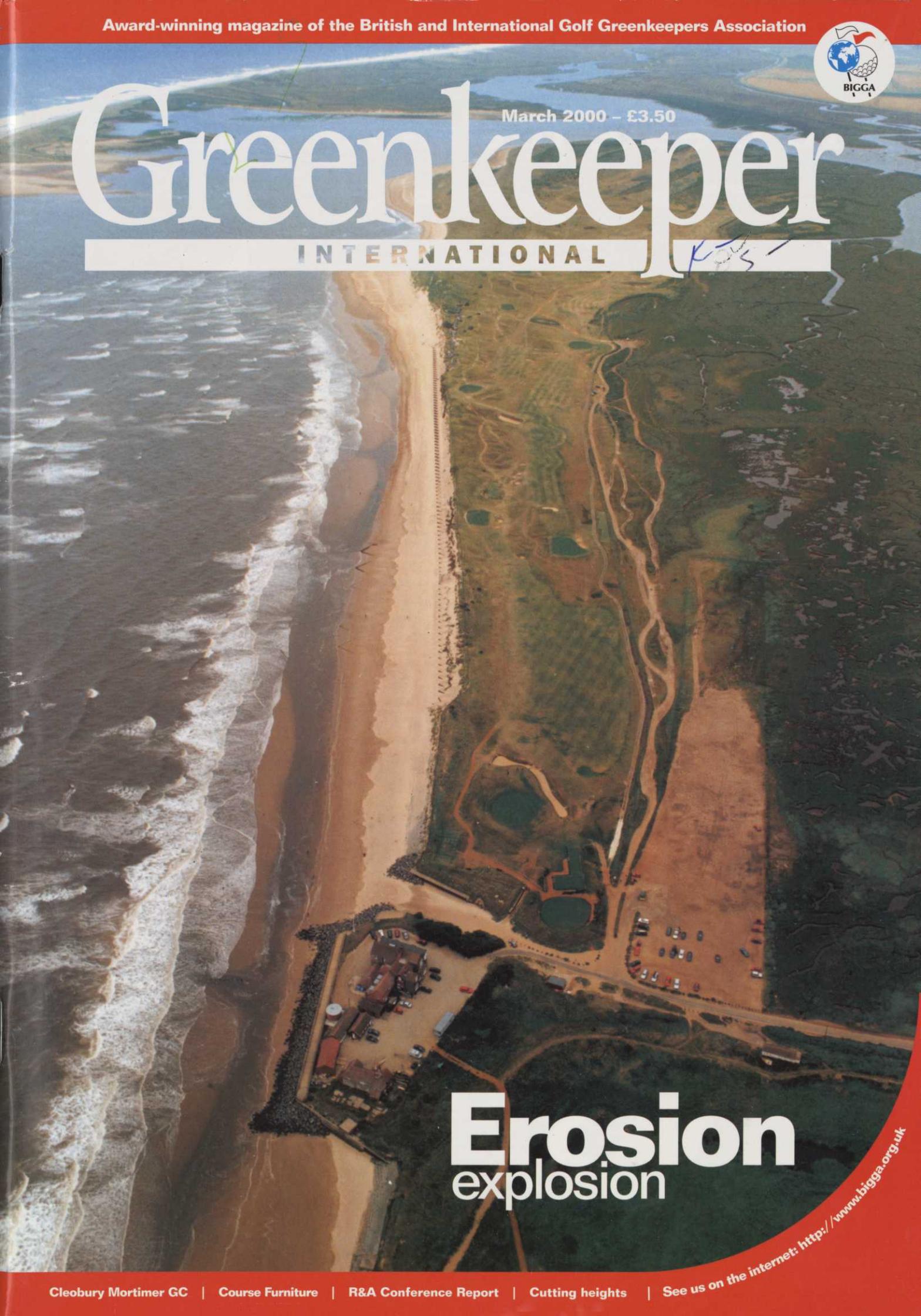




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The Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, please contact BIGGA on 01347 833800



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March 2000

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by April 6, 2000

Regulars

News

Pages 7, 8, 9 and 10

12 New Products

13 Letters

15 The Learning Experience

Scott Kinkead, presents a timely view of recent developments in top dressing

18 Education

Ken Richardson outlines the year's major competitions

20 Membership Update

20 Finance File

Trevor Downing illustrates the importance of investments.

30 Time Waster?

Brin Bendon launches a new series aimed at improving your skills off the golf course

42-48 Around the Green

64 Talking Heads

Course Closures

82 Features Listing

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

82 As I see it...

Elliott Small continues to settle into the role of Chairman with a visit to St Andrews



82 As I see it...



75 Win £50 with our Buyers' Guide quiz

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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

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Reader Reply Card

Advertiser	Ad ref	Page
Advanta Seeds	647	5
Allen Power	126	26, 32
Allen Power	126	35, 54
Amenity Land Services	408	73
Amenity Technology	431	84
Andreas Stihl Ltd	230	29
Aventis	59	59
Barenbrug UK Ltd	172	41
Bernhard & Co	535	17
Biocseed	613	70
Boyd Golf	649	54
British Seed Houses	87	54
Charterhouse	130	46-47
Eagle Promotions	549	53
Envigo	582	83
Even Products	609	41
Flowtronex	610	37
Golf Car UK Ltd	583	66
Golf Turf International	655	32
Greensward Engineering Ltd	312	66
Hi-Chem UK	638	11
Humate International	656	48
ING Turfcare	639	38
Inturf	31	61
John Deere	103	19
Kawasaki	544	37
Kubota (UK) Ltd	86	6
Lely UK	61	44-45
Lindum Seeded Turf Ltd	38	66
Marlwood	501	42-43
Motorkov	658	70
North Staffs Irrig.	217	26
Perryfields	551	62-63
Pittland Technology	189	66
Richard Campey	496	54
Rigby Taylor	127	2, 49, 74
Scotts	161	21
Sisis Equipment	176	22
Sovereign Turf	435	38
Stihl	230	29
Textron	646	14
UAP Amenity	659	38
Weed Free	504	61
Westurf	-	70

Water, water everywhere?

It has often been said, and is again later in this issue, that water will shortly become our most valuable asset. The repercussions for golf when this happens will be great.

I was interested, therefore, to stumble across the latest issue of Environment Action, the official publication of the Environment Agency, which devoted its centre spread to the subject of water and water conservation. It made some interesting reading and, while not directly mentioning golf, offered up some information that may be of interest to more than a few of you.

Apparently there are 48,000 licensed river and underground abstractions in England and Wales alone but there are changes proposed in the licensing system to help ensure that authorisations contribute to the sustainable management of water resources. Included in these proposed changes are that all new authorisations will be time-limited and existing licences will be converted to time-limited status while in cases where abstractions are shown to be causing environmental damage the licence could be revoked.

Another proposal is that from July 1, 2012, the right to compensation will be ended for losses arising from the revocation of an abstraction licence.

Obviously that is more than 10 years down the line but the message is clear. A licenced borehole may not be the indefinite answer to all your irrigation prayers and, with probable strict monitoring of water use, sensible policies will have to be in place to keep the water police at bay.

But that starts with domestic use and the same Environment Action feature lists some interesting facts about water wastage and how we can all help.

For example, if everyone in the UK took a shower instead of a bath we would collectively save as much water as it would take to fill Wembley 10 times over; also if everyone in the UK turned off the tap when they brushed their teeth we would save as much water in a week as it would take to fill the Millennium Dome and the fact that a third of all water used in the home is flushed down the toilet.

Other, more obscure information, includes, the fact, and I'm sure the Environment Agency is not advocating that we try, that a person can survive without food for more than 30 days but less than a week without water, while a camel can do without water for up to 17 days and an astronaut needs only 2.9 litres of water a day.

I'm indebted to Environment Action for this information as it highlights what we can all do to help the situation while also sounding the alarm bells for the future of our industry.

We must find a way of using less water to maintain our golf courses before restrictions are imposed on us not after.

Golf is an easy target and if it is a choice of holding greens or a hot, deep bubble bath I'm pretty sure I know what would win the nation's vote.



Editor:
Scott MacCallum

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

Features

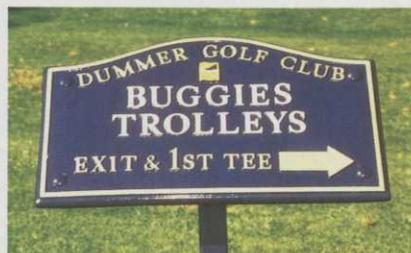
- 23 Pastures New**
Graham and Robert Pain have turned Cleobury Mortimer into a fine 27 hole complex as Scott MacCallum found out
- 27 Lessons Learned**
Joe Bedford and Dean Cleaver, of FEGGA, put forward the Federation's views on Committed to Green
- 33 On Course for Change**
John Lelean reports from the R&A Conference
- 39 A Fine Crop**
Scott MacCallum visits Avoncrop, BIGGA's latest Golden Key Supporter
- 50 Finishing touches**
Roland Taylor looks at the latest trends in golf course furniture
- 55 Valderrama Adventure**
Jason Taylor, of the London Club, reports on his experiences working at Valderrama during the recent World Championship event
- 60 BIGGA Essay Competition**
The winning entry of the over 25 Category Essay Competition
- 67 A Close Shave**
Noel MacKenzie of the STRI discusses the intricacies of cutting your turf to the correct height
- 71 Welcome to Westurf**
Paul Jenkins gets everyone ready for next month's Westurf Exhibition



33 On Course for Change
This month's cover features a stunning aerial photograph illustrating the scale of coastal erosion at Brancaster GC



67 A Close Shave



50 Finishing Touches



For top flight
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If you are looking for top flight grass seed mixtures then get right on course with the MM Range. Whether its greens, tees or fairways we have exactly the right mixture – with none of the handicaps associated with lesser brands!

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“What do I think about our Kubota Grandels? Well, let's just say I drive them myself.”

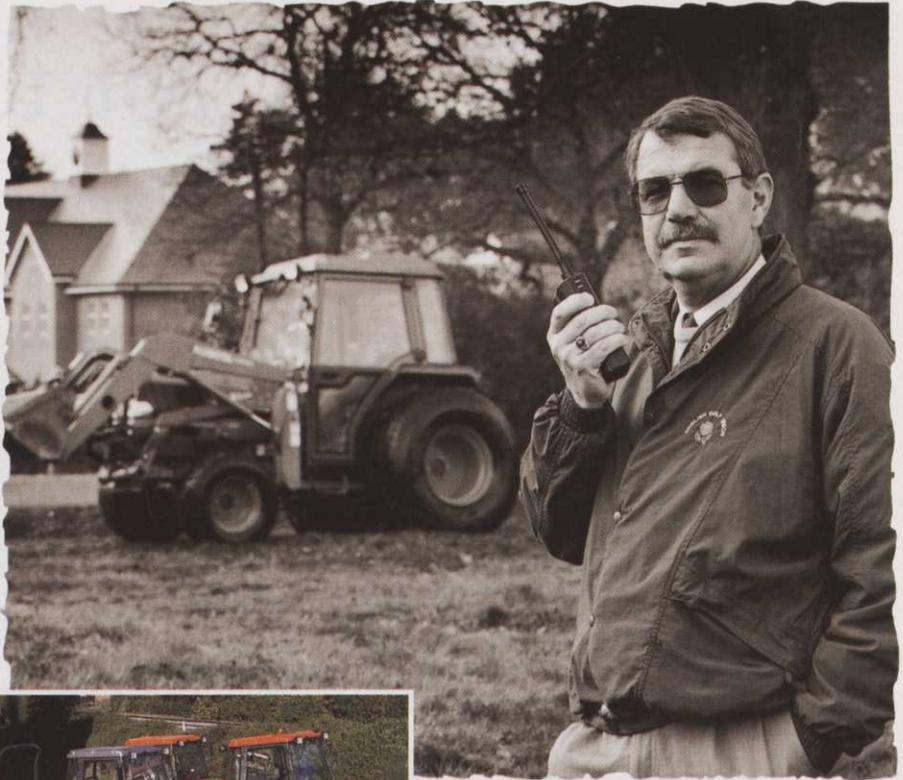
“I bought my first Kubota tractor more than fifteen years ago, and I've relied on Kubota ever since – in Britain and overseas. But I'm particularly pleased with the new Kubota Grandel L4200s we're using at Woodhall Spa.

With 36 holes and an extensive golfing academy to maintain, we need tractors that can work ten hours a day. And these do. They haven't let us down.

The Kubota Grandels give us the power – 45 hp – we need for rough cutting, digging and loading. But they're not too heavy for the tees and the greens. And the gear ratios are perfectly spaced for every job on the course – from mowing to spiking and scarifying.

What's more, the staff enjoy working with them. They are quiet and comfortable with good all-round visibility. So much so that you'll find everyone volunteering for grass-cutting, leaf collecting and loading.

