as there is often some leeway. It is better if you can get the employer to start talking first as you will be able to establish their entry positions. But don't start negotiating until you are sure that you are their first choice.

Make clear what you want

- start with the salary itself and then move to the benefits package
- explain that your minimum salary level is somewhat higher than the offer and that you would ideally like a higher figure

...but show it is well-considered and you are reasonable

- put forward a rationale to support your position
- refer to your research on market figures
- reinforce your commitment to the job

Be cautious about being offered a salary which looks too high; there may be unforeseen problems and you could be vulnerable in a future redundancy programme.

Be prepared to negotiate...

Learn to signal and recognise signals, that is, subtle hints that suggest possible areas for movement or concessions. Link proposals into a package using the "If you, then I" formula.

E.g. "If you would be willing to consider investing in my training for NVQ Level 4 and cover the costs of taxing and insuring my van, then I might be willing to agree to the salary on offer for the first six months pending a subsequent salary review."

If they won't negotiate

If the employer will not be flexible in their offer, or if their offer is not good enough, ask them for time to consider. You may have more offers in the pipeline or they may reconsider.

... still on a positive note

If it is clear that you are not going to reach an agreement or accept the job, be sure to end on a pleasant note. If the lack of agreement was simply

over salary or some other condition, they may approach you several months later and improve their offer. They may also remember you and consider you for other jobs.

Your current salary

You must avoid using 'sales tricks' such as deliberately avoiding answering questions about salary. It looks suspicious, so if the interviewer asks for your salary, tell them. Otherwise, only volunteer it if it is clearly to your advantage e.g. if you know the salary on offer and it is near your existing package

Who else may ask about salary?

Your network contacts may need to know your salary expectations so that they can arrange introductions at the appropriate level. Tell them honestly, giving them a realistic upper and lower figure. Anyone they refer you to may ask similar questions. This need not prejudice subsequent negotiations.

Recruitment consultants and agencies

Volunteer appropriate information

Agencies and consultants need to know both your current salary and your expectations. Employers usually ask them to identify candidates within specific salary ranges. The salary level also classifies people who approach them directly. This is why you should be realistic and do not pitch yourself too high or too low.

Employers who advertise

There is considerable debate on whether to include salary details or not. The dangers are that if your salary is higher than the one on offer, you may be regarded as too expensive, or with suspicion (why will he or she take a drop?). If it is significantly lower, you may be regarded as too inexperienced. Therefore...

- if the advertiser asks for your salary details, you should give them
- if there is no mention of the salary offered and they have not asked for your salary details, don't mention it
- if the salary offered was stated in the advertisement and they have

not asked for your details, only state them if it is clearly to your advantage

Speculative letters

If you make a direct written approach to employers, do not mention salary as they may reject you on salary grounds alone, before considering what you could offer them. When you are calculating the value of packages proposed by employers, you need to look beyond the salary figures. You are unlikely to glean all the information you need at interview without looking mercenary, but the written offer should give full details

Basic salary

- is it at the market rate?
- how often is it reviewed?
- is it based on performance?
- how is performance measured?

Bonuses

- do they pay them?
- what are they based on?
- are they pensionable?
- is there a profit sharing scheme?

Pensions

- what type and what sort of benefits?
- what contributions do you and the employer make?

Other benefits

- car
- medical cover
- service contract
- holiday entitlement
- notice period



Brin Bendon is the Managing Director of Vector Training Ltd., an approved training provider for BIGGA and many other corporate and public sector clients. Brin is well known to many Greenkeepers in his role as one of the lead tutors on the BIGGA's Management Development Programmes. Vector Training can be contacted via telephone on 01904 642462 or by email: enquiries@vector-training.demon.co.uk.

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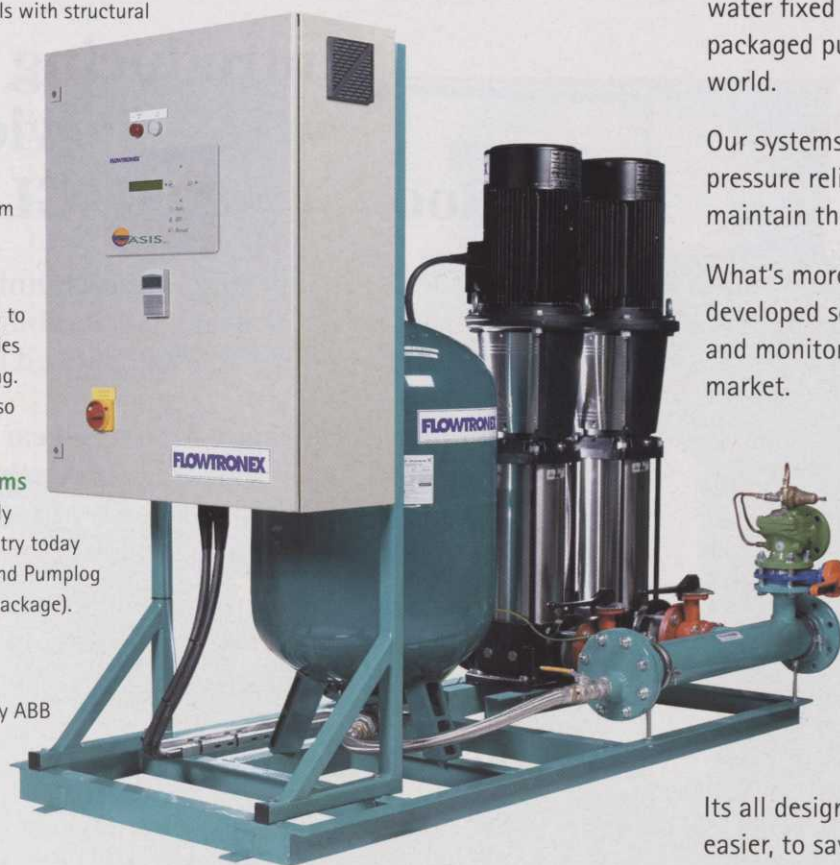
Our in-house control panel department uses high reliability ABB variable speed drives with Allen Bradley control gear as standard for world wide spares and service.

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- * The new performance nozzles improve water distribution.

