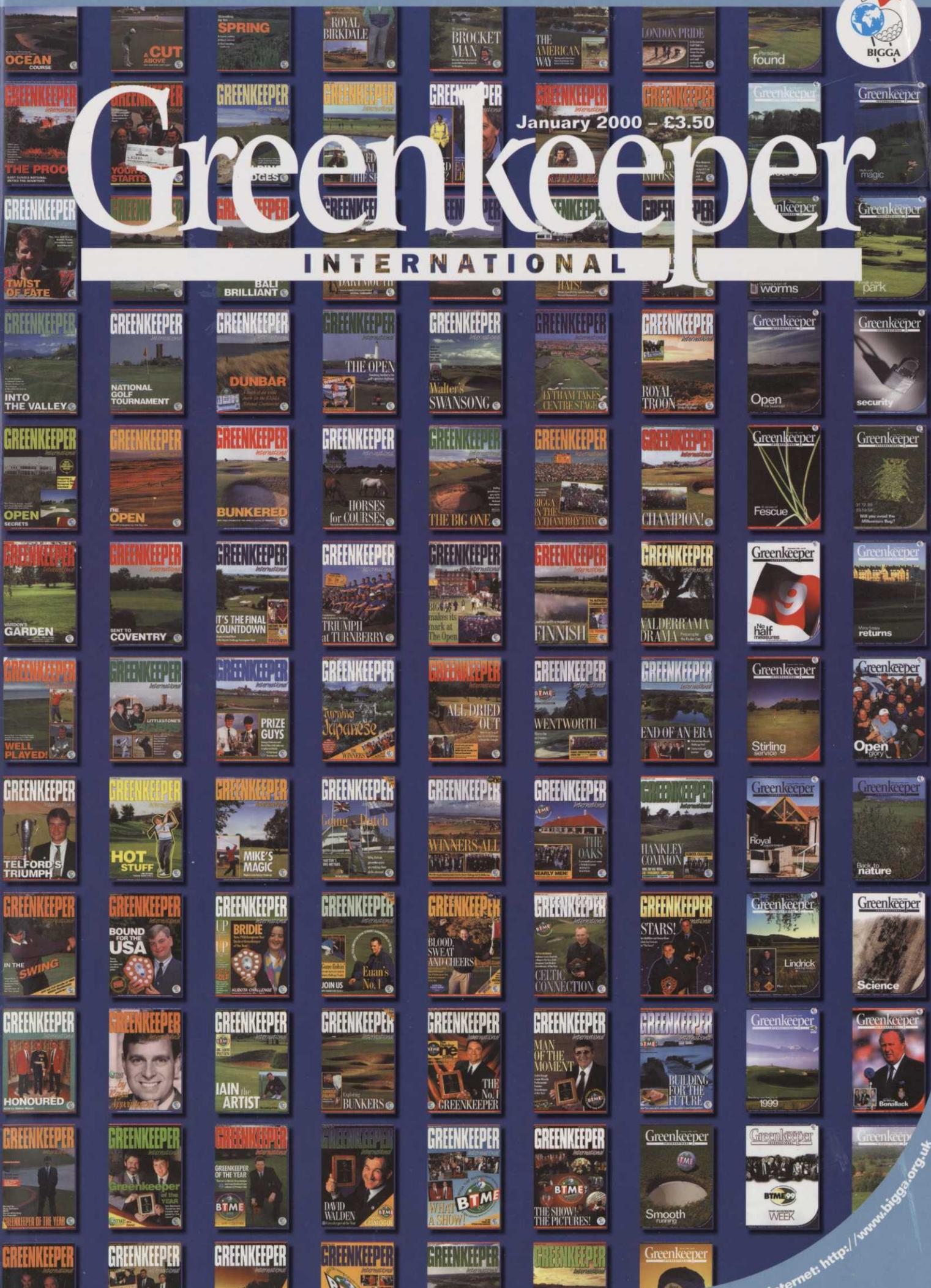




Greenkeeper

January 2000 - £3.50

INTERNATIONAL



Mycorrhizal structures associated with turf roots

Intelligent disease control

Harmless to beneficial turf fungi

Still effective against disease



Fusarium



Dollar Spot

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

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

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Reader Reply Card

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Into the New Millennium!

Well, it's arrived and, what do you know, nothing has changed. Here we are, the first people in living memory to set foot in a new millennium and unless we take a look at the calendar we wouldn't even know it.

In many ways, though, that's quite reassuring. Everything is just as we left it back in the good old 1900s. The January Sales are in full swing, our computers work - hopefully - and we have Harrogate to look forward to in a few week's time.

There is a need to commemorate the occasion, however, and we have chosen to display every single Greenkeeper International cover since its inception in 1991 on this our Millennium Issue cover. Each cover will hopefully hold a memory for someone, and apologies for those of you whose favourite have been obscured in some fashion.

Another salutary lesson it gives us is how quickly time marches on. I'm sure I won't be the only one of us who looks at particular cover and thinks "It can't be that long ago!". I'm still coming to terms with the fact that I've now edited more than 50 Greenkeeper Internationals.

This month is the first when your favourite magazine will be in full colour. Until now there have been certain pages, at the front and the back of the magazine, that were purely black and white but now they have gone, and we have the option of brightening up every one of the pages. It is part of an on going process of making changes and improvements to the magazine, much as happens with BTME.

The old adage - wouldn't it be great if we had the odd new adage occasionally - "If it ain't broke don't fix it" doesn't apply to BTME because, despite its undoubted success over the last 11 years, we have always striven to build and make changes if we felt it could add something extra to the occasion.

This year we've got a superb new hall, giving much more space as well as a new entrance to the Show. This means more exhibitors with bigger stands for you to visit; we've got a career's clinic for the first time; some of the finest speakers ever to grace a platform and the Beatles - well The Bootleg Beatles, who are the nearest thing to the real thing, who will be appearing at the traditional banquet in BIGGA's own Cavern Club - Hall D!

Harrogate will also see Gordon Child step down as BIGGA's National Chairman. He's held the post for two years and by any measure has been a wonderful ambassador, as well as a tireless worker, for the Association during that time.

He and Marion, whose own input to the Association during the past two years has also been invaluable, can now look forward to a retirement that has been well earned.

They will do so with the best wishes of everyone ringing in their ears.

Editor:
Scott MacCallum



Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

Features

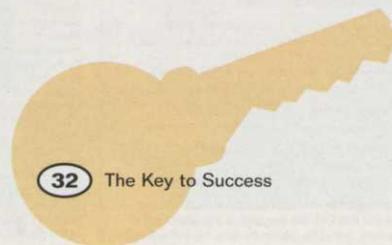
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Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award winner, Brian Turner, describes how a greenkeeper's life is often a stressful one.



29 Awkward Jobs



23 A Little Piece of History



32 The Key to Success



Best quality,
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best seed.
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The highly acclaimed MM sports turf mixtures and the Designer landscaping range are the flagship amenity brands from Advanta Seeds UK. The same high quality seed, proven cultivars and technical 'know-how' all remain unchanged to ensure unbeatable performance in the field. For the best known seed - best talk to Advanta.



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Environment Award for Sand Moor

Sand Moor Golf Club in Leeds was the recipient of a special BIGGA Environment Competition award recently.

The club had made a strong bid for this year's BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Grass Roots, thanks to the commitment and dedicated hard work of Head Greenkeeper, Bobby Barnes.

However, a couple of days after competition judge, Jonathan Hart-Woods, met up with Bobby to be shown the work done at Sand Moor the respected Head Greenkeeper died suddenly.

It was to honour Bobby and the rest of his team that Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone Ground Care; Bob Taylor and Jonathan Hart-Woods of the STRI, and BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child, travelled to Leeds to present the club with a plaque in recognition of the fine environmental work that had been done.

Rod Baker, who the previous



month had presented Temple Golf Club, in Berkshire with the National Award, was equally delighted to be making the presentation to Sand Moor.

"Golf is not bad for the environment and here it provides an environmental haven in the middle of an urban society," he said.

With the encouragement given by the award Sand Moor Captain, David

Hughes said they would be definitely entering the competition again in 2000.

"We are extremely proud of what Bobby and the rest of the staff have done at Sand Moor."

Also present from the club was Acting Head Greenkeeper John Daniel; Chairman of Green, Robin Kilburn and Club Chairman Clive Wilkinson.

BIGGA AGM

The 2000 BIGGA AGM will be held in the Majestic Hotel Ballroom at 5.45pm, Wednesday, January 19. Membership Cards must be produced to gain admission.

Taking a gander at new leaflet

Just published, *The Management of Problems Caused by Canada Geese: A Guide to Best Practice*, describes in detail the biology of Canada Geese and also the problems that they can cause. The booklet, which will be of use to people managing public amenity areas, recommends integrated management strategies, combining habitat modification and population control.

The species can be hunted in the open season - 1 September to 31 January (or 20 February on the foreshore). During close season Canada Geese are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. However, under the Act, licences can be granted to control adult birds and/or their eggs. Licences are issued by both the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions and also by the Ministry of Agriculture

Fisheries and Food (for agricultural situations).

Copies are available from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, European Wildlife Division, Room 902, Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol, B52 9DJ; Tel. 0117-987-8903.

Nick gets set to cover Midlands



Scotts UK Professional has appointed Nick Martin to the Turf and Amenity sales team to cover the Midlands.

Previously employed in a sales capacity with Scotts Main Distributor E T Breakwell, Nick has also gained experience as a Golf Course Manager with The Vale Golf and Country Club and studied to National Diploma level at Pershore and Hindlip College.

Nick is an active member of an off road racing team, participating in events all over the UK and is a keen cricket and squash player.

Stolen Sisis

A Royer Shredder 112 was stolen from SISIS Scottish Depot in Falkirk on 21 November. If you are offered one for sale from an unorthodox source SISIS would like to hear from you.

Please Call Keith Vertigan on 01625 503030.

Students get the point of grinding workshop

Grinding your cylinder mower to give optimum cutting performance was the topic of a recent workshop at Greenmount College. A large number of students and local greenkeepers attended the workshop delivered by Express Dual Educational Bernhard and Company.

The workshop which was organised by Neil McLaughlin, of Greenmount College, demonstrated the use of the Express dual 2000 to grind cylinder mowers.

Stephen Bernhard discussed the importance of a planned maintenance programme and correct cylinder grinding to ensure first class performance from mowers. Slides showing the damage caused to grass by different blades gave some food for thought.

Evaluating the day David Morris lecturer in mechanisation said that the students were captivated by the lively and informative presentation.

Neil McLaughlin was delighted with



the attendance and the quality of training provided.

"It is always beneficial to see machinery

operated by experienced machinists and to talk to the experts, we greatly appreciated Bernhards visit to the College."

A new look for some familiar faces

In the autumn of '98, the idea for Pentagon Amenity Marketing was conceived and now, some 18 months on, the business is ready to become a trading reality. Pentagon is a new face, but one you'll recognise because it already deals with the majority of the UK's landscape and turf professionals. Pentagon consists of Stewart's in Scotland, Alpha Amenity (formerly County Amenity) in the North of England and Midlands, Collier Turf Care in East Anglia and Driving Force Leisure in the South.

"Pentagon was created and exists

to reduce the distance between customer and supplier. After a decade's experience working for ICI (in which ever guise!) I noticed that national distributors found it difficult to offer the same service nationwide as they could local to their depots. In contrast, regional suppliers offered a more efficient service to their customers, but often lacked the support and buying power of their larger competitors. With a combined sales force numbering 22, four main distribution points, Pentagon will be able to trade as local suppliers but have the strength and support of a

national scale distributor," explained Clive Heginbotham, Business Director of Pentagon Amenity Marketing Ltd.

Pentagon has now put together a portfolio of new products sourced from across Britain and Europe, some of which you will know, others you may not.

The new products will be showcased at BTME 2000 and will include a range of fertilisers, equipment, speciality paints, biological treatments, and a range of products designed to complement the 'natural' approach to turf management.

Par Aide UK

Par Aide UK has become the official distributor of Range Servant Driving Range equipment and will be undertaking the servicing of all existing equipment.

For more information contact Andrew Lofting Tel: 01424 818008.

Matt moves on to Bioseed

Bioseed Probiotics has appointed Matt Maryon, former Course Manager at Yeovil Golf Club, to its sales team from January 2000. Matt will be covering the South West, South Wales and South Midlands.

"Leaving greenkeeping was a difficult decision, however a new direction brings a new challenge. I am really looking forward to working with the team and developing my role and area with Bioseed. The Company has great products and ideas and are totally committed to the Sportsturf industry," he said.

We'll be right back after the break...

That's exactly what one of our Greenkeeper Members did! Craig Pennyquick, Head Greenkeeper at Winterfield GC, famous for his tattoo of the BIGGA logo, is a keen Sunday League footballer, unfortunately, one fateful Sunday he found himself involved in a bad tackle which resulted in him breaking his leg.

Craig was obviously off work for some weeks, but what he didn't realise was that he could claim for being off work under the Personal Accident Insurance scheme. Craig was aware of the scheme, but because he had an accident in his leisure time and not at work, he didn't think he was covered.

Steve Dixon, Craig's Section Secretary, checked with Craig to see if he was claiming and pointed out that it didn't matter where the accident took place, he was entitled to receive payments while he was off work.

So, Craig contacted the insurers immediately, they sent him a form to complete with his Doctor's signature, he returned it and within days he had a cheque arrive through his door.

So the moral of the story, if you are a Greenkeeping Member, you are covered for any accident you have, whether at work, home, holiday or even playing football! If you find yourself off work because of an accident, contact the insurers straight away!

Thankfully Craig is back on his feet and is now playing it safe and is refereeing instead. Is that safe these days?

Barenbrug gets set to lead the way

Barenbrug is the first seed company to announce double testing of grass seed mixtures destined for turf production.

Quality testing of seed delivered to Barenbrug's warehouse has been the norm, as with most other seed producers, for many years. Barenbrug decided 12 months ago that this alone was not good enough so it introduced random testing of the mixed turfgrass seed using the same controls and independent testing houses as previously. This extra test has been of great interest to Turf Grower customers, so much so that the company has announced that the experiment will become a standard procedure for all turfgrass seed orders. Bags of Barenbrug Turf Mixtures will carry a yellow label confirming this.

"Turf Growers can now gain further confidence from the stringent controls and extra check we have put in place," said Alan Lomas, Sales and Marketing Manager.



BIGCA goes Stateside for study

Twenty four members of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects spent a week in the south-east of the United States studying historic courses and meeting with USGA Green Section Staff.

The tour, led by BIGCA President Howard Swan and Vice President David Williams, took in the Championship courses at Pinehurst and Augusta National, as well as the Atlanta

Athletic Club where the USPGA Tournament will be held in 2002.

The Study Tour was part of the Institute's continuing Professional Development Programme for its membership.

The 24 architects, representing a third of the Institute, came from 14 countries, and among them were nine students from BIGCA Diploma Course.



Advanta uses BTME to launch brand new portfolio

Following a year of corporate restructuring, grass seed breeder Advanta, (formerly Mommersteeg and Sharpes International), is using BTME to launch its own portfolio of amenity grass seed mixtures. These are being presented as two distinct brands - Advanta MM's and Designer from Advanta.

The mixtures within each range, have been designed to produce high quality, persistent swards, which are tailored to specific end-uses.

"We now offer the most complete range of amenity grass mixtures in the UK," says Advanta Amenity Sales and Marketing Manager, Dave Phillips.

"By having two core brands we are providing our customers, who often have very diverse requirements, with the best choice of high quality mixtures they will find in the market today."

Royal Inverdivot GC...

by Tony Husband



Committed to Green

...but where are the Greenkeepers?

Neil Thomas reports...

Since its launch in September 1997, 'Committed to Green' has sought to attract interest among golf clubs from across Europe in its attempt to encourage clubs to address environmental issues. In early November a US/Europe Golf Environment Summit met at Valderrama Golf Club in Spain and resulted in "The Valderrama Declaration" signed on behalf of the golf authorities by the Royal & Ancient Golf Club, the United States Golf Association and the European Golf Association and endorsed on behalf of sport and the environment community by other major bodies. The Declaration sets out a forward-looking perspective on the golf community's role in initiating and supporting environmental education, research and conservation programmes.

The Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA) was represented at the Summit and a report was subsequently made to the FEGGA Annual Conference held later in November again in Spain. Implementation of 'Committed to Green' will be through the Committed to Green Foundation which became operational from 1 January 2000, superseding the former European Golf Association Ecology Unit headed by David Stubbs, who will now lead the new Foundation.

It became clear during the FEGGA Conference that there had been no greenkeeping representation from Europe during the Valderrama Summit. Indeed discussions in relation to 'Committed to Green' have not included any input from the greenkeepers throughout Europe simply through the inability of the EGA Ecology Unit to consult with the greenkeeping Associations. Published information available to date would indicate a similarly negative attitude to the greenkeeping profession from the new Foundation if the almost total absence of refer-

ence to greenkeepers and greenkeeping is to be taken as the yardstick. Put quite simply, it is greenkeepers who have to work with 'Committed to Green' and be involved in its implementation from the outset.

So clearly something is seriously amiss. The structure for implementing 'Committed to Green' has to be questioned in that there is seemingly little in place beneath a top management tier. An empathy with greenkeepers and their Associations must be established and at present is clearly lacking. Delegates to the FEGGA Conference made it quite clear that the present position is not sustainable and the 17 national Associations present unanimously agreed that the programme could not be supported as presently constituted. This was not to say that the Associations do not support 'Committed to Green', far from it. However, there is a lack of confidence, a feeling that national greenkeeping Associations are being ignored and that there is no recognition of the fundamental role of greenkeepers in implementing the programme.

Yet it is greenkeepers and golf clubs who are moving forward irrespective of 'Committed to Green'. There are two measurable awards in this regard. In Scotland, the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Initiative currently has 250 golf clubs registered with whom it is working. 34 of these have become eligible for the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Charter, which is presented to clubs who set up and implement environmental management plans.

Within BIGGA the Environmental Award Competition has now completed a successful fifth year with outstanding industry support from Amazone Ground Care. The award is creating environmental awareness among golf clubs and their members as well as creating a focus for greenkeepers to demonstrate the environmental benefits of golf cours-

es. Both these awards should be embraced by 'Committed to Green' which as yet has little relevance I suspect to the vast majority of golf clubs.

FEGGA was therefore authorised by its member Associations to write to the R&A, the European Golf Association and the PGA European Tour, as the three funding bodies of the Committed to Green Foundation, to express its profound dissatisfaction with the present situation and its serious concerns for the future of the programme if the current ambivalence to consulting with the greenkeeping associations is to continue. For its part, BIGGA's Board of Management has determined to make its views known to the R&A in the hope that this matter can be urgently reviewed.

Furthermore BIGGA has decided that, through the pages of Greenkeeper International, it will address these issues and seek the views of the bodies and individuals involved with 'Committed to Green'. We can then highlight the key role greenkeepers have to play in implementing the programme and how this can be successfully achieved by consultation with the greenkeeping Associations and their representation on technical committees charged with evolving and implementing the 'Committed to Green' programme.

To this end we will welcome contributions to the pages of Greenkeeper International in order that a constructive debate can be initiated which we hope will ultimately be for the benefit of greenkeepers and the golf clubs they represent when they decide to seek the 'Committed to Green Certificate of Environmental Excellence'.

Finally one is reminded of the old adage, 'they also serve who only stand and wait', in this case the greenkeepers. The time has surely come for those in charge to stand and deliver.

Harry Diamond

1930-1999

Harry Diamond died at Ayr County Hospital at 3am on Wednesday December 8th, 1999 in his 69th year. To write all that Harry has achieved over the years would fill Greenkeeper International for the next few issues. He was, as we say in Scotland, "A man of many parts".

I have known Harry since we were strong young men, both of us being active members of the Scottish and International Golf Greenkeepers Association. His introduction to golf was through caddying as a very young lad. He was born and brought up in Irvine, which is in the very heart of Ayrshire golfing country. He once told me that, except for a few short walks, you could hit a ball from one course to another for five miles down the Ayrshire coast.

When one considers there are 16 top class courses within walking distance of Irvine what could one do but get involved although, in his early days, it was the necessity to bring a few extra shillings into the family purse that took Harry on to a golf course.

Among the many stories he told was of how he caddied for the well known amateur and Walker Cup golfer, Jimmy Walker. Jimmy was not always the smartest of dressers on the course so Harry thought he would tidy him up by starting on his shoes which he polished to a glowing shine. After the match Jimmy blamed Harry for losing him the game. He said that every time he addressed his putt, the glare from the shoes blinded him and he couldn't see the line.

From caddying as a lad it was only a step into greenkeeping where he started as an apprentice at Glasgow Gailes under the Head Greenkeeper, Bert Graham, and the then First Assistant, Ben Moir. There Harry learned the basic art of greenkeeping and, as he said, "How to take care of yourself and, if possible, avoid the golfers".

Harry served his National Service with the Scottish Fusiliers, one of the Scottish Regiments who were formed and recruited in Ayrshire. He was always the athletic type and took part in all sports, in particular, running for his Battalion. After his National Service he returned to Glasgow Gailes where he started to play serious golf. He was involved in



county golf as a boy and played in the Scottish Boys and other local competitions. It was not long before the County saw Harry's ability to win golf matches and at a handicap of one he was often in the Ayrshire County Team.

When it came to Greenkeepers' Competitions, Harry's name appears on most of the Scottish trophies. He might have gone into Professional Golf but as most of us know, the Club Pros in the 50s had a harder time keeping the wolf from the door than even greenkeepers.

He served his time as a greenkeeper and then moved on to Irvine Bogside as Head Greenkeeper, where I know he had happy memories but as we know this does not fill the pot, so Harry took up the Course Manager's position at Ayr Belleisle and Seafield Municipal golf courses

where he stayed for many years until he was asked to take a desk job in Golf Administration for Ayr Council.

This was a prestige position where he had many irons in the fire, not least the ability to assist in Greenkeepers' education. At this time, Ayr Technical College refused to carry on with the education of our Assistants. Harry was instrumental in persuading the Educationalists on the Council and the Youth Employment that a College for Greenkeepers was essential in Ayr when one considers the number of golf courses that fall within the boundaries of Ayr and the number of greenkeeping students requiring theoretical training. It was only sensible that courses to this end were started and financed and the students taught to a Higher national level locally.