What do I think about our Kubota Grandels? Well, let's just say I drive them myself. ”



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



The Grandel Range: L3300, L3600, L4200

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Ad Ref 86

NEW L4200 HST model available JULY

Slaley Hall receive Deere delivery



One of the leading golf courses in England, Slaley Hall in Hexham, has recently expanded its John Deere equipment fleet for use on the championship Hunting course and the new Priestman course opened in April 1999.

An additional 15 machines have been purchased, worth around £190,000. This brings the total value of John Deere equipment bought since 1995 to nearly £400,000.

The equipment was supplied by local

John Deere dealer Greenlay Ltd of Choppington, Northumberland. This is one of Greenlay's biggest ever sales to a golf course, according to dealer principal David Lowes, and also makes Slaley Hall one of John Deere's biggest golf course clients in the UK and Ireland.

Slaley Hall's latest machines include the new 2500 triplex and 220A walk-behind greens mowers, additional 2653 utility tees mowers, 3235A fair-

ways mowers and Gator 6x4 utility vehicles, plus a tractor mounted model 1500 Aercore aerator and a front mounted FI 145 rotary mower.

"During the winter the diesel Gator utility vehicles work non-stop, and the rest of the year the fairway mowers in particular are running all the time to keep on top of the grass," says Course Manager Steve Cram, who manages a team of 11 greenkeeping staff and two full-time mechanics.

Textron goes for gold with new warranty scheme

Textron Turf Care has launched Textron Gold, a new three-year warranty scheme with major customer benefits. Part One of this new scheme applies to all new Textron-supplied machines and is an extension of the manufacturer's original twelve-month warranty for a further two years.

There are no excess payments but the machine must be maintained using only genuine parts and the annual winter service has to be undertaken by an authorised Textron dealer. Standard exclusions apply to Part One and include normal wear and tear, contamination of the hydraulic system, ingress of foreign material and impact damage.

Part Two provides additional cover to that detailed above and includes the following:

- Hire of replacement machine if the covered machine is out of action for 48 hours.

- Accidental damage caused to the machine including impact damage and malicious damage to the machine.

- Damage caused by contamination of the hydraulic system and ingress of foreign material.

Part Two is subject to a £100 excess per claim and is bound by the same servicing and parts conditions that apply to Part One. Full details are available from Textron's Sales Department on 01473 27000

New scheme from British Seed Houses

Turfgrass professionals trading with British Seed Houses throughout 2000 can now benefit from a new 'Grade A' training and educational credit scheme supported by BIGGA, IOG, STRI and LANTRA.

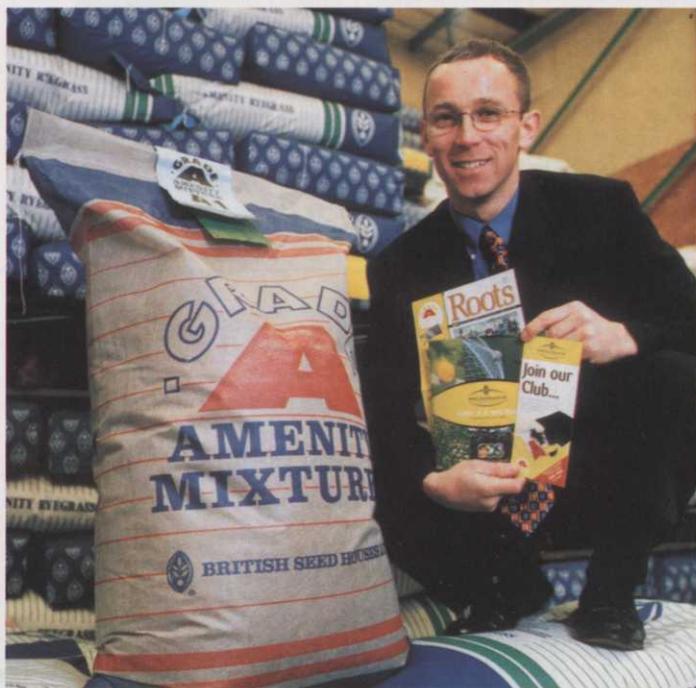
Designed to encourage continuing high standards of turfgrass industry professionalism, the training credit scheme (TCS) is the key benefit on offer to customers joining the new British Seed Houses Grade A Club.

Club members also gain exclusive access to new cultivar developments coming out of the UK's only amenity grass breeding programme at the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER).

Discount on a new IGER soil testing service and regular technical updates are also part of the Grade A Club membership package.

Grade A Club members build up credit points that can be redeemed for discount off the price of training courses and materials available from BIGGA, IOG, STRI and LANTRA. The level of discount is related to the value of Grade A seed mixture business done with the company, although customers purchasing the Avalon and Providence cultivars – and the British Seed Houses' compound granular fertilisers – also qualify for credit points.

Speaking at BTME 2000, British



Seed Houses director Simon Taylor said that joining the Grade A Club offered greenkeepers, grounds managers, landscape contractors and turf growers a superb opportunity to secure extra value from their ongoing relationship with the company.

"Forging a long-term relationship with our customers is a priority and to achieve this objective we recognise that we need to offer much more than simply high quality seed and advice under our 'Seeds, Service, Solutions' banner," he said.

Stuart gets technical at Lindum



Stuart Green has joined Lindum Seeded Turf as technical advisor for Lindum Plant Nutrition. Latterly with the golf maintenance section at Gleneagles, Stuart began his working life as a greenkeeper at Bushey Hall Golf Club, Watford, before taking his H.N.D. in golf course management at Reaseheath college. During his course, Stuart received the Gleneagles Award for Excellence in Golf, while enjoying a work placement at the famous club returning once he qualified.

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

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



Name: Graeme Ferguson

Club: Duddingston GC

Position: Second Assistant

Age: 25

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

2. What education are you currently undertaking?
HNC at Oatridge College

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

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

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

6. Who has been the biggest influence on your career?
The late William Shepherd, Royal Musselburgh

7. What would you do to improve the life of a greenkeeper?
To try to make BIGGA a Union (trade recognised)

8. What are your hobbies?
Golf

9. What do you get out of BIGGA?
Meeting different people from different areas

10. What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?
Course Manager



Slow Play can be a real menace as the third member of this threeball learned to his cost. Ably supported by Pat Allan, of Stewarts, and Ronnie Bunting, of Kilmacolm, our friend came off worst during a round at the magnificent Elie Links, in Fife.

Helen achieves success with Symbio

Symbio's new MycoForce range of mycorrhizal inoculants has been granted Millennium Product status. The news was announced by the Prime Minister at the launch of the fifth tranche of the Millennium Products Initiative, attended by Symbio's management and research team at the Millennium Dome and the MycoForce range will take its place in the Spiral of Innovation in the Dome.

The Symbio MycoForce range, developed during four years of academic research and field trials, uses the power of natural mycorrhizal fungi and rhizobacteria to assist virtually all plants to grow using much less fertiliser.

Mycorrhizal plants are also more disease and draught resistant thus

reducing the need for fungicides, ancillary chemicals and water.

"After nearly ten years pioneering the biological approach to sports turf management in Europe, I am delighted for our hardworking, innovative research team and our technical advisors that we have been honoured and included in the Millennium Dome," said Martin Ward, Symbio's Managing Director.

Symbio enter the new year with great confidence following a year in which the new MycoForce range was voted as a finalist in the Horticulture Week/Mercurius best new grower product of the year awards, and Helen Wakerley was voted runner-up in their Young Achiever of the Year Award for her research work on the MycoForce Project.



New ecology title from STRI

"Nest Boxes for Birds and Mammals" is the second book in Bob Taylor's ecology series -Studies in Golf Course Management. This new title covers a range of box types suitable for encouraging roosting, sleeping and hibernation in a variety of bird species and mammals, including badgers, bats and hedgehogs.

Written in four sections, the new 74 page book is very much a 'how to' practical guide for nest box construction. It takes the reader through an easy to follow series of 19 types of box all illustrated by excellent drawings and diagrams, which enable even the most inexperienced to tackle some of the simpler designs. Text, which outlines construction details, siting of the boxes, sustainability, maintenance

and management of wildlife conservation, accompanies each drawing.

Although the book forms part of the ecology series for Studies in Golf Course Management and was written in response to the needs of golf course manager and greenkeepers wishing to enhance the wildlife potential of their course, the new book is equally suitable for anyone keen to encourage native bird and mammal populations. Including amenity turf users, parks, recreational and leisure areas and schools. Copies of "Nest Boxes for Birds and Mammals" priced at £7.50 plus £3.00 postage and packing are available direct from the STRI's mail-order specialist book service "Turfgrass Titles of the World". Please contact Margaret Richards 01274 518908.

Philip named as BTLIA Personality of the Year

Philip York was named BTLIA Personality of the Year during BTME.

The annual award presented by BTLIA Chairman Tim Hooper acknowledged Philip's personal contribution - made over a period of many years promoting the fine turf irrigation industry.

John Shildrick Memorial (Educational) Awards were presented to the BIGCA and Warwick College.

Tim Hooper also presented Merits Awards to MJ Abbot Ltd and Irriturf.

Toro sign three year deal with Marriott

Toro Company has agreed a new three-year partnership agreement with Marriott Hotels in the UK, part of The Whitbread Hotel Company. The new deal is worth about another £1 million over the period and also covers tournament support.

It means that Toro will continue as exclusive suppliers of golf course turf machinery at all 10 Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs in the United Kingdom. Toro won the original multi-million pound deal two years ago, for a two-year term, after beating off stiff competition from three worldwide competitors.

The Whitbread Hotel Company's group golf and leisure operations manager Paul Marlow, and Toro's European sales manager Bob Buckingham, signed the agreement at the Marriott St Pierre Hotel Golf and Country Club, near Chepstow, Monmouthshire.

The golf development consultant for Marriott Hotels, Steve Clement, who has been heavily involved in setting up and running the partnership initiative, said, "This has been a very good partnering agreement. A good deal of effort has been put in with indi-



vidual Course Managers and myself and we're very happy with how the whole thing has been administered.

The distributors Lely UK and their dealers have looked after us very well, and the equipment has been first rate."

Farmura to distribute Alginure

Farmura has acquired the marketing and distribution rights for the Alginure range of products following restructuring of the Comtec Group.

"We welcome the opportunity to add these market leading seaweed based products to our range. This will further enhance our position in the market as the leading supplier of organic and environmental products," said Managing Director Jonathan Harmer.

Nick Simpson, the retiring Managing Director of Alginure will be remaining as Consultant to ensure future development and growth of the Alginure range both in the UK and overseas.

Neil moves to Weed Free

Neil Lowther, 36, formerly deputy Head Greenkeeper at The London Golf Club, has joined Weed Free Professional Services.

Over four years experience at the prestigious club has given Neil a thorough knowledge of the technical turf management of both a traditional links style course and one built to a typical American design.

Neil's previous employment in the agricultural contracting business has given him the ability to operate heavy machinery with confidence and he is looking forward to receiving a brand new 1,000 litre tank Spraying Mantis. Based in Kent, Neil will manage contracts for the company from East Sussex, North to East London, Essex and beyond, leaving the recently appointed Ray McClatchie, Surrey, Berks., Bucks., Herts., Hants., and Oxon.

Speedy Kevin lands new role



Speedcut Contractors has appointed Kevin Smith as Contracts Manager. He has joined the Company after nearly 16 years with White Horse Contractors, and brings with him 22 years experience in construction drainage and renovation of golf, sports and amenity areas. His appointment will strengthen the Company's team and enable them to offer a professional service for a full range of activities.

Tacit's Tim offers new shopping service on Webb

Tacit has joined Tesco and Amazon in launching its own internet shopping site on www.tacitgolf.com

"It is easy to browse the site, select the products you wish to order from the regularly updated catalogue and place them in the Tacit shopping basket. Current prices appearing next to the products. As products are put into the shopping basket a running total appears letting you know your spending as you go along," said Tacit's Tim Webb.

"A 'Basket' of goods can be produced allowing the greenkeeper to budget for the year without the order being sent and a hard copy can be then printed out for future reference by the Greenkeeper and Committee alike. The order can then be stored and transmitted when authorisation from the relevant authority has been obtained," he added

Tacit's online shopping service and online catalogue is believed to be the first of its kind in the greenkeeping world and points the way for this millennium.

Economy Tee Markers (Solid Ball)

Great value and performance. Tacit tuffex tee markers offer a solid, durable and vandal resistant marker at an exceptional price.

- Made to withstand really tough treatment
- Smart economical golf ball design
- Solid ball
- Will not chip

Product	Ref	Price	QTY
Plain White	0020	£5.00	<input type="text"/>
Plain Yellow	0025	£5.00	<input type="text"/>
Plain Red	0027	£5.00	<input type="text"/>
Plain Blue	0028	£5.00	<input type="text"/>

particularly suited to removing debris that prevents the normal function of soft spikes.