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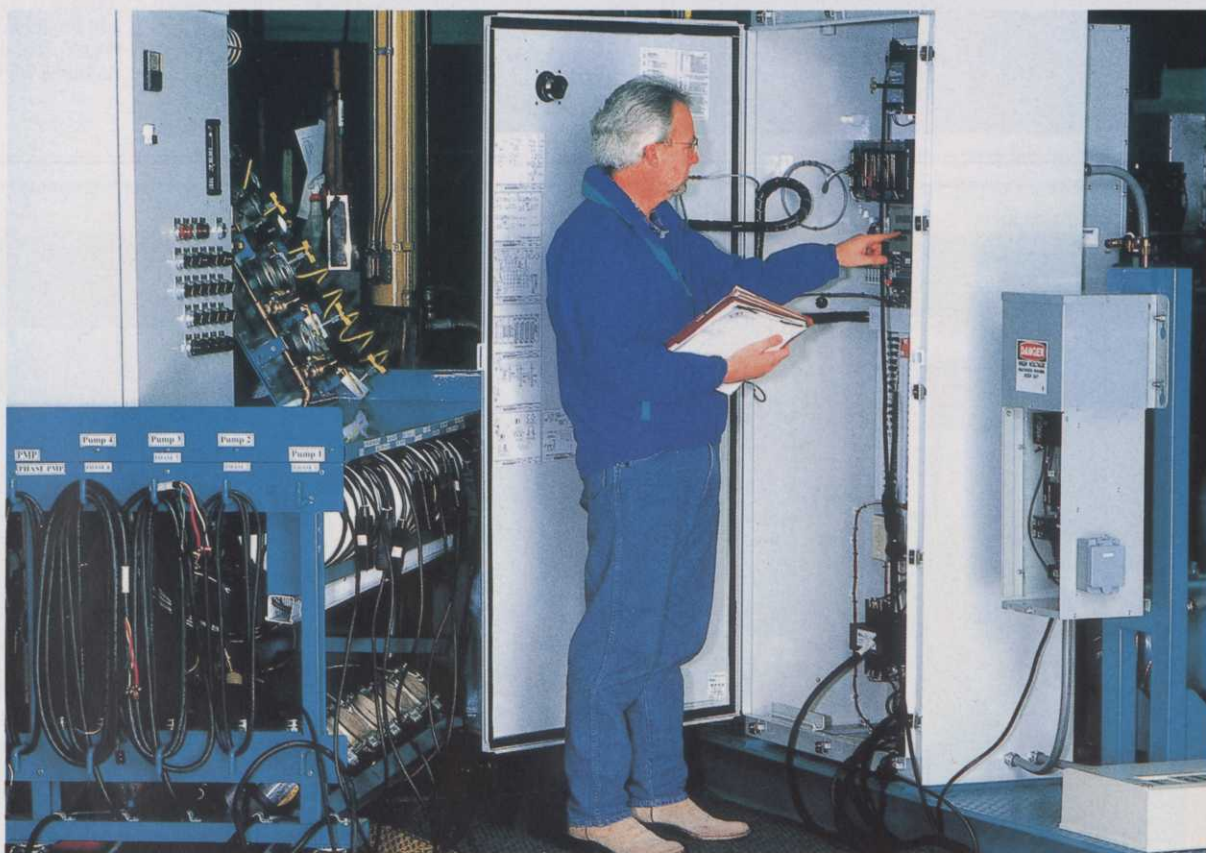


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Golf course managers throughout Europe are the latest converts to advanced pumping system technology that is revolutionising the way courses pump water. Kevin Shaw of Flowtronex Europe investigates...

Cruise control



Final checks to control panels before shipping to site

The new intelligent pump systems are more efficient and cut down on waste and maintenance - all important factors in helping to reduce bottom-line costs.

The secret is variable speed control - known in the trade as Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) - which regulates water pressure, extends the life of piping and reduces energy consumption.

Today VFD accounts for more than 80 per cent of all pumping systems sold to golf courses in the United States and now it is set to challenge the conventional technology used on most of Europe's fairways.

Traditionally, irrigation pumping systems are fed by fixed-speed pumps, which function only at full throttle. During non-irrigation times, or low flow demands, a smaller jock-

ey pump keeps pressure in the system. Once the irrigation system is back on line the main pumps are activated and a surge of water shoots through the piping to maintain line pressure while the sprinklers are operating.

These fixed speed systems carry with them certain drawbacks including pipe blowouts, power inefficiencies and additional maintenance. The new

Cruise control

VFD technology brings with it smoother start-ups and gradual pressure increases, reducing wear and tear on pipe work, cutting electricity consumption and requiring less day-to-day maintenance.

Cruise control

Variable Speed Drive systems can be compared to cruise control on a car. Just as cruise control maintains a constant speed by varying the amount of petrol fed to the engine, VFD maintains a constant output pressure by changing the speed of the pump according to the amount of water required in the irrigation lines.

Since a VFD system only runs the pump fast enough to deliver the pressure desired, it operates at a greater efficiency than a fixed speed station.

VFD also reduces the frequency of what is commonly called water hammer, a sudden surge of water that can cause pipes to leak, rupture, or literally blow out of the ground.

Turf irrigation consultant Robin Hume sees the prevention of water hammer as one of the key benefits of variable speed systems. His company, Robin Hume Associates, installed

its first VFD systems in the early nineties, in Belgium.

AVFD is much more controllable, he said. It is particularly good in conjunction with other pumps when you are dealing with different flows, because you can set parameters for ramping up and down, setting pressure and flow limits.

Variable Frequency Drive can be used on large or small irrigation systems. The key factor is the need for controllability, rather than size. We installed a VFD system at Twickenham RFC to irrigate the pitch. The most important thing there was having a fully automatic system that could maintain a smooth flow and allow them to draw off small amounts of water when required.

At the other end of the scale, St Andrews' new VFD irrigation pump set is the biggest in the country. It works superbly and is pleasantly quiet, he added.

The only downside to VFD is the initial capital outlay - variable speed is more expensive than fixed, even though the prices are coming down. But you will save that extra cost in

efficiencies over the lifetime of the system.

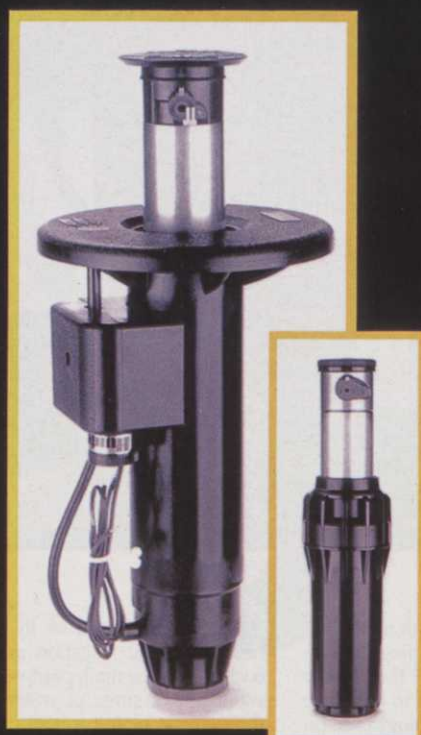
Golf course irrigation consultant Phillip York agrees that VFD brings all-round benefits and says the initial cost should not be a deterrent when considering whether or not to use a variable speed system. The cost is more than offset by the advantages, he said.

VFD provides stabilised pressure, which allows for casual or automatic use of the irrigation system on demand without having to switch units on and off.

We have far less trouble post-installation with variable speed drive because there are less surges through the system, reducing leaks and breaks in the pipes.

User-friendly

Another benefit of variable speed systems is their ease of use. The pressure and flow rates of water in the irrigation lines are monitored and controlled by computer technology and Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs). These controllers help make decisions for the system. For exam-



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Irrigation systems at
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ple, they measure pressure in an irrigation line and then send back an electronic signal which tells the motor to speed up or slow down, depending on the necessary pressure level.

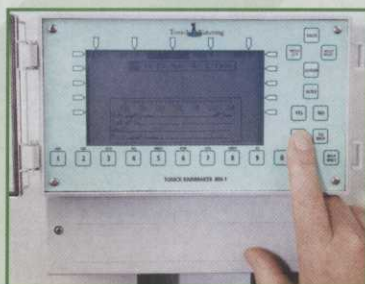
In fact, the introduction of VFD acted as a catalyst for the pump station industry, promoting a technological whirlwind of programmable logic controllers and software as well as a general substitution of electronics for mechanics. Such advancement has changed every pumping system, including conventional fixed speed control.

Some of this software is so advanced that users can remotely monitor systems operations from almost anywhere, via modem, on a personal computer or laptop. The benefits of this are obvious. As well as freeing the course manager from the confines of the pump house, it also allows him to get on with other important tasks elsewhere, while still having access to the system at any time should he require it.