Harry served the greenkeepers on

many committees. His record for service in the Ayrshire Section is unequalled, starting back in the SIGGA days right up to the 16th of November when he was on the telephone to me making suggestions of how we could go about helping greenkeepers who had occupational ailments. This was Harry - always thinking about his fellow man.

In recent years, as well as being active in the Ayrshire Section, he was Chairman of the Scottish Regional Board of BIGGA and did three years on the Board of Management as the Scottish Representative where those serving at the time will remember his sound and wise counselling. I know that if we on the Scottish Board gave him a brief it was carried out to the letter.

After retiring Harry was called back to Ayr Council to help finalise the redistribution of work on the Sports Grounds and Golf Courses. He finally wound that up, and was invited out to Malta to straighten out constructional problems they were having with their existing golf course. It ended up with his being the mainstay in putting the whole course into excellent playing condition. For over two years he flew in and out of Malta so many times that he was known as "The Maltese Falcon". I can't recall whether I told him about this alias. If I did he would have laughed for if anyone liked a good story it was Harry. His ready wit and marvellous memory brought tears of laughter to any gathering of friends. He was an avid reader which was obvious from his conversation.

Harry is survived by Jessie, his second wife - they were married in America in the summer of 1998 - his son, Paul, and three daughters, Ann, Linda and Rosemary, and 11 grandchildren, and Jessie's two sons, Kenneth and Allan, who will all find a vacancy in their lives.

The funeral service was held in the Good Shepherd Cathedral, Ayr, thereafter to Masonhill Crematorium. Both services were well attended by friends. It is a mark of respect for Harry that the Crematorium was filled to capacity and standing.

Our thoughts are with the family in their time of mourning.

What can we say except, "Well Done" to a life that touched us all.



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- Valves



Address your letters to **Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. You can also fax them to 01347 833801 or email to scott@bigga.co.uk**

Malcolm's course is a Temple

Everyone at Temple wants me to thank BIGGA, the Judges and especially the Sponsors for running the Environment Award Competition. It has created a lot of interest and we have been contacted by a number of clubs, not only with their congratulations but also for information and assistance.

I sincerely believe this is the way forward for golf. Natural management not only helps the environment but returns golf courses to the conditions which is ideal for playing traditional British golf.

We and the Award have featured

on national and local radio, local papers and even the glossy national golf press. This must be good for the game of golf.

While I am writing, please pass on an invitation to Jim Hillier (Letter from America - December issue) to visit and play Temple. He will certainly be able to play the course in February, as we are open 365 days a year! We are a Willie Park Jnr designed course, opened in 1910 and I hope this will be traditional enough for him. I'm not sure if Martin Gunn, our Course Manager, would consider our maintenance practices

"old fashioned" but they would certainly be approved of by Jim Arthur. Do I need to say more?

Over the years Martin and I have been shown great courtesy and, more important, given valuable time by Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers around the British Isle and it would be a pleasure to return some of this hospitality to someone who obviously appreciates traditional British standards of Golf Course Management.

Malcolm Peake, Temple Golf Club, Berkshire



Sunni thanks

The two days I spent at BIGGA for the Toro Awards were very informative and a great experience.

The standard of the finalists was very high and I felt every one of us should have won. How the judges decided on a winner must be extremely difficult.

I would like to thank Toro for their tremendous support towards our education system and BIGGA for promoting the image of the greenkeeper, as I feel we still do not command the respect we deserve from the golfing fraternity.

**Brian Turner,
 Sunningdale Golf Club,
 Berkshire**

The Turner prize

I was so pleased to hear that Brian Turner had been given the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award.

I have known Brian for more years than I care to remember having been in the same trade since my retirement last January. Brian has always been a good advertisement for greenkeeping with his golf courses being kept to the highest standards. I am sure he would be the first to admit that being a very good golfer to boot has helped considerably in his greenkeeping career.

My congratulations to him. It's well deserved.

**John Nudds, Hunstanton
 Norfolk**

Communication the key to a good course

In preparation of my dissertation in golf course architecture and my seminar for the BTME 2000 entitled 'Is the grass really greener on the other side', I carried out a survey among British and American Course Managers in order to draw a realistic comparison between course conditions and maintenance standards on both sides of the Atlantic. From the beginning of my career in golf course architecture, I was guided by the words of Robert Trent Jones who said that 'We can build the greatest golf courses in the world, but if they are not properly maintained, they are nothing. I am convinced that appearance and performance of golf courses are products of the degree of collaboration between golf architects and superintendents. It is therefore vital for both professions to under-

stand each others principles, skills and limits.

Too many golf courses have been designed and built without any thoughts of maintenance budgets and resulting problems. There is no doubt: with massive budgets, high staffing levels and modern machinery - every design can be maintained. On most golf courses however the maintenance budget is limited. Architects and superintendents shall therefore communicate whenever possible in order to broaden their professional views. I think that communication forms the foundation for optimum results of a project. Exchange of knowledge and experience will improve conditions for course maintenance and lead to golf courses with a high aesthetic and playing value.

It was a pleasure to realise that this subject is an interesting issue for British greenkeepers, too. The fact that 53 out of 80 British Head Greenkeepers have responded and filled out my extensive survey is very encouraging. I was sent wonderful letters and extra information, material and photographs of their golf courses. The response exceeded my expectations by far.

I am very touched and grateful for the friendly and generous help of the Head Greenkeepers, Course Managers and Superintendents, and I hope that we will meet at BTME 2000 in Harrogate:

**Bettina Schrickel, Design
 Associate at GOLFPLAN, The
 Ronald Fream Design Group Ltd,
 California & Germany**

A very dedicated group

During the past year I have been privileged to interview a number of greenkeepers from all over Britain and Northern Ireland in connection with the Talking Head feature in Greenkeeper International.

I would like to place on record what a helpful group of men they are, not only a credit to their profession, but also to their clubs and their Association.

Having been in sports journalism for some 50 years, and interviewed countless people in a wide range of sports, I would like to say that I have found no group more helpful and dedicated than these BIGGA members.

I look forward to talking to many more in the months ahead.
Malcolm Huntington, York

Editor's Note: Malcolm was Sports Editor and then Chief Sports Writer of the Evening Press, York, where he worked for 46 years before retiring from full-time sports writing. He was awarded the MBE for Services to Yorkshire Sports Journalism in 1997.

You can read Malcolm's latest Talking Heads feature on page 24. This month, six Head Greenkeepers talk about the most influential issues which have ranked highly on their course or in their career.

Harry Diamond

I was saddened by the death of Harry Diamond. Harry was a stalwart of SIGGA, BIGGA, you name it, Harry was there. Harry was one of the personalities in greenkeeping, which are now few and far between. Harry was a regular attendee at all Ayrshire outings, and his tales were legendary. I was Ayrshire chairman for two and a half years, and without doubt my best memory was the joy with which he accepted honorary membership of BIGGA.

At this time I would also like to remember, Harry's friends, namely Cecil George, Jimmy Nielson, Jack McMillan etc. The list is too numerous to carry on. Let Harry rest in peace and hopefully some of our young greenkeepers can aspire to be like Harry.

Ian G McNab, via email

Well deserved praise for John

I would like to say through your letters page how proud I am of my husband, John Kerr, Head Greenkeeper at Enfield GC, who has just passed his NVQ Level 4. He deserves a mention after studying so hard.

I would also like to thank Ian Merrick, of Oaklands College and David Golding, of the GTC, both of whom I have only spoken to on the phone, but who have played roles in John obtaining his NVQ Level 4/

Well done John and may you have continued success in all you do!

Lynne Kerr,
Enfield
Middlesex

Dispute resolved

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the friends, colleagues & club members who supported me through a very difficult & stressful time due to a dispute with my former employers. Also many thanks to BIGGA without whose legal aid cover I would not have been able to pursue the matter through a solicitor.

The dispute has been resolved with a settlement payment made by the golf club in question and I feel I can now continue my career vindicated in the whole matter with this I would like to thank my new employer for giving me the opportunity after a period of time searching for work.

Finally, may I wish my successor good luck.

N J Wilson, Bristol

JANUARY 2000

Reminders

1. Meet with staff to organise weekend rota.
2. Ring OCMIS to discuss irrigation requirements
3. Speak to **TEXTRON** ref: Machinery
4. Sort transport for **BTME**
5. Visit **OCMIS** stand **A5** at **BTME**
6. Take dog to Vets
7. Telephone No's: -
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0131 220 2102 - Scotland
(1) 235 4020 - Ireland

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Ad Ref 312

Ian Miller, Head of Resources and Assistant Director at Otley Agricultural and Horticultural College in Suffolk, provides an insight into new learning techniques.



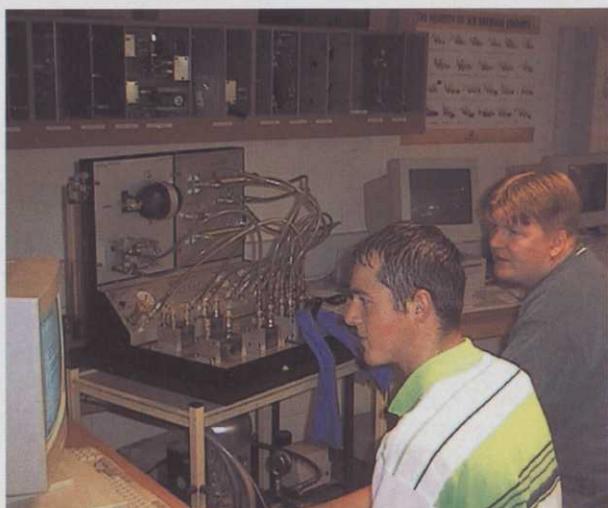
Learning CURVES



Right: Students working on the electro-hydraulics board

Much of the machinery and equipment used to maintain a golf course is of a high capital value and is required to work over long periods of time. Training, accurate and rapid fault diagnosis and repair are essential to ensure that it continues to operate to full capacity providing the optimum return for the course manager.

Three years ago Otley Agricultural & Horticultural College was facing a dilemma. Our engineering workshop, built in the late 60s was outdated in design, uninsulated, and was an inadequate size for the demands of today's modern engineering requirements especially when it came to modern turf care machines. I am sure this is a familiar story.



This page: Top: Faults being inserted into one of the systems on the Jackobsen LF3400

Above: Understanding hydraulics is crucial on modern turf care equipment. Here students are troubleshooting a possible fault

Next page: Top: A student diagnosing a problem in an ignition system using one of the simulator boards

and construction of modern motor vehicles, computer diagnostics and engine management systems to name only two. This has led to a requirement for new skills within the industry and a requirement for not only training new entrants into the industry but also upskilling the existing staff to use this technology.

It is only a matter of time before turf care machines adopt similar systems. It is with this in mind the college's project team have equipped the Centre. In March of 1998 David Blunkett released £90 million funding for Centres of Excellence.

Otley put in a bid and, with support from companies such as Textron Turf Care, were successful in winning £460,000 to equip this technology and learning centre. There is not only a need to train the technicians but also the operators. Much of the equipment now used to maintain a golf course is of a high capital value and is required to work over long periods of time.

The idealists view would be to have no downtime, but this is not yet achievable. However it can be much reduced by good training, accurate and rapid fault diagnosis and repair. A point not to be missed by Textron, the local manufacturer of Ransomes and Jacobsen grounds care equipment. Textron were the centre's first commercial customer, and has readily embraced the new teaching methods and regularly sends its dealer staff on training courses at Otley.

The hands on approach has gone down well with both the firm and the dealership staff. They find the ability to work at their own pace is rewarding and less frustrating than

Two main options were available: To run down and eventually close the engineering facility or to invest heavily in new facilities and equipment in preparation for the new millennium.

The latter was the decision made by the College. The initial requirement was to construct a brand new engineering workshop with teaching accommodation totalling some 1400m².

The Felix Thornley Cobbold Trust supported this both financially and in planning. This amounted to a total cost of some £500,000 and was completed by July 1998. The second requirement was to furnish the centre with state of the art equipment and teaching facilities. This was to include new methods of teaching and learning. The formation of an engineering employers' forum helped to steer the college in the right direction in order to train technicians and operators with new skills for the next century.

The forum highlighted the fact that technology would play a more crucial part in machine operating systems and fault diagnosis in the next decade and beyond.

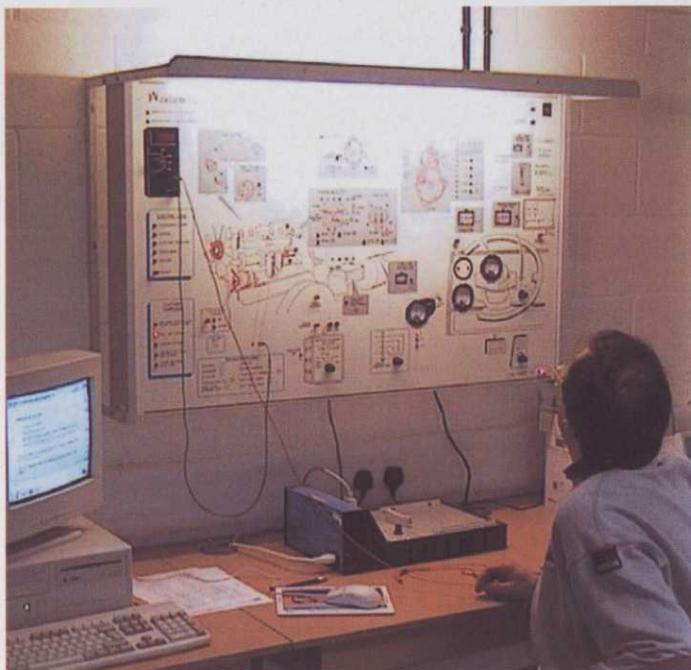
Experience of the automotive industry has shown that an ever-increasing amount of technology is being used within the development

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more traditional teaching methods. "They are a real boon and allow students to get on with their work at their own pace, retrace their steps if they do not understand something and test themselves as they go along," said Richard Clarke, a sports turf lecturer at Otley College, said of the computer-based learning packages.

The computer system is networked allowing the lecturer to test and monitor the student's progress. The system is also extremely versatile. A complete beginner could be on one computer learning the basics of the four-stroke engine cycle, while at the other end of the room a highly skilled technician could be fault diagnosing an alternator circuit using an oscilloscope.

All around the walls are boards that show the wiring and layout of a range of equipment circuits. Students learn how these circuits are made up and use wires to link the components. Also, with the help of instructions on the computer, students are taught fault finding routines using a circuit tester to find where potential problems lie.

Here they learn the fundamentals before being let loose on real equipment - including one of Textron's Jacobsen LF3400 fairway mowers. There is simply not the space here to list the entire range of teaching equipment in the new centre. This in itself says a lot about what is on offer.

The system starts by using the latest teaching aids to instruct students about the real basics using self-learning programmes. Here the computers are tools used for nothing other than teaching, using graphics to really

help explain how things work. Next the computers are linked to the boards with the computer programme providing instructions for students to follow. Here the computers are not only teaching the students, but monitoring their actions.

The next stage is diagnostics and faultfinding. Here the lecturer can place a number of faults on the board and, via the computer, follow every action the student takes in finding the fault.

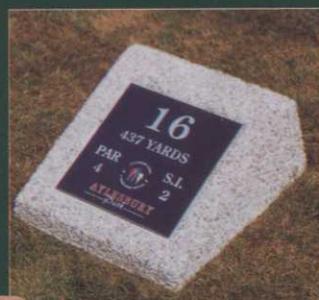
Not only can the facility be used by technicians but also by operators to ensure maintenance and basic faults can be diagnosed. This will be the focus of the training seminar available at the BTME 2000 in January. This seminar is being run by Textron Turf Care and supported by Otley College.

Summary

A report from Mike Roberts of Profi magazine stated, Otley Centre of Excellence's facilities are, frankly, almost unbelievable. Cast aside any pre-conceived ideas of what a college lab, workshop or classroom used to look like - you are way off. Indeed, we have never seen such advanced teaching equipment before - even at the headquarters of the multinational machinery makers.

Modern machinery demands well-trained and highly skilled mechanics to support it, and Otley has the equipment to teach them.

Let's hope this is just the start of the long-overdue revolution needed to bring machinery support staff up to date with the equipment they are repairing and servicing.



UPDATE

Important news about the learning experience

Unfortunately, it is now too late to book a place on the National Education Conference or Workshops.

However, you can book places on Seminars, on the day, at Harrogate. Anyone wishing to book a place on their choice of Seminar, should contact Sami Collins on the Seminar Registration Desk in the Royal Hall. Thanks to the continued support of Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products, the Learning Experience 2000 has something for everyone at very affordable prices.

New for BTME 2000 is the Careers Clinic in the Kings Suite. Manned by Brin Bendon and Frank Newberry, the Clinic should provide the knowledge and skills needed to find that new job.

The BTME Seminars start at 11 am on Wednesday 19 January with a FREE Keynote speech by Simon Weston. Simon is recognised throughout the World for his optimism, humour and enthusiasm and is a popular choice of speaker. This is on only chance to hear this talk at it will not be available on video.

Students and Lecturers should note that entry to all Seminars is free on production of a Student Membership card, Student Union card or other relevant documentation.

BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, looks at some forthcoming events in which you can participate.

EDUCATION FOR THE NEW Millennium

Sami and I would like to wish all our readers a very Happy, Prosperous and Educational New Year and a bug free Millennium!

Greenkeepers Pay and Conditions of Service

Following a number of queries about the Year 2000 Recommendations on Greenkeepers Salaries and Conditions of Service since their release in September, we were asked to look again at the recommended rates for First Assistants. After some deliberation, the Chairman of the Standing Committee decided that the recommended rates for First Assistants should be in line with all other rates ie an increase of 2.2% on the 1999 recommended rates. An amendment slip is included with this magazine but if you need extra copies then call at the BIGGA stand in Hall Q at BTME or contact BIGGA House.

The BIGGA 1999 Essay Competition

Congratulations to William Bowden (under 25), Simon O'Hara (over 25) and Kerran Daley (Course Manager), the winners of the 1999 BIGGA Essay Competition, who each receive £500. Winning Essays will be printed in February, March and April, in this magazine.

The Year 2000 Essay Competition will be launched at BTME.

There are three categories: Head Greenkeepers/Golf Course Managers and deputies; Assistants and Students

aged 25 and over; Assistants and Students aged under 25.

Entrants are required to write an essay of between 1500 and 2000 words long ie. five to seven type written pages.

The Essay will be marked to an agreed criteria by selected BIGGA representatives. The subject matter is 'Managing without Chemicals', How would you manage your course if today's products were not available?

The last day for entry is 27 October 2000 and the winners will be announced in the January 2001 edition of Greenkeeper International

The winners of each category will receive £500 with two runners up in each category receiving £100.

Start thinking, start writing and submit your entry to be in with a chance.

Computers in Greenkeeping

I am continuing to provide training in Computers and Computing around the Regions and I have completed four, 2 day courses during 1999. Each course is free to members and can take up to six delegates. Areas covered include Hardware-what is it/ what do I need/ how does it work/ what does it cost? Software-what is it/ how do I use it? Applications, including Word Processing, Data bases, Spreadsheets, e-mail and Internet. Contact your Section Secretary if you feel that you would benefit from training in the selection and use of computers.

Visit the BIGGA and the Epani

stands at BTME to discover how you could take your golf course management practises into the 21st Century.

Regional Training Courses

Despite a large dose of apathy in some areas of the Country, our Regional training courses continue to attract enthusiastic delegates each year. Work is already under way to design this year's courses, but if you would like to see a particular subject covered in your region then please let me know.

BIGGA House Courses

The five weeks of BIGGA HOUSE Courses are being redesigned for the Year 2000 and beyond. Although containing much of the material from previous courses, the new courses will be modular and reflect the changes in N/SVQ Standards. Watch for detail in future editions of Greenkeeper International.

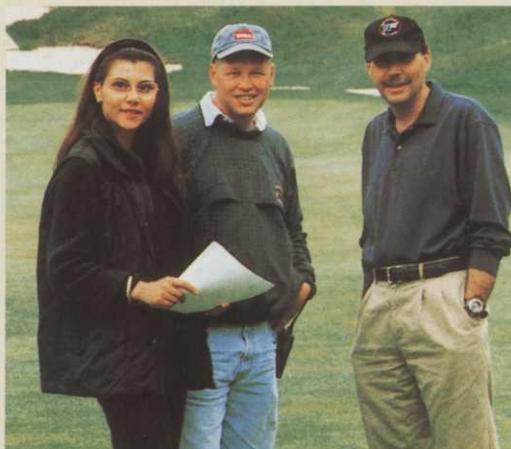
Reducing noise at work

New guidance on ear protection has been developed by the HSE. It explains employers legal duties, the types of protection available, information on when to wear it, how to wear it and maintenance tips.

Single copies of 'Ear Protection Employers Duties Explained', 'Protect your Hearing' and a poster 'Wear ear Protection Properly' are available free of charge from HSE Books Tel: 01767 881165.

THE GRAND TOUR SCHOLARSHIP

Bettina Schrickel pictured with Jeff Baker and Bill Spence at the Country Club, Brookline, MA, USA



Thanks to the efforts of Bettina Schrickel, Rain Bird International is sponsoring a travel scholarship for four turfgrass/golf course architecture students in the Year 2000, called the Grand Tour Scholarship.

The Grand Tour Scholarship offers study tours to leading golf courses of the United States with two students travelling the Eastern Route and Two travelling the Western Route.

Both study tours will take place in April and students will visit 22 golf course in four weeks on the Eastern Route and 18 courses on the western Route in three weeks. The scholarship covers air tickets, car hire, hotel expenses and a cellular

telephone. Applicants must possess a valid passport, an international driving licence and comprehensive travel insurance before departure.

The deadline for applications is 30 January 2000 and application forms are available from BIGGA House or direct from Bettina by fax on 00493320564035. Applicants must be over 21 and be able to prove significant educational achievements in their chosen career ie turfgrass and/or golf course architecture.

Further information may be obtained from Bettina on 00493320564034 or at BTME as she is giving a seminar on Thursday 20 January called "Is the grass really greener on the other side?"