- Cleans the bottom and sides of your shoes simultaneously
- Slatted design allows debris to fall away
- All brushes easily replaced (replacement brush set)
- Rugged construction allows the user to lean on the cleaner whilst brushing shoes

Product	Ref	Price	QTY
U-Boot Shoe Cleaner	0085	£90.00	<input type="text"/>
Full Replacement Brush Set (set of 4)	0086	£48.00	<input type="text"/>
Bottom Replacement Brush Set (set of 3)	0087	£28.00	<input type="text"/>
Side Replacement Brush Set (set of 4)	0088	£20.00	<input type="text"/>



Andy evaluates his new role at Sisis



Sisis Demonstrator, Andy Walker, has been appointed Product Evaluation Manager.

He will be responsible for testing all future new products and improvements to existing machines, to achieve the best possible design. He will continue to do some demonstrating to keep in close contact with the end user.

Andy started his career with Sisis in 1976 as an apprentice engineer, later moving to the Development Department, building prototypes. Eleven years ago he transferred to the sales team as a Demonstrator and has travelled the world putting the Sisis range through its paces.

Announcing Aventis Environmental Science

Aventis Environmental Science started trading on January 4, 2000. The company consists of five core businesses in which the turf and amenity business plays a leading role.

It was formed from a merger of Rhone-Poulenc Amenity and Agrevo in the UK. Worldwide, Aventis has over 90,000 staff in 140 countries and is a new global leader in life sciences.

"This merger means many exciting developments in the turf and amenity sector and we look forward to sharing these developments with our customers in 2000.

Aventis Environmental Science will be the leading customer and innovation driven turf and amenity Business. We will offer people an improved greener environment and quality of life. We aim to provide customers with the best innovative and ethically sound products and services," said John Hall, Market Development Manager.

"Our 'number one' fungicide, Rovral Green, has been found to be harmless to beneficial turf fungi (mycorrhiza) while still being as effective against pathogenic species (such as Fusarium and Red Thread), which leads to added benefits, such as increased resistance to drought, pests and diseases," he said.

Aventis's new interactive CD-Rom version of the Aventis Technical Manual, was demonstrated on their stand at BTME.

Dreams Come True for superfit Peter

Superfit Peter Montague, Head Greenkeeper at Belhus Park in Essex, is quite a guy.

When he crosses the line in the London Marathon in April he will have completed the 26.2 mile distance for the 50th time - a total running distance of over 1300 miles... and he will be doing so while pushing a six foot tall rabbit in a wheel-chair.

"I know greenkeepers often have problems with rabbits but this isn't a run of the mill problem," he joked.

Peter has a best time for the famous distance of three hours ten minutes - not pushing a rabbit I might add - and has run in some of the world's most famous city marathons.

"I started in '85 and my running has taken me all over the country and often abroad including New York, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Barcelona, Lisbon, Munich, Berlin, Amsterdam, Malta and Dublin," he said.

"I have met a great circle of friends during all my running and we have a healthy social side which is very important," he added, no doubt with the emphasis on the "healthy".

The beneficiaries of Peter's running have been the Dreams Come True Charity which helps, literally, to make the dreams of terminally ill children come true.

"Children can visit Disneyland or meet their favourite celebrity and every penny raised goes directly to the children," explained Peter.

Anyone wishing to sponsor Peter on his 50th Marathon for the Dreams Come True Charity can contact him on one of the following numbers: 01708 852316; 01375 481176 or 0467 475946.



Awards galore at annual Hayter Dinner



The annual Hayter dealer dinner on the eve of BTME is always a popular event and this year was no exception. Together with the company's UK dealers many overseas dealers were present and represented countries including, France, Germany, Holland, Sweden and Norway. Guests from the Golf Greenkeepers associations in Canada, U.S.A., Germany and, of course, BIGGA were also present to enjoy a pleasant evening. The awards presented were: Export Dealer of the Year: Arie Molenaar of Voets in Holland. Top Dealer for 1999: George Brown Implements. Pictured is Chris Brown receiving, on behalf of his hard working staff, the award from Chris Gibson of G.M.S., last years winner. Outstanding Dealer for 1999: "Monty" Davis of Major R. Owen. Pictured is Monty receiving his prize from last years winner, Steve George.

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Greenkeeper International rounds up the latest innovations in the fineturf, amenity and machinery product markets

Money-saving product from Chemlok Pro-mix



The Chemlok Pro-mix chemical induction system, designed and manufactured in the UK, has undergone a recent facelift and is now not only more compact but even more cost effective. The Chemlok Pro-mix is driven by clean water from a tap, an irrigation outlet or the system pressure on the sprayer. While the sprayer is being filled with clean water, the pesticide container is locked into the Chemlok valve to control the speed of flow of concentrate into the venturi, which mixes the product with the filling water. The measuring cylinder measures volumes in 25ml increments and there is a drum extraction upgrade for drums and IBCs of 20-1000 litres. Container adaptors are fitted with a foil cutter so you don't need to pierce the foil before you start work. After transferring the concentrate, the system power rinses the container completely clean, saving money on disposal costs. The Chemlok Pro-mix will handle any liquid or powder pre-mix from any manufacturer in any container from 1-1000 litres.

For further information
 Tel: 01932 269495.

Complete automation with a robot lawnmower!

Is this the shape of things to come? A robot cuts your fairways, greens and tees while you are free to undertake the tasks beyond the latest technology?

Husqvarna has won the prestigious Swedish Society of Crafts and Design award with the Auto Mower. From a total of 300 entries, the Auto Mower came first in its class and then went on to win the overall top prize.

The mower is a battery powered machine that operates silently and without any exhaust emissions. When it senses the need for a power boost it takes itself off to the charging station already installed in the garden.

A low voltage sensor cable, neatly buried around the edge of the lawn, lets the Auto Mower know where it is at all times and enables it to stay within the area to be cut. It can be programmed to operate between set hours to suit both the owner and the size of the lawn.

For further information Tel: 01453 822382



Increased productivity as John Deere casts a wider net

Designed for easy servicing and increased productivity on golf courses and in parks and public areas, the new John Deere 1600 wide area mower is the company's first commercial rotary machine to use hydraulic mower drive.

This incorporates an Eaton axial piston pump, which transfers power more efficiently compared with gear type pumps and motors, especially in tough working conditions.

John Deere's straightforward two pedal forward and reverse foot control combines with a three lever mower deck lift control for easy operation. Good traction is also provided by the two speed

transaxle with standard differential lock and mechanical four wheel drive on demand.

The centre deck will cut to a width of 1.57m with both wings raised, while with one wing raised the cutting width is 2.51m). The wing mowers automatically stop working when raised above 45 degrees, and overall transport width with the wings locked is 2.03m.

Each wing has a breakaway feature that allows the mower deck to move back and away from any obstacle, then automatically reset to the normal working position.

For further information Tel: 01949 860491



New TC21D helps to expand New Holland's range

The New Holland Series TC Compact Tractor range has been expanded by the arrival of the TC21 D. Designed and built with the traditional New Holland qualities of reliability and durability, the 4-wheel drive TC21 D will satisfy the needs of the most demanding customer with its advanced features. These include exceptional manoeuvrability, hydrostatic transmission option, high performance hydraulics and comfort and economy.

For further information Tel: 01268 292183



TC21D from New Holland



Address your letters to the Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Aine, York YO61 1UF. You can also fax them to 01347 833801, or email them to reception@bigga.co.uk

Vicar's Cross at Course Closures

Since becoming the Chairman of Course Management, at my club, I have read with interest a number of articles in "Greenkeeper International." While I appreciate that the magazine is directed at greenkeepers, I feel that there are some issues which relate to the wider internal politics of clubs, which could be of interest to your non greenkeeping readers.

One of my major headaches is the need to apply restrictions during the winter period in order to protect the course. Our course has a clay based sub-soil and the heavy rainfall which we have experienced over recent years has created great difficulties for us. Despite on-going drainage programmes over the last 35 years, there are still numerous occasions when it is necessary to close the course.

With these circumstances prevailing we have an annual policy for the pro-

tection of the course, mainly during the period December to February, although the actual period is dependent on the general playing conditions. This is done through the use of preferred lies or small synthetic mats for general play, a few winter tee mats and some restrictions on the use of trolleys and buggies.

Members are always made aware of these restrictions and the majority are both understanding and co-operative in complying with them. However, there is always an underlying feeling amongst a minority that somehow we are different from other clubs and that elsewhere members enjoy unrestricted golf all the year round! I know that this is not true but it would be extremely helpful if evidence was available to show this. Particularly useful would be information regarding the total banning of both pull

and electric trolleys during the winter period as this issue is by far the most controversial.

For this reason I am writing to ask you whether, through your magazine, it might be possible to carry out a survey of clubs in order to determine nationally, how clubs deal with this problem. We all tend to cope on an individual basis and therefore, in isolation. Mutual support and co-operation in providing this information would, I am sure, make this annual headache easier to manage.

John Baird, Chairman of Course Management, Vicars Cross Golf Club

Editor's Note

Anyone with information which may assist John should contact him at Vicar's Cross or utilise our Letters' Page to pass on any useful information

Check out this month's Talking Heads feature on page 64, where six of the country's top men explain how their courses cope with closure

Are we really Committed to Green?

I write as a greenkeeper, with strong environmental views. I am a keen promoter of environmental awareness and the sustainable and appropriate care of all our golf courses.

I am currently working as an assistant greenkeeper at Woodbury Park in Devon, where for the last six months we have begun several initiatives aimed at promoting and conserving various areas of natural habitat on and around the golf course.

Consequently, it was with great regret that I read your article on the 'Committed to Green' campaign (Jan 2000 issue).

How sad that as an industry we should fight so hard and for so long to break down what can be best described as archaic and unnecessary communication barriers within many of our golf clubs, only to see that the very organisations that are supposedly 'guiding' our industry towards a greener and more 'responsible' future cannot organise themselves to reach a full and fair agreement with regard to the future environmental management of our golf courses!

As an organisation, BIGGA has to be praised for the numerous campaigns and

initiatives it has launched and supported to improve environmental awareness. Not least the growing success of the BIGGA Environmental Awards, which for the last five years have served to illustrate just how committed as a profession greenkeeping is in working within sustainable and environmentally sound parameters. It seems so often that the many large committees and advisory bodies become alienated from those individuals who work tirelessly on a day-to-day basis to achieve more than can seemingly be gained after days of discussion and hot air!

All too often the best efforts of the enthusiasts are scuppered through both a lack of support and information on how best to set about a course of management. From its launch in 1997, the Committed to Green initiative appeared to be a very positive and worthwhile programme for the future but any initiative, no matter how promising is destined to fail without sufficient encouragement and support for those who are expected to carry out such guidelines at a grass roots level!

If the truth be known, there are in fact hundreds of individuals within our industry who are willing to become involved

in the longterm improvement of golf's image as regards the environment.

However if these voices are left unheard for much longer, both their enthusiasm and patience will run out. Let's face it, without the contribution and co-operation of greenkeepers, nothing will ever be achieved.

It is of utmost importance that all grievances be ironed out, everyone be consulted and that the industry as a whole can move towards a stable and sustainable future. We all have an opinion and a voice and we all deserve to be heard. The question must be asked: How will our industry ever improve its image if those who can make a difference, neglect to communicate or acknowledge those who are already working at a grass roots level to achieve what must be the common goal for all greenkeepers and individuals working within our industry? For any scheme to be successful it must have the full and comprehensive support of everyone involved within the industry.

A new decade, a new millennium, still the same age old problems!

William Bowden, Exmouth, Devon

Green issues from across the pond

As an outsider from the United States, and reading Greenkeeper International magazine over the last two issues, I would like to comment on how the Committed to Green issue appears from this side of the pond... in my view.

Beginning with Neil Thomas and Gordon Child's articles in the January issue I could feel their concern for the way the Valderrama Declaration with the Committed to Green Foundation went. This month I have read all the letters and the interview with David Stubbs titled "Green Issues".

Number One I get a bad feeling about David Stubbs' attitude and when I read comments like "Neil Thomas and Gordon Child gave a very distorted picture of the Committed to Green Programme" and his comments on American bias - "They were inaccurate and offensive". His comments point to a lack of communication skill somewhere along the road he took.

Secondly, I personally agree with Neil and Gordon on the fact of greenkeepers being on the ground floor. Every Superintendent (greenkeeper) here in the States that I know (including myself) has made the initial contact and sold the Audubon program to their clubs, not one I know of has been directed by a club official to do so. To start at the top with a trickle down effect to the person who is doing the work, and is truly concerned about the environment they work in and love so much, is putting the cart before the horse.

In my opinion as a greenkeeper, to have a club official shove something at you that you in your own way have already been silently working on for years without recognition, is the wrong approach.

Remember Mr Stubbs, Green starts at the ground and grows up not down.