Being able to monitor remotely is a big advantage for us and for course managers, explained Robin Hume.



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Reaping the benefits

Variable speed control is growing in popularity around the world. While initially more expensive, VFD systems can offer long term savings in power

costs and repairs, as well as simplifying daily maintenance. The technology is tried and tested and the accompanying software can produce better efficiencies, smoother operations and smarter operator interface.

With the rapid pace of developing technology in this field, as in the wider world of computer technology, there may come a time when new systems will be outdated almost as soon as they are installed. But for now the specialist manufacturer of pump sets has

the upper hand. The benefits are many and VFD systems with their compatible technology have unleashed a wave of positive changes.

Reliability, high-tech water delivery, reduced energy consumption and hassle free operation has enabled variable speed control to revolutionise the irrigation industry. In just over ten years fixed-speed pumps have become the exception rather than the rule in the United States. All eyes are now on the European golf industry.

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BIGGA ESSAY COMPETITION

GREENKEEPING AND GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

**A play in two acts subtitled:
Next Time Around
Dramatist: Kerran Daly**

The Prologue

'Here I sit so patiently, waiting to find out what price I'm gonna have to pay to get out of going through all these things twice'

Bob Dylan – 'Stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again'

Act 1

It is the end of an era – the 20th century draws to a close

Scene 1

The eclipse of the sun is already dwindling in the mind and the millennium beckons. The burning issues of golf course management during the 20th century have centred around the battle to retain the inherent character of British golf courses against all the odds. During the last 20 years, that battle has been a losing one. The introduction of American style courses during the boom 80's and early 90's has influenced our natural game. Many of these monoliths, which have in the main failed as commercial enterpris-

es, are now the breeding ground for future committee men on some of our best British courses. As their present courses are not designed for playing traditional golf, due to the influence of water hazards and bunkers around target greens and lush, poorly drained fairways excluding the running ball game, the future looks bleak.

The howls of protest, by top Professionals to the presentation of what Henry Cotton or Harry Vardon would have recognised as a typical, traditional test of golf for the 1999 Open at Carnoustie, bear testimony to the fact that as we approach 2000 it may already be too late. Though an understanding of the traditional British style game is still nurtured by some influential members of our

provincial clubs, the legacy of the past 20 years is a certain percentage of golfers who have no experience of and therefore little understanding of the more subtle aspects of the indigenous game. Their influence and unrealistic expectations fuelled by TV hype and the commercial pressures for greenkeepers to please their clientele is set to dilute the current stock of native courses.

The impact of TV on greenkeeping practice in the late 20th century should not be underestimated. The stripping up of major venues due to understandable commercial pressures sent fertiliser and irrigation companies into flurries of activity. The bid by well-intentioned greenkeepers to outdo each other and their American

counterparts in their presentation skills led to similar pressures on those without the proper resources to cope. Fairway irrigation in particular needs a knowledgeable and forceful greenkeeper to effect favourable results. Once installed however, who knows who will end up in control and what other classic course might bite the dust?

The link between too much play and compaction, Poa, disease et al is universally recognised and the restrictions concentrate the mind on radical solutions. As always it is the law and the forces of the market which govern our actions. The law has spoken and market forces must respond. As high inputs to combat wear and tear are no longer acceptable some other doctrine must prevail.

The inevitable result of the relentless commercialism has been a grudging acceptance of *Poa annua* as a suitable surface on which to play golf. What heresy, what treachery, what hypocrisy. When it becomes inevitable that all one can produce is *Poa* dominated turf then *Poa* suddenly becomes acceptable. This unfortunately is the current state of affairs and how to turn this around in favour of more suitable grasses is what must occupy greenkeepers for the early part of the millennium.

Throughout the 70's and 80's King Arthur (Jim that is, not Scargill) roamed the country with his band of loyal knights preaching the gospel and fighting the heretic *Poa*. Under the continual onslaught of ever increasing amounts of play and the incessant call for faster greens many of his followers have fallen by the wayside, weary with the war. Most have justified their desertion as a commonsense approach in a modern world, while some have sited the survival of home and family as more important than the survival of Fescue/Bent.

Our erstwhile monarch now bellows in the wilderness like some lost bull,

abandoned by the herd. Who will pick up the standard, who will be our saviour, where is our white knight? In this dog eat dog world no-one can afford to risk all and go it alone.

Scene 2

A strange newcomer enters the piste. His arm is mighty, his sword is sharp and true and his shield is emblazoned with the motto 'BRUSSELS'. History shows us that sometimes we need to be saved from ourselves. When commonsense is ignored we must resort to the forces of the law to uphold some sanity. The curtailing of our freedom to do as we please is the price we have to pay for our obscene consumerism and blatant disregard for others and for those who are to follow.

Throughout the late 20th century it has been the Health and Safety at Work Act that has been largely responsible for the vast improvement in greenkeepers conditions of work. If we had waited for benevolent golf clubs to enact a change through generosity of spirit then many, with the odd worthy exception, would still be waiting.

European law is about to clamp down on the economic madness of free trade with no thought for long term environmental damage. All industry will be forced to work within strict, sustainable guidelines and enforced to clear up its own mess. I believe this will herald the turn around to affordable, sustainable golf played on economically and environmentally sound courses. The

limitations imposed on fertilisers, pesticides, fungicides and water will all force a reversal of the past 30 years of consumerist mayhem. The need to use only renewable sources and to impose recyclable systems will lead to minimalist, organic based regimes remarkably similar to pre-war practices. Nothing will be wasted and greenkeepers will once again assist nature rather than try to control it. It is the greatest irony of all that the impositions of Brussels may well ride to the rescue of King Jim, the great libertarian.

Scene 3

The technology will of course be vastly different but the principles of sound greenkeeping and good house-keeping will return. The wheel will turn full circle as it inevitably does and we can only hope that this time around we will take on board the lessons of the past.

The building of excessively free draining rootzones as we enter into a period of global warming and water restriction, will be seen as sheer folly. The extravagant use of water and fertiliser to maintain such greens will no longer be morally or legally justifiable. Properly built suspended water table greens should survive well, but many others are heading for hard times. The thinking behind the introduction of excessively free-draining rootzones seems fundamentally flawed. Do greenkeepers really regard the rapid drainage of greens so that the course is instantly playable after a winter's deluge as an advantage or

Indoor sports and recreational activities are interspersed with sips of Cappuccino and convivial chat whilst awaiting your turn on the 18 computerised holes, where you can play out your monthly medal, smashing your drive into a virtual reality south-westerly gale at St Andrews or firing a 6 iron into the heart of the 13th green at Augusta, under a blazing sun. It is not the same as real golf but it wets the appetite for the coming season and keeps the swing intact.

is the rest of the course suffering immeasurably as a result?

Whilst the emphasis on watering, nutrition and pest control may have changed due to commercial pressure, the basic practices of greenkeeping remain little altered. Technology has improved the methods and replaced the manpower required but aeration, scarification, mowing and top-dressing are changed merely in their intensity and efficiency. We can only

as the major component of rootzones and topdressings. The term sand bunker may also have to be reviewed.

The waste of water through overhead irrigation will be phased out. The collection and re-use of drainage water through under-soil irrigation systems becoming compulsory.

Act 2

It is well into the 21st century and Brussels has acted.