Above: Turf quickly established by incorporating ENVIGRO into the soil/root zone prior to turfing

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Phil Siddle, Head Greenkeeper, Rossendale Golf Club (inset)

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BIGGA's Membership Services Officer, Tracey Maddison starts the new Millennium with a warm welcome to some new members to the Association, and some important renewal information to existing members...

Membership moves into the Millennium!

Welcome to the first Membership Update for 2000. On behalf of the Association, BIGGA's Membership Services Officer, Tracey Maddison, would like to wish all existing Members and prospective new Members, a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

In November, over 60 new members were welcomed to the Association, increasing the total membership figure to over 6,800, providing a positive start to the New Year for the Association which is growing in members and growing in strength.

We are constantly trying to improve the services

and benefits offered to you in your membership package, however, it is only with your comments, feedback and suggestions can we provide you with the services and benefits that are most important to you. If you are going to BTME 2000, then call into the Membership Services Stand in Hall Q, just next to the main BIGGA stand and have a chat with myself or Kirstie about any topic related to Membership. We would love to meet you! Also, you can get an exclusive look at the all-new, interactive BIGGA website.

Attention all Greenkeeper Members whose membership expired December 1999 and expires January 2000, you should have received your renewal pack by now, if you haven't telephone the Membership Services Department today!

Don't forget as part of your Greenkeeper Membership you have access to a legal helpline, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the new telephone number from 1st January 2000 is 0800 068 1893. Look out for the new red and white leaflet in your Membership Pack for 2000.

BIGGA welcomes...

Scottish Region

William T Armstrong, East
Glenn S Campbell, Central
Andrew Clark, Central
Iain D Cunningham, East
James M Farrar, Central
Graeme N Ferguson, East
Davy I Graham, East
Gary J Innes, Central
David C Key, Central
Gavin D Logan, Central
Malcolm Low, Central
Donald D Macdonald, North
Jonathan W Mann, East
Steve M P Newell, Central
Euan Robertson, East
Charles Webb, Central
John Wedlock, East
Steven Wood, Central
Alan Wotherspoon, Central

Northern Region

Philip D Armitage, Northern
David A Brierley, North West
Richard C Briscoe, North West
Nigel Brown, North West
Darren J Burfitt, North West
Richard S Foulkes, North West
Daniel J Grainger, Northern
John A Iblson, North West
Stephen M Kay, North West
Adrian E Kinsey, North West

Andrew J Merry, North West
Sean Metcalfe, North West
James H A Moorcroft, Sheffield
Paul Smyth, North West
Neil Toner, North West
James G Turner, North West
David L Waterworth, N West
Christopher Wood, North East

Midland Region

Robert Aldred, BB&O
James Biggerstaff, BB&O
Christian Donaldson, East
Midland
Simon J Graham, BB&O
Barry G Healy, BB&O
Jonathan Oldknow, Midland
Frankie Owens, Midland
Mark Russell, Midland
Harvey W Ryder, Midland
Gary Simpson, Midland
John Starkey, East Midland
Brian J Tomsett, East Midland
Ian A Upton, BB&O
Daniel T Urwin, East Midland

South East Region

Matthew J Burr, Surrey
Lee Cox, London
Martyn J Gray, Surrey
Alan J Morden, London
John P Wilson, London

S West & S Wales Region

Patrick Lewis Jones, South
Wales
Matthew Lock, South West
Russell Riley, South Coast

Northern Ireland

Ian Martin, South East

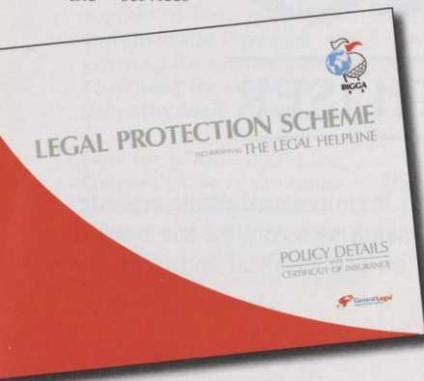
International

Jos Meuskens, Africa

Associate Members

Keith B Sulman, East Anglia
Emyr G Nickels, South Wales
Ceri Richards, South Wales

Check out the February 2000 edition for the 1999 December new members!



Trevor Downing, of J. Rothschild Assurance, outlines some important points worth considering when looking for financial services

Extra benefits add real value

When considering financial services, people naturally want to the best value for money at the outset of a plan and throughout the term. They will regularly review their arrangements to ensure that they are getting not just peace of mind but also added value.

We encourage our clients to conduct such reviews, and to compare our services with those of alternative providers, but when you do so it is important to make sure you are comparing like with like. Moreover you will often find that our services include extra benefits not found elsewhere which, when taken into consideration, greatly increase the value to you.

A case in point occurred recently when one of our colleagues arranged cover for two of his business clients, who were partners in a firm. To protect their business interests, he effected two of our Lifetime Cover Plans for them.

Some time later, with the firm's annual

review of expenditure fast approaching, the two business partners found themselves looking for ways to cut costs. They were introduced to a financial adviser from an alternative company who offered them a 30% reduction in premiums for the same cover. They were naturally intrigued but decided to discuss the matter with us first before taking any action.

In the course of the discussions it became apparent that the alternative quotation had been prepared on a very different basis, and when like-for-like quotes were compared, it turned out that the competitor's premiums were some 37% more expensive. But it didn't end there.

There were also several important elements of cover in our plans that were not in the competitor's. For example, the business partners and their families had the additional cover of children's critical illness, including cover against meningitis, at no extra cost.

At the mere mention of the latter, one of the business partners suddenly turned pale. He explained that ten months previously his 17 year-old daughter had contracted bacterial meningitis while on holiday abroad and had to be flown home by air ambulance. Not realising his J. Rothschild Assurance Plan covered such eventualities he had not made a claim.

Our colleague took up his case and contacted our Administration team in Dublin. They in turn informed the client that the time limit for claims notification was normally six months but in this case they would waive that requirement. Once the client's claims document had been submitted together with reports from the two consulting doctors, the claim was met in full. Almost a year after his daughter had been taken ill, the client received a cheque for £25,000 (including interest) with the main cover under the plan for himself and his business partner,

remaining in place, unaffected by this payment.

In some instances, bacterial meningitis can result in permanent disabilities. Should she need specialist treatment for this condition in the future, whether it be at home or abroad, she will be able to get it without having to worry about paying for it. At J. Rothschild Assurance we think it is suffering enough to contract such an illness in the first place without having to worry about money for treatment.

The moral of this story is, when you compare our services with others', make sure you compare like with like - and look at all the extra benefits our cover provides. We are confident that every time you will find that J. Rothschild Assurance provides real added value and true peace of mind.

If you would like more information please contact Trevor Downing on 01959 500427.



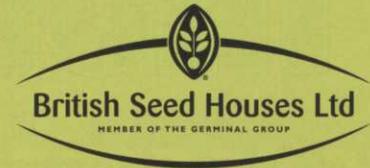
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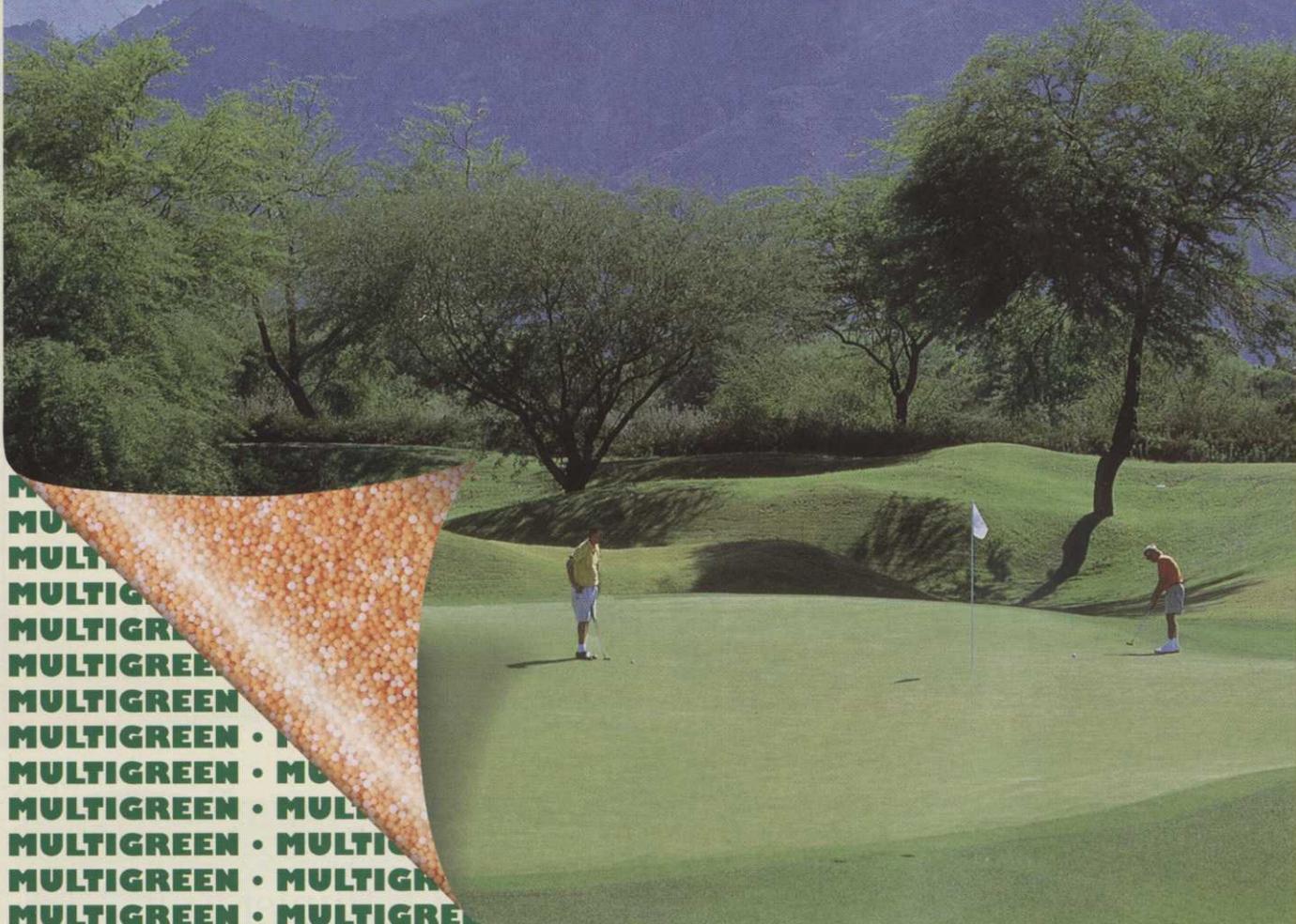
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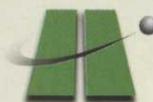
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Scott MacCallum travelled to North Wales to meet a man and machine with quite a story to tell...

A little piece of history

In 1932 Rhos on Sea Golf Club on the coast of North Wales, close to Colwyn Bay, took delivery of the first Ransomes Overgreen to leave the Ipswich factory.

Sixty-seven years later that same Overgreen - No B301 - was wheeled out, in pristine condition having been renovated by the club's owner, to celebrate the club's centenary and the 50th anniversary of Head Greenkeeper, Aneurin Hughes', arrival at the club.

That bare fact shows a level of continuity that would be the envy of most clubs. More so when you consider that in the 100 years the club has had just two Head Greenkeepers. Hughie Evans became the club's first Head man in 1908 and held the post up until 1959 when Aneurin took over. As Aneurin edges towards his official retirement age next March, the third Head Greenkeeper has been appointed. Diana Blundell, the daughter of club owner Frank Lithgow, has a steep mountain to climb if she is to be judged on longevity, but having spent time at Mere in Manchester, she brings with her the modern day skills required to do the job at the turn of the millennium.



As Aneurin admits, "She's got a lot more qualifications than I have."

The fact that the first Ransomes Overgreen found its way to North Wales was down to the club's then owner, J.B. Brear, who arrived at the club as club professional just after the first war.

"When the club came up for sale in the early 20s he bought a good share of it and by the 50s he'd bought about 90% of the shares," explained Aneurin.

"He was a very advanced, forward thinking man in terms of engineering as he had been a Chief Engineer in the Royal Navy and at the club whenever anything new came out he'd try it and if he liked it, he'd buy it. This was also the case with fertilisers which he brought to the club and weedkillers. He was one of the first to try weedkillers. He also worked closely with R.B. Dawson, of Bingley, on greenkeeping matters."

Remarkably the Overgreen was still in regular use up until the early 1970s by which time it had more than earned its retirement which it spent in Mr Lithgow's store.

"In the summer I used to

go out at first light and cut all 18 greens in about three and a half to four hours then raise the height of the units and go out and cut all the tees," said Aneurin, who added that the greens were cut every day in the summer.

Because the Overgreen didn't have a tight turning circle greens have to be cut in halves which gave them a light and shade, black and tan look.

It also had a range of Sisis attachments for hollow tining, slit tining, rollers and brushes.

"The Overgreen made the job an awful lot quicker but for special occasions like Captain's Day we used to take one of the 16 inch cutting units and push it by hand. We did that until the mid 50s."

Having worked at the club since he was 14 - he never ever considered leaving - Aneurin has seen many changes within the game and the industry itself.

"After I'd been here about a year I asked the boss if I could play and he said no. I had to have lessons from the professional, when he could fit me in, then play with the professional and the Captain to see what I'd learned about etiquette. Then I was given a leaflet about etiquette which I had to learn, and then brought before the committee to answer questions on etiquette. It was the same for any junior.

It was a shame when that was stopped," he said, adding that it was in the mid 60s when golf increased in popularity that he noticed etiquette standards beginning to drop.

As far as greenkeeping is concerned Aneurin can recall mixing his own fertilisers from hoof and horn and dried blood.

Getting back to cutting greens every day in the summer. It was in part due to the home made fertilisers boosting the grass to the extent that they grew by quarter of an inch a day.

"Mixing fertilisers was much more interesting and there was much more of a challenge to it than there is today."

Rhos on Sea has gone back to a more organic approach in the last five years.

"We starved everything for at least 12 months to get rid of all the chemicals. It did look terrible but the club decided to bite the bullet."

The moment when the Overgreen was wheeled out was an emotional one for Aneurin.

"It was thrilling. Mr Lithgow had reground and sharpened the blades, repainted it, given it a good decoke, cleaned the points and the plugs and it started first time. I cut the 18th green with it a few times before it went back into storage. To me it is priceless."



TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on some of the things they consider to be "Tops"

You're the tops

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Eddie Adams
Course: St Andrews Links - Old Course
Region: Scotland
Type of Course: Links
Number of Holes: 18
Number of Staff: 21



Name: Phil Baldock
Course: Ganton GC
Region: Northern
Type of Course: Inland links
Number of Holes: 18
Number of Staff: Five, plus two apprentices



Name: John Wells
Course: Brocket Hall Golf Club
Region: Midland
Type of Course: One parkland, one woodland
Number of Holes: 36, plus one nine-hole par three practice course
Number of Staff: 23 (including gardeners and mechanics)



Name: Chris Kennedy
Course: The Wentworth Club
Region: South East
Type of Course: Heathland
Number of Holes: 54, plus nine hole par three and six grass tennis courts
Number of Staff: 40



Name: Jim McKenzie
Course: Celtic Manor
Region: South West and South Wales
Type of Course: American style parkland
Number of Holes: 54
Number of Staff: 58 (summer) 38 (winter)



Name: Alan Strachan
Course: Royal County Down GC
Region: Northern Ireland
Type of Course: Links
Number of Holes: 36
Number of Staff: 15

1

1. What do think has been the single greatest invention the greenkeeping industry has seen?

1. Apart from the obvious lawn mower, I would consider the aeration machine the most important invention for golf turf maintenance.

1. The hydraulic triplex mower - when mine are running well. With one of these and a range of attachments, more tasks can be completed more frequently with less labour.

1. The strimmer as it has helped to save many man hours on the general tidiness of the course, leaving time for other important jobs.

1. Power driven aeration equipment - hollow coring and core harvesters, slit-tiners, verti-drain and hydrojet.

1. Hydraulics for mowers and virtually every piece of equipment.

1. The lawnmower! Seriously, I think the best to be the verti-drain in recent times. Compaction is one of the biggest problems on courses and a machine which helps to relieve this, generally with little disturbance, would be a worthy addition to anyone's machinery fleet.

HEADS

2

2. Who is the best greenkeeper you've encountered in your career?

2. There are two - Dave Dewar for his training during my apprenticeship and Walter Woods for his guidance and support throughout my 15 years at St Andrews.

2. My dad, Rex Baldock, who achieved results without many of the resources available to us now, such as a reasonable budget, modern machinery and well-trained staff. Closely followed by Ian McMillan, at Hankley Common, a very good greenkeeper with a progressive attitude to management.

2. I greatly admire people who work on The Open venues, but Turnberry in 1994 looked superb, so I guess, George Brown.

2. Shaig Logan, of Muirfield. He prepared his course for four Opens to the highest standards. However, when you see some of the equipment he had to achieve this standard of quality and presentation it was evident just how talented he was.

2. Old Tom Morris, about whom I have read so much. He was Keeper of Greens at St Andrews from 1865-1904 and has a reputation lasting more than 100 years, despite working without resources. How many of our top people will be talked about in 100 year's time?

2. Sandy McGregor, my first boss at Montrose Links. He gave me my first chance in greenkeeping and I am grateful for that. He quickly made me realise that there is an awful lot to do in this job other than cutting grass.

3

3. If you could choose any golf course in the world, other than your own, which one would you most like to manage?

3. Difficult question, but it would have to be Pebble Beach in California because of its design, lay-out and location.

3. Hankley Common. A beautiful heathland course with the best greens I have played on. The club also has one of the most enlightened attitudes to greenkeeping, greenkeepers and course management.

3. Any British links course, as they are beautiful, peaceful and beside the sea. This is where the best golf is played in my view.

3. Cyprus Point, California, for all round setting and quality in a naturally beautiful area - and Sun City, for its achievements in very difficult surroundings.

3. Pebble Beach, California. A spectacular course with spectacular views - and I daresay a touch better weather than we enjoy!

3. Any course which allowed no play before mid-day and close one hour later, situated beside a beach with a perfect climate of warm days, blue skies and nice soft rainfall at night! Truthfully, Royal County Down is pretty close to being the best. I feel it is the most natural and attractive links course in the world, but relatively unheard of in the UK.

4

4. What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

4. If a job is worth doing, do it well - Dave Dewar.

4. Free advice is exactly what you pay for it. If it's not broken don't fix it - from Alex Moore, my Deputy at Royal Portrush.

4. Grass roots do not grow in the soil, they grow in the spores of the soil, which makes me realise the importance of aeration.

4. Do not leave important duties or tasks until tomorrow, as the next day's circumstances may have changed, ie weather, staffing levels, vandalism. And... never have an affair with the Captain's wife!

4. Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today - advice given to me by Chris Kennedy when we were on the staff at Hags Castle a few years back.

4. To treat all employees as equals, treat them fairly and expect no more of them than what you would do yourself.

5

5. Who delivered the most memorable seminar paper you can remember and why?

5. A seminar on irrigation water analysis I attended at the GCSAA show given by Dr David Kopec and Dr Clark Throssell. It was eight hours long, but it never got tedious. They involved the audience and encouraged dialogue and debate between fellow superintendents. It was excellent.

5. Golf Course Management by John Harris/Ian McMillan. John was and maybe still is, Managing Director of a computer company and Greens Chairman at Hankley. He and Ian gave inspirational papers at a seminar which convinced me that there were at least some people involved in the management of golf courses who knew how things should be done. I have met some more at Ganton.

5. Dr Donald White, Professor of Turf Grass Science at the University of Minnesota, gave a talk at the National Conference at Egham, Surrey, in 1990, entitled "Annual Meadow Grass, the super grass". This made a lot of greenkeepers realise that some of the best greens in the world can be of high amounts of Annual Meadow Grass content, if managed well.

5. In the United States, James Beard on theory. In the United Kingdom, Walter Woods and Jack McMillan on practical theory and greenkeeper oriented skills and for all mentioned previously. Plus, mixed with his own brand of humour, George Brown on Turnberry.

5. Dr James Beard, Professor emeritus at Texas AM University, talking at Montpellier, France in 1995. He spoke for nearly two days on a variety of subjects particularly relevant to me at the time.

5. A paper presented by Jim Moore, of the USGA Greens Section, on Water Management. He presented himself and his subject very professionally and kept the audience interested throughout by getting them to participate. He made the subject interesting and humorous and explained it in a simple manner.

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Ad Ref 217

Roland Taylor takes a look at the kind of jobs not necessarily on your job description which can have you stretching high wide or low!

Those awkward jobs



For many readers looking after a golf course not only entails matters greenkeeping it often encompasses what amounts to estate management. This involves being responsible for a wide variety of other aspects including trees, hedges, wild flower and natural sites, watercourses and ornamental areas. In addition, car parks and paths may also come under a Course Manager's control.

To maintain all these areas can absorb a considerable amount of extra labour and time, so any jobs need to be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible. Today there is usually a piece of outdoor power equipment that will simplify and speed up a task, so it is worth looking around when at the planning and scheduling stage of these operation.