WP Montague MG, Ohio, US via email



Flashback to January's issue

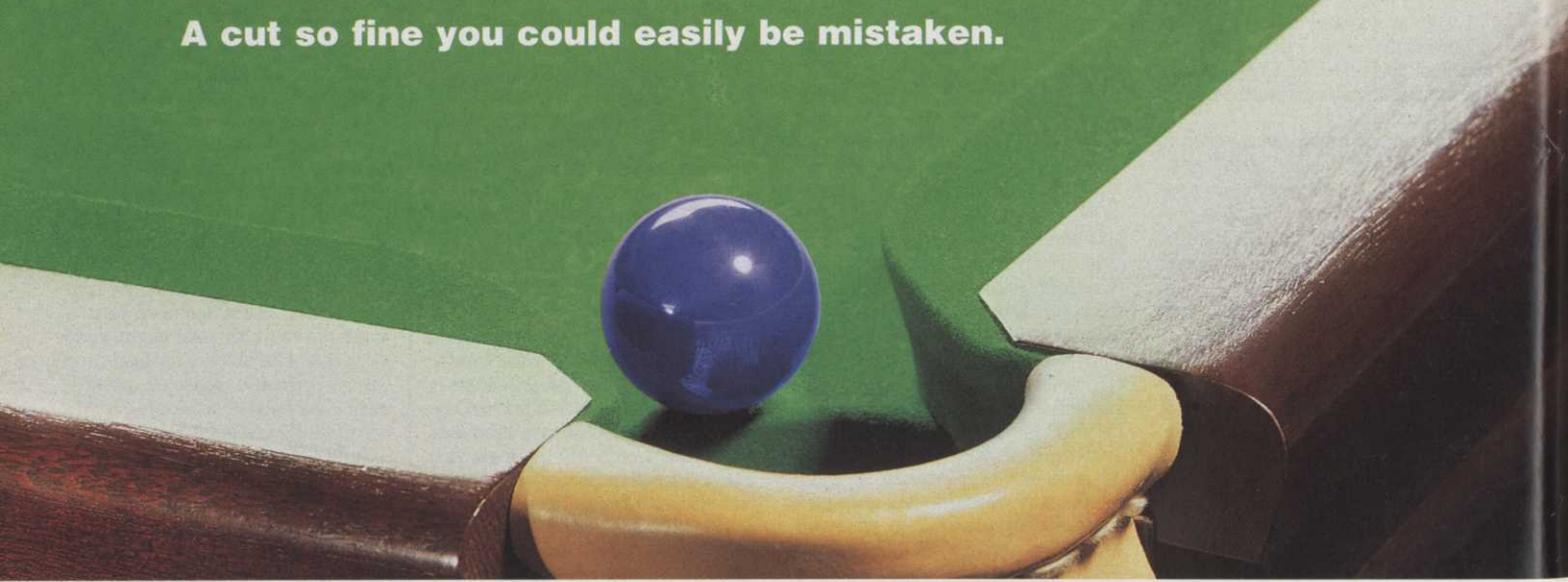
Old machines: Truly a cut above the rest

The January Issue story of the Rhos on Sea Golf Club's Ransomes Overgreen Mower was very interesting for me as I have five of these machines collected over the last few years, one of which is the same age as Aneurin Hughes's machine. My unit has a SISIS aerator fitted and came from the Old Course on the common at Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, being in use up to five years ago. I also have about 30 other old mowing machines some over 100 years old.

Peter Hampton, Bernhard & Co, Territory Manager, Western USA



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Scott Kinkead, is General Vice-President of Turfco Manufacturing Inc. the Minneapolis-based manufacturer of Top Dressers who created the first powered machine in 1961. Here he presents a timely view of recent developments in top dressing.



Oooh, suits you, sir



Above: Top dressing can be a one person job. Hoppers can be loaded easily with a tractor mounted front-end loader to shorten turnaround times

Above right: Equipment should be versatile enough to handle all types of material, wet or dry, and capable of applying heavy, medium or light dressings including some as fine as mist for exceptionally light applications

New practices require more versatile equipment

The benefits of top dressing have been recognized since the days of old Tom Morris. According to legend, it was old Tom who purportedly said: "More sand, honeyman, more sand."

While top dressing principles are as valid now as they were then, the use of top dressing as a management tool has increased. Smoothing the playing surface, producing a better growing medium and controlling thatch have become that much more important as golfing traffic has risen. As a result, golfers today have higher expectations for the quality of their facilities.

These factors are changing the way greenkeepers manage their top dressing programmes. New, more efficient equipment designs are coming on to the market in response to the changing trends in top dressing.

As you look at your top dressing needs now and in the future, it will be important to consider these changing trends. They may well influence how you select and employ your top dressing equipment in the years ahead.

Size of areas being top-dressed

Once top dressing was typically limited to greens, now many courses top-dress tees, approaches and even problem areas in fairways. This has led to more specialised equipment with increased capacities.

Greater variety of materials

Top dressing has generally involved some combination of soil, sand or peat. Nowadays, however, top dressers are used to overseed, spread compost, spread grass clippings, apply lime and even spread soil amendments such as

crumb rubber - as well as applying a wider range of top dressing mixtures. Equipment needs to be versatile enough to handle more materials efficiently.

Influences of material storage

Many top dressing materials are stored outside and thus are often wet when loaded, even if they are covered. Top dressers today must be able to spread wet or damp materials, and spread them evenly to minimize extra time for dragging the surface. Some greenkeepers have been forced to use costly, bagged sand to avoid wet materials. Newer top dresser designs can effectively handle moist materials.

Frequency of application

Ten years ago, top-dressing golf greens was usually a twice a year activity - once in the spring and once again

Oooh, suits you, sir



in the autumn, following aeration. Now, with a greater focus on greens quality and consistency, greenkeepers may top dress greens every two to three weeks and some as frequently as every 10 days.

Variable application rates

When top dressing was applied once or twice a year, it was usually heavy - a 6mm layer or more. Now, frequent light applications may involve as little as 1mm of sand each application. Today's equipment must be capable of both extremes.

Time and labour considerations

More frequent top dressing, of course, means the process must be more efficient. Equipment, therefore, must be more efficient, more reliable and more accurate to get the job done in as short a time as possible, and with the least amount of manpower possible.

Size of area to be top-dressed

The size of greens influences the type of top dressing equipment that can be used. Small greens with numerous bunkers and obstacles may dictate a pedestrian top dresser. These, of course, are quite manoeuvrable but lack capacity. For maximum capacity, as well as good manoeuvrability, a truck-mounted top dresser may be the answer.

Between these options are trailed top

dressers, most of which have good manoeuvrability and a relatively high capacity to reduce the most timely aspect of top dressing operations - loading. One rule of thumb says that if you can get on a green with a riding greens mower, it will probably accommodate a trailed top dresser. Hopper size becomes more important if you plan to top dress tees and approaches or even fairways.

Variety of materials

Ten years ago, the typical top dressing application could be anything from straight soil or compost, to a mix of 70% organic material and 30% sand. Today, the trend is to higher sand levels - perhaps 80% sand with 20% organic material - all the way up to 100% USGA specification sand.

Equipment must be able to handle a wide range of top dress mixtures, with the capability for both heavy and light application. If the equipment is also used for other jobs, such as overseeding or applying lime, it must be adaptable for those materials. Does it have the precision adjustments to apply everything from sand to compost to crumb rubber uniformly and consistently? Will it handle wet materials, whether sand or other applications such as spreading grass clippings? These are important and fundamental questions that need to be addressed and then the equipment selected accordingly.

How is top dressing material stored?

Whether sand and other materials are stored outside or under cover effects how they spread. Even materials covered and stored outside will usually have considerable moisture content, wicked up from surrounding surfaces. In the past, the inability of top dressing equipment to handle wet materials restricted their use. Some greenkeepers were forced to use bagged sand to get around the problem. An expensive solution to the problem!

However, properly designed equipment can handle a variety of moist or wet top dressing mixes. Brush to conveyor belt designs typically do the best job when conditions require spreading wet mixtures. Continuous pattern belts deliver more uniform application with varying moisture levels.

Frequency of application

Greenkeepers have found that frequent light application of top dressing sand or mix helps maintain level and consistent greens, as well as helping dilute and control thatch. Some newer grass varieties tend to be more "thatchy" and, with heavier use, there has been a tendency to increase fertiliser and chemical use to maintain turf growth and vigour. This also tends to increase thatch.

A good, consistent top dressing programme creates a smoother playing surface and modifies the topsoil layer to provide a better medium for grass growth. Along with aeration, top dressing can improve flow of water and air to the root zone and soil drainage. Greens that are top-dressed frequently tend to be faster, too.

Harold Neal, greenkeeper at Tulsa Country Club, says his frequent light top dressing programme allows him to mow greens higher. This promotes better grass health without sacrificing any speed at all. His greens recently were rated as the finest putting greens in that region.

Following a frequent light top dressing programme will necessitate more efficient equipment. Uniform application, the ability to handle material with varying moisture content and hopper capacity all become major considerations.

Desired application rates affect equipment selection

The trend to frequent, light top dressing means that top dressing equipment must be versatile enough to apply material at extremely light rates, from as little as 1mm thick, up to heavy rates (6mm after aeration, for example).

Uniform distribution is critical with light applications, to avoid extra time for working in the material. Some greenkeepers put on a very light application without dragging. Bill Larson, CGCS at Town & Country Club, says

Below: Machines using spinners to distribute sand uniformly can achieve up to 9.14 metre per swath



Application Chart

Area in square metres	Thickness of application			
	1mm	1.5mm	3mm	6mm
100	0.1	0.15	0.3	0.6
<i>Cubic metres of top dressing required</i>				
Golf Green				
465	0.465	0.697	1.395	2.79
1000	1.0	1.5	3.0	6.0
Bowing Green				
1475	1.475	2.213	4.425	8.85
2000	2	3	6	12
3000	3	4.5	9	18
4000	4	6	12	24
5000	5	7.5	15	30
6438	6.438	9.657	19.314	38.628
7500	7.7	11.25	23	46
Hectare				
10000	10	15	30	60

they just turn on their sprinkler heads for "two or three minutes and it's all done."

Frequent light applications may steer you to equipment capable of broadcasting material. Top dressing equipment today is more versatile than ever before as well as more user friendly. Start/stop controls from the operator seat save time and provide better control. Some machines are equipped with an electric clutch actuator that times application starts so the operator can begin top dressing within 25mm of the desired spot.

Man power and time considerations

Where, in the "old days," a greenkeeper might shut down the course for a day or longer and put five or six of his team to work aerating and top dressing the greens, most greenkeepers today don't have that luxury.

More likely, the team is out before sunrise to get maintenance work done as quickly as possible to accommodate the early golfer. If the course is open seven days a week, all the maintenance work must be scheduled to minimise interference with play.

In these circumstances the equipment must be ready to go with as little preparation time as possible. And, it must enable the team to get their jobs done as efficiently as possible. Features like ground drive can help assure even distribution at varying speeds, making top dressers more efficient, plus cutting down on follow-up time for working material into the turf.

Hoppers that can be loaded easily with a tractor-mounted front-end loader shorten turnaround time at the storage shed. One worker can load the hopper, then drive the top dresser to the course and spread the material. Top dressing can be a one-person job, compared to five or six people a few years ago.

Frequent light top dressing means time to accomplish the task becomes that much more important and the right equipment can make it extremely efficient. Some machines employ spinners to spread sand uniformly and can do so at up to 9.14 metres per swath. This allows the operator to cover 18 greens in less than half the time it would normally have taken.

An example of the timesaving that can be achieved is that of Harold Neal

at Tulsa Country Club. He uses his spinner-equipped machine to top dress 22 greens, including nursery and practice greens, in less than 2 hours. Most greenkeepers also report that frequent light top-dressing seldom disrupts play. "The golfers usually don't even know we've been out there," is the typical comment.

Changing your top dressing programme?

With the evidence that more frequent top dressing benefits golf greens, as well as improving tees, approaches and even fairways, you may well be considering changes in your own top dressing programme.

A good first step is to consult your local agronomist for recommendations. Then, it becomes a matter of determining the area you intend to cover, including size of greens, and what equipment will best suit your situation. Will you use the equipment for other materials? Will it double as a material handler, i.e. to replenish bunkers?

How are you storing your top dress materials or how do you plan to store them in the future? What amount of your greenkeeping time will you allot to topdressing? Do you have sufficient manpower to carry out a more intense top dressing programme?

Finally, if you decide that a more frequent top dressing programme is a beneficial step, you will need to take a good look at your equipment selection. Will it handle a wider variety of materials? Will it spread uniformly, accurately, even with moist material? Will a broadcast type machine make the job more efficient, more precise?

Asking these questions about where your present top dressing programme is and where you would like it to be is critical to making it successful. Decide what you want to accomplish and then find the equipment that will achieve your goals. Don't be reticent when it comes to getting equipment demonstrated. If manufacturers say they can spread material light and handle wet material make them show you what that means and compare different machines. With all the advances in top dressing equipment there is sure to be a machine that meets your specific needs. In the words of one greenkeeper, "Top dressing used to be a chore, now it's fun."