A strange newcomer enters the piste. His arm is mighty, his sword is sharp and true and his shield is emblazoned with the motto 'BRUSSELS'. History shows us that sometimes we need to be saved from ourselves. When commonsense is ignored we must resort to the forces of the law to uphold some sanity.

guess at what new innovations lie around the corner. A genetically modified disease resistant Fescue which can replace Poa, survive close mowing, withstand constant use and drought whilst remaining green and healthy looking would be a huge commercial success. The monopolies commission and concern from the general public about GM safety may well put paid to that.

The control of worms, leatherjackets and other troublesome pests without chemical means will no doubt spawn organic alternatives or biological controls based on predators or genetics. Failing that the market will be open to innovative cures based on mechanical or electrical treatments.

All machinery will have to conform to the principles of recycling. Equipment will all be returned to the manufacturer for decommissioning and re-use. Outright purchase without buy back will become prohibited and a form of leasing will be standard practice.

Waste products from manufacturing industries may well replace sand

Scene 1

Restrictions are fully in place and the law encourages sound ecological management whilst prohibiting high input regimes based on water, fertiliser and fungicide. Greenkeepers need to use all their skill, knowledge and the advantages of modern technology. There is recognition that past practices were not sustainable and the adaptation to the limitations of renewable resources has required some lateral thinking by all concerned.

The link between too much play and compaction, Poa, disease et al is universally recognised and the restrictions concentrate the mind on radical solutions. As always it is the law and the forces of the market which govern our actions. The law has spoken and market forces must respond. As high inputs to combat wear and tear are no longer acceptable some other doctrine must prevail.

Scene 2

Golf clubs have understood that nearly all the damage which needed

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Throughout the 70's and 80's King Arthur (Jim that is, not Scargill) roamed the country with his band of loyal knights preaching the gospel and fighting the heretic Poa. Under the continual onslaught of ever increasing amounts of play and the incessant call for faster greens many of his followers have fallen by the wayside, weary with the war.

such high levels of maintenance to put right is caused by winter play. Course closure, temporary greens and trolley bans have all failed to provide the answer and given greenkeepers a bad name. A radical re-appraisal of pricing policy has been the way forward. Golfers now pay on the basis of the damage they cause. There are no course closures, no temporary greens and no trolley bans. However, winter golf is at a premium. Eight-month memberships abound whilst those who wish to play the full year pay double the July price for January golf. You can use a trolley any day you wish but it adds 50% to your round in winter.

The potential for a loss of earnings for the Club has been negated by them becoming centres of social activity during the colder months. Indoor sports and recreational activities are interspersed with sips of Cappuccino and convivial chat whilst awaiting your turn on the 18 computerised holes, where you can play out your monthly medal, smashing your drive into a virtual reality south-westerly gale at St Andrews or firing a 6 iron into the heart of the 13th green at Augusta, under a blazing sun. It is not the same as real golf but it wets the appetite for the coming season and keeps the swing intact.

The 21st century is full of promise and potential for our profession. Education is the key to unlocking that potential and influencing the powers that be in moving things forward in a commonsense direction. It is an unfortunate fact that people are judged on what they know and not what they are, but it is a fact none the less. Our predecessors, quietly plodding down the fairways leading their horse-drawn gangmowers had the wisdom of Solomon but they

doffed their caps to lawyers, doctors and schoolmasters in recognition of their superior education. To succeed we must educate, educate and educate and leave the rest to providence.

the ball properly.' It's a dagger in the heart. A lifetime's hard work dismissed in the puff of a cigar. Rage and fury, cursing under your breath and screaming in your mind. Forgive

The building of excessively free draining rootzones as we enter into a period of global warming and water restriction, will be seen as sheer folly. The extravagant use of water and fertiliser to maintain such greens will no longer be morally or legally justifiable. Properly built suspended water table greens should survive well, but many others are heading for hard times. The thinking behind the introduction of excessively free-draining rootzones seems fundamentally flawed.

The Epilogue

Endlessly trundling up the fairways, trying hard to keep straight. Mind wandering and wondering about what might have been and what will be. Doing your best to dodge the wayward missiles of outrageous fortune heading your way. Feeling fragile and vulnerable behind your glass screen. Pushing on and on, forward to Valhalla, Utopia, suburbia. On and on, moving obstacles out of your path, riding out the wheel spins on the steeper slopes. You must get there, you must get there, you mustn't look back.

Back to stare into the face of past experience and recognise the doubts, the mistakes, the regrets, the missed opportunities. The crazy spill of commercial hype dragging you into the confusing mire of new fangled fertilisers, micro-organic soups served up with ladles of gimmicks. Health and safety gone into overdrive, pulling you down while someone just within earshot is saying 'These fairways are bloody awful! The grass is so short and tight that you can't hit

them for they know not what they do. You mustn't look back, you mustn't look back!

I look back.

Oh God NO! The middle unit's not cutting. Like me, blocked up.

Overloaded with stuff and more stuff. I've got to go through all that again. I wonder whose songs I'll sing next time around, I wonder Will think the same thoughts?

For information and an entry form for the BIGGA Essay Competition 2000, please call Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager on 01347 833800 or email: ken@bigga.co.uk