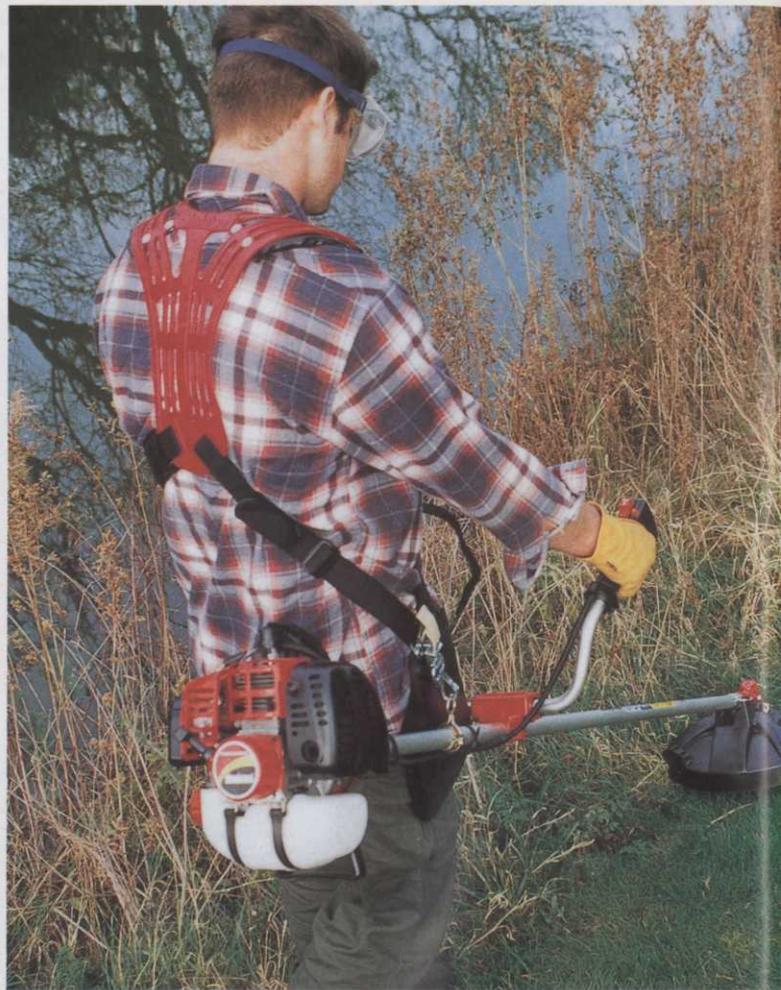
Those awkward jobs



Trees

These need attention from time to time, such as pruning, shaping, or removing dead or infected timber. Cutting back high branches can often present a problem. If a ladder or platform is used, in the interests of safety more than one member of staff should be present, thus tying up labour. Access might also be a problem, making the use of these types of structures impractical. One solution could be long armed pruners - these can reach heights up to 14ft. While they will deal with smaller branches when it comes to thicker ones a saw is needed. Although some pruners have the facility for fitting a saw attachment, the task of cutting branches at the full extension is not easy. In the last few years manufacturers have come up with another answer - powered pole pruners. These are small chainsaw cutting heads mounted at the end of a long drive shaft with a lightweight two-stroke engine to provide power. There is a choice of guidebar lengths suitable for dealing with most branches. Lengths of shafts vary between models, the average being about three metres. Longer than this and the unit could be unwieldy and difficult to operate.

If the branches to be removed are very thick then it is best to use the services of a professional arboriculturist. Once the timber is on the ground it can be quickly sawn up using a small chainsaw. The operator of this piece of equipment will need to be fully trained in its correct use,



plus all safety aspects relating to it.

Another method of dealing with material from tree maintenance, plus naturally fallen branches, is chipping. Chippers come in all shapes and sizes so there is one to suit virtually every application. This is an ideal form of disposal as the results can be left under the trees, used on paths or as weed suppressant on ornamental areas.

Hedges

Apart from shaping and giving a tidy appearance trimming also encourages new growth to thicken the hedge, especially low down.

There are plenty of hedgcutters available and these come with a wide choice of blade lengths, the longest being 42 inches. Single or double-sided cutting systems are available. Where the hedges are high, then some form of ladder or platform has in the past been necessary. These can slow the operation down and require more labour. An alternative, especially if the run of hedge is short or a ditch in front makes access difficult, is the latest introduction - extended hedge trimmers. These consist of a long shaft with an articulating head on to which is mounted a reciprocating cutterbar. This system enables the blade to be set at different angles to accommodate the shape of the hedge or bushes. The units can also be used for cutting a ditch side or riverbank.

On the edge

Keeping edges trim, especially

around bunkers, can be a very time consuming operation, but there are now plenty of machines available to make this job faster. The units are generally based on a vertical cutting blade with depth control and the speed at which the operation is carried out depends on how fast the operator walks. On some models the cutting head can be swivelled for trimming that feather of grass found around course furniture, walls and path edges.

Water courses

Because of the microclimate these create, vegetation thrives and tends to be lush and if left soon restricts the flow of water. Where there are long runs of ditches or streams, a flail mower on an extended arm can be used, but because a tractor is involved the banks must be sound. An alternative is a brushcutter or clearing saw. As these can be used on other areas around the course, they are a valuable addition to the machinery store. For clearing watercourses, the backpack models can be an advantage as they give the operator more flexibility especially in restricted areas. There are various cutting heads available for dealing with most of the brushwood and vegetation likely to be encountered in these areas.

Tree planting or fencing

From time to time, replacements have to be made, and digging holes for these takes time and often a lot of effort. The earth drill or auger makes



the operation fast and easy and with the right equipment one man can carry it out.

Earth drills come in all forms and sizes including tractor-mounted, skidster attachments and highly portable one-man models. There is a wide choice of hole diameters and depths of drilling available.

One of these units is a 'must' for any tree planting or fencing operation.

Laying drainage or electricity cables

Where this is needed, a trencher will not only make the job faster it will also cause minimal damage to the surface. There are small units with their own engine or attachments for skidsters and tractors. The width of trench and depth they will excavate will depend on the machine.

Natural habitats

In recent years the importance of preserving natural habitats has been recognised, especially on areas such as golf courses where the levels of disturbance are minimal. These sites require a management programme that involves a degree of maintenance. If left unattended the stronger and more dominant plant life takes over at the expense of fragile rarer species.

Some of the equipment already mentioned is suitable for use in these areas but, depending on what is growing there, other machines may be required. Where wild flowers are

being encouraged, it will be necessary to mow at specific times and remove all the cut material, so a mower with good collection facilities is required.

Wheeled brushcutters are suitable for keeping pathways open and the hand-held models can be used for removing unwanted saplings and brambles.

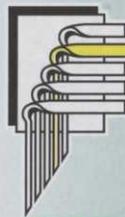
Where heavier growth such as bracken, heather or larger sapling has to be dealt with there are now ride-on brushcutters suitable for these areas.

Hard surface areas

Over time these areas become ingrained with dirt, lichens, moss and algae. A pressure washer will quickly remove these deposits bringing the surface back to its original colour. In addition, these units are ideal for washing down machinery.

There are plenty of sweepers and vacuum collectors available for removing litter, leaves and other debris from these sites. These include hand-held, pedestrian operated, tractor-mounted and self-propelled models. Often these type of units are an attachment for another piece of equipment, so when deciding what to buy it is worth asking if one is available that will fit on your existing piece of machinery.

All the equipment mentioned in this feature is available to hire, so unless there is sufficient work to justify the capital outlay, this would be the ideal way getting that extra assistance in making your job easier.



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Nothing Kuts Like A Diamond





Neil Thomas reflects on Golden and Silver Key membership of the Education and Development Fund and looks to the future ...

The Key to Success

BIGGA's Education and Development Fund in 2000 is entering its ninth year. Launched in January 1992, Golden and Silver Key members, both companies and individuals, have contributed significantly to a Fund that, throughout the nineties, has greatly enhanced the education and training of greenkeepers and which is reflected in their ever growing professionalism. Greenkeeping has moved on in the intervening years and today's Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper enjoys a status and profile as the custodian of a golf club's most valuable asset, its golf course, which was rarely apparent a decade ago. Perceptions have changed within golf clubs. In 1992 it was quite normal for a golf club to view the clubhouse rather than the course as its primary asset. Now it is the course which is perceived as the number one priority. High maintenance standards are demanded, innovative practices and attention to detail. Professionalism is the order of the day and up front are many Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers whose education, training and experience renders them well suited to meet the expectations of the current generation of golf club members. Whilst much credit for this can be given to our national training system, it is in no small way due also to the utilisation of resources within the Education and Development Fund which, over the years, has

enabled BIGGA to provide wide-ranging training courses across the United Kingdom, as well as a myriad of publications, field guides, videos and training aids together with the refunding of fees for educational courses.

Since the opening of BIGGA HOUSE in October 1998, a purpose built, state-of-the-art training room has been available for training courses and it also houses the BIGGA library. Funding of £44,000 was provided by Golden and Silver Key company members through the auspices of the Education and Development Fund towards the costs of this training facility which was appropriately named 'The Key Room'. The room is available for hire both within and without the industry and is free of charge to Golden and Silver Key company members.

Much has been achieved then through the Fund and it is only right to pay tribute to companies who have supported the Fund through the years, appreciating the benefits which would accrue in enabling them to deal with trained, professional greenkeepers in the course of their business operations. Equally, BIGGA is mindful of its individual members who have contributed to the Fund in the belief that they are investing in their own futures. The achievements since 1992 would suggest that theirs was a wise investment.

Over the years some companies

have come and gone from the list of contributors to the Fund, maybe through mergers or changed priorities. We thank them for their past support. In 1999 there were 26 contributing companies with a total membership tally of 107 years as set out in the accompanying league table. In some instances this table reflects the prior merger of companies. A maximum of eight years is possible in support of the Fund.

These companies alone have contributed since 1992 some £277,000 to the Education and Development Fund. This is an outstanding figure which BIGGA members need to recognise and appreciate as fundamental to the education and training now available to them. The successful utilisation of the Fund can be measured by the increasing numbers of trained, qualified and technically competent greenkeepers now emerging as true professionals, who, year on year, are producing better quality and well maintained golf courses. Not everything in the world of greenkeeping is perfect, far from it. However, standards have improved considerably since 1992. BIGGA's efforts through the Education and Development Fund and in partnership with the industry are justly recognised as significant in this regard.

So to 2000, and we are pleased already to welcome Gem Professional as a new Golden Key member. We believe that the time has come for BIGGA to review the Golden and Silver Key scheme in conjunction with its industry partners.

Consultations have already started and during the year we will look to update and strengthen the scheme with a view to consolidating the Education and Development Fund during the first decade of the new century. The Fund has a major role to play in BIGGA's overall strategy for the education and training of its members and our partnership with the industry in this regard is vital. Whilst we are looking at a success story, we now need to have a vision for the future as the game of golf continues on its path of global expansion and greenkeepers are challenged to reach new peaks in their professional lives.

Years in Key membership Companies

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4	Advanta Seeds UK, Ocmis Irrigation UK Ltd, Rolawn, Supaturf Products Ltd
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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

Annual Conference, Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline, Tuesday March 7

The Scottish Region is delighted once again to present their Annual Conference at Lauder College, Dunfermline.

As in previous years the speakers cover a wide range of greenkeeping topics with talks from Course Managers to a representative from the Scottish Golf Union - all with a positive viewpoint on the game of golf.

From Kilmacolm GC we have the Course Manager Ronnie Bunting, who will give a talk on "The Environment and Kilmacolm Golf Club"; The General Manager of the Scottish National Golf Centre, Neil Simpson, will present a paper on "The Scottish National Golf Centre and the Development of Golf in Scotland"; Brian Robinson, Senior Agronomist, Grass Science Services, will talk on "Grasses into the 21st Century"; from Rangers Football Club we have the Head Groundsman, David Roxburgh, who will talk on "Football Groundsmanship"; Alistair Connell, from Souters Sportsturf, will speak on "Drainage and Irrigation" - very relevant considering the weather conditions we are suffering at present; Head of Elmwood Golf Developments, John Quinn, will deliver his talk on "Beyond Head Greenkeeper." Finally, Simon Barnaby, of Scotts (UK) Professional on "Integrated Diseases. Turf Grass Management".

This year's Conference has a variety of topics which should appeal to everyone in the greenkeeping industry. The Conference has always been well supported throughout the years and hopefully this will continue. We look forward to seeing everyone at Dunfermline.

Application forms will be available in the early part of the January.

East

The East Section held its AGM at Kingsknowe Golf Club. We had a small turnout for the day which consisted of a lecture by Angus Fertilisers, a nod, and a nice buffet lunch which was provided by our sponsors for the day, Greentech Ltd.

The section committee would like to thank Greentech Ltd for sponsoring the day. The AGM took place in the afternoon, there is not a lot to mention about it other than that the committee remains the same as last year. The Chairman gave a full report on all his activities for the year, the Secretary did the same and also gave us a very healthy balance sheet yet again this year, so well done to everyone on the committee for a job well done. Information regarding next season's tournaments will be announced shortly.

On a sad note, Jimmy Paton, former Head Greenkeeper at Turnhouse GC, died recently after a long illness. I had the opportunity to work with Jimmy for nine years at Turnhouse a couple of years after coming into greenkeeping and he was a real character. He was also a Past Chairman of this Section and somebody who will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him. The Section's thoughts are with his family at this time.

The 1999 Patrons' Awards winners are Graham Wood, Dunbar, and Alistair Holmes, Seahouses. Well done to them both and we will see you at BTME 2000 in Harrogate in January. If you are going on the Scottish trip to BTME get your application forms back to Peter Boyd as soon as possible to avoid disappointment and I will see you there.

Chris Yeaman

West

Welcome to the first Section news of this century. I would just like to wish every member, a happy and prosperous new year and the best wishes for a good season ahead. A few items to mention this month, starting off with the AGM.

There were approximately 40

members in attendance. Newly elected members to the Committee were: Brian Bolland, General Committee; Cecil George, Education; Brian Hillen continues as Chairman for a second term, with Gavin Jarvis acting as Vice Chairman.

The nominations for Patrons' Award this year go to Joe Bell, Kilmacolm GC, and John Young, Dougalston GC.

The Scottish National Tournament will be played for at Newmachar GC, June 2000. Awaiting confirmation of date.

The last draw of the 100 club, £50.00, was won by Stuart Tay ... sorry Alistair Taylor.

Following the AGM the evening carried straight on into the games session, five games played in total.

The victors of the evening were I. Smith and S. Mckittrick, with a total of 15, winning by three clear points. Well played guys.

Thanks go to Nairn Brown for their gift voucher drawn at the raffle.

Thanks also to Claremont Bowling Club for use of their facilities and also to the bar staff in attendance that evening.

As usual, many thanks to John Scott for expanding my waistline!, with his culinary delights ... the pies were good, well done John.

Finally, I was at Victoria's for the Annual Dinner on Friday, November 19. A good evening was had by the majority of people who attended.

Personally I found the evening quite enjoyable and good value for money. The selection of food was good and was of a reasonable standard. The cabaret, apart from the delay at the start, was very entertaining, although it could have lasted a while longer.

If any members would care to express their views about the current format for the annual dinner, please feel free to speak to the Committee.

Once again, please send me any information you have regarding anything! Well just anything.

0141-776-1532 M:07050-173080
Gavin Jarvis.

North

Two new members to start off the year 2000. We welcome Ewan Cameron, from Elgin GC, and Shaun Macdonald, from Royal Dornoch GC. Welcome back to Carole Ross, who returns to work at Royal Dornoch after taking time off to have a baby.

Members might like to know who does what in your Section, so here is a list of your Committee and their duties. Chairman, Magazine and Education, Iain Macleod, Tain 01862 894402. Vice Chairman and Treasurer Wilson Morrison, Alford 01224 826289. Secretary Dougal Duguid, Westhill 01224 740329. Outings and Trophies Hugh McLatchie, Peterhead 01779 470173 and Iain Gunn, Strathpeffer 01997 420155. 200 Club Stewart McBain, Aberdeen 01224 733347. Raffles John Geddes, Ellon 01358 723034 and Kevin Peace, Inverurie 01467 625125 and last but not least Handicaps Stevie Sullivan, Craigie Hill 01738 632003.

Of course all are on hand at events to ensure smooth running and will help members if at all possible. The Section is in good hands and all we ask is that members support the outings and 200 Club so that we also remain financially solvent. Hughie McLatchie has some 50th Anniversary badges left from the Downfield outing and they are available at £4.00 each to anyone interested, a nice memento for members of the Section.

This month we have BTME at Harrogate and I look forward to seeing Section members there. John Geddes, Ellon, and Gordon Moir, St Andrews, are our two Patrons' Award winners and will be present as a result. Remember, support your Section and Association and next year it could be you. We must thank all the members of the Trade in Scotland who support the Patrons' Scheme and make this award possible. See you in the Majestic on the first night!

Happy New Year to all at H.Q. See you at BTME.

Iain Macleod

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Ayrshire

A guid New Year and Millennium to all our members and friends. I hope everyone achieves their targets in 2000 and it provides good weather for successful greenkeeping after the recent difficult couple of years we have encountered.

The Section AGM was held recently in the Parkstone Hotel, Prestwick. A small turnout was in attendance, surprise, surprise. Peter Boyd, our Regional Administrator, was also in attendance to see all the business conducted very smoothly. With no changes the following office bearers were elected to serve in 2000. Chairman, Duncan Gray, The Pines, Vice Chairman, Iain Barr, Largs Kelburn, Secretary Derek Wilson, Irvine Bogside, Committee, Jim Paton, West Kilbride, George Brown, William McMeikan, Jimmy Johnstone, All Turnberry, Brian Finlayson, Barassie, Harry Diamond, retired and Trade, Robert Bruce, Ritefeed.

There are still vacancies on committee and come next year it will be essential to introduce new blood to the committee. If any member is remotely interested in joining the committee, please come forward. The Section outings were discussed for 2000 and arrangements are being made. We hope to confirm these venues at the next committee meeting which is on Monday February 7 at 3pm. Usual venue of the Parkstone Hotel.

News has reached me of a special public services award won by Troon Municipal Golf Courses of South Ayrshire Council. This award is a tribute to the fine work carried out by Head Greenkeeper, Billy Fletcher and his greenstaff, on the Fullerton, Oakley and Lochgreen courses. Congratulations from the Ayrshire Section on this award. Congratulations also to Bobby Bennett who takes up the new position of West of Scotland Sales Representative for Thorntrees. Bobby will take over from Mike Dooner who will move North and East to expand his empire.

All roads lead to Harrogate this month and I look forward to joining Peter Boyd with the Scottish Region party on this trip to meet friends old and new and take in the seminars and exhibition.

Any news call me on 01505 683278,

Iain Barr

Central

Well, I hope everyone has recovered from celebrating the start of a new millennium and are ready for the season ahead. At the time of writing, December 3, some of our courses are covered in frost and snow which is a change from last winter when it seemed to rain all the time. Still the course will get a rest and we will have to work harder in the next couple of months to catch up with the winter work before opening day comes around again.

We are up and running already on the new members front with Alun Wotherspoon, Glenn Campbell, Andrew Clark, David Key, Malcolm Low and David MacGregor all from Murrayshall Golf Club, along with Charles Webb from Callander Golf Club joining the Section. As before, welcome to the Section lads and we look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Congratulations go to Albert Arnott, from Dunninger Golf Course, on his recent achievements at Elmwood College. Albert is a strong supporter of the Section, which is much appreciated by the committee as he has to take a day from his holiday allocation to attend any events. Well done Albert.

The first draw for 'Club 2000' will take place this month and the name of the winner of the £50 first prize will be in next months magazine along with the names of all those who failed to sell or return their two tickets. Thanks to everyone, members and patrons who made the effort to support this venture, it is very much appreciated by your committee and the funds raised will be put to good use.

I know it is only January, but the first golf tournament of the season will be taking place at St Andrews on Tuesday, April 11, the scores from which, along with the Autumn Tournament scores will determine the Section qualifiers for the BIGGA National Championship, so if you wish to compete in this event, remember to get your entry in early.

Entry forms for the Inter-Club Tournament will be with you shortly and I would ask you to get your entries in as soon as possible in order that we can get the tournament underway before the Spring Tournament and completed before the Autumn Tournament. PLEASE.

I am looking for venues for next year's two tournaments, so if you fancy hosting one on your course, or there is a particular course you fancy playing on, let me know and I will make the necessary approaches. Hopefully there will be more to report next month.

John Crawford



Northern Region
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North East

December 2 at South Moor Golf Club was again the venue for the AGM and the presentation of the years trophies. Well, what a turn out. Seeing was believing, I just could not get over it. The day went well, but very cold and windy, however, that did not stop Mal Lathan, of Hexham, knocking a round of 72 gross less 1 = 72 net, bottle of Bacardi and to runners-up, Mark Pagan and Alan Ainscough, both of the host club, a bottle of vodka each.

Just a memo to members that a repeat of this year's talk will be in operation in February, March 2000. All members will be notified by post. Thanks to Terry Charlton of Turf Care.

Jimmy Richardson

Sheffield

Happy New Year and Millennium to you all.

On 29 November we held our Christmas competition at Rotherham Golf Club. It was a perfect late autumn day for golf, especially after the winds we had the day prior to the event. Our thanks go to Rotherham Golf Club once again for giving us the courtesy of the course.

Rotherham was again in excellent condition and our thanks go to Dave Chappell and his staff for an excellent job done. Well done Dave!. Thanks also to Brian Booth from Rigby Taylors who was the main sponsor of the competition. Thanks to all other trade members who provided prizes. Finally, thanks go to the catering staff who provided an excellent meal which was enjoyed by everyone.

There was some excellent golf played in very good golfing conditions.

The overall winner was Simon Brown, from Worksop Golf Club, who played some very good golf, even chipping in a couple of times for a par! Well done Simon, not bad for a new member.

Results: 1. Simon Brown; 2. Stuart Pygett; 3. John Dorach; 4. Alan Sanson. Well done to all the prize winners.

Finally congratulations go to Rother Valley Golf Club, and Head Greenkeeper Alan Halfyear, who were recently in Today's Golfer magazine, voted third best club in Great Britain in the category of £20 and under green fee, and for best overall value.

Rother Valley has been open for three and a half years, June 1996, and Alan has been Head Greenkeeper for the past two years and is gradually improving the course and still has a further three years of his initial programme to carry on the progression.

Hopefully things will go from strength to strength. Alan and good luck in the future. Well done for getting Rother Valley on the golfing map. Keep up the good work.

John Lax

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North Wales

I hope you have all recovered from the effects of the millennium bug! The government didn't tell me it affected the eyesight and balance. It also made me talk rubbish - nothing new there then!

Back to the real world. The lecture at the college on pesticides and CDA sprayers was attended by over 40 delegates, those sort of numbers makes it worthwhile. Excellent. Thanks go to Paul Clifton, of Rhone Poulenc, and Danny Jones, of ALS, also Graham Wright and the Welsh College for the use of their facilities.

A moderation meeting for NVQ assessors was also held at the college on the same day, Howard McCauley gave us all the updates and how the GTC are pushing forward after the TSC report. If any assessors need help or guidance, please get in touch with me.