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This month, **BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson**, gives details on new-look competitions

EDUCATION UPDATE

The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition



Following the success of the 1999 Golf Environment Competition, when Temple Golf Club were the worthy winners, Amazone Ground Care have agreed to sponsor the Competition for 2000, with additional support coming from the R&A.

Information on the Competition is included with this magazine and requests for entry forms need to be returned to BIGGA HOUSE by 21 April. You should be thinking about your entry NOW.

The competition is designed to reward those clubs that integrate ecological management with normal golf course management practices to ensure that golf and the environment are compatible.

Why not enter and your club could win the first prize of £4000, a runners up prize of £500 or, new for this year, a special prize for the best environmental project. All clubs visited by the judges will be offered the chance to purchase a copy of the detailed report on their course, which will also include an action plan.

If you have not received your form, with this magazine, then contact the education department at BIGGA HOUSE.

The TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping



The New Look TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping Competition was launched at BTME. The competition is now open to Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers/Superintendents in the whole of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. With prizes like a TORO Workman 2100 Utility Vehicle and a two week trip to the USA, plus TORO Reelmaster 1000 for Runners up plus £250 for the winner's greenkeeping team this competition should be more popular than ever. Winners in 1999 were Brian Turner from Sunningdale and Michael Murphy from Waterville, County Kerry who have just returned from New Orleans, where they visited the GCSAA Show and Conference and the TORO factories. This year could be your turn. Nomination forms have been sent out to golf clubs and head greenkeepers/course manager/superintendents but if you need a copy then contact BIGGA HQ. Get your nominations off as soon as possible and we will send out entry forms to all nominees. All entry forms must be returned to BIGGA HQ by 31 May 2000. The National Final will take place, in Harrogate, on 29 and 30 October.

The TORO Student of the Year Competition



Now in its eleventh year, the search to find the TORO Student of the Year has begun. Competition details and entry forms have been sent to colleges and training providers and all entries should reach BIGGA HQ by 2 June 2000. The main points of the competition are:

1. The winner receives the TORO scholarship to the USA and visits to the TORO factories and to the GCSAA conference and show in Dallas.
2. The winner's greenkeeping lecturer wins a visit to the GCSAA conference and show in Dallas.
3. The two runners - up win an all expenses paid visit to the Learning Experience 2001 at Harrogate.
4. Regional finals will be held in six locations during late July and, up to eight students will be selected for the National Final which will take place on 29 and 30 October 2000.

Refund of education/training fees

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

- a. You must be a member of BIGGA and have been a member for at least two years.
- b. You must have paid your own fees and be able to provide proof of payment eg receipt/credit card slip or statement.
- c. You must have completed a course or component part of a course and be able to provide evidence of completion eg certificate/end of course report etc.
- d. If you are starting a course in 2000, you may apply for a refund to be paid on course completion as in c.
- e. The Course must not be subsidised, already, by BIGGA.
- f. The Course must be relevant to your job as a greenkeeper.

Members will be able to claim 80% of fees paid up to a maximum of £250. Contact BIGGA HQ for an application form.

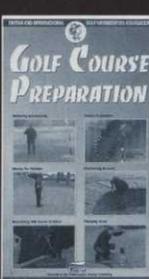
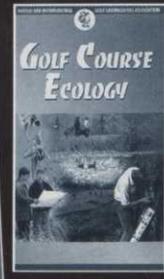
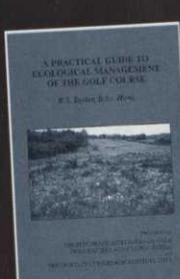
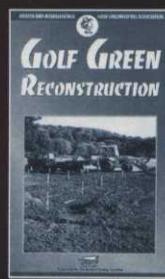
Part Time Workers

Part time workers are to be given the same rights as full time workers from April 2000. The Part Time Employers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 will require employers to:

- Not exclude part timers from training.
- Provide part timers with access to the same career break schemes as full time workers.

Copies of Part Time Work/Public Consultation can be obtained from DTI Publications on 0870 1502500 or www.dti.gov.uk/ir/consult.htm

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Raising the Standards of Mowing Management Video
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Setting the Standard in Spraying Application Video
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You Just Can't Beat THE SYSTEM

Good news. The days of "one-size-fits-all" lightweight fairway mowing just ended.

Now, with the John Deere 3235 Turf System mowers, you get the ground hugging benefits of 22-inch (56-cm) cutting units regardless of what turf surface you work on.

The diesel-powered, 32-hp (24-kW) 3235 has two solid cutting unit options – both designed and manufactured by John Deere.



3235 with heavy-duty cutting units



3235 with standard cutting units

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In January almost 180 new members joined the Association. BIGGA's Membership Services Officer, Tracey Maddison, would like to welcome them on behalf of the Association.

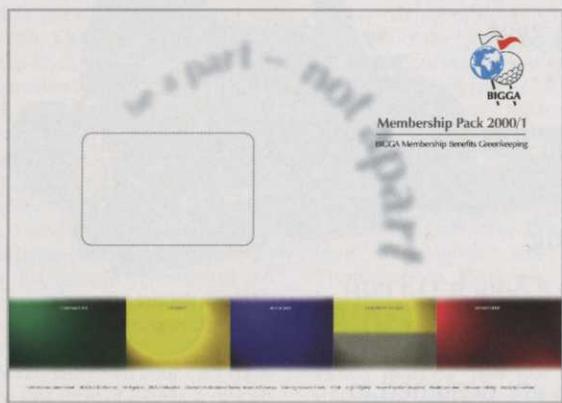
Prizes galore in the Membership Draw!

Help us to help you! In your Membership Renewal Pack you will have found two yellow application forms for Greenkeeper Membership of BIGGA. Help increase membership of your Association and join two new members today. If you join a minimum of two new members to the Association this year, you will automatically be entered into the Membership Draw at BTME 2001 to win one of three fantastic prizes.

You could find yourself flying off for a weekend away or spending a wonderful weekend in the historic city of

York in the first class company of the Monk Bar Hotel, or winning vouchers for a major high street store.

To have a chance of winning a fantastic prize all you have to do is to make sure your name goes on the application form in the 'Who referred you to BIGGA' line, encourage two new members to join and leave the rest to us. Mark Smith, Head Greenkeeper of Drayton Golf Club, did just that and he found himself winning £600 worth of holiday vouchers. So come on, help your Association grow in members and grow in strength.



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Paul R Brown, Central
Stephen Brown, West
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Gareth D Evans, North
John R Hamill, North
Kenneth A Henderson, West
Richard Love, West
Bob P Masson, North
Colin McLaren, North
Stuart Muir, Central
David R Sinclair, North
Huixia Wei, Central
Duncan J Wright, Central

Northern

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Andrew Billings, Northern
Keith D Blaylock, North East
Gareth Bullock, Northern
David R Cresser, Sheffield
Terry Dale, North West
Steven J Fletcher, Northern
Scott Greaves, Northern West
Thomas Harrison, Northern
Christopher Ideson, N West
Alan D Jackson, North West
Adam P Kendall, Sheffield
Richard Knowles, North West
John A Longcake, North West
Christian I Martindale, Northern
Alister H McAnaw, N West
George Mullen, Cleveland
Leslie Nelson, Northern
Anthony Oley, North West
David A Platt, North West
Frank Platt, North West
Kenneth M Pollard, N Wales
Paul Redford, North West
David Rowley, North West
Frank Shields, North West
Lyn Steel, Northern
Daniel J Teale, Northern
David W Thom, Northern
Darran Thomas, Sheffield
Adam M Wainwright, N West
Wesley A Walker, North West
Martin N Webb, North West
Andrew J Williamson, N Wales
Ian Wrightson, North West

Midland

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Chris Aubrey, East Midland
Stephen Blackman, Midland
Nicholas W Clarke, Midland
Craig Cumming, Midland
Jamie Cuthbert, Kent
Nick J Edwards, Midland
Michael T Fowkes, Midland
Scott Glover, Midland
Matthew R Marlborough, Midland
Andrew J Harrison, E Midland
Daniel Hawkins, BB&O
Gavin T Heath, Midland
Peter A Jenkin, East England
Martin Johnson, East Midland
Robert J Kimberlee, Midland
William A Langley, Midland
Stephen Massingham, East England
Chris Mayhew, Midland
Laurence McRory, Midland
Jonathan Merchant, Midland
Russell D Moody, East England
Craig Morris, East Midland
Andrew Pearson, Midland
Bryan D Reidy, BB&O
John M Smith, East of England
David A Snow, East Midland
David R Sturgeon, BB&O
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Derek P Blake, Essex
Simon P Bolden, London
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Stuart M R Butler, Kent
Daniel D Clark, Kent
Richard Cook, Essex
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Terry Cutler, London
Robin W Doodson, Surrey
Steve Dover, London
Gareth Dowsett, Essex
Owen Dudman, Sussex
Mark S Fleury, Essex
Colin P Forde, London
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Kevin Gladdish, Kent
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Darren Hastie, Kent
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Mark Kennell, East Anglia
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Nigel Morris, Surrey
Robert J Moss, London
Adrian O Leary, London
Eddy Oliver, Surrey
Robert J Pisanis, Surrey
Matthew Pratt, East Anglia
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Gerald F B Sharpe, East Anglia
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Check out April's edition for February's new members!

Trevor Downing of J Rothschild Assurance illustrates how an investment of £10,000 became £1.4m in just 30 years

Who wants to be a Millionaire?

In December, the St James's Place Greater European Progressive Unit Trust celebrated its 30th anniversary. Anyone who had invested £10,000 when the trust was launched, would today have an investment worth £1.4m - a return of 18% pa after all charges. By any benchmark, a very successful outcome for those clients who have remained invested throughout and an interesting thought for those of us contemplating where to invest in this millennium.

Thirty years is a relatively short part of our lifetime. What difference would it have made to any of us if our parents or grandparents had invested £10,000 on our behalf 30 years ago? What difference could we make by investing for the next 30 years?

Obviously, no one can guarantee the level of future investment returns from investing in unit trusts but over the longer term, equity based funds have consistently outperformed deposits and

other forms of savings. For example, instead of £1.4m, £10,000 invested over the last 30 years on deposit would now be worth £66,052. This equates to six times as much as originally invested but nowhere near the 140 times increase produced by the Greater European Progressive Unit Trust (see table below).

So, how do Taube Hodson Stonex Partners Ltd (THSP, the manager of the Greater European Progressive Unit Trust) achieve their success? Can we expect their record to continue?

Well, THSP also had another unit trust celebrating a birthday recently, their UK and General Progressive Unit Trust was 10 years old last October. It too returned 18% pa after charges during this time, producing a five-fold increase over the decade and vindicating the investment strategy adopted by the managers over successive periods.

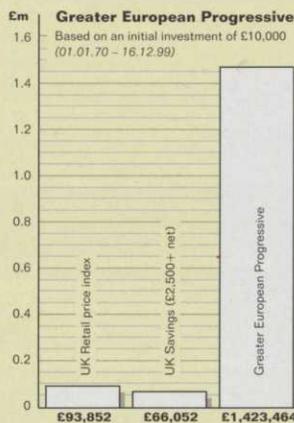
We look at the UK fund in more detail in the next article but the overall driving

force behind the THSP investment success is their focus on stockpicking and choosing successful investment ideas or themes to follow.

The current portfolio reflects this with the major holdings including: Canal Plus (France) Investor (Sweden), Holsten Brauerei (Germany), Ericsson (Sweden), Marconi and Psion, reflecting the managers' strong views on the positive outlook for IT, Media and Telecommunications across Europe.

The new millennium will, undoubtedly, bring new investment opportunities. Will it also bring a chance to see £10,000 invested now turn into £1.4m in 30 years time? No one can be certain, but what history has shown is that equity markets offer a better chance of gaining greater investment returns than deposit based investments. With the focus on tomorrow's industries in Europe, perhaps it's time to look at the Greater European Progressive Unit Trust.

If you want to know more about THSP or how to use an ISA to ensure your investment remains tax efficient, please contact Trevor Downing on 01959 500427.