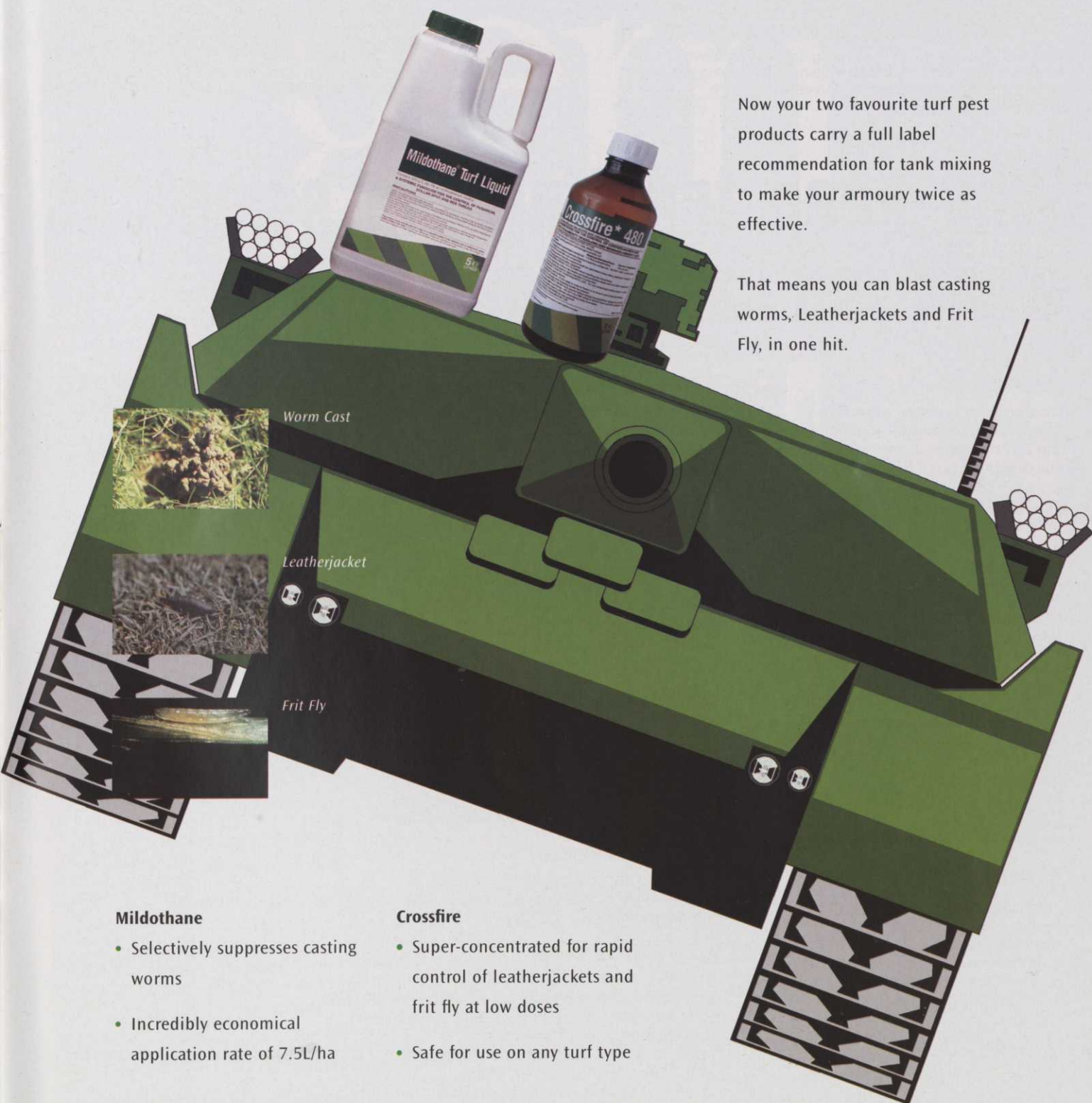


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Why keep treating the symptoms when you can effect a cure.

The Problem

Compaction and soil structure breakdown are ongoing problems for the turf manager. Constantly saturated soil or a build up of fine soil particles, cause the loss of air availability and this effect can break the soil structure down into even finer particles increasing the clogging effect. When these pores become unpenetrable, water and air transport stop.

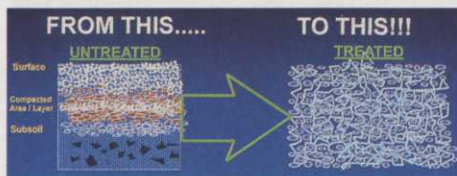


A Programmed Approach

Applied as a conventional high volume spray, initial applications will penetrate layers and solid soil structures and the turf manager should see the results in reduced soil compaction and lower bulk density. Integrate will remain in the soil at various depths rather than leaching through.



Opening up of soil structure reduces recurring drainage problems



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Integrate moves down through the soil profile solubilising the 'fines' that are clogging the pore spaces, drawing together the clay and organic soil particles into soil aggregates with the sand and silt. This 'opening up' of the soil structure provides an improved flow of air and water into and through the soil and, with additional pore spaces to develop pathways for deeper root growth, a more healthy, vigorous turf will be the result.

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Scott MacCallum travelled to Lancashire to visit BIGGA's latest Golden Key Supporter, Gem Professional...



A real gem



One of the most difficult balancing acts to achieve with any degree of success must be retaining all the identity and heritage of a traditional family company whilst developing, or matching, every new advance in one of the fastest moving industries in the country. Gem Professional, based in Oswaldtwistle near Accrington, in Lancashire, and BIGGA's latest Golden Key member, has achieved just that.

The company has been in the Metcalf family since its origins back in the 1880's, and has strong claims to be the largest independently

owned company in the industry, but it is still at the cutting edge when it comes to providing modern day greenkeepers with their day-to-day requirements.

The beginnings of Gem Professional lie back in the 1880's when the Metcalf family were what were known as dry salters. It is an old fashioned name for the supplying of chemicals etc. for use in heavy industry. They also crushed bones for hardening steel and bone meal and hoof and horn meal were by-products of that process. In 1924 Joseph Metcalf first started mixing the

organic fertilisers with sulphate of ammonia and potash to produce Metcalf's Complete Fertiliser for use on bowling greens, golf greens and Local Authority parks.

Records show it was 19 shillings and 6 pence (97.5p) per bag which was considerably more expensive than a comparative price today. The range also included Earlybird Worm Killer, Velvas Grass Seed, straight fertilisers and mowing machinery.

The Company moved from its factory premises in the centre of Accrington to its present 25 acre base in nearby Oswaldtwistle in 1973.

A real gem



Here, a vast range of fertilisers and growing media are produced for both the Professional Amenity and amateur garden markets.

"Two years ago we took a look at ourselves and employed a market research company to work on our behalf. In return we were given some home truths. We knew some of the things which we wanted to improve upon but needed someone else to confirm this," explained Clive Pearson, UK Sales Manager.

To emphasise the point Gem, under the guidance of Managing Director, Brian Metcalf, and Clive, have recently repositioned the Gem Professional range under the Pro Formula brand and changed the company logo.

They have also amended the packaging to make it much easier to understand by the end user.

The point is followed up by Brian who took over the reins of the company from his father in 1968 with a handful of staff and has guided it through to today when over 200 people are employed.

"Customers don't always seem to appreciate just how large a company Gem is". One question asked 'Which of these companies do you perceive as being a manufacturer?' The customers didn't have a clue," said Brian.

In fact, the company has been manufacturing an extensive range of fertilisers and turf dressings since 1924 and owns its own sand quarry, peat reserves and bark processing factory. In response to this breakdown in communication, Gem has produced a lavish new ring binder manual which includes everything anyone could possibly wish to know about the company and its products.

"We spoke to our customers, including many greenkeepers, before we produced it and what has emerged is what is basically a training manu-

al which makes our customers' lives so much easier," said Clive.

"The binder has been designed so that a Greens Chairman or Secretary can also understand the products and relate to the Greenkeeper's choice or recommendation. Committees must be able to understand the entire package which we are offering because that is extremely important," he added.

"Sometimes you find in this industry that a Greens Committee may have to take half an hour discussing a differential of a few pounds per tonne on turf dressing or a few pounds per bag on fertiliser due to lack of knowledge. This valuable time could be better spent evaluating larger capital commitments or course improvement projects. Now this manual has been introduced people will be able to appreciate our type of products with confidence and develop an understanding of their functions and performance. They must be able to compare like with like."

Additionally, the manual is easily and quickly updated as and when new specifications or products become available.

"ISO 9002 accreditation was achieved in 1987 and now forms a central plank of company policy. Continuous self assessment, benchmarking and improvement strategies are in place which are linked to technical innovations and product development," said Clive.

Gem Professional seek to improve products and performance under the guidance of Geoff Bone Dip.C.H., Group Technical Manager. Geoff sits on the Product Development Committee and is ultimately responsible for bringing products to market. This process is facilitated by the company's in house laboratory where a dedicated team of technicians perform a multitude of analytical tasks. This work is two fold.

Routine jobs involve testing raw materials used in the manufacturing processes to ensure they meet the tight specifications laid down. A batch coding procedure is in place which guarantees traceability of a finished product right back to the basic raw materials used in production. Only suppliers who meet our strict requirements are used. Finished products are likewise examined and tested to ensure conformity before being released into the warehouse prior to despatch to the customer.

Project work is the keystone to new products and product improvement and the laboratory is heavily involved in this function. In addition, fertilisers, dressings and all growing media are subjected to field trials under

Geoff's supervision prior to being accepted into the company's portfolio.

"For example, the Super Range of controlled release mini granular fertilizers were subjected to independent trials over six months at Liverpool University," said Clive.