The Christmas tournament and AGM was held at Royal St Davids, Harlech. A total of 65 competitors took part in what was a fantastic day. Our thanks go to all the officials and members for allowing us the privilege of playing their world class course. To Roger and his team for the presentation of undoubtedly one of really true tests of golf anywhere and to the Secretary, David Markill, for

making us so welcome and presenting the prizes.

The winner was, for the second year running, Shaun Pritchard of Chirk, with 31pts who not only received the Toro Cup, he also is the first recipient of the Bill Lawson Shield which is awarded to the best score from an under 21 - he is in fact 18, while Roy Hamer, of SDA Training, donated a golf shirt.

I think it's great that our Section's only life member, a man with a life time of greenkeeping under his belt and SDA training are helping to encourage the younger greenkeeper. Thanks go to you.

In second place was another youngster, Marc Brite, the current DGU champion, with 29pts and third, also 29pts and definitely not a youngster, Dave Parry. The winner of the Rigby Taylor Cup for best aggregate over the year went to Allen Lewis. The best score of the day went to Trade member Terry Adamson with 34pts and the best guest with 33pts was David Austin. Longest drive, member Jeremy Hughes, guest Francis Cripps. Nearest the pin, member, Allen Lewis, guest Dave Austin.

Thanks go to Aitkens, ALS, Acorn, SDA Training, Sportsworld and Walker Engineering for their support.

Back to education. Remember

the lecture on Soil & Water Management on Wednesday 12th January, 2.30 - 4.30 at the college. If you didn't go last time, make sure you do this time. It's an eye opener. Honest!

Coach to BTME 19 January, Slaters Abergele 7am, Welsh College (Northop) 7.30 am. Sainsburys Petrol Station Cheshire Oaks 8am. free to members, £10 to guests.

The college seminar is taking place on 23 February. I will inform you of speakers next month.

At our AGM your committee has been re-elected, the faces are the same, however, Jeremy Hughes will be taking over the duties of Match Secretary from Trevor Johnston during the year. Our Education Officer, Phil Davies, would appreciate any ideas from you as regards lectures for the coming year. If there is any subject you would like, let us know and we'll try our best.

One final note, my ex boss, the man who put up with me from 1973 - 1979, Len Sproxtton has just had a hip replacement operation. Knowing Len as I do, he'll be chomping at the bit to get back to work. Take it easy, OK. Watching the Reds will take your mind off it (bet that can be painful at times).

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

This is my first column and I would like to thank Kevin (Scoop) Heslop for writing the column for the last couple of years. He has made very little news into a very amusing and informative feature. Highlights from Kevin's past columns can be found at www.scoop.co.uk!

Richmond Golf Club have a new space cadet on their staff. Oliver Shepard started straight from school in August. He's a mad Star Wars fan and has seen the new film ten times. His first Cleveland Section Golf Tournament was at Wynyard in October. He came second, winning a CD player. So Richmond also have a new bandit.

The Autumn tournament at the Wynyard Club seems a long time ago now but here are the results. 1. Martin Woods, Wearside GC; 2. Oliver Shepard, Richmond GC; 3. Steven Jaques, Wynyard. Longest Drive, Martin (Tiger) Woods, Wearside GC. Nearest the Pin, Barry Walker, Wearside GC. The booby prize was highly contested but was eventually won by Craig of Bedale GC.

Thanks to Gary Munro, Course Manager at Wynyard, for allowing us courtesy of the course.

The event was a big success. Good

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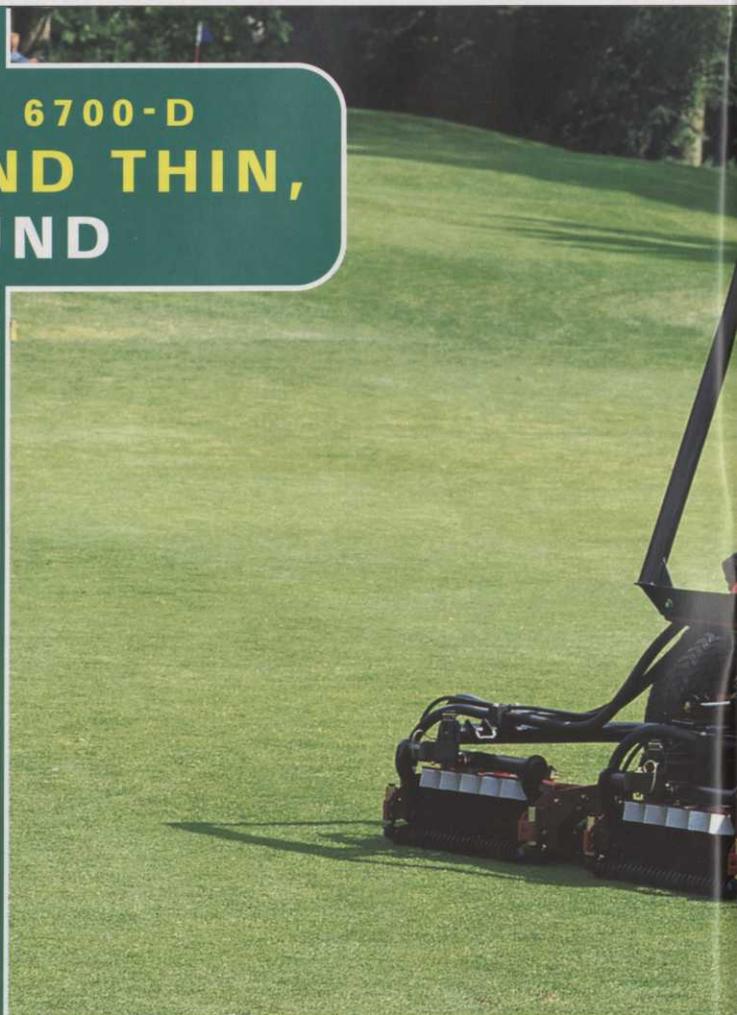
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weather, good food and good company helped in this success, but good organisation from the section Golf Committee was the key. They are already on to the spring tournament. Watch this space for more details. Hopefully the spring event will be well supported by greenkeepers. If you have never been to a tournament or haven't been for a while, an extra effort to attend would be appreciated. You will be made welcome and remember, a bad days golf is better than a good days work.

On the 11 November at Darlington Golf Club, Andy Veltman of Par 4 Irrigation gave a talk on new and future developments in irrigation technology. It was an interesting and informative talk. Thanks to Andy for coming to see us.

If you have any news contact me on 07808 196558.

Steven Jaques

North West

On 25 November we had the AGM, Christmas dinner and played for the President's Cup at Wilmslow GC. The weather this time was dry and sunny and the golf was good. The course which is a great test of golf was in superb condition, thanks to Steve Oultram and his dedicated staff who had been out mowing

greens by hand in the early hours of darkness. This has become a popular tournament over the last few years with more members turning up each year. This year we had 53 members playing and of course 53 members attending the AGM which is a great improvement over recent years. The winner of the "President's Cup" was Mike Davie, the N.W. Chairman for the next two years. The longest drive was won by Paul Pearse, and the nearest the pin was won by Mike Bottomley. The two beautiful cut glass bowls were donated by Rufford Soil Technology, so at last Mike Bottomley got to take home a prize for his wife. All competitors had to bring a bottle for the prize table, so that everybody left with a prize.

The golf was followed by the AGM and that did not take long as all members seemed happy with the accounts etc. Steve Oultram, who had been Chairman for the last two years, handed over the Chairmanship to Mike Davie who will hold office for the next two years. The committee chose to serve for a further year and Mike Bottomley was voted onto the committee.

The AGM was followed by the Christmas dinner which was beautifully prepared by Gwen Chason who

had just returned from a holiday in Florida and the bar kept everybody well watered. I would like to thank Steve and his staff for getting up so early and preparing the course, the caterers for keeping us well fed and Wilmslow GC for allowing us courtesy of the course.

That seems to be it for now, so I wish you all a happy new year and will see you on the Northern Region stand at Harrogate.

Bert Cross



East Midlands

This year's AGM and Golf Tournament was hosted by Radcliffe-on-Trent GC on November 3. The day was blessed with pleasant Autumn sunshine, with the format for the day being a three ball Texas Scramble. All seven teams were able to produce very respectable scores in the conditions and once again, this proved to be a very popular format for all those who participated. The eventual team winners were Gary Thurman, Gavin Robson and Brian

Booth. Gross 69 Nett 64. Second Ian Needham, Pete Larter and Darren Moody.

I would like to thank Radcliffe-on-Trent GC for extending courtesy of their excellent golf course and also to our very generous sponsors Vitax Ltd for providing a grand prize table. Also I would like to thank Richard O'Hara, Head Greenkeeper and his staff for a very well presented course, not forgetting the Steward & Stewardess for a fantastic evening meal.

Moving onto the serious business of the AGM, there is very grave concern about the lack of numbers that are now attending Section events and the committee will be sending a questionnaire to all members to find out what comments and opinions they have on this matter. I would like to thank our retiring Chairman, Dave Leatherland, who during the last two years has done a lot of sterling work for our Section, and I would also like to welcome our new Chairman, Gavin Robson.

The rest of the committee is as follows, Vice-Chairman, Adie Porter; Secretary, Antony Bindley; Treasurer, Richard Barker; Committee Members, Dave Leatherland, Ian Needham, Tim Allard and Jeff Dickinson. Regional Board



See us at BTME Stand B35

Ad Ref 61

Members, Richard Barker & Antony Bindley. May I once again remind all members that if they wish to attend any Section event, your form and remittance must be returned to the Secretary before the closing date.

If any members are interested in a four day chainsaw course at Ramsdale Park GC next March, please contact Course Manager, Steve Levers on 0115 965 5600 for further details.

Three dates for your diary. May 10 Spring Tournament, Chilwell Manor GC. 20 September, Autumn Tournament, Market Harborough GC. and 1 November AGM Tournament, Park Hill GC. Also the section hope to organise the following activities in the near future. A visit to Pride Park, home of Derby County FC. A trip to Toro Lely UK and a Go-Kart evening.

Antony Bindley

Mid Anglia

The Midland Regional Seminar was held in our Section once again at Mentmore Golf Club towards the end of November. It was good to see an improvement in numbers attending this year, with 60 members on the day.

A number of interesting topics were covered by the speakers, notably bio-organics, computer aided greenkeeping and rules of golf relating to greenkeeping. The Course Manager of the Buckinghamshire, Phil Chiverton, also gave an excellent presentation on the maintenance of a high profile golf course. Neil Thomas, the Executive Director of BIGGA and Gordon Child, Chairman were welcome guests for the day.

Peter Larter, our Regional Administrator, organised the day superbly. It is disappointing that the Region will be losing Peter shortly, but we wish him well in his new appointment and thank him for his hard work over the last three years. Our thanks go once again to Mentmore, for providing us with excellent facilities during the day.

Our last golf event of the millennium was our ever popular Texas Scramble event, which this year took place at the exceptional Bocket Hall in early December. As ever, the event was oversubscribed. Twenty-six teams competed over an immaculately presented golf course. Course Manager, John Wells, and Head Greenkeeper, John Moorhouse, along with all the staff at Bocket Hall must be thanked for their efforts in making an enjoyable day for all concerned. The hospitality shown by Bocket Hall was superb and our thanks for allowing us courtesy of the course.

The top three teams are as follows: 1. M. Whittle, R. Howson, B. Healy, S. Coulson, Woburn, 59.5; 2. S. Aiston, N. Pestle, G. Shield, A. Males, Mid Herts, 59.9; 3. J. Moorhouse, L. Cant, J. Hatton, D.

Wright, Bocket Hall, 60. Nearest the pin: J. Woodward. Longest Drive: C. Yeomans.

A presentation was made to Chris Brook, who won "Golfer of the Year" as well as Frank Scullion and Duncan Seiling, who were victors in the Lodgway Four Ball final.

Chris Rook, from the Lodgway Company, was in attendance and pledged his support for the competition next year. Avoncrop Amenity products were the main sponsors for the day, along with a number of other companies who once again supported the Section. Many thanks to you all.

Finally, I'm sure we are all looking forward to Harrogate once again, whether attending workshops, the National Conference, seminar programmes or the trade show. Hope to see you there!

Paul Lockett

Midland

On December 8 at Little Aston Golf Club the Christmas Tournament and AGM was held. The results were as follows:

Winning team were: Nigel Couchman, Alan Cutler, Eric Thomas, John Walker.

Nearest the pin was David Brazier with a fantastic hole-in-one. Longest Drive was won by Tony Cheese. Many thanks to Steve Hanlow from Burrows who was our main sponsors. Congratulations on behalf of the Section to Little Aston Golf Club and especially to Andrew Borraston for presenting the course in excellent condition.

The new committee elected at this AGM will be as follows: President, Alan Kit. Chairman, Peter Richmond; Secretary, Jonathan Wood; Members of Committee - Rhys Thomas, Eddie Stant, Peter Holtham, Andrew Smith.

Finally I would like to wish Tony Cheese all the best in his new role as Rigby Taylor Representative for the Midlands Section.

Jonathan Wood

Berks, Bucks & Oxon

The Turkey Trot was held at the Lambourne Club on November 25 and was a superb day.

The sun was shining like it was July and incredibly the majority played in short sleeves.

Congratulations to everyone connected with the Lambourne, especially to Tony, Geoff and the team. The course was in excellent condition. Thanks also go to the catering staff who provided a lovely meal, the members who gave us courtesy of the course for the day and also to the Avoncrop Team who sponsored the event.

The committee would also like to thank F.T.T. Richard Fontmeuller has attended the majority of this seasons events and the company have donated raffle prizes throughout the season.

The results of the day were as follows: 3. 81 points, D. Goodchild, C. Wright & C. Small; 2. 83 points, V. Riches, M. Ely and C. Evans; 1. 86 points, J. Brooks, D. Scillachi & L. Bishop.

L. Bishop also won nearest the pin and, thanks to his new driver, J. Bowness won the longest drive. To think we used to call him Nancy Lopez. Well done to all the winners,

the scoring was excellent. The AGM followed the golf day and was pretty painless as far as AGM's go, although there were a couple of important points brought up. Some members are still not receiving invites to the events and some are not receiving magazines. It was explained that the mailing lists come direct from HQ and enquiries on these points will be made before

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the next meeting. Some of the members are also having difficulty finding event locations, including myself, so it was suggested that it may be an idea to put a contact number at the given Club on the competition application form. The trade have been a big help financially this year and this is showing in the end of year closing accounts and we as a Section value your contin-

ued support. Last, but not least, congratulations to Ray Clarke on two counts.

Firstly on his marriage the day after the Turkey Trot and secondly, for keeping it a secret from the whole Section. We wish you and your new wife all the best Ray.

Happy New Year to you all.

Ross Wilson.



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

South East Region

Due to the generosity of sponsors, the Region was able to keep fees extremely low for this event held at

Writtle College, Chelmsford in November. This coupled with the impressive array of speakers arranged for the day accounted for such good support with around 120 members and associate members attending.

The theme of the Seminar was "Greenkeeping - The next Millennium" and covered aspects of greenkeeping, past, present and



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January 2000 Greenkeeper International 39

future. Chaired by Regional Chairman, Raymond Day, the Seminar opened up with Dr Tim Lodge speaking on Top Dressings and Rootzone Materials. Tim was followed by Mark Hunt, on Fertiliser Requirements and the morning closed with an interesting talk from Giles Wardle on Golf Course Irrigation.

Dr Alan Gange kicked off the afternoon session with Biostimulation that was itself stimulating and the last lecture was from Brian Robinson on Grass Seed Technology. There then followed a lively question and answer session.

The Region is most grateful to Martin Forrester, Carl Crocher and the Essex Committee for their work which contributed to this event and, of course, to our sponsors:- Gem Professional, Avoncrop Amenity, Bailey's of Norfolk, Driving Force Leisure, Payne and Sons, Rigby Taylor, P. Tuckwell Ltd, UAP Ltd and Ernest Doe and Sons.

Derek Farrington

Essex

I would like to start by wishing everyone a Happy New Year and hope you all enjoyed the hectic festive season, indulged in the ritual of Christmas food and drink, sounds like a TV programme? If the weather has been kind to us our stress levels of 'fuz' attack to our greens over the holiday period will be minimal.

Our AGM and Christmas Golf Competition took place mid December at Rochford Hundred, kindly sponsored by Ernest Doe & Sons. Any changes and results will appear in February's Around the Green.

Two reports outstanding from November are the South East Seminar and Go Karting. The Seminar held at Writtle was a great success with 120+ people attending the day and as a Section I would like to thank the guest speakers, sponsors and Writtle College for their hard work and contributions on the day.

A little reminder from Ian Willett to make a note in your '2000' diary that this year's Seminar takes place on November 14 at Thorpeness Golf Club and hopefully a coach will be laid on, but more details later on in the year.

The Annual Go-Karting event was once again held at the Indikart Track, Colchester on November 26. Nine teams entered the three hour endurance race with the 1998 winners, Stapleford Abbots managing only fourth place this time around.

The new champions are Chelmsford who completed 490 laps in a close competition with

only two laps separating them and third place.

Race classification after three hours. 1. Chelmsford, 490 laps. 2. Colchester, 489 laps. 3. Abridge B, 488 laps. 4. Stapleford Abbots, 478 laps. 5. Abridge A, 478 laps. 6. South Upminster, 478 laps. 7. Rolawn, 477 laps. 8. Swans, 474 laps. 9. Does, 470 laps. For the success of the Go-Karting to continue, we will be looking for a sponsor or two.

Anyone interested please telephone Martin Forrester on 01245 603131.

The next two Section events will be the return of evening lectures at Writtle College, starting at 7.30 pm. One in February and the other in March. Our man John Sinclair, as ever, will endeavour to find quality guest speakers, so please attend to make all his efforts worthwhile.

Our First new member to the Section in this Millennium year is Peter Montague, Head Greenkeeper at Belhus Park Golf Course. Welcome Peter, hope to see you in the near future at one of this year's events.

Well that's all from me now. See you at BTME.

Dave Wells.

London

Since the retirement of my boss, Fred Plumeridge, in the spring, life has been very hectic and I have not had time to chase enough news for a monthly column. However, there has been some news to report and this is a brief summary of the Section in 1999.

Mervyn Downing, of Aldenham, had a good day at The Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath - he won the putting competition, came 4th overall and won the Greenkeepers and Guest prize with Freddie Hague with scores of 38 and 36, winning a Waterford Crystal clock.

John Kerr, of Enfield, successfully completed NVQ Level 4 at Oaklands College. He started in September 1998 and completed it at Easter 1999. Dave Watts and Spencer Wood, also of Enfield, completed Level 3.

The BIGGA qualifier was held by kind permission of Hadley Wood Golf Club and prepared by Craig Handyside, the Course Manager, his deputy, Rob Washbrook and the rest of the team. The course was in super condition and we were very lucky with the weather, having a lovely bright day. Thirty attended and best nett score was by Larry Eden, best gross score was by Ian Semple and the best score of the Guests was by Mark Day.

The London to Brighton Bike Ride on 20 June was graced by a team from Highgate Golf Club.

Team training consisted of 600 miles of pedalling around the area, using golf clubs as boundary markers around the routes taken. Team Captain, Derek Mason, plus Russell Ling, Richard Andrews, James Seisun, Tony Lashmar and Ben Mason were the greenkeeping contingent and they were joined by three other members of staff and three Highgate Golf Club members. Departing from the club car park at 5.30 am the lads pedalled to the start at Clapham Common and set off for Brighton at 6.30 am. The journey was completed in under four hours and everyone finished! All proceeds were donated to The British Heart Foundation. Any remedies for saddle sores, please forward to Highgate Golf Club, for the attention of Mr Russell Ling.

The Summer Tournament was hosted by Dyrham Park and prepared by Course Manager, Don Wilson. The course was in excellent condition and as ever, the facilities and food were of the highest standard. 1. Mark Talbot, 2. Ian Semple and 3. Paul Clark. Nearest the Pin won by Ian Semple and longest drive by Alex McIndoe. The Trade Prize was won by S. Headley and the King Pin Prize sponsored by Mark Pyrah.

In September Assistant Greenkeeper William Long, of Aldenham Golf Club, was sadly killed in a road accident. Travelling home after a night's rabbit shooting, William's vehicle left the road and he was killed instantly. Condolences to his family and all who knew him.

The Turkey Trot was held at Old Fold Manor, on November 11. The turn out was a disappointing 25. Those who did not make it missed a great day. The course was in fantastic nick, Johnny Beck provided excellent refreshments at The Halfway House and the catering was superb. Special thanks to Sean Downes, Old Fold's Catering Manager, and all the dining room staff for making a very entertaining evening. The winner was J. Palmer, Stockley Park, with 45 points and 2. was J. Haynes, of Northwood, with 36 points. The winner won a Christmas turkey supplied by Rigby Taylor, who were represented on the day by Dennis Smith and Mark Stidwill.

The AGM was also held on the same day and there are some changes to the Committee. After six years hard work, Don Wilson has decided to step down from the committee and on behalf of the Section I would like to thank him for all of his time and effort. Elected to the Committee were: Robert Phillips, of Sandy Lodge, and Kenny Mackay, of Hanbury

Manor, with Tony Dunstan, Ian Semple and Craig Handyside continuing to stand.

These men need your support. Do not take the golf days for granted, they take a lot of organising! A higher level of attendance is required by you, the members, to make the golf days a success and new venues are required. Has your club hosted a BIGGA event?

Peter Hopkinson

Surrey

Congratulations to Brian Turner for winning the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping. Having played in the McMillan Tankard Competition in August at Sunningdale with 40 + greenkeepers, we all saw then why this award is truly deserved.

Golf World magazine has recently published the 1000 best courses in Britain and Ireland and this time it's congratulations to Andrew Hall and his greenkeepers for being part of the team at St George's Hill that made it to 17th place, the highest for a Surrey Club. Other Surrey placings were 19th Sunningdale Old course, 26th Hankley Common, 41st Walton Heath and 88th Sunningdale New. Thanks to Andrew who overcame his natural modesty to point this out to me.

Surrey Section played its last golf competition of 1999 on Tuesday, November 30 at West Hill. Thanks to Terry Huntley for arranging the day which a massive turn out of 80 golfers thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you to West Hill for courtesy of the course and the catering staff for an excellent meal. The results were 1. Bob Rogers 41 points; 2. John Davidson 37 points; 3. Steve Holmes 37 points. 4. Mark Harvey, 36 points; 5. Gordon Bell 36 points; 6. John Mathis 36 points; 7. Gareth Roberts 36 points. Thank you to Patissons for sponsoring the prizes.