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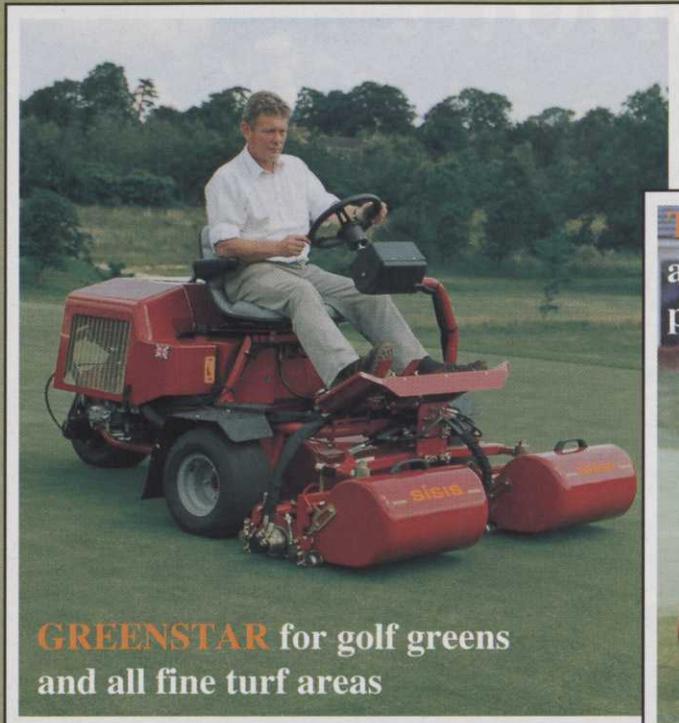
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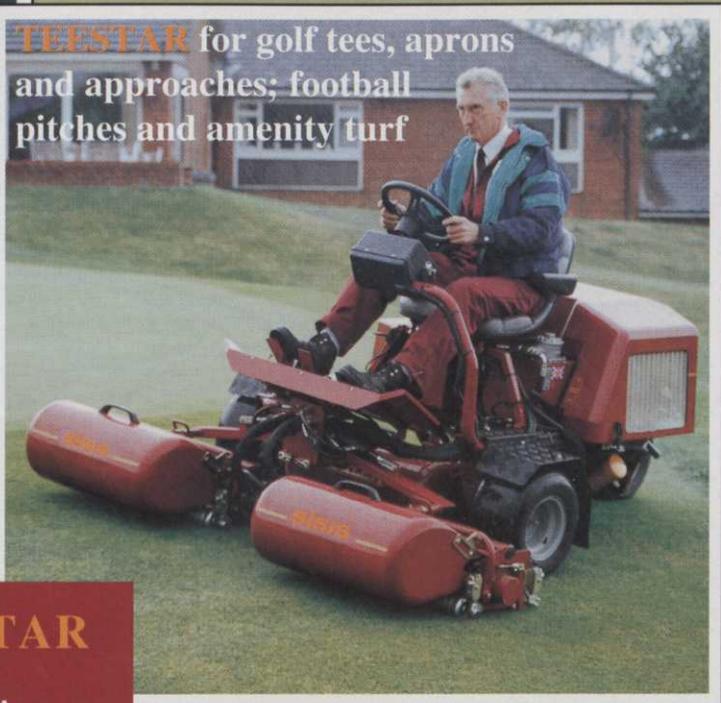
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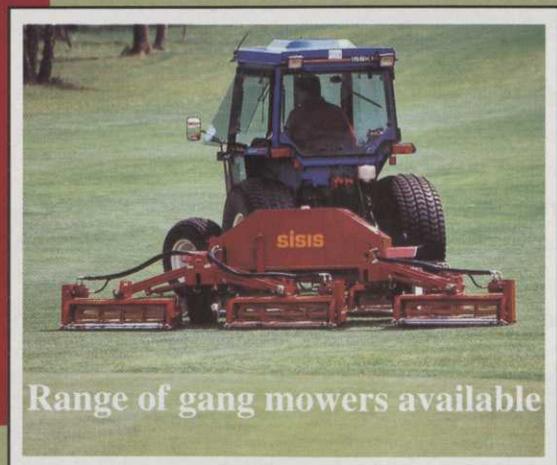
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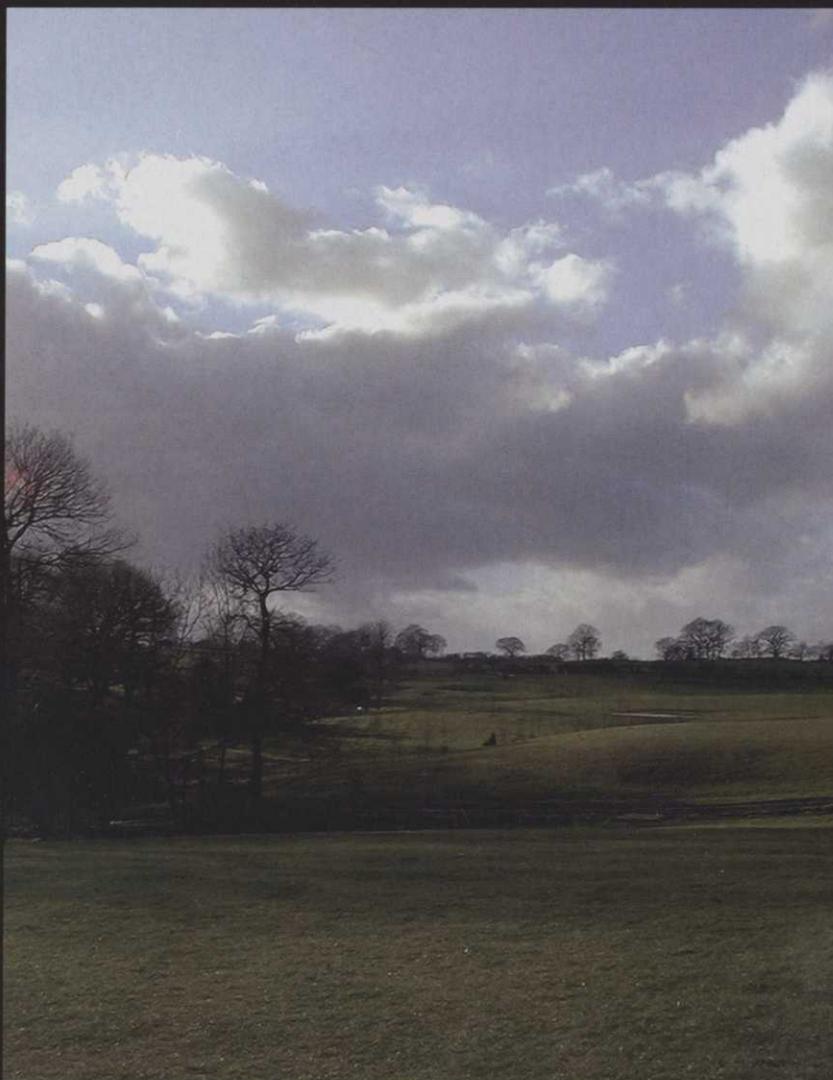
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Scott MacCallum meets up with two brothers whose move into the golf market certainly hasn't gone sour

Pastures new



Cleobury Mortimer Golf Club is a fine complex. Ten miles out of Kidderminster it boasts 27 interesting holes which are not too intimidating for the novice but with interest enough for the proficient; some magnificent oaks; an attractive clubhouse and some excellent practice facilities, all set in beautiful Shropshire countryside. It looks like it has been there for years.

But just seven years ago this was farmland and the staged developed is the work of two brothers, farmers born and bred, who have masterminded the transformation from dairy farm into a

golf club boasting over 700 members.

Graham Pain now handles the administration of the club while brother, Robert, is in charge of everything outside, although they are interchangeable and don't believe in job titles - for themselves nor for their 15 staff.

"We were farming 400 acres on three separate sites with a village in the middle so it was never very easy," explained Graham, who admitted that, for those in agriculture, the writing for the industry had been on the wall for 15 years - going back to when milk quotas were first introduced.

"As relatively young men, in our 30s with wives and families, we looked at the situation and asked ourselves whether we wanted to continue doing what we were doing, with not much light at the end of the tunnel, until retirement. Or did we want to change our lot."

Having decided on the latter it was a case of whether they dipped their toes in the water of an alternative life or dived right on in.

"It was a case of whether we might open a bed and breakfast, hosting the odd clay pigeon shoot, or really grasp-

Pastures new

ing the nettle and taking a make or break move... something very radical," said Graham.

The fact that the three of us are sitting in the well appointed first floor function room in the clubhouse is evidence enough of the path they chose.

Golf was always one of their main options as they owned a substantial amount of land and golf would be a good use of that resource.

"We looked at the Demand for Golf report and, although it had its limitations, it made a point that was relatively valid," said Graham, referring to the report's call for more golf courses throughout the country.

The brothers identified a gap in the market between the multi-million pound projects that were being built around the time and the traditional members clubs where membership was given only after a, sometimes intimidating, interview with the committee.

"We suspected that the long term future of golf is in the mid market level - a guy, with a wife, a couple of kids, a mortgage and a reasonably good job and who is looking to take up golf after having played rugby, cricket or football. He's looking for a sensibly priced product but a good quality golf course."

Having made this decision the Pains approached the local planner and asked about the feasibility of building a golf course at Cleobury Mortimer.

"The head planning officer advised us to contact the English Golf Union



Clockwise from above: The 6th on the Badger's Sett nine

Cleobury's tribute to Payne Stewart crafted by a local blacksmith and mounted on an old tree stump

The attractive course markers hewn from local timber

Below: Brothers, Graham and Robert Pain



and we got in contact with their local man, Ray Baldwin. That advice saved us spending a fortune on a planning application which could have been thrown out," revealed Robert.

Ray steered the project through its various phases, designing the first, and subsequent two other nines himself, introducing the brothers to the STRI, who, through Andy Cole, assisted with the construction criteria, and English Nature to guide them through the environmental issues.

The brothers also took a decision to use local contractors wherever possible on the construction of the course and this bore fruit particularly when it came to the drainage of the courses.

"They were a father and son company with huge experience going back to the 50s and 60s when there was a lot of grant available for drainage work. Their knowledge was stunning," said Robert.

"When we built the irrigation lake, for example, we asked them to dig us the biggest hole they could for the money available. The son started at 5am on the Saturday morning and worked for a whole week then called me to check his levels. I went round the face of the dam - it covered three acres to hold five million gallons and he'd done it by eye - and he was half an inch out. He was furious because he thought he'd got it spot on," said Graham.

That irrigation lake was an example of how looking into the future and making provision in the present has served them well.

"Water is the most precious asset any of us will have in the next ten or 20 years and it is going to be very difficult to manage. So we bit the bullet right at the very beginning when we decid-

ed to put in the lake as well as a bore hole, for which we obtained a licence to pump all through the summer. That will cover all our water needs come what may. Having said that it really was something we'd rather not have spent our money on at that stage, but we felt it was a long term investment," said Graham.

They also insisted on putting in two main drains 15 metres apart and 18 inches down along the entire length of each fairway on all three of the loops.

"That was our infrastructure and although you could say it was wasteful it meant that we knew what we'd got," explained Graham.

"Since then we've put in open ditches around the boundaries of the course to get the water away," added Robert.

Perryfields provided the seed that was used for the course with the greens on the first nine turfed and the other two seeded.

"We went for turf because we needed to get the first nine open to bring in some revenue but every loop was in play within 12 months of construction starting," said Robert.

"In any case, the best thing for a green is to get some size 10s on it," he added.

The first nine opened in July '93 with 202 members with the second nine opening in '95 by which time the membership had risen to 500.

The opportunity to build the third nine came with the chance to buy another 50 acres of land in 1997.

"Deciding to go to 27 holes was purely down to commercial reality. We didn't want to get away from our philosophy of affordable golf for the ordinary guy on a quality facility but in order to satisfy those demands we had to have a lot of pay and play, societies and



corporate days," explained Graham. "You can only do so much on 18 holes, particularly on your prime days of Saturday and Sunday when you can charge more, and we were becoming victims of our own success - people wanted to play but couldn't get a tee time," he admitted.

The extra nine holes solved that problem as demonstrated by a recent Mixed Open when over 200 players competed while at the same time the weekend regulars were enjoying their own round - all playing 18 different holes and filtering round each other.

The transition from farmer to greenkeeper has been accomplished with great aplomb by Robert who now freely admits there is nothing better than being out working on the course in the summer dressed in shorts.

"A lot of it is not that different from agriculture and involves knowing the soil, but attention to detail is important and not being frightened to ask. We have always sought out unbiased advice," he explained.

The pointed is followed up by Graham.

"Also not being afraid to learn from your mistakes. We've all dropped tremendous clangers but we have always, and also told our staff, owned up to it and be open about it. That way we all learn."

The working patterns of Graham and Robert have worked well when it comes to building relations with the membership.

The brothers place great store in their availability to the membership and believe it has earned them respect.

"They see Robert, who owns half the business, cutting rough or me pulling pints behind the bar and know we are



prepared to roll up our sleeves and get on with it," said Graham.

"I'm in the clubhouse in the morning for my breakfast and Graham at the other end of the day and people ask us questions and make suggestions.

We can also defuse things. They know that we listen and that we can sanctions things to be done rather than wait and have a committee decide on them," said Robert.

It is a point that Graham is eager to take on.

"The great thing about running a golf course in our situation is that we have the power to make a difference and this

is brought home when we meet golf club secretaries. We don't have many levels of management as our staff are empowered to make decisions as well."