A further function of the laboratory is particle size examination and analysis of turf dressings. Gem own their own sand deposits at their Wroot Quarry near Doncaster where reserves are in excess of 20 years.

"A number of companies claim ownership of their sand deposits but they don't have the name on the gate," said Clive. "Ours has."

At Wroot strict ISO 9002 controls are also in place. The graded soil and washed sand for Turf Dressing is metered into the steriliser in exact proportions as per the specification, not rough bucket fulls, and our analytical records prove our technical data conform; a distinct benefit to the customer. The laboratory is also equipped to undertake soil analysis and this service can be arranged through our team of field representatives.

The decision to become a Golden Key supporter of the Association was the final piece of the jigsaw for a company which has been heavily involved with the Association at Section and Regional level for quite some time.

"We have 10 technical representatives and every one is involved in his local Section - in fact Ian Sellars, is Section Secretary in Surrey. When I was promoted to Sales Manager two years ago I felt strongly that we should get more involved with the BIGGA Education and Development Fund. It is a very good idea and I believe we should be putting something back in," he said.

The company already hosts greenkeeper visits from all over the country with the excellent training room being used to its full advantage.

"The greenkeepers learn about our products and we learn about which products they are looking for," said Clive, "and they can also see first hand our manufacturing facilities."

"So we had already put a lot into BIGGA without being fully involved and becoming a Golden Key member was the final step for us," said Clive.

You can be sure that Gem Professional will be around for many more years to come providing the greenkeeping profession with exactly what it needs. Indeed, a Gem of a company.

Gem
professional

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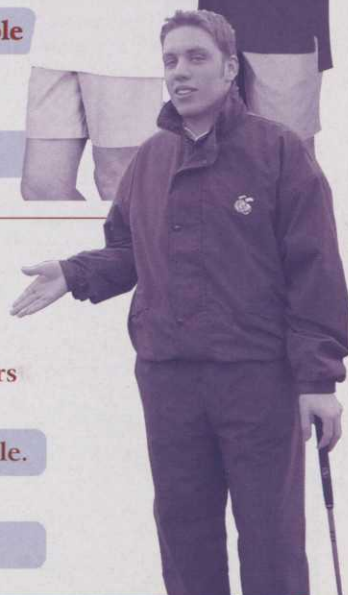
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Entries to reach us no later than Tuesday, April 11, 2000. The first correct entry drawn will receive a cheque for £50!

The judges decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

This competition is not open to BIGGA staff or non-members.

Last month, Mr LJ Parry from Birkenhead, one of our retired members, certainly knew his numbers when he correctly identified all three telephone numbers.

Our congratulations and a cheque for £50 are on their way to you!

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This 27 hole Private Members' Club is set in 300 acres
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experience on a course of high standards is essential.

A keen interest in golf is desirable. Salary negotiable.

Apply enclosing a full C.V. to the Course Manager.

Closing date for applications: 30th April 2000**ABRIDGE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB**

Require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

for their mature 18 hole parkland course

Applicants should have a minimum of two years experience and have
NVQ level 2 or equivalent. Spraying Certificates an advantage

Apply with full CV by Friday, April 28, 2000 to;

The Manager, Abridge Golf & Country Club, Epping Lane, Stapleford
Tawney, Essex RM4 1ST



THE
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Apply in writing with full CV to

The Course Manager
The Hampshire Golf Club
Winchester Road
Goodworth Clatford
Andover
Hants SP11 7TB



Wenvoe Castle Golf Club

Require:

Experienced Assistant Greenkeeper

Wenvoe Castle is a private members club, the 65 year old parkland course has an ongoing course development programme.

The successful applicant must be self motivated and be able to work within a small team of qualified experienced greenkeepers, he/she should be qualified to City & Guilds II or equivalent NVQ level 2, with a minimum of 3 years experience with modern machinery.

Salary negotiable according to experience and qualifications.

Applications in writing together with C.V. by April 31st 2000 to:

The Secretary
Nicola Sims
Wenvoe Castle Golf Club
Cardiff
S Glam
CF5 6BE



Brundtlandbanen Toftlund

seeks

the Chief Greenkeeper

who will contribute bringing the golf course

Brundtlandbanen Toftlund

up among the 25 best golf courses in Denmark

Toftlund Golf Club has started an ambitious project which within a period of approx. 15 months will upgrade Toftlund Golf Club from an average golf club to range among the 25 best and most attractive golf courses in Denmark.

To contribute to this we are looking for an ambitious, competent and well-experienced chief green keeper, who is ready to participate in this exciting project.

Qualifications:

- Relevant training at a level corresponding as a minimum to that of a Greenkeeper in Denmark
- Some years of experience from a corresponding job
- Pronounced co-operativeness and a working method which includes as well flexibility as independence
- The aim, ability and willingness to contribute to a good teamwork in the organisation, and the ability to motivate and to share out the work.
- Communication - in addition to English - preferably also in German with the guests of the golf course.
- Intention of attending lessons in Danish

We can offer:

- A unique chance of participating in a newly started project of rearranging and establishing a golf course, offering rich opportunities for you to participate in the further development.
- Attractive employment conditions including a favourable wage and housing possibility near the course.
- A well-functioning green keeper staff, of which one is in process of training as green keeper.

Information and application:

- Further information on the vacancy can be acquired from Managing Director Niels Buch, tel. +45 7383 0155.
- Application in writing including documentation for relevant training, previous appointments and other references to be sent no later than April 20, 2000 to

Brundtlandbanen Toftlund Invest A/S
Vestergade 5, DK-6520 Toftlund
Denmark

Brundtlandbanen Toftlund Invest A/S, which is situated in the southern part of Jutland, is the parent company of a newly established, 100% self-financing golf business group consisting of an operational company and a service company. The business group has per January 1, 2000 acquired golf course etc. from Toftlund Golf Club. The total area of the golf course makes approx. 65 hectare and when the project has been completed around September 2001, it will consist of an 18-hole golf course, a 9-hole PAR-30 course as well as putting green, driving range and training area with accompanying golf school. Furthermore, in the summer 2000 a new and up-to-date 500 m² club house in two storeys including restaurant, pro-shop, conference and administration facilities will be built.

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Mr Brian Croll – Manager
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Requires a

COURSE MANAGER



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The successful candidate will require the following attributes:

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A minimum of 10 years experience with at least 3 years as Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager.

Strong working knowledge of all modern golf course management practices with the ability to train, motivate and direct staff.

A proven ability to prepare and monitor budgets, inventories and expenditure.

If you are interested in this opportunity and have the necessary qualifications and experience, please apply in writing including a full CV and an indication of salary expectation to:

**The Chairman of Greens, Gay Hill Golf Club,
Hollywood Lane, Birmingham B47 5PP**

No accommodation is provided

Closing date for applications

28th April 2000

Chief Greenkeeper for Rungsted Golf Club



Rungsted Golf Club is looking for the best Chief Greenkeeper to start as soon as possible. Rungsted Golf Club is located in North Sealand in Denmark in a truly beautiful environment of trees and small ponds.

The Golf Club is more than 60 years old and thus one of the oldest golf clubs in Denmark.

The Club upholds strong traditions in Danish golfing. In the past 2 years, the Club hosted the SAS Invitational tournament, where personalities such as Colin Montgomerie, Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara visited the Club. In this year's tournament in July Paul Lawrie and Retief Goosen will play against Danish Thomas Bjørn and Norwegian Per Haugsrud.