The winners of the Huxley Bowl this year were Tom Smith and Richard Penley-Martin, from Merrist Wood Golf Club, and they were presented with the trophy by David Luxford and John Welling from Sisis, the new owners of Huxleys. This competition will in future be sponsored by Sisis.

The Surrey Section AGM took place at West Hill and minutes were recorded for circulation next year. Tom Smith was voted on to the Committee and all current members will continue to stand.

Brian Willmott

Kent

There is plenty of news to catch up on as there has not been anything printed for a little while - my apologies. Let's start with the golf day held at Tandridge in October.

The results were as follows. Best Nett D. Clark; Best Gross, D. Kelso 2. Nett J. Fullagher; 2. Gross A. Pearson; 3. Nett G. Royden 3. Gross G. Elliot. The Trade and Guest winner was John Hills.

Many thanks to all concerned at Tandridge for the courtesy of the course and the excellent meal which followed an excellent golf course.

While all this was taking place the National Championship was being held at Carden Park. I'm afraid Kent did not win but it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. I would just like to say hello to Robert Challacombe and Dave Cuthbertson, who helped to make it an enjoyable stay. I would also like to mention to everyone that Neil Gilham, who I shared a room with, kept me awake with his snoring. Sorry mate!

In November there was the Regional Seminar at Writtle College, which was very informative and interesting and a credit to all concerned.

Next up was the AGM at Wildernessee. There are several points to note for those who did not attend (which happened to be about 95%). They are that John Fullagher has joined the committee, which is greatly appreciated by all. Secondly that Gary Debenham, of Broughton GC, has taken over as Secretary from the ever present Huw Morgan, who is sadly stepping down. It could be said that everybody will miss the hard work Huw has put in over the years. So from all concerned thanks for all your efforts and best wishes for the future.

The last golf day was the Turkey Trot and Christmas Dinner at Darenth Valley GC in early December. The winner was D. Wood with 38pts (bandit) and nearest the pin was G. Elliot.

We would also like to say a big thank you to all of the sponsors for their generosity, who made the day possible, as they did throughout the year, and we look forward to your continued support for the coming year - which looks prosperous.

We are also looking for new venues for the coming season so if your club would be interested then please contact us with details. Next month I shall have some new ideas for the coming year which will hopefully make it more interesting and appeal to a wider audience.

Anyway I hope everybody had a Happy Christmas and an enjoyable New Year and I hope that you all enjoy yourselves at Harrogate.

Any news, views or gossip give us a call on 01474 879200 or 0402 573994.

Kneale Diamond



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Devon & Cornwall

A happy new Millennium to you all, I hope you have had an enjoyable festive season.

The Section's first meeting of the new century will be the Barenburg Seeds meeting which will be held at The Warren Golf Club on Wednesday, January 28, the day will be once again be sponsored by Barenburg Seed. The day will start with a singles Stableford golf competition with start times between 8.30am-10am. For non golfers the course walk will leave the clubhouse at approximately 10.30am. After lunch there will be an educational talk, please make sure your entries have been sent back to me by Monday, January 17, as I will be at BTME that week.

Our Devon Garden Machinery-sponsored meeting was held at Manor House Hotel on Wednesday, November 17, this meeting was also the Section's AGM.

As always the day started with our golfing members competing for the Toro Trophy, which was played in a foursome format. Our non golfing members were treated to an excellent guided tour of the course by Course Manager, Mike Symonds.

After an excellent lunch Alan Dommett, from Devon Garden Machinery, presented the prizes on behalf of Toro and DGM to:

1. Andy Parker, Credition, & Tony Vokes, St Austell, 27pts;
2. Tony Gooch, Torrington, & Billy Spratt, Phoenix Irrigation, 26pts on back 9;
3. Simon Coombes, Daintion & Gerald Ayliffe, Wranaton, 26pts.

The Section would like to express its gratitude to the day's sponsor Devon Garden Machinery for its support and to the Management of Manor House for allowing our Section use of their excellent facilities and to all the Manor House staff for making the section so welcome. Special thanks must go to Mike Symonds and his crew who had the course in fine condition.

The Section's AGM followed the golf presentation and was opened by the Chairman Terry Farkins.

The Section Administrator opened his report with the balance sheet for the year ending September 30. He explained that during the last financial year the board of management had called an EGM, as it had come apparent that a few changes to the constitution regarding the financial issues needed to be made. The main change was to make sure that Section funds would be independent and wouldn't be included into the main account for end of year figures. Also, the constitution now requires section accounts to be professionally

audited, which have been done this year.

The Section remains indebted to all the companies who have sponsored the section meetings over the last year, namely Avoncrop, Barenbrug, Devon Garden Machinery, P.J. Flegg, Rhone Poulenc, Roffeys and Supaturf.

This financial year also saw a change in sponsorship of the fixture cards after the two year agreement with P.J. Flegg was completed. The Administrator thanked Patrick Flegg for his company's sponsorship and further development of our fixture cards over the past two years. As you are aware our new sponsor for the next two years are Rigby Taylor who have continued the further development of the cards bringing colour onto them. The Administrator thanked Martin Samuel for his support in securing the sponsorship and development of the cards. He also informed members present that the Section made a profit of £279.22 compared with a slight loss of £89.53 on the previous year. Although the Section made a profit, the administrator felt that members must keep membership participation at section meetings as possible to ensure the section can continue to secure sponsorship of our section meetings & fixture cards.

He asked members to make every effort to attend as many meetings as possible and add that every member present could help the section by contacting a member who you know doesn't attend and invite him or her along.

Approval of accounts proposed A. Parker seconded D. Blake

The Chairman opened his report by informing members that it had been a pleasure and an honour to serve as Chairman over the past year. He continued by congratulating Mike Bush, Deputy Superintendent at St Mellion, and William Collins, Head Greenkeeper at Falmouth, on their tremendous achievement in reaching the national finals of the Toro Student of the year finals. Also, he congratulated Tony James, of Tehidy Park, on winning the Charterhouse & Scotts National Championship held at Carden Park.

The Chairman's final congratulations were passed on to Gordon Child who is completing his second year as National Chairman a position that he thoroughly deserves for his contribution to greenkeeping over the years.

The Westurf trade show this year was a massive success and an ideal venue for our members and hopes that all members will support the show next year as it will be bigger and better than this year, the Chairman congratulated the Regional Administrator, Paula Humphries, who has redirected Westurf into a show with a future. Her hard work and enthusiasm for greenkeeping is a big asset to our

Region. The Chairman thanked Paula on behalf of the section for all her hard work and wished her a speedy recovery from her radiotherapy treatment. The Chairman on closing his report passed on the Section's thanks to all the trade companies who have supported the Section over the last year this was very much appreciated and he thanked members for helping the Section to be so successful. He thanked Richard Wisdom for representing the Section so well on the Regional Board, with the Chairman's final thanks going to Richard Whyman who is without doubt the best Section Administrator in the Country.

Committee elected. T. Farkins, Chairman & Regional Board Member. C. Rawlings, Vice Chairman. R. Wisdom, Regional Board Member, C. Gadsby, S. Getson, M. Morgan, M. Samuel, President one year term, A. Dommett, Trade member two year term, J. Palfrey, Trade member three year term, R. Whyman, Section Administrator.

In November the Section held its first pesticide training course and test at Bude & North Cornwall which was sponsored by Farm Industries Ltd Textron dealers for Cornwall. After the excellent training course the course achieved 100% pass rate, congratulations to all. I am planning another course in February, for details please contact me on 01288 353438.

I finish my Section report on a sad note with the news that Jack Manley who was Head Greenkeeper at Torquay Golf Club for many years and an active member of the Section passed away in November. The Section's thoughts go to Jack's family. Richard Whyman

South Coast

Welcome to the 21st Century. I hope that you all had a good time and didn't end up too much under the weather with all the celebrations. A Happy New Year to everybody. Let's hope that BIGGA can really push forward and build on all the good work that has been done.

Details of the AGM and the Christmas Stableford will be in the next month's report.

Our first event for the Year 2000 will be at Canford Magna. The date and time January 12 at 10am. The speaker will be Bob Buckingham. He will be talking about Toro products. This will be followed by lunch and nine holes of golf. Let's hope the weather will be a bit better than it was last year. If I remember rightly, the golf was rained off.

On Thursday February 8 our Section/Regional Seminar will be held at Sparsholt College. Some very good speakers have been arranged by Jef, our very able secretary. Details should be with you by the time you read this report. Those of you wish-

ing to attend, return your cheques and entrance slips to Jef Drake as soon as possible. This is to make sure the caterers have an idea of how many will be attending. Jef has put a lot of hard work into organising this seminar. It is up to all of us as members of the section to make every effort to attend and give the seminar our total support.

Looking ahead to March 8, a talk from a representative of Scotts Fertilisers at Crane Valley Golf Club. This will be followed by lunch and 9 holes of golf.

Ken Lodge

South Wales

Looking back on Wednesday, November 17 our Section seminar was a great success and well attended, thanks to Derrick Cashmore who, on behalf of the Principal, welcomed our Section to Pencoed College huge thank you to the speakers of the day Graham Francis, Tony Webster of TIS, Len Dixon of Field Capacity, Peter Hampton of Bernard & Co Ltd, David Shelton of Sheltons Sports Drainage Solutions. Also thanks to Ken Richardson who travelled down to be at the seminar I'm sure like us you enjoyed the day Ken, thanks again for supporting the Section. Thanks to the caterers for the spread which was delicious. A presentation was made on the day to Peter Gillard for his commitment and friendship to the Section after his second retirement. Last but not least our compère for the day was none other than the legendary Malcolm Davies who made the day run so smooth.

On November 24 the Regional Seminar held at Cannington College was well attended. The speakers consisted of Dr Mike Canaway, from STRI; Dr Bob Daniels, of Scotts; Dr Danny Thorogood, of IGER; Dr Stephen Bernard, of Bernard & Co Ltd, and Prof Bill Adams, of the University of Wales. Lots of relevant and useful information gained in attending the day. Thanks to the host of the day Richard Whyman from the Devon & Cornwall Section what a splendid job.

Bring your up-to-date with the results of the golf, AGM and the gossip at P&K next month and what Tony Horne presents us with in our evening lecture this month. February sees guest speaker Peter Johnson on Wednesday 9th, at Pencoed College Speaker for March the 8th is yet to be announced.

Richard Hatcher

South West

A very happy new Millennium to all members of the South West Region. I hope your computers are still in good working order and that you haven't picked up any nasty viruses over the holiday period.

The Autumn Tournament took place at Bristol & Clifton, on November 11, and was kindly spon-

sored by Rigby Taylor. Once everyone had worked out how to actually get into the clubhouse, the day itself proved to be very successful. 1999 has seen many changes taking place at Bristol & Clifton, with the installation of fairway irrigation being the most important. Despite all the ongoing work, Matt Hawker and his team did a great job in getting the course into superb shape. The result of the tournament was as follows :- 1. Nigel Pring, 36 points; 2. J. Byrne, 35 points; 3. K. May, 33 points; 4. G. Cook, 32 points.

Following the meal, the prizes were handed out by Hugh Martin, of Rigby Taylor, who also handed over a cheque for £42 from the nearest the pin competition to the Captain of Bristol & Clifton, which will go to a nominated charity. Thanks were given to everyone connected with Bristol and Clifton including the committee, caterers, greenkeeper and Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the event.

The AGM then followed with a number of issues being discussed. One of the main concerns from many of those attending was that even though the Section has a membership of around 290, it was the same 40 to 50 members who turned out and supported every event. Where are the missing 240 members? Anyone with ideas about getting more of the members involved with the sectional events, should contact someone on the regional committee with their ideas.

One idea also discussed was the introduction of a handicap system just for our own tournaments, which would allow more fairer competition. John Keenaghan volunteered to look after this area.

The AGM said a sad goodbye to Ivor Scoones who is retiring from his position as Regional Secretary. Ivor has played a crucial role in the formation and running of the BIGGA South West Region, contributing a huge amount of time and hard work for the benefit of all greenkeepers. Ivor's input will be particularly missed at committee meetings (although on the lighter side, it was acknowledged that these meetings will take place in half the time with Ivor's absence).

The meeting also showed its appreciation for the work of Peter Baynton, who is stepping down from his role as Secretary. Peter has done an excellent job of what is the most demanding of all the sectional jobs. His replacement will be Chris Jack.

Also taking place in November was the Regional Seminar held once again at Cannington College. The theme of the day was Research, from which a number of interesting speeches were given. I thought the speech from Stephen Bernhard about a new approach to reel maintenance was particular thought provoking and impressive. Many thanks are given to Cannington

College for hosting the event, all the companies that sponsored the event, all the speakers and their contributions and of course to Paula Humphries once again for all her hard work in organising the event.

The next event this year will be the Winter Tournament being held at Painswick G.C. on February 23. Your attendance at this event would be very much appreciated. If you would like to take part in the over 50s competition in June this year, Terry Humphrey would be glad to hear from you. His telephone number is 01454 778871.

I have arranged a number of training courses for early part of this year including the following: A one day First Aid Course to be held at the Southern Ambulance Training College, Chippenham, on Tuesday February 15th.

A one day Abrasive Wheel course to be held at The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester on Thursday February 3rd.

A PA2 Tractor Mounted Spraying Course to be held on Thursday March 2nd.

A PA6 Knapsack Spraying Course to be held on Wednesday March 8.

To enrol on the spraying courses, you must have obtained the PA1 Foundation Module Spraying Certificate. If you would like to take part in these or any other course, please contact me on the following number, 01249-783382.

Paul Cunningham.



North East

I would like to begin by apologising for having nothing in around the green for the last couple of issues. I have been so busy with work and moving house that I have not had time. So let me start by giving you my new phone number and address 012667-72125 or 07977-362938. 7 Parkamore Estate, Glenariff, BT44 0AY. Any information suitable for around the green would be greatly appreciated.

By now you should all have received a questionnaire on how we should proceed over here in the near future I hope you will all take time to read it and return it. It was decided at the AGM to carry out this questionnaire because of the numbers who did not attend. Because of the importance of this issue we have decided to hold another meeting on January 24 at Portstewart G.C. at 7pm to discuss the matter further. At this meeting we will also be looking to vote in a new committee so if you are interested please fill out the relevant part on the questionnaire.

Eamonn Farrell.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you responsible for supplying Section Notes for all the great work that you do.

I know it must seem like a thankless task when you have a deadline approaching and you've got nothing to write about but generally the pages do provide more than enough news to keep everyone interested.

I'd also like to remind long time Section Note contributors, and inform those who have been handed the task, of those deadlines.

The cut off point has always been around the 5th of the month - eg for the January Notes the deadline was December 5. There is a little leeway as I know there are sometimes events you wish to include and you hold the Notes back. That's fine but if you could use the 5th of the month as your regular deadline I'd appreciate it.

You may wonder why it is so early in the month so, as we have a little space to play with this month, I'll take the chance to explain.

Normally the magazine arrives on your door mats in the first few days of the month of issue - January magazine will have arrived with you in the first week of the year. At our end to enable this to happen, and in the post as early in the month as possible, our printers have to be supplied with the entire contents - editorial and advertisements - two weeks before then, which takes us into the middle of the previous month.

Then to give David, our designer, a chance to lay-out the pages in an attractive fashion he needs another full working week. This takes us back to around the 12th of the month.

Invariably there are elements of the magazine that require me to work close to that deadline so it is ideal to have those parts of the magazine that are not particularly time sensitive cleared early. Section Notes are one such element, bearing in mind that they also have to be typed onto our computers by Christine when they come in.

I hope this explains to you how we can need a full month to process your Notes. As I said there is some leeway but the earlier you send them in the more it will help.

It is also helpful if you can have them typed or in clear handwriting, to reduce the number of misspelt names we print, while a recommended word count for each Section would be around 500. (This column is 500 words long to give a measure). Obviously, if you've had a particularly busy month, don't feel you have to miss anything out just to keep it under 500.

The Section Notes are a valuable element of the magazine - often the next read after the Recruitment pages! - and I do appreciate the work you put into producing them.

Thanks a lot and keep up the good work.



Scott MacCallum

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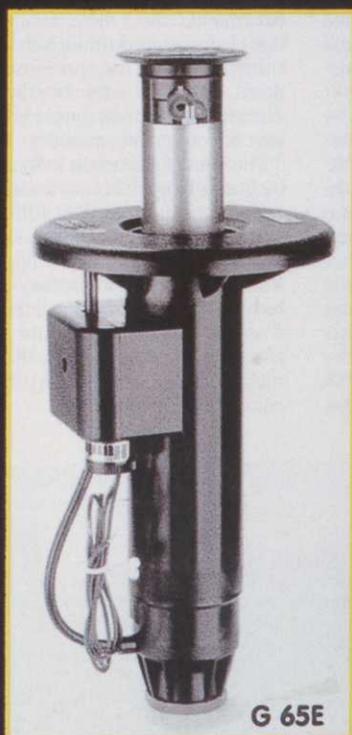
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Walter Woods made his annual pilgrimage around the Toro finalists and found six wonderful individuals working on some wonderful and varied golf courses.

Raising the

When the R&A officially approached Tom Morris to return from Prestwick to St Andrews with the job description of Professional Golfer, Greenkeeper on the Old Course and Caddie Master his salary was £50, an enormous sum in those days.

He was also provided with an assistant, Mr Honeyman, who was armed with a barrow and shovel. With Old Tom's words echoing in his ears "More sand Honeyman, more sand". Mr Honeyman applied sand to greens and fairways.

Old Tom would not know it then but he was setting a standard which would have far reaching effects all over the world.

The next most important standard which measured improvement would be the lawn mower, invented by Edwin Budding in 1830. Gone would be the scythes and sickles and in would come the push mower and horse drawn gang mowers. Old Tom Morris, along with Honeyman, would be in their glory.

Over many years, further improvements have been made, mostly to cutting machines, but also to aeration equipment that can break up the most severely compacted surfaces.

Today's greenkeepers will have appreciated all this development but they too are constantly setting standards. Fairways on today's

Championship golf courses are sometimes better than greens were many years ago, with equally fast stimpmeter readings. Greens can be cut in a fraction of the time with precise uniformity.

In 1987 when BIGGA was inaugurated with the aim of formalising education, standards were being constantly improved. Golf Course Managers can now communicate at the highest level and their job has become a profession and they must cope with the demands placed on them by the ever increasing expansion of golf.

A few years ago an approach was made by Bob Buckingham of Toro and Graham Dale and Peter Mansfield of Lely suggesting that they would like to finance an award which would measure new standard setting related to individual golf courses and Course Manager's education.

This Award, the Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping, has become an annual event with participation growing each year. For the first few years the fear factor was apparent with Course Managers reluctant to enter, thinking that they might not meet the criteria. This has now changed with the knowledge that clubs and individuals who enter are winning because by doing so they are pushing the quality levels still higher... just as Old Tom Morris did.

At the beginning of each year the entry forms are sent out and returned. The entrants are then organised into their own Regions where they can be assessed using retired, respected Course Managers who have time to visit. From these visits a short list of six finalists is selected - usually the furthest away most inaccessible courses throughout the country!

Yours truly is then sent out to visit, armed with directions honed with military precision by Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson.

The first club to be visited was north - where men are men and sheep are nervous. Right through glens, winding through snow topped mountains, past Inverness, turning right at the Black Isle to Fortrose and Rosemarkie. Both little fishing villages have escaped through time and the golf course is on a peninsula bordered on both sides by the sea, dictating that a hook should not be a part of your golfing armoury.

This gem of a course is looked after by Stuart Hogg, who was an apprentice to Jim Paton, of West Kilbride.

Stuart is enthusiastic about his profession and always willing to learn about the combination of old techniques and modern methods. The golf club is one of the most friendly, hospitably you will meet making it no wonder why Stuart enjoys his work there.





standards

From the furthest north I headed south, past Hadrian's Wall to the historic city of Chester and Carden Park, venue for his year's BIGGA National Golf Championship. Andy Campbell, without his kilt, is the Course Manager who with each passing year is becoming more professional and showing us what can be achieved by good education. Andy is responsible for two courses, the Cheshire and the Nicklaus, designed by the great man himself. Both courses were beautifully manicured having dried out from torrential rain the previous month.

Yeovil was my next stop down the M6, past spaghetti junction through traffic jams then into this delightful course which contains 27 holes. Our Chairman, rang to inform me of the young Course Manager's ability and after meeting him I could understand why. Matt Maryon was a breath of fresh air. Young and ambitious with a large appetite for education he made me believe he could easily perform the duties of General Manager. The golf course was perfectly presented with well maintained surfaces for members and visitors to enjoy.

Brian Turner, of Sunningdale, was my next port of call giving me the opportunity to call on Chris Kennedy and family at Wentworth which had just finished with the World Matchplay and another successful year for the previous Hags Castle man.

The following day I spent with Brian walking round one of the finest and most picturesque courses in the world. The venue for many Championships, both professional and amateur over the last few years, Brian has adopted a policy of reducing NPK levels to greens of both courses. The New course has a large amount of Bent grass, some Fescue and Poa where the Old course is more dominated with Poa, owing to the large amount of traffic it receives. This policy will be difficult, requiring the support of his committee, but nevertheless if the golf club wants Championship standards it will have to be done and Brian will be the very man to do it.

Leaving Sunningdale it was north again to Fulford Heath, just south of Birmingham to meet Kim Blake, the Course Manager of this lovely parkland course which contains lakes surrounded by mature trees and flowering bushes. This course was perfectly maintained, mostly for membership and visitor play, although County fixtures were a regular owing to its delightful setting.

Kim, is a BIGGA enthusiast, encouraging his staff to participate in all educational pursuits. This is also reflected on their individual performance in their combined efforts to provide quality.

Leaving the congestion of Birmingham it was northwards on the M1, which frightens the living

daylights out of me, right to Durham and Chester-le-Street, where the locals speak funnier than I do.