Having seen many golf courses built in the 90s in the hands of receivers and have multiple changes of ownership Graham and Robert have received much acclaim for having undertaken the project the correct way - staging the development and not over stretching themselves.

"It makes us laugh because we did it the way we did because we didn't have the finance to do it any other

way. We had security because we owned land and the banks knew us but we always tried to be modest with what we were trying to achieve.

"It is a long term investment. I'm 40, Robert's 42 and we've got a lovely asset out there, on a stunning piece of real estate, which can give us a return in the long term and a reasonable standard of living in the mean time. There isn't a lot more you could want out of life," said Graham.

To use a dairy analogy from their previous lives, and without ever appearing smug, Robert and Graham are the cats who have got the cream.

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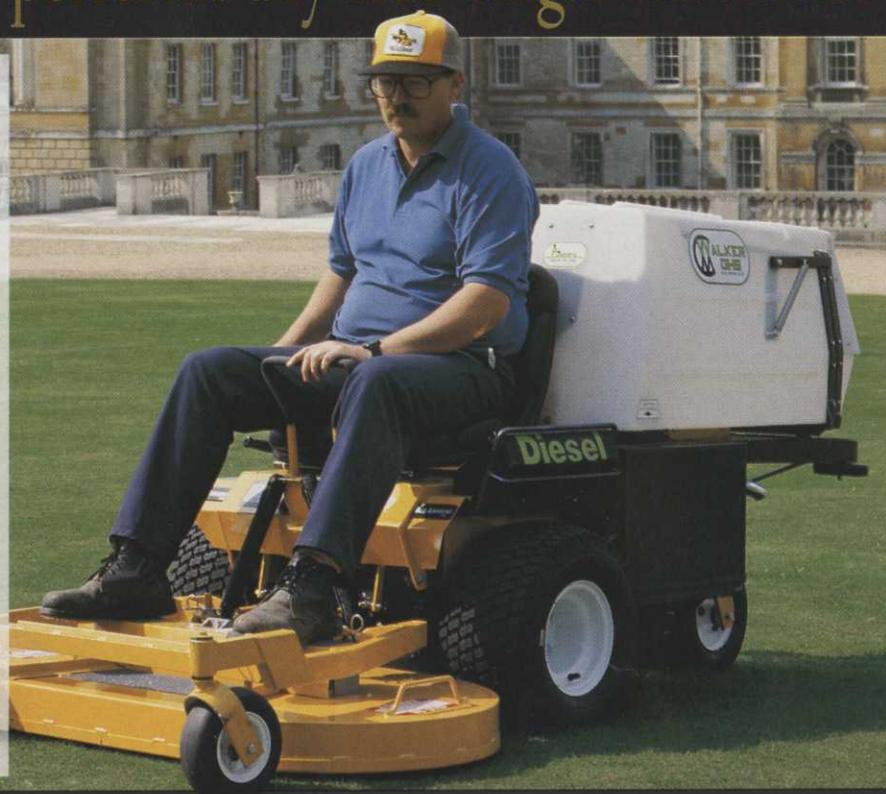
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The Committed to Green debate gathers momentum with Joe Bedford, Vice Chairman, and Dean Cleaver, Secretary, of the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations taking heed from Old Tom Morris

Lessons learned

The question is, did the funding bodies, representative Associations and authorities even look back to see when all programmes were collated if they would work? The answer is NO.

We are not asking for the wheel to be re-invented. The framework of a plan is already in existence. There must be however a system whereby constant reviews are taking place to ensure harmonisation of all programmes.

On course for change a conference by the Royal & Ancient Golf Course Advisory Panel brought both of us to the hallowed ground of St. Andrews, the spiritual home of golf, and a fitting and inspirational place to visit at the dawn of the New Millennium to discuss our beloved game and what we now believe is required "a change of course for golf."

The cold wind of the Eden estuary swept across the old course as we entered the Royal and Ancient clubhouse. A mysterious quality filled the air as we experienced the warmth and hospitality of the reception area. The Open Championship Trophy sat in an old glass case at the entrance to the "big room" and inside the walls were covered with magnificent paintings. Moving about the room meeting the other guests you could not help being drawn to view the paintings, which depicted many scenes and landscapes. The immortal people of

golf were represented in the canvas, among them, old Tom Morris, winner of four Open Championships. A native of St. Andrews, and custodian of the links from 1864 he set about in harmony with Mother Nature and time to assist in the evolution of the Old Course. In this "big room" the changes in golf course maintenance and the essence of golf were hard to fathom. As we admired the portrait of Old Tom Morris we felt very proud of our profession for just like the great man we are the custodians of the courses of the world.

Our predecessors were confronted with many challenges in being the guardians of golf courses and now in our time, we face the question about the role of golf and its place in a modern environment. Who has issue with golf? Is it the European Union, our National Governments, environmental or interest groups, maybe the public? Some people site extremist groups

with unrealistic objectives, Whoever they maybe golf has responded in different ways.

Golf's authoritative bodies, the Royal and Ancient and the PGA European Tour through the European Golf Association, formed the Ecology Unit which in turn planned a very laudable environmental programme, 'Committed to Green.' National greenkeeping associations recognised also their responsibility and implemented specific programmes of education, set up discussion groups and in some cases run excellent Environmental Awards. The Federation of European Golf Greenkeeping Associations, an umbrella group of the nineteen European greenkeeping associations, was set up to meet and share common bonds and interests on education, professional recognition and most importantly environmental issues, on a European level. The lack of adequate communication between

Lessons learned

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Our predecessors were confronted with many challenges in being the guardians of golf courses and now, in our time, we face the question about the role of golf and its place in a modern environment.

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the golfing authorities, ecology unit, greenkeeping associations and others led to different paths being taken. Visions, strategies and plans were drawn with buzzwords like sustainable, biodiversity and stewardship being flaunted. The question is, did the funding bodies, representative Associations and authorities even look back to see when all programmes were collated would they work? The answer is NO. There is no better medium to firmly indicate this than the meeting of FEGGA's nineteen member Associations which took place in Spain back in November 1999. A clear mandate was given to the board of FEGGA, to ensure primary participation for our profession in any specific environmental plan for golf courses, and that is what we intend to do.

We are not asking for the wheel to be re-invented. The framework of a plan is already in existence. There must be however a system whereby constant reviews are taking place to ensure harmonisation of all programmes.

Following our clear mandate we would like to make the following recommendations to the various parties concerned.

Funding Bodies:

The Royal and Ancient, The PGA European Tour and the European Golf Association.

- Invite submissions from all professional representative organisations within the golf industry on present and future ideals.

- Set out from the funding policies 'golf-only' environmental programmes and ensure guidance and control.

- Organise a consistent lobby at European Union, national and local level of the environmental benefits of golf courses. This is correctly reflected in legislation.

- Ensure adequate funding. This issue is the greatest challenge to ever face golf.

Committed to Green Foundation:

- Return to golf ecology only, the idea of encompassing other sports is wrong, Golf individuality will be weakened at a vital time when we are coming to terms with this challenge. We do not want to be associated with motorbike organisations.

- Shift the emphasis of the programme to the golf course. Land usage is the primary issue, buildings like clubhouses and hotels are already regulated with waste management and energy efficiency policies.

- Implement from the findings and recommendations of the funding bodies any necessary re-structuring.

- Ensure that any programme implemented is practical with a minimum use of jargon. It must be freely available with self-help in principle to ensure cost does not prohibit participation.

- Promote the benefits of golf course turf.

- Ensure the programme reaches to young golfers and children, they are the players of the future.

Greenkeeping and representative organisations:

- We all must be pro-active and put our strength behind a quality environmental programme.

- Through the associations worldwide we have the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge to provide counsel and independent information to sustain any programme.

- Hold regular meetings between architects, constructors, consultants, and trade companies to ensure coherence.

- At our golf clubs and in our communities we must spread the environmental message and the vital role that golf plays.

- Our golfers must be informed so they fully understand future implications for the game.

The game of golf is as diverse as life itself. We live in this "everything now" society and it is no different for golfers who fuel the desire for immediate and perfect conditioning of our golf courses. How can we teach everyone that a bit of Mother Nature, good environmental practice and above all patience and time are the keys to the future of golf courses?

Look no further than Old Tom Morris, custodian of the links and be inspired to do right.



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Time

Top tips for time management

And all my endeavours are unlucky explorers come back, abandoning the expedition, the specimens, the lillies of ambition still spring in their climate, still unpicked: but time, time is all I lacked to find them, as the great collectors before me.'

Keith Douglas 'On return from Egypt, 1943-4'

Why time management?

The signs of poor time management are everywhere to be seen. Endless meetings that proceed without a clear focus or structure because of a weak chair or lack of a clear agenda, desks piled high with cluttered paper work, late for appointments, missed deadlines and failure to achieve objectives, higher stress levels and so on.

Poor time management costs employers and the economy as a whole billions of pounds each year. It contributes to higher sickness and absence rates, lower staff morale and reduced productivity. These are all good reasons for persuading organisations to address this problem. However, perhaps the most compelling reasons for dealing with poor time management are the negative effects on the individual. Poor time management can mean a failure to achieve personal goals, which in turn can reduce self-esteem.

Life Goals

Begin by looking at your life goals, those outcomes that you would like to achieve in your life outside work. It may be that you want to improve your golf handicap, to do an Open University degree, and to simply have more personal time for yourself and your family. Whatever the case, it is important to try to visualise these outcomes as clearly and specifically as you can. Try to imagine how you would feel if you were to achieve your goals

Many of us fall at the first hurdle and never get beyond expressing faint desires and hopes. We say that we haven't enough time, and that provides a convenient excuse for failing to realise our dreams. So to be successful, we must really want to achieve our goals. It is this that will provide the motivation to make time by saving time. If it is important enough, you will make the time.

Time Stealers

Once we have defined our goals, we need to examine what has prevented us from making the time in the past. Sometimes it is because we waste time. Invariably however, we find that we lose time without being fully conscious of where the time leakages have occurred. If you suspect that you lose time in this way, try keeping a log of your time. Take a typical day, and record what happens by accounting for each 5 minute increment during the day.

You may be surprised to find that you lose a lot of time through interruptions, phone calls, unscheduled visits from reps, poorly managed meetings or simply other people who like to idly pass time with you. If so you need to take charge by controlling the way others steal your time. Be gracious with people and ruthless with time.

'Well we can't stand here doin' nothing, people will think we are workmen.'
Spike Milligan

Time Management - an attitude of mind.

Time Management is much more than a set of techniques. It is an attitude of mind. To change our attitudes about anything we need to be motivated to change. In other words we have to want to do it. So what prevents us from achieving our goals?

Brin Bendon, well known to many who attend BIGGA Management training courses, starts a new series aimed at improving your off-course skills

waster?

Procrastination

'Procrastination is opportunity's natural assassin.'

Victor Kiam

These are many reasons why people procrastinate: perhaps to escape an unpleasant or overwhelming task by doing easy, low priority jobs first or to excuse poor work. They might try to get someone else to do the job for fear that they won't be able to do the job or because they don't know where or how to start. Or they argue that there won't be time to do the job perfectly.

These are some of the 'escapes' people use: indulging in something they like doing such as reading, socialising or day dreaming; indulging in negative feelings like anxiety, fear or worry and running away from the job or using perfectionism as an excuse, and blaming others for interruptions.

Attitudes to adopt

So if you are serious about improving your time management, here are some attitudes to adopt:

- Admit you have been wasting time.
- Decide work isn't necessarily unpleasant - adopt a positive attitude.
- Separate your feelings about the job from your decision on what to do about it.
- Recognise and acknowledge the futility of procrastination.
- Decide to face unpleasant tasks square on.
- Think through previous jobs - and recognise that fears of failure are usually unfounded. Use this to boost your confidence.

Taking control of your time. The Pareto Principle

Wilfredo Pareto, the Italian philosopher and economist, was the author of something that we now refer to as the 80/20 Rule, namely:

- most of our effectiveness (say 80%) will come from a relatively small

number of key activities (say 20%).

Poor time management often means that we can spend a great deal of our time (80%) on things which contribute very little to our overall effectiveness (20%). We may be busy, but not particularly productive or effective.

So to be effective we need to:

1. Define clear goals and tasks
2. Prioritise tasks in terms of urgency and importance i.e. Must do Now, Should do Soon, Like to do Later
3. Delegate or ask for help if you are up against tight deadlines
4. Make a start

'Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion'

Parkinson's Law - Professor C Northcote Parkinson

Techniques to help you work smart, not hard

- Decide to do the most unpleasant job of the day first.
- Break the job down into small tasks.
- Start anywhere, if starting is a problem.
- Commit yourself by telling someone you're going to do the job.
- Set your own deadlines
- Reward yourself at stages through the job.
- Remove or avoid your escapes and distracters, eg socialising.
- Schedule start times for jobs.
- Stick to high priority jobs.
- Consider the consequences of procrastination.
- Do one job at a time. Breaking off and having to come back to it wastes time
- Ask 'what's the best use of my time now?'
- Regularly review your progress and take corrective action when necessary.