Over the past 5 years Rungsted Golf Club has undergone a face lift with very considerable investments in club house facilities, and now the time has come to bring the course to its best.

The Course (18 holes) has always had the reputation of having one of the finest layouts in Denmark, but during the 1990's the greens have been causing us problems, and the main reason for looking for a highly skilled Chief Greenkeeper is to solve these problems. We are thus looking for a Green Keeper, who is familiar with and knows how to tackle problems occurring in greens with compacted clay and 100% poa annua grass. Besides maintaining the course at a high quality level, the major responsibility of the Chief Green Keeper will be to initiate the process of turning our greens into high quality greens that allow for high standard playing for at least 7 or 8 months a year.

The Chief Greenkeeper will be in charge of 5 employees, an annual budget of some £200,000 and annual machine investments of around £40,000.

Applications must be received by the Club at its home address Rungsted Golf Klub, Vestre Stationsvej 16, DK - 2960 Rungsted Kyst not later than 20 April 2000.

For further information on our Club, please check our Web-site www.rungstedgolfklub.dk, or call the Club treasurer Mr. Jorn Styczen at +45 33 55 23 18 during working hours or +45 45 41 44 46 in the evening.



COPTHORNE GOLF CLUB

Require an
ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are looking for an enthusiastic hard working greenkeeper.

NVQ level 2 or progress towards it would be an advantage as would PA2 and PA6 qualifications.

Apply in writing with full CV to:-
Mike Gould, Head Greenkeeper
Cophorne Golf club, Bowers Arms Road,
Cophorne, West Sussex RH10 3LL

BOYCE HILL GOLF CLUB

Require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are looking for an enthusiastic and hard working greenkeeper to join our existing team.

NVQ Level 2 along with PA1, PA2 and PA6 qualifications preferred

Apply in writing with full CV to:

The Secretary/Manager
Boyce Hill Golf Club, Vicarage Hill, Benfleet, ESSEX SS7 1PD

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Paul Jenkins, Course Manager, Lilley Brook Golf Club,
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Birchwood Park Golf Centre

Require

a hard working, ambitious and reliable **Assistant Greenkeeper**
to join our team on this busy 27 hole golf course.

The successful applicant will possess all necessary knowledge
of current practices. A knowledge of USGA greens and
possibly lake management would be an advantage
but not essential

Package to include salary and benefits.

If you feel you have the necessary skills. Please apply
in writing with current CV to:

Mark Drake, Course Manager, Birchwood Park Golf Centre
Birchwood Road, Wilmington, Kent, DA2 7HJ

WALTON HEATH GOLF CLUB

requires an

Assistant Greenkeeper

to join our existing team on the two Championship Courses.

A keen interest in golf and a desire to develop a
Greenkeeping Career are essential attributes.

Accommodation available.

Please apply in writing to:

Clive Osgood, Course Manager,
Walton Heath Golf Club,
Deans Lane, Tadworth,
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e-mail: clivewilliams@vitax.co.uk

Sandy McDivot finds himself in the dishonourable company of world golfers

Turning a blind eye?

I was watching TV the other day and made my usual choice of tuning in to the BBC. I do this because there is this theory that they do not interrupt programmes with adverts. This is of course complete absurdity as the BBC delights in spending our licence fee on adverts. The only difference is that all these adverts are about themselves.

One such commercial you may have seen extolling the virtues of the corporation showed a renowned female British athlete claiming that she had asked God that morning to give her wings to help her in the race. "And he did," she claimed. Amazing, God actually gave her wings!

So that morning I decided not to ask the good lord for a pair of wings but merely if he would be so kind as to give me a half decent putting stroke for the monthly medal that afternoon. And he didn't. In fact at the risk of blasphemy he replaced my usual uncoordinated effort with something that had more resemblance to a brain convulsion.

However, after reflecting on my misery I concluded that if God had indeed granted me my request I could well have been contravening rule 14.3 on receiving artificial assistance and could therefore be accused of cheating.

But going back to the subject of highly tuned female athletes, I spotted the Lady Captain playing on the 2nd green a while ago when on morning switching duty. As I had some trivial matter in which to discuss with her I approached the green and stood at the side waiting for her to putt. Due to her fading retina and the low set morning sun directly behind me I realised that despite looking towards me she had not a clue I was in the vicinity. Then to my amazement and with her partner aimlessly thrashing about in some distant bunker, she picked up her ball and moved it several feet closer to the hole. Now faced with this situation of flagrant cheating by the Lady

Captain there are three options a greenkeeper has.

1) Approach the Lady Captain's partner and inform her that the most respected member of her section has just committed the ultimate sin and should be banished from the club.

2) Quickly and quietly withdraw and forget all you have seen.

3) Go to the Lady Captain and casually explain everything you have just witnessed and suggest that a fairly hefty sum of cash deposited in your own personal benevolent fund would be sufficient to insure that the whole unsavoury matter is kept from the waiting world.

Of course in the interest of any long-term career prospects option 2) is the only course of action that should be taken.

But the subject of cheating is far from alien to greenkeepers. I don't know what it is but to golfers we greenkeepers seem to be completely invisible. (This is especially so when we are within range of their worst hit drives) So given this ability of ours to blend into the surrounding flora, acts of golfing dishonesty are often witnessed by the greenkeeper who the golfer either never notices or who is convinced that as a person that cuts grass we would be entirely ignorant of matters concerning the games regulations.

Here at Sludgecombe being a club that's only criteria for accepting members is can they come up with the readies, we have more than one example of such persons of dubious character. A few have been politely kicked out but one still remains and indeed is a popular member of the club. This has happened for two reasons. The first is that this particular person despite his suspect integrity does not make the fatal error of actually winning any of the clubs silverware. The second is that he has a lucrative sideline whereby he inflicts violence on people for financial reward. This is a job that he is especially good at with baseball bat

forcibly applied to patella being his speciality. As he finds this a rewarding tax-free occupation the membership as a whole have never felt they have much moral obligation to confront him with the irrefutable evidence that they have at their disposal.

But for real high performance in the unrecognised skill of cheating we have to go much further afield. At the risk of serious litigation I have always felt that certain, and I must emphasise a tiny minority, of professions are especially proficient in this art form.

I have a good friend who is a professional but I should point out that he is one of the honest majority. He has often witnessed examples of golfing deceit and some of them are absolute classics.

Of course there is the standard pro format of the suspect pro with the hand chosen team that decide dishonesty is the best policy and basically make the score up as they go along. Top pro, team prize, closest to the hole, longest drive, you name it they win it. But that is straightforward corruption and requires little in the way of imagination. I prefer the tale he told me of a player who had a brilliant stratagem when playing in those sponsored pro-ams where there was a hole-in-one prize on offer. If, as would sometimes be the case, visibility was obscured by dense fog or mist on the hole offering the reward, he would overclub by miles, hit the ball and claim to anyone within earshot that he had hit it perfectly and the ball would surely be close. Then following a cursory search and some nifty handiwork he would pick the ball out of the hole claiming the ace. The ball of course was in reality some distance over the green in an adjacent field but a nice sponsor's car was once again in the garage.

I also like the well documented story about the pro whose father was a famous ice hockey star. During a qualifying event he had decided that an erasure applied to scorecard card



would be the best way of making up a few shots. And so having failed by traditional means to qualify he simply reduced his score by a couple of shots somewhere betwixt playing partner and clubhouse. It was only later when one of his partners noticed the scoring error in the papers the next day that the matter was brought to the attention of the governing bodies.