The day I chose was raining cats and dogs but the sun soon shone when I met Barrie Lee, the Course Manager of this parkland course which lies under the shadow of a huge castle. Originally it had an 18-hole course on the estate then it was changed adding more holes towards the river making 18 holes and a five hole practice course. Barrie is an amazing, energetic fellow, constantly looking at ways he can improve his education which would be instantly relayed back onto his golf course.

During the finals at Aldwark Manor a long discussion took place involving the Toro management and BIGGA officials mainly about applying a fair system of marking which ensured that 50% of the marks went to golf course maintenance with the remaining percentage averaged out on the rest of the marking process to include the final interview.

As you will all be aware Brian Turner, from Sunningdale, won the Award. It could not have gone to a finer individual who was an outstanding candidate and a credit to his profession.

It is also important to thank the Toro Company for allowing BIGGA to run an award which helps to raise the standards and gives such valuable prizes.

From left to right:
1 Matt Maryon at Yeovil

2 Stephen Skachill cuts a green at Chester-le-Street

3 Fortrose and Rosemarkie

4 Fulford Heath

5 Sunningdale

6 Carden Park



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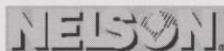
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Ad Ref 31

Wellingborough GC decided to have all 18 greens rebuilt in one go and work started in mid-July. As Scott MacCallum discovered, they will soon be reaping the benefits...

Taking the Bull by the horns?



Many established golf clubs find themselves in a quandary. Saddled with ageing greens, built to cope with the playing levels of the day, which now struggle to cope with the increased year round play they are presented with the following options.

Do they?

a) Do nothing and accept that they will be forced to play temporary greens on an increasingly regular basis each winter. Or ...

b) Decide to rebuild the greens to a modern specification and face the cost and undoubted upheaval that ensues.

It is fair to say that eventually the second option is likely to prevail but that merely creates more options. How to go about it.

Do they?

a) Carry out the job in stages using the existing greenkeeping staff over the course of a few winter programmes? Or ...

b) Bring in an outside contractor and split the job into three phases of six holes or two phases of nine completing the work over two or three years.

The pressures on a modern day greenkeeping team and the workload involved in rebuilding 18 greens may edge a club towards the second option where the amount of upheaval would have to be assessed before deciding which way to go.

Or ...

There is a third option and the one chosen by the members of Wellingborough Golf Club.

They brought in an outside con-

tractor, S&G Ltd of Welwyn, who rebuilt all 18 greens in one hit. And what's more, to ensure they had the best conditions in which to do the work they started on the Monday after the finish of the Open Championship in July.

The benefit to the club was that the entire work was completed in just 15 weeks and the members of Wellingborough can look forward to enjoying their golf on brand new greens from next season.

"For many years Wellingborough had greens to be proud of, but only for a few months each year. Visiting societies during the summer could not believe that we were to be digging up our greens. But they didn't see them during the late autumn. We suffered from Black Thatch which meant that later in the year there was

Taking the Bull by the horns?

Below: Steve Clement and Chris Gilroy of S&G Ltd



very little opportunity for the greens to dry out and consequently they were soft and spongy. Putting became a lottery," explained Roy Tomlin, the Club's Secretary/Manager.

STRI Golf Course Architect, Jonathan Tucker, and, agronomist, Andy Cole, were involved in the project from the early stages and assisted the club in deciding what needed to be done and how best to go about doing it.

"Initially it was a slow process of the club agreeing that something needed to be done and then getting everyone on board to agree to it ... the committee and then the wider golfing membership," explained Jonathan.

"Once that was agreed that the work needed to be done the next step was to decide whether to do it in one hit or over two or possibly three years. The final decision was taken because of the difficulties in juggling the maintenance of old established greens with the new ones ... and the fact that the disruption would be kept effectively to one year. Although I do believe that finance was also very cogent argument," he said.

On the face of it it seems a reasonable and considered decision but remarkably Wellingborough may be one of the first to have taken this option.

"It is very unusual that a club should bite the bullet in this way. It is the first time I have been involved in a project like this. Usually a club likes to see the fruits of its labour and see how it does in the first year before moving on to year two," said Jonathan.

In fact it was not until a couple of months before the work was due to start that the decision was finally taken and S&G put in two tender quotes, one for nine plus nine and the other for doing it all in one go.

The club held a very successful meeting of members - around 200 attended at which the club officials, together with Jonathan and Andy, made presentations.

"We were able to get over the reasoning behind why we wanted to do it in one phase."

Bob Savine - the "S" in S&G - who explained just how what could be construed as the more drastic route for the club is also the most cost effective.

"There are savings for doing it all together on materials, not having to remobilise for the second or third years and on company overheads and these amounted to about 10%, which in monetary terms is quite significant."

The 15 week time period to complete the contract held no fears for S&G who ensured that everything was in place before they started work.

"We anticipated having it all done in 12 weeks and if it wasn't for a bit of bad weather we would have achieved it. As it is we will have to go into week 15."

Bob, and Chris Gilroy - the "G" in S&G - worked closely with Head

Greenkeeper, Ian Marshall, who has more than 20 years experience on the course.

"What he doesn't know about the course isn't worth knowing and any problems we encountered, for example with electricity or gas mains, he knew exactly where they were which saved us valuable time. He also had to prepare the 18 temporary greens."

Ironically when the time came to dig up the existing greens they looked in superb condition.

"We played them and were hard pushed to find anything wrong with them. Ian had done a great job papering over the cracks, but in the winter you couldn't play on them," said Bob, reiterating what Roy Tomlin had said.

Having said that the work was being done in one hit the job was actually planned in phases before the work started.

A total of 10 men, including Bob and Chris, undertook the work while S&G has recently employed Steve Clements, formerly of Whitbread, as a Project Manager. He visited the site once or twice a week.

"The plan was to reconstruct three greens a week but because the weather was so good in the first few weeks we were almost getting to a point of doing four a week, and that was everything from re-root zoning and resurfacing," said Steve.

The original turf was scrapped and Rolawn washed turf was brought in, the decision being that turf, as opposed to seed, would give the greens a head start.

"As well as the greens reconstruction the irrigation system around each green was also renewed," said Steve.

Credit must also go to the golf club for sacrificing a large proportion of their summer season to allow the work to take place in advantageous conditions.

"The Open had only finished on the



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Sunday and work here started on the Saturday and they were on temps from then on. Not many clubs would contemplate the disruption to their club competitions and bigger societies," said Jonathan.

The upside is that it allowed the work to be done much quicker than if it had been limited to the autumn and winter.

"Just to give an example, when I was at Whitbread the policy was not to do any construction work in the summer. We would take greens out of play in November and not be finishing the work until the first week in May. On another occasion we took a green out of play on April 1 and it was finished by May 1 so what took six months in one case took just one in another merely by choosing a different time of year to do it," said Steve.

"You are better off leaving your

greens in play over winter, no matter how bad they are, rather than try to rebuild them in the winter," he added.

Steve explained that he had come across situations recently whereby architects had attempted to impose damages on a contractor starting work in October should he not finish the work in the agreed time.

"That either shows a lack of awareness of what can happen to ground in the winter or an acceptance that the contractor will be working in wet conditions. To any good contractor that is not acceptable."

It is that sort of knowledge and experience that encouraged S&G to bring Steve on board.

"S&G has gained from Steve's experience and as a team - S&G, Jonathan Tucker and the golf club, we've worked well. That's what has made this project so successful," said Bob.



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Ad Ref 651

Dr Stephen Baker, Head of Soils and Sports Surface Science at the STRI, looks at the current and future research on golf course agronomy with particular emphasis on the problem of winter wear

Into the 3rd Millennium

The parties are over, the hangovers have receded and, yes, we are into the year 2000. In the December 1999 issue of *Greenkeeper International*, I considered aspects of research on golf course agronomy through the last century. As we move into the new millennium it is appropriate to review the implications of current research projects and to identify some of the many areas where future work is needed.

On the evidence of the last century, the needs for research with respect to golf course agronomy progressively change. This results from both factors within the game (e.g. increased play, more winter use, expectations of the golfer) and external factors, for example changes in pesticide legislation, increased demands on water resources throughout society and in the longer term climatic change, with its potential impact on turf irrigation, grass selection and the incidence of disease.

The R&A's Golf Course Advisory Panel has identified key strategic issues likely to affect golf in the future. These include:

- (i) Climatic change
- (ii) Water use and conservation
- (iii) Environmental issues
- (iv) Demographic/planning issues
- (v) Chemical inputs and outputs
- (vi) Implications of increasing usage

Greenkeeping staff also have strong views on the practical problems they encounter. As part of an R&A strategy to identify research priorities, greenkeepers were asked, through a questionnaire in *Greenkeeper International* (June 1998), to indicate priorities for research particularly with respect to condi-

tions on their course. The five main problem areas were identified as: i) the control and management of annual meadow-grass, ii) traffic management/winter wear, iii) the control of earthworm casting, iv) rabbit control, and v) wear by golf trolleys.

In an article of this length, it would be unrealistic to address all the issues where research needs have been identified. Instead, I wish to focus on the topical issue of winter wear on golf courses, in particular on two areas where we are currently carrying out research work and two areas where we consider that future research would be profitable.

Green construction

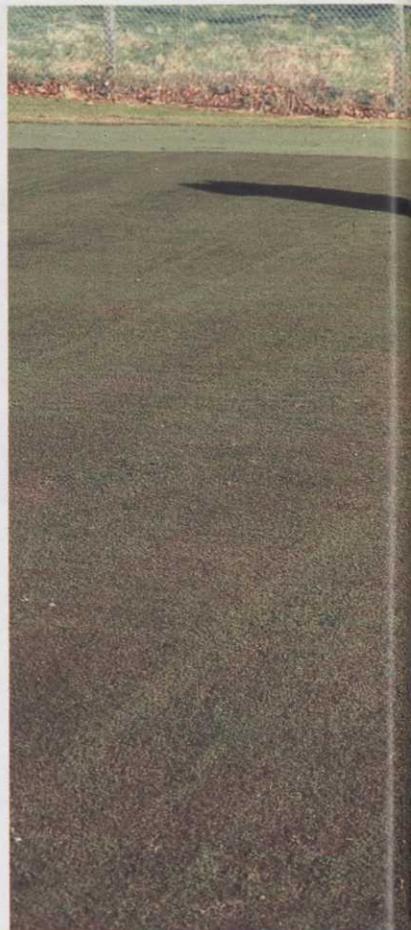
One of the main factors affecting the quality of greens in winter (or necessitating the frequent use of temporary puffing surfaces) is the poor soil physical characteristics of many greens. In the R&A sponsored survey of 74 golf courses between 1993 and 1994, we found that 43% of greens had water infiltration rates below 10 mm/hr and 41% of greens had less than 5% air-filled pore space. Such values mean the greens are slow draining, prone to water logging and may suffer from restricted root development. In most cases, this resulted from the use of existing soils with relatively high silt and clay contents.

To achieve more free-draining and firmer putting surfaces through the winter, sand-dominated rootzones are now widely used in green construction. However, in the past comparatively little research work has been undertaken to examine the performance of different rootzones supporting fescue/bent turf. In June 1995, thanks to R&A funding, we

established a trial at Bingley examining the performance of 18 different rootzone materials formed from combinations of two sands (medium and medium-coarse), three amendment materials (sandy loam topsoil, organic fensoil and sphagnum peat) and three mixing ratios of sand amendment. Each of the rootzones was installed as a 300 mm deep layer overlying a 50 mm blinding layer of 1-4 mm grit and a 5-10 mm diameter drainage layer.

The trial has received simulated wear since July 1996 and this has allowed us to examine changes that occur over time. Soil physical properties have been strongly influenced by rootzone composition and recent results are shown in Table 1. Infiltration rates were inevitably highest on mixes incorporating coarse sand with low quantities of amendment. Infiltration rates were higher for the mixes containing peat than those with topsoil or fensoil. After deliberately flooding the surface, water drained quickly from the pore space of all mixtures meaning that air-filled porosity was satisfactory for all rootzone materials. However, moisture contents were highest on the medium sand and for the 70:30 mixes. They were also higher on the fensoil and peat mixes than on mixes incorporating sandy loam soil. The firmness of the putting surface was also influenced by rootzone composition. In particular the rootzones containing peat gave the softest surface and firmness decreased as the amount of amendment material was increased from 10% to 30% by volume.

The plots were originally sown with a mix of 40% Chewing's fescue, 40% slender creeping red fescue and



20% browntop bent but our most recent botanical analysis (September 1999) indicates average values of 53% bent, 33% fescue and 12% annual meadow-grass (plus 2% dead or bare). Annual meadow-grass is higher on the more moisture-retentive medium sands and higher when topsoil was used as the amendment material, particularly for the coarser sands.

As part of the same project, we have also examined the effects of a range of alternative organic amendment materials on the soil physical properties of rootzone mixes. Materials have included green waste, coir (derived from coconut shells), sewage and straw, rape residue and wood fibres. When mixed with a suitable sand, it was possible to formulate mixtures that met with USGA criteria for hydraulic conductivity, total porosity, air-filled porosity and capillary porosity for all the amendment materials.

The work on rootzone mixtures is still continuing but in the relatively near future we should be in a position to publish guidelines, supported by scientific data, on the optimum rootzone materials for UK conditions.

Earthworms and casting

The problems of earthworm control and winter wear are often closely linked, as smeared casts are one of the main factors contributing to muddy fairways and tees. We have just had another mild, wet autumn and many courses have either suffered from heavy casting or spent often thousands of pounds on pesticides that give only short-lived control. Last year, we published two articles in *Greenkeeper International* outlining the work that has been carried out on earthworm control and steps that can be taken to reduce casting. It has to be stressed that, in

the absence of pesticides such as chlordane (the use of which has been illegal since 1992), there are no single solutions to the problems of earthworm casting, indeed total control is unlikely. However, casting can be reduced by sound greenkeeping practices such as the use of acidifying fertilisers, avoidance of lime-rich top dressing and, where appropriate, the removal of grass clippings.

Our current research on casting control has four main themes:

a) Further examination of the use of sulphur for soil acidification. In particular this is being directed at predicting the most suitable application rates for a range of soils, whereby casting is reduced as much as possible without detrimental effects on the sward.

b) Mowing practices and fertiliser application based on ammonium sulphate to reduce casting on fairway-type turf.

c) Use of horizontal barriers in the soil to restrict burrowing activity. We recently carried out a detailed survey of 32 golf courses to examine population distribution of earthworms in the UK. We identified 13 different species altogether, but three species (*Aporrectodea longa*, *A. caliginosa* and *Lumbricus terrestris*) made up 87% of the 8,000 earthworms that we sampled. *A. longa* and *L. terrestris* in particular have deep burrow systems that can reach one metre or more into the soil. Clearly any barrier would stop earthworms coming to the surface to eject soil taken from the deeper soil horizons. However, of greater long-term importance is the fact that these species use the burrows to escape the effects of drought or heavy frost. If earthworms cannot migrate downwards at times of unfavourable weather conditions, their chances of survival and subsequent reproduction are small. There is a precedent for this approach in the literature of the pre-war years with references to layers of coarse sand, iron filings or broken glass to discourage earthworms, but we are instead examining different grades of plastic mesh material at depths of 100 mm and 200 mm and also the effects of a coarse, angular grit layer.

It would, of course, be disruptive and impractical to use this approach on existing areas but where there is any re-construction it may be an option to be considered, although the implications on water movement and deep aeration work must also be considered.

d) Our other current avenue of

research has been to examine the effect of the injection of compressed air into the soil. Equipment such as the Robin Dagger or Air-Jet 2000 have been used for relieving compaction in the soil by releasing a pulse(s) of air at pressures of around 150 psi. Under the right conditions, this causes considerable heaving of the ground and this may have implications for soft-bodied creatures such as earthworms. This autumn we have been looking at effects on the survival of earthworms and casting rates, and results should be available next spring. (Incidentally, if any readers have observations on casting activity following air injection work, we would be interested in details.)

Wear by golf trolleys and buggies

The issue of trolleys and buggies on golf courses is a sensitive one and has always raised debate within golf clubs. Such equipment has clearly allowed many older or less mobile golfers to continue enjoying the game of golf for much longer periods. However, in the winter months in particular, trolleys and buggies can contribute to wear on the golf course. Thankfully, the use of narrow-wheeled trolleys has now ended and most trolleys have a wheel width of at least 70 mm. This means the ground pressure of a trolley with a full bag is reduced to about 13 kPa, which is only half that of a player standing with both feet in contact with the ground and considerably less than the force exerted during walking. This is typically in the order of 70 kPa with even higher values as

Soil physical properties four years after construction

Assessment date (1999)	Infiltration rate (mm/hr)	Moisture content 1 hour after flooding 0-100mm (%)	Hardness (gravities)
	March 15	March 22	March 22
Effect of sand type			
Medium sand	86	26.2	74
Medium-coarse sand	110	21.8	71
Effect of amendment			
Sandy loam soil	88	21.0	75
Fen soil	91	25.6	73
Peat	114	25.2	69
Effect of mixing ration			
90:10 (sand:amendment)	116	20.4	75
80:20	97	24.2	72
70:30	80	27.1	69



the heel makes contact with the ground. However, trolleys and buggies have the disadvantage that their use tends to cause golfers to be channelled along specific routes on the golf course and it is here that the effects of wear become more apparent. Furthermore, the very fact that golfers do not have to carry their own bags over their shoulder does increase the temptation to fill the bag with extra items, thus contributing to soil compaction. For powered equipment, the possibility of wheels spinning on slopes in wet conditions must also be considered, as this is potentially a significant source of damage, particularly at times of the year when the turf will be slow to recover.

There is very little independent scientific information on the effects of trolleys (unpowered and powered) or buggies on turfgrass wear, and this is an area where we believe work would be of considerable benefit. In particular, there should be detailed assessments to develop criteria defining conditions when trolleys or buggies are likely to cause significant turf damage and conversely when their use is perfectly acceptable.

Alternative spikes

There is increasing evidence from the United States that the wide range of plastic spikes and studs causes less wear on putting greens (and indeed other areas of the golf course such as teeing mats, wooden steps and bridges) than conventional metal spikes. However, there are also concerns that traction or grip may be affected by changes of spike type.

This may be particularly relevant in Britain where golf continues throughout the winter and grip on steeper slopes and banks may be affected by wet conditions or, for example, mud arising from earthworm casts. Similarly, wet grass clippings may also affect traction properties, therefore the interaction between spike design, weather and management practices needs to be examined.

Most of the American work that has been carried out has been on creeping bent greens on which the grass, because of its lateral growth habit, is particularly prone to "plucking" type damage. This may be less relevant on British greens where the predominant grass types are brown-top and Highland bent, fescue and annual meadow-grass. However, until research is carried out, there will be many unanswered questions and, as the use of alternative spikes has safety as well as wear implications, work is needed to assess whether their use should be encouraged on British golf courses.

I have focused on just four topics connected with winter wear. Future development work on for example mechanical treatments, black layer control and turfgrass breeding is also relevant to the problems experienced through the colder, wetter months. The last century brought about vast improvements in our knowledge of golf course management and the range of equipment available to exploit that knowledge. There is no reason that these improvements should not continue through the 21st century.

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Brian Turner, Course Manager at Sunningdale GC, takes a look at the stresses involved with the everyday running of a golf course and offers some advice

Stress.

All part of the job?

The very meaning of the word stress is the physical, emotional and mental pressure which is experienced by most people in the modern day work place. In greenkeeping management stress is becoming more and more apparent, and part of this is due to the very high standards we set ourselves.

BIGGA was formed in 1987 to bring the profession of greenkeeping the respect it deserves.

If the green is not dark green there must be something wrong with it

If the greens are not receptive and do not make a big pitch mark you are not putting on enough water

And when the greens become waterlogged and covered in disease, the golfer demands to know why you have ruined the greens

We are not merely grass cutters, and turf management is essential for the success of a course.

Although we have come a long way since then, we still have not broken the barrier of respect we deserve.

Since the early 1970's after Tony Jacklin had won the British and US Opens, golf has boomed, and our presentation standards have risen

dramatically, with green speeds going crazy. I can remember working at Wentworth in the 70's when we cut the greens at 5mm once a day during tournaments. Today Chris Kennedy tells me the greens are cut three to four times a day at 3mm height of cut. This is stress, not only on the greenkeepers, but to the grass plant as well. These mowing heights cannot be maintained for long periods without the grass plant suffering from thinning out and disease.

Televised tournament golf has made our job more demanding, as golfers expect these playing conditions all the time, which is impossible as we know, but the golfer does not fully understand the reasons why.

Green speed seems to be the most important and talked about subject on the golf course. Why is it when a golfer says to us the greens are slow we take it as a criticism, yet when they say the greens are quick we take it as a compliment? I know that some golfers are as comfortable on slow greens as some are on fast. It does not matter how good your course presentation is or how good your tees and fairways are, the bottom line is if your greens are not quite perfect the course is not up to scratch.

You may have noticed that I have not mentioned bunkers. This is another contentious issue. I am sure we have all experienced the complaints that the sand is the wrong type and particle size, there is too much or not enough sand and it is unevenly distributed.

Water and fertiliser management can come under question by the golfer. If the green is not dark green there must be something wrong with it, and if the greens are not receptive

and do not make a big pitch mark you are not putting on enough water. On the other hand when the greens become waterlogged and covered in disease the golfer demands to know why you have managed to ruin the greens.

Aeration is the one task that causes most complaints, but I feel is the most important task in turf management. When is the right time to aerate? Never if the golfer has his way. This one operation gives the greenkeeper his biggest headache, especially if he is hollow tining or verti-draining.

Turf management is not an exact science, and in greenkeeping we experience peaks and troughs. Our aim should be to make these peaks and troughs into small ripples with sound management programmes that satisfy all parties within the golf club. This is not easy to do, but we must get across to golfers the importance of all tasks involved with sound practical greenkeeping management.

Good greenkeepers through experience, training, knowledge, and gut feeling know when to carry out particular work programmes, and how to peak their course for special events, giving all golfers a fair chance, and not tricking the greens up to ridiculous speeds.

To ease stress in greenkeeping management, sound policies must be laid down by the greenkeeper and committee and carried out with conviction and confidence, and with no fear of retribution from golfers.

In America many people have their personal 'shrink' to help them get through a stressful week. I wonder when the greenkeeper will be joining them.