30 ways to make more time

Preparation and organisation

1. Become aware of time
2. Place a clock where everyone can see it.
3. Prepare a daily to-do-list
4. Prioritise tasks in terms of Importance and Urgency
5. Delegate tasks
6. Be assertive
7. Say 'no' to jobs that aren't yours
8. Set realistic deadlines
9. Give yourself private time.
10. Keep your desk or workspace tidy

Dealing with interruptions

11. Work out who needs access to you at all times and insist that others make appointments
12. Get your secretary (if you have one) or a deputy to deal with the rest
13. Ask people why they've come to see you
14. Stand up when they come in
15. Be gracious with people and ruthless with time
16. Suggest you arrange a meeting later when it suits you
17. Make the meeting in the other person's office
18. Perch on the edge of the desk
19. Save small talk for the pub

Meetings

20. Be conscious of wasting other people's time. If you have to attend, do have to be present for the whole meeting or for just part of it?
21. Plan the meeting - have a clear objective. Start and end on time.
22. Don't allow meetings to be interrupted or side-tracked.

Dealing with the telephone

23. Use telephone technology to field your calls and have a call back system
24. Make your calls in blocks. (It's

a good idea to make them just before lunch and just before people are about to finish work for the day. It focuses their minds and prevents rambling telephone calls and pass-timing.)

25. Write down the points raised in the call

26. Be especially aware of time passing on the phone. Use an egg timer to time your calls and complete them within 3 minutes

Office systems

27. Finish one job before you go on to the next

28. Spend 5 minutes in the morning planning the day

29. Have an administrator screen mail and handle each piece of paper only once

And finally...

30. There is no such thing as dead time if you are serious about managing your time. So make use of committed time such as when you are in your car or on a train. These are opportunities that afford you the time to think. Embrace these ideas and make them into habits and you will be able to achieve much more with less.



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

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John Lelean reports on the recent conference at St. Andrews which gave rise to some serious predictions about coastal erosion

On course for change

At Turnberry, fencing made from chestnut paling is staked into the top of a threatened dune to help prevent erosion



The aptly entitled 'On Course For Change' conference at St. Andrews in February brought together a group of the most powerful and influential representatives ever assembled in European golf.

Course Managers mingled with secretaries, architects with constructors, head greenkeepers with environmentalists and there to keep the pot boiling was Michael Barratt of Nationwide fame, whose chairmanship ensured there were few dull moments.

His searching questions to the array of speakers during the two days was a replica of his professional performance before the BBC cameras and even Michael Meacher, the Minister of State for the Environment did not escape a friendly 'grilling' on government policy.

The R&A, who sponsored the event can feel justly pleased with its success, not only from their choice of subjects and speakers, but the depth of knowledge stimulated by contributions from the floor.

BIGGA's newly elected President Sir Michael Bonallack, the current Captain of the R&A, ably set the scene on the opening day. He said the conference was set-up to identify the real facts that will affect the management and maintenance of golf courses in the light of climatic change.

It was not the time for decisions, but discussions, utilising the wealth of expertise gathered in the body of the hall.

Within minutes John Pethick, a professor of marine science at Newcastle University had the conference intrigued and stunned with his predictions of impending disaster to many of our more famous links courses as a result of climatic change.

Temperatures, he said are already showing a significant rise and this in turn is increasing the height of sea levels. Warmer, wetter winters and dryer, hotter summers have been recorded in recent years and the trend will continue.

He added that coastal courses are most at risk, particularly those links on estuaries such as St. Andrews

This theme was developed by Dr Mike Hulme from the University of

East Anglia who with some impressive graphs and statistics showed how since the 1980s excessively cold spells in winter had halved and conversely the hotter summer days had increased.

Sea levels had already risen around our coasts of between 15-20 centimetres in the past 20 years, which predicted a further sea level rise over the next century of some 30 centimetres higher than it is today.

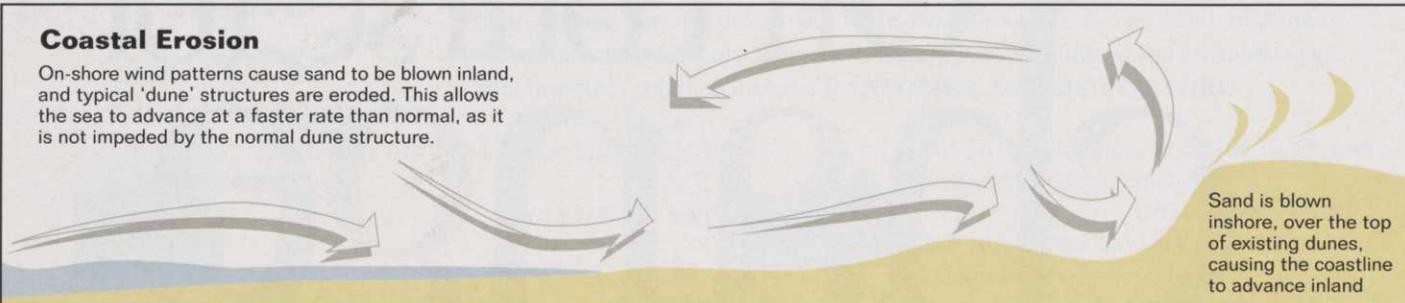
Storm surges accompanying heavy winter rain could produce high tides five times the current expected levels and even if there was an immediate reduction in the production of greenhouse gases, it will still take hundreds of years for nature to repair the damage already done.

Inland courses were also warned of the dangers facing them. Although they would not be eroded by the sea,

On course for change

Coastal Erosion

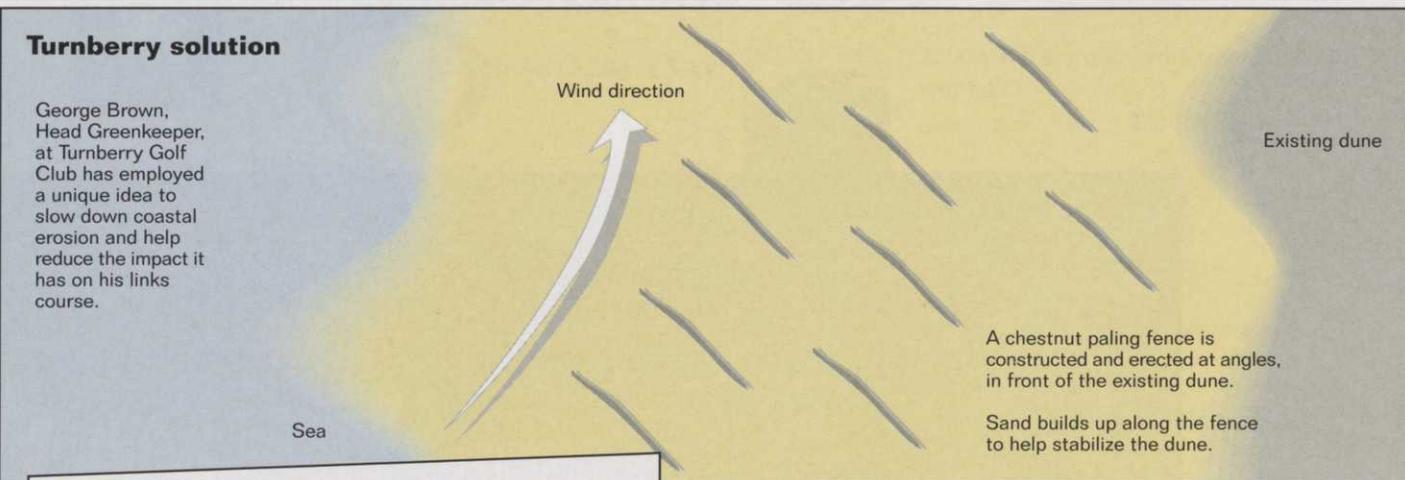
On-shore wind patterns cause sand to be blown inland, and typical 'dune' structures are eroded. This allows the sea to advance at a faster rate than normal, as it is not impeded by the normal dune structure.



Sand is blown inshore, over the top of existing dunes, causing the coastline to advance inland

Turnberry solution

George Brown, Head Greenkeeper, at Turnberry Golf Club has employed a unique idea to slow down coastal erosion and help reduce the impact it has on his links course.

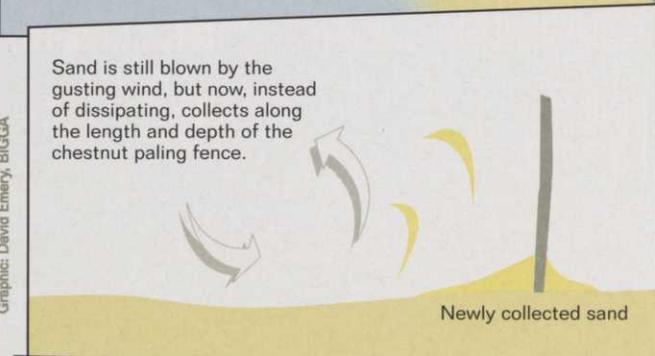


Existing dune

A chestnut paling fence is constructed and erected at angles, in front of the existing dune.

Sand builds up along the fence to help stabilize the dune.

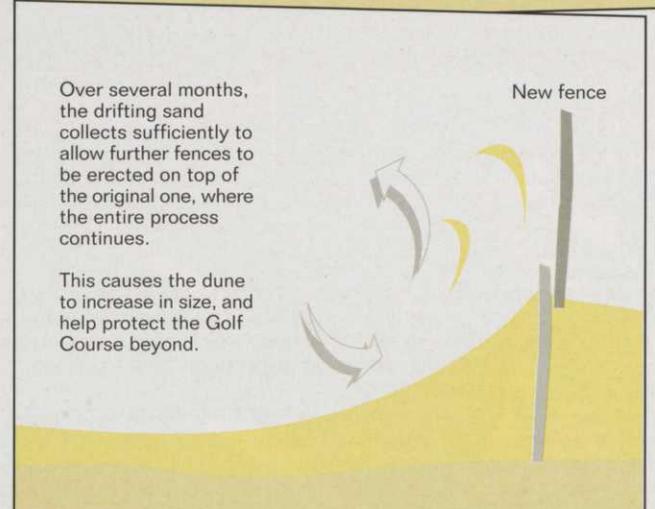
Sand is still blown by the gusting wind, but now, instead of dissipating, collects along the length and depth of the chestnut paling fence.



Newly collected sand

Over several months, the drifting sand collects sufficiently to allow further fences to be erected on top of the original one, where the entire process continues.

This causes the dune to increase in size, and help protect the Golf Course beyond.



New fence

George Brown's unique erosion defence system has been in place for over 6 years at Turnberry. Before the installation, drifting sand coming onto the links course was a major problem. Now however, virtually no sand is visible on the course, and the erosion is minimal. George estimates the cost for replacing the fencing every year is approximately £750 - £1,000.

worms will dig deeper in the hotter summers, but be more active in warmer wetter winters.

He also forecast an increase in the rat population, more wasps and slugs, greater mole activity and in uncultivated grassland weeds would flourish, particularly ragwort and thistle. Even the heathlands would not escape, heather will die back, heather beetles more numerous and bracken will take over the vacated ground.

The culprit he explained, was man's method of energy production, in other words, higher levels of carbon dioxide and methane gas in the atmosphere producing the greenhouse effect.

Although some of the sceptics viewed this prediction of doom and gloom like a page from Old Moore's Almanac, it stimulated a lively discussion after John Pethick, developing his examination of coastal erosion suggested that money spent on sand dune defences was akin to throwing cash into the sea.

He inferred that like King Canute, golf courses could not hold back the tide, no matter what defences they erected, be it rock, concrete or any of the various schemes tried at St. Andrews, Brancaster, Crail or Hayling Island.

His solution was that where links are under threat they should accept they will lose holes to the sea and re-build others where the moving sand has created new dunes.

Armoured defences were not sus-

tainable, they merely stop the sand coming in and prevent the dunes reacting to changing sea levels. Instead he proposed the migration of holes, employing a flexibility of architecture to suite the situation.

Among links most at risk was the Old Course itself, where the Eden estuary is widening, undercutting the defences built over the past three hundred years. His prediction was that in time the par-3 11th will be washed away and probably the 12th tee.

The reaction of Sir Michael Bonallack, quoted in the following day's issue of the Glasgow Herald, was - "To move this hole would be like repainting the Mona Lisa. I think there would be utter dismay throughout the world of golf... I hope it does not happen in my lifetime".

The Royal West Norfolk course at Brancaster, the venue of a seminar to discuss the wider aspects of coastal erosion last October, prompted the identification of a major conflict. This was the lack of agreement between various government bodies and singled out for special criticism was English Nature, who it was alleged were a 'bureaucratic spanner in