Then there was the guy whose own speciality was "bird nesting". This comes into its own when a particularly nasty lie is encountered in the rough. Wedging out sideways appears to be the only course of action, that

is until 20 practice swings, plenty of stomping about and some vigorous thumping of the adjacent ground has revealed the ball to be in such a perfect lie that you could get a driver to it.

Finally we go to the greatest country in the world; the US of A. Only a country like America could spend a cool quarter of a million dollars on the uniform for the humble and retiring wives of their glorious Ryder Cup team. Here they take a real pride in this game within a game. They even have a golfing society made up exclusively of cheats whose proud motto is "If you don't cheat, you're only cheating yourself".

In California, there are eccentrics who could even rival our own aris-

toocracy. One such character towards the end of his regular night-time soirees would go to the balcony, flick a switch and there before everyone would stand a full flood lit, downhill golf hole complete with tee, bunkers, green, the works. He would then declare to the assembled drunken multitude that he would make a hole in one and asked for people to bet against him. There would always be a few gullible, intoxicated types convinced that this would be easy money. So having set up the necessary wagers he would go to the tee and gently chip a ball off the front. The look on the party goers faces must have been something to behold as the ball gently bounced down the slope and onto the green where it would go around

and around in ever decreasing circles homing in on the hole until it finally dropped out of sight. The entire hole had been designed whereby any ball chipped off the end of the tee would like in some enormous pin ball machine always end up on the concave green with the hole in the geometric centre. Brilliant!

Sandy McDivot.
Head Greenkeeper,
Sludgecombe Pay and Play

Feature listing from April '98

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

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

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

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

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

July '99: Carnoustie, Golf Course Furniture, Spike Research, Toro profile, BIGGA Silent Auction

August '99: Viscount Whitelaw tribute; Open review; Merrist Wood; Saltex preview; Turf; Trees; Grass Cutting; BIGGA Golf Day review; Redexim profile

September '99: Slaley Hall; Tyres; Spotlight on Thatch; Elmwood College Awards; National Championship preview

October '99: The Manor House, Castle Combe; Aeration; Saltex review; Mycorrhizas; Toro Award preview

November '99: Sir Michael Bonallack interview; The Pines GC; Oil; Bunkers; National Championship review

December '99: Agronomy; Security; Environment Competition Winner; Toro Award Winners

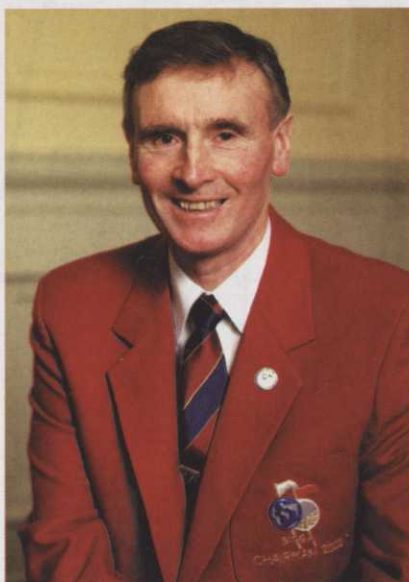
January 2000: Greens Construction; Awkward Jobs; Sandy McDivot; Agronomy; Toro Award review

February 2000: BTME2000 review; Committed to Green interview; Rookery Park GC; Engines; Chairman's profile; Environmental Management

March 2000: Cleobury Mortimer GC; Course Furniture; R&A Conference Report; Cutting heights; Avoncrop profile; Valderama report; Westurf preview



Helping hands



By the time you read this, most of us will have had our Opening Days and be well into the new playing season and obviously once more the 'Masters' syndrome will be in effect. The atrocious weather suffered by many in various parts of the country up to now, I write this on the March 13, will have affected a lot of greenkeepers in how they have been able to present their courses for the start of the season. Golfers have notorious short memories when it comes to weather and by the end of the first dry week, if we ever get one, they will have forgotten how bad it has been all winter.

Their calls for better conditions immediately, will not doubt put quite a few greenkeepers under a lot of pressure and stress. Already we know of one of our members who has lost his job, (see page 7). Fortunately he is a strong character who knows what's right, and with the help of the BIGGA Helpline he effected an excellent severance package though nothing can atone for the loss of one's job.

If you have problems, ask for help. There's always someone. Initially it may be a fellow greenkeeper, or perhaps your Regional Administrator can give you advice and there's the Legal Helpline, it's there for you.

I was very fortunate, as your Chairman, to represent the Association

at both the GCSAA American show and conference in New Orleans and the CGSA Canadian show and conference in Ottawa.

New Orleans is a wonderful place, so much to see and do. I would love to go back there for a holiday. There is so much character to the city with its restaurants, music, night life and the people themselves, such a cosmopolitan mix. Quite a few BIGGA members who made the trip will testify to this. The BIGGA stand was very busy on the first two days but, like the rest of the show, the Sunday morning was quiet.

I was genuinely surprised at how many people came to our stand and the many questions they asked. We had enquiries about membership, our web site, work placements, superintendents looking to come to BTME, others wanting to know more about the Master Greenkeeper qualifications, colleges wishing to learn more about our educational system and even people asking if we could recommend courses and places to stay for holidays.

As well as quite a few BIGGA members who had made their own way there, it was nice to have Brian Turner, winner of Toro Greenkeeper of the Year and to meet Tommy Givnan, the Toro Student Award winner, having a break from his prize of a study course in the USA.

Two weeks later and I was in Ottawa for the CGSA show and conference where I had to present a paper on Greenkeeping in Scotland. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of people who wanted to talk afterwards about the differences and comparisons between our work programmes. As in the UK and the USA there is a tremendous thirst for knowledge as was apparent by the attendance at all the sessions in both countries. Again we made new friends and contacts and if all the guys from Canada come to BTME that said they would, prepare for an invasion. The world is getting smaller all the time.

I would like to thank Ken and David at HQ for the excellent power point pre-

sentation they made up to accompany my talk. It made life so easy.

I have just read my magazine and was interested in the comment by Paul Cunningham in the South West Section notes, than an American exhibitor stated that the GCSAA show was five times bigger than BTME. Sorry Paul but I have to beg to differ. At BTME we had 200 stands and 6000 delegates. The GCSAA had about 750 stands and 21000 delegates. By my calculations they had 3.75 times more stands and 3.5 times more delegates. When we take into consideration that the USA is nearly 30 times bigger than the UK & Ireland, I think we compare more than favourably. I must admit that I was slightly surprised at the GCSAA show as I expected it to be bigger than it was.

Many of you may have read the letter in the March issue of GI from Peter Hampton, of Bernhard & Co, on the subject of old machinery. This is something that is close to my heart, the preservation of old golf course machinery and tools so that someday we might have a museum. I have a couple of old machines myself and also have an old land measure chain. My favourite is two leather horse shoes which were used on the horses pulling the gang mowers at Galashiels Golf Course in my father's time there.

As more and more new maintenance facilities are being built, more and more "rubbish" is being thrown out. But is it rubbish? I appeal to you all that if you have any old machines or tools, hold onto them, or if you do not have the room get in touch with BIGGA HQ first, hopefully we may be able to find somewhere to store them until the time is right. I was fortunate to speak with Peter Hampton and he has intimated that he would be willing to advise and help in the restoration of old machinery.

After attending all these conferences and seminars over the last two months an old saying came back to me, which some younger members can take to heart

"I never learn anything talking,
I only learn when I ask questions"

S. A. R. Small



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