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Entries to reach us no later than Monday, January 21, 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 Hebden of Garforth GC, 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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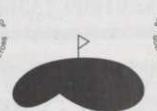
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Recruitment

THE WHITECRAIGS GOLF CLUB

require a

DEPUTY TO THE COURSE MANAGER

The successful applicant requires to be highly motivated and ambitious. Qualified to NVQ3 level (or equivalent experience), qualification in spraying and chain saw certification would be preferred. Ability to demonstrate participation in improvement programmes would be advantageous.
 Apply in writing, enclosing CV to;

The Secretary, Whitecraigs Golf Club, 72 Ayr Road, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6SW

PITLOCHRY GOLF COURSE

require a fully qualified and experienced

FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

with spraying certificates

The remuneration package includes a rent free bungalow comprising sitting room, dining room, 3 bedrooms etc.

Applications in writing with a full CV and names of referees to:-

The Secretary, Pitlochry Golf Course Ltd,
 Pitlochry Estate Office, Pitlochry, Perthshire, PH16 5NE

STOCKS

GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

COURSE MANAGER REQUIRED

The new owners of this complex are embarking on an improvement of the existing 18 hole championship length course and require a suitably qualified person to lead this project and maintain a continued improvement programme. The existing Head Greenkeeper is nearing retirement and the successful applicant will need to work with him for approximately 12 months.

The successful candidate will require experience in project and team management together with budgetary skills necessary to manage this expanding department.

Please send your application marked to the attention of the Director of Golf at the following address:

Stocks Hotel Golf and Country Club,
 Stocks Road, Aldbury Nr Tring, Herts HP23 5RX

HOEBRIDGE GOLF CENTRE

Require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Very busy established Golf complex with three courses and driving range are looking for a greenkeeper to join our existing team.

Ideally the application should be qualified to NVQ Level 2 or in the process of working towards this. Alternatively experience and the desire to achieve the qualifications will suffice as the Company are committed to a full training programme for the successful candidate.

The golf course is well supplied with new modern equipment and full irrigation system, new greenkeepers sheds are currently being constructed.

Apply in writing with full C.V.,

The Centre Manager, Hoebridge Golf Centre,
 Old Woking Road, Old Woking Surrey, GU22 8JH



Invite applications for the position of

DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER

The successful candidate should be proactive with the ability to organise work programmes and motivate staff.

Must have at least 5 years experience and knowledge of all modern greenkeeping methods.

Qualified to a minimum C&G phase 3 and hold relevant spraying certificates.

Accommodation is not available.

Applications in writing enclosing full CV to:

Mark Piggott, Course Manager, East Berkshire Golf Club,
Ravenswood Avenue, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 8BD



THE LONDON GOLF CLUB

Invites the applications for the positions detailed below:

The successful candidates will join a dedicated greenkeeping team working from one of the most modern facilities in the industry, at this prestigious private members club with two championship courses.

IRRIGATION TECHNICIAN

The primary responsibility of this post relates to the maintenance, service and efficient running of a Rainbird irrigation system.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate the following:

- Sound knowledge and experience of irrigation repairs
 - Confident problem solving ability
 - Hard working and self motivated
 - Good organisation and administration

ASSISTANT GOLF COURSES MANAGER

This challenging position requires an experienced professional with both technical and managerial skills supported by qualifications and relevant history. The successful candidate will be required to lead and motivate staff, as well as organise and monitor maintenance operations. Applicants should demonstrate the necessary ability and skills to develop a team of up to 30 staff and also carry full responsibility for the running of the courses in the absence of the manager.

Salaries negotiable, depending on experience and qualifications

Applications in writing with full CV by 7 February 2000 to:

The Personnel Manager, The London Golf Club, South Ash Manor Estate,
Ash, Nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7EN



Burhill Golf Club

Have vacancies for

Assistant Greenkeepers

Due to the recent construction of an 18 hole Championship length golf course, which has been constructed to USGA specification, at the prestigious Burhill Golf Club.

Excellent opportunities have arisen for enthusiastic, hard working and competent greenkeepers to compliment our existing team to look after our 36 hole golfing complex and practice grounds.

Applicants should be qualified to NVQ level 2, PA 1 and PA2 Spraying Certificates and have a minimum of 3 years experience on a course of high standards, to join our existing team in the Spring of next year.

The Club has continuous plans to improve the existing course, and with modern machinery there are excellent prospects for the enthusiastic greenkeeper.

The remuneration packages are negotiable plus other attractive benefits.

If you fit the bill and want to be part of a challenging and exciting future please write enclosing your current C.V. to :-

**Gordon Hogg, Secretary/Manager,
Burhill Golf Club, Burwood Road
Walton on Thames
Surrey KT12 4BL**

Tel: 01932 227345

Closing date for applications Monday, 31st January, 2000

PENN GOLF CLUB LTD

Applications are invited for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Penn is a well established heathland course situated about 2 miles from Wolverhampton. Applicants will be experienced in all aspects of greenkeeping, with appropriate qualifications, having practical knowledge of modern machinery and irrigation systems. The ability to lead and motivate staff, organise work programmes and maintain health and safety requirements is essential.

Salary negotiable: No accommodation.

Apply with writing with CV to

M H Jones, Hon Secretary, Penn Golf Club Ltd, Penn Common, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5JN

RICHINGS PARK GOLF CLUB

Invites applications for the position of

GREENKEEPER

Applicants must be suitably qualified and experienced in all aspects of modern greenkeeping.

All applicants should apply in writing to

The Course Manager, Richings Park Golf Club, North Park, Iver, Buckinghamshire SL0 9DL.

BEARWOOD LAKES GOLF CLUB

requires an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Bearwood Lakes is a prestigious new development in the heart of Berkshire, opened in 1996 to much acclaim and built by Southern Golf.

This is an excellent opportunity to be part of a committed and dedicated team.

The successful applicant should be qualified to NVQ1 and NVQ2 level and also hold pesticide certificates PA1 and PA2. Salary is negotiable depending on experience.

Please apply in writing together with C.V. to,

Phil Beal (Head Greenkeeper), Bearwood Lakes Golf Club, Bearwood Road, Sindlesham, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 4SJ

Marriott

MANCHESTER

HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB

MECHANIC/GREENKEEPER

The Marriott Manchester Hotel & Country Club, set in 200 acres of mature parkland, offers a range of facilities including an 18 hole championship course. An opportunity exists for a Mechanic/Greenkeeper to join a company that offers the best facilities and best benefits in the industry.

The ideal candidate will be:

- An experienced mechanic
- Able to repair and maintain a range of modern sports turf machinery to the highest standards
- Able to assist with greenkeeping duties
- A team player equally able to work alone

Salary dependent on experience

For an application form or for further details, please contact;

Human Resources Department, Marriott Manchester Hotel & Country Club, Worsley Park, Worsley, Manchester M28 2QT Telephone 0161 975 2000

Closing date for applications - Friday 28 January 2000

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You will already have demonstrated your ability to gain respect within the industry and you will have a strong technical background, a degree or diploma being an advantage but not essential. It is probable that you are looking for a new challenge that will enable you to build on your reputation whilst being within a commercial and therefore exhilarating environment.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone wishing to develop themselves and their career. Should you wish to discuss the position in confidence, please call David Phizacklea on 01284 752945 quoting ref. 2940. Alternatively write or e-mail enclosing your career details.

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SPEY BAY GOLF CLUB

Applications are invited for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

The club was established in 1907 and is a traditional 18 hole links course situated on the Moray Firth coastline.

The course forms part of the Spey Bay hotel complex, which is currently undergoing major refurbishment.

The ideal candidate will be experienced in all aspects of green-keeping and possess all the necessary qualifications as laid down in BIGGAS job specifications.

You will be a self-motivated individual working to the highest of standards, who will wish to see a great natural links return to the respected level it once occupied.

Salary and conditions negotiable.
No accommodation available

Applications in writing including current c.v.
and salary expectations are invited by 31st January 2000 to;

Gary Stangoe, Managing Director, Spey Bay Hotel,
Spey Bay, Fochabers, Moray. IV32 7PJ

Golfclub Linz St. Florian, Austria

Require an

**Experienced First Assistant,
and Assistant Greenkeeper**

Golfclub Linz-St.Florian is a semi-private membersclub -

A member of "The Leading Golf Courses of Austria" situated near to Linz (between Salzburg and Vienna). The 25 year old parkland course fulfilled a 4 year development programme to rebuild all greens, set up lakes and a computerised irrigation system (Toro).

You must be self-motivated and able to work within a small team of qualified experienced Austrian and English Greenkeepers. You must have practical knowledge and experience on sand-based greens, modern machinery and computerised irrigation systems. Knowledge of the German language would be helpful.

This would be an excellent opportunity for any progressive greenkeeper to further their career.

The salary will be negotiable according to experience and qualification. Accommodation on course available, singles preferred.

Written applications with a full C.V., photographs and references to reach following address before January 20, 2000.

Traders Warenhandel
A- 4020 Linz
Wienerstrasse 95
Austria

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You will be providing our customers with a fast and efficient service. Able to work under pressure, you will need to be well organised, disciplined and able to exceed customer expectations every time. Previous experience in Grounds Maintenance/Horticulture would be desirable.

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Please apply in writing with full C.V., clearly stating position applied for, to Chris Geddes, Market Manager.

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We welcome applicants regardless of gender or race.



**Sandy McDivot welcomes in the new Millennium
with a study of his crystal tea leaves.**

Future. happiness

An appropriate time I think for Old McDivot to gaze into his crystal ball, consult the stars and take a general butchers at the tea leaves. When it comes to prediction I can comfort myself with the fact that many of my fellow prophets have failed abysmally in recent times. Even the previously infallible Nostradamus seemed convinced that the end of the world would occur in July of last year. This would have been utterly catastrophic, as it would have meant the total and complete annihilation of Captain's Day. So assuming we are all still here and a quick glance outside has revealed no comet hurtling at us, then here is my attempt at prophesising what is to happen within this great industry of ours in the not too distant future.

Firstly let's look at the destiny of golf course design. An oft told story is that we are a few years behind our American cousins in this, as in so many other facets of life, and so with this somewhat depressing thought in mind, what are they up to across the pond?

Well it would appear that they are now spending astronomical sums of folding stuff on trying to achieve the natural look. So tufts of fescue are bunged in every conceivable nook and orifice, the odd bare patch is deemed classical and Mother Nature maintains bunker faces her self. It rather reminds me of one of Dolly Parton's old quotes when she said, "I have to spend a lot of money to look this cheap."

But maybe we have cause for celebration if we are to follow in their footsteps, for surely we only have to actually regress a few years in our own history to find that we were creating these highly sought after masterpieces ourselves at a tiny fraction of the cost. We used to call them Municipals. In fact there could be a whole new opening in the States for some of those dire old Head Greenkeepers we sometimes used to

produce back in the 60s who could take several hundred acres of pristine golfing turf and through a concerted lack of effort, a complete vacuum of any knowledge whatsoever on any subject especially turf management and aided only by the consumption of many thousands of bottles of whisky, transform it into the roughest bit of golf course you could find.

I also predict that one day in the future; teams of psychiatrists will solve two of the greatest mysteries known to man. Why is it only one woman golfer is allowed on to a tee at any one time. If you do not believe me, then watch them yourselves. It does not matter how far they have to walk; they will all wait patiently next to the tee while one of their number whacks it away. Only when she has driven does the next lady golfer make her painfully deliberate way onto the tee ready for her 50 yards of power thrust. This has been of great puzzlement to me over many years and to this day I have never found a satisfactory explanation.

Of equal mystification to me is the question as to why at all member's golf clubs throughout this country, there are deranged individuals who will insist on playing every day whatever the weather. Only recently I spotted two such pathetic creatures coming up the 9th hole in what could only be described as a violent storm. As they came off the green I felt a certain sympathy for them that was only tempered with the thought that at least they were near to the sanctuary of the clubhouse. This sympathy was however quickly replaced with feelings of utter incredulity as they walked straight onto the 10th tee and in monsoon rain and a hurricane strength winds the first of them attempted to hit a drive towards the flooded fairway. I was surprised that he managed a good 100 yards with his spasmodic convulsion of a golf swing but then it

was the club that was flying through the air and not the ball.

Irrigation systems my astronomical charts tell me will be a thing of the past in the golf course of the 21st century. Instead of computer controlled, satellite linked, two wire systems complete with dodgy decoders and permanently jammed valve in head pop-ups, we will have a system that will consist of a storage facility, a couple of man size pumps and a hydrant point at the back of each green. Irrigation of the turf will then be carried out by greenkeepers with hose pipes either late in the evening or early in the morning. You may believe me to have finally taken a permanent vacation from the land of sanity but I promise you, in most cases this method is a considerably more cost effective and efficient way of getting water to the areas that require it.

That is not to say I am some sort of degenerate old luddite suspicious of all advances in technology as I am a great supporter of those radio controlled hand sets that enable the modern greenkeeper to activate an irrigation station while at the furthest reaches of the golf course. I strongly recommend to all of you to get them in your budgets as soon as you can hoodwink the committee. It is not for their use in checking the system or in applying additional water when out mowing the greens in the morning, although these reasons could be the ones given to the committee when trying to persuade them to come up with the necessary readies for the purchase of these marvellous little inventions. No, the real benefit these hand sets have for today's greenkeeper is that you can inflict punishment on the members in the form of a cold water dousing at distances of anything up to a mile away.

I once had the greatest of pleasure in carrying out this specialised form of discipline to one of those spoilt

junior members who are about as likely to repair a pitch mark as they are to put their never ending supply of empty coke cans in the bins provided. What I did was wait until he was towards the end of his round of golf so as to destroy any chance of a good score he had going and then just as he walked onto the green let him have it with all five pop-ups. He then ran for cover at which point I put them down again only to repeat his soaking each time he ventured back onto the green. Then when he finally gave up I got him on the next tee. But the piece de la resistance was when he approached the following green. Early reconnaissance revealed the aim of the approach sprinklers still set in the ground and then and with perfect timing, just as he passed the carefully selected spot I was able to get him with the full 10 bars worth.

It is this sort of tireless work that can give us a real sense of achievement so critical if we are to carry out our jobs to the best of our abilities. Do not worry if the recipient of your efforts runs off complaining to the secretary, as we now have at our disposal the classic line "I knew that computer wasn't right since the millennium bug."

I also predict that the PC will take on an increasing significance within our industry, to the point where anyone wanting to aspire to the dizzy heights of Head Greenkeepership will have to be highly proficient in its use. It is not that we need them to create courses in great condition, it is just that failure to embrace them will result in a severe lowering of respect from the punters who pay our wages. Gone are the days when we could hand write the annual budget on an oil stained bit of A4. Computer generated spreadsheet format; complete with 3D bar charts is

what they have already come to expect.

The Internet will become increasingly influential in our jobs as both a product-purchasing tool and as a way of sharing information on the latest technological advances. Manufacturers and supply companies may view this to be a welcome addition to their selling armoury but they had better beware as we would then have the ability of not telling ten of our colleagues about shoddy service but 10,000.

As we become more expert in the use of the computer I do believe that we greenkeepers will more and more be offered the job of Golf Club Managers. This has already begun to happen as it becomes obvious to the powers that be that employing us for overall control makes a great deal of sense when it comes to streamlining the management.

We are already controlling our own finances and are rapidly learning the art of negotiation and communication, so it would appear utterly logical to put us in overall charge of the entire establishment. The Professional Golfers have aspired to this and with some success but there is a conflict of interest in employing them as they still have to spend most of their time giving lessons and selling equipment in the shop. Retraining of the Secretaries may also be an option but have you ever heard of one willing to learn everything there is to know about greenkeeping, including how to change the oil on a tractor or

clear out a drainage ditch. I think not. So I believe the door is well and truly open for anyone out there willing to go down this particular road.

Wishful thinking though it maybe I do hope that I will one day come to work and not be asked, "What's the weather going to do today?" by all and sundry. It's not that I mind being asked this, it's just that it seems to infer that as a somewhat simple person of the land I have a kind of sixth sense built into my meagre brain.

Then there is the line they come up with on a regular basis during the summer when we are attempting a little bit of drought stress on the greens in an effort to reduce the shallow rooting poa annua. "You'll lose them," they say. Admittedly it is usually heard when it looks like we have been mowing the greens with a flame thrower but it always conjures up thoughts of arriving at work one day only to find that due to our provident watering techniques all the greens have completely vanished, presumably along with greenside bunkers.

Health and safety within the workplace has quite rightly taken on a greater and greater significance in our jobs and I can see no sign of this trend changing. It started with COSHH assessments, and then risk assessments, and then workplace assessments. Somewhat surprisingly we have never been asked to perform an assessment on the most dangerous of all objects to be seen on a golf course, the golfers themselves.

Then there has been the equally important green movement. Once again we will be travelling much fur-

ther along this path in the next century. In fact if we take both the green movement and the health and safety trends to their logical conclusion we could end up with the organic golf course. Horse drawn gang mowers could in many cases replace those toxin producing tools of mass destruction that we use to cut the grass. All pesticides would be banned and all fertilisers could be based on the composted by-products of farmyard animals. I may have convinced you that I am now in the latter stages of senile dementia or you may believe my predictions with just a few minor adjustments are a genuine possibility. After all, we are already using organic fertilisers to a greater extent and we all know the less pesticides we use the greater the plant diversity we encourage. Certainly it would be quite a PR exercise for our industry.

This brings me back to my first point about following the lead from across the Atlantic. Maybe it is time we took the initiative and took golf into the next millennium ourselves. But before you all rush off and replace your mechanic with a vet, may I wish everyone who works in greenkeeping best wishes for the future and here's to a happy and prosperous next 1,000 years.

Sandy McDivot, Head Greenkeeper, Sludgecombe Pay and Play.



Feature listing from December '97

January '98: FEGGA Conference; Buying Power Equipment; Elmwood GC; Mobile Phones; Traffic Management; Spraying; Environment

February '98: BTME Review; Overseeding; Royal Mid Surrey GC; Drainage; Thatch

March '98: Trees, Golf Course Accessories, News from GCSAA, Leamington & County GC, Trevor Smith's BTME Talk

April '98: Gleneagles Hotel, Compact Tractors, Environment, Protective clothing, Rain bird, Internet

May '98: Greens Mowers, Suspended Water Table Greens, Seeds, Letham Grange Resort, Charterhouse profile, Security and BIGGA's Fund Raising Campaign

June '98: Interview with Nick Park, Earthworm special, ATVs, Royal Porthcawl, Grinding

July '98: Aeration, Royal Birkdale preview, The importance of research, Architecture

August '98: Mill Ride, Fescue, Blowers, Textron, Open Review, Nematodes, Training

September '98: Nine holers - Tolladine and Fingle Glen, Turf, Steve Clement profile, Drainage, World Scientific Congress report

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

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

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

January '99: Pesticide Usage, Life in Colorado, Lyschott 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



A wealth of experience



In November I visited Mentmore Golf & Country Club for the Midlands Region Seminar, which was the last for Peter Larter who is leaving his post as Midland Administrator, to manage a family business. Peter has been a very popular man who has worked hard for the Region and will be badly missed. The seminar was very good and well organised. My only problem was getting home after. I ran into train congestion, having to pass by Wembley at the same time as the Scots were trying to get there for the match with England.

The following week I attended the FEGGA Conference in Fuengirola, Spain, which started slowly but came to life on the second day with Jonathan Smith's presentation on the Ecology Charter for golf clubs in Scotland. This was followed by a report given by Joe Bedford, as a FEGGA observer, on the Committed to Green Conference held the week before at Valderrama. The report provoked a long discussion as FEGGA had been asked to endorse the Valderrama Declaration on Committed to Green. All 22 member Associations firmly rejected any endorsement on the following grounds.

1) There were no European Greenkeepers invited to take part in the programme despite the fact greenkeepers are the ones who will implement any such agreement.

2) The whole programme was American-dominated with many Superintendents taking part as if the same laws of the land apply here as in the States.

3) We were suspicious of the real motives of running Committed to Green.

Greenkeepers in the UK have a long history of concern and involvement in conservation on our courses and we don't need some jumped up do gooders telling us what to do. We have men like Bob Taylor, from the STRI, and Jonathan Smith, of the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Trust, to give us all the guidance we need and within the appropriate laws.

This is my last column as your Chairman before handing over to Elliot at the AGM. It has been a wonderful experience for me, meeting and talking to so many members and friends on my trips around the country. But one occasion stands out for so many reasons, that was the opening of BIGGA HOUSE. It was my most nervous time for introducing His Royal Highness The Duke of York. It was also very fitting to have Viscount Whitelaw, our President for ten years, there for the last time and Sir Michael Bonallack, who we had already approached to take over when he was able to say a few words. It was a day we had waited for and we at last had somewhere to call home. The home of greenkeeping in the United Kingdom where we could all meet and our staff could work in pleasant surroundings.

There are so many other occasions that will live with me forever. The Thanksgiving Service for Viscount Whitelaw in London, the peace mission to Ireland to meet Iain, Joe and Tracy from the GCSAI with Elliot and Neil, which ended with both sides on very friendly terms, the keynote speech of Frank Dick OBE at the BTME 99. I had never seen so many greenkeepers transfixed for so long. There was the Hayter International Cup in Atlanta, and for

those who took part I am sure it will be remembered for a very long time.

It was great to meet our Canadian friends and cement the relationship between the two Associations. All these occasions were very moving experiences and I will always look back with pride and enjoyment on the many trips representing the Association.

I would like to thank you all for the way you welcomed me at events around the regions and for giving me the opportunity to be your Chairman. My grateful thanks to all our staff, they have worked hard to put greenkeepers where we are today and on a personal note, for all the help and support they have given me throughout my two years. Finally, to my wife Marion who has put up with all my travelling and for doing all my typing and office work.

I have just been given the sad news that a dear friend, Harry Diamond, has passed away. Harry was a highly respected man, golfer and greenkeeper. He served on the National Board up to 1996 and sat on the Review Body, representing Scotland, which reformed the Constitution and Rules of BIGGA in 1995/96. There are many who will have known Harry longer than me, particularly in Scotland, and they don't need me to tell them of his qualities. He was larger than life and a good friend who will be missed by all who knew him. All our sympathy at this time must be with Jess, his wife and family for their sad loss.

It is a sad note on which to end my final column, but that was Harry, he always wanted the last word.

Gordon Child
BIGGA Chairman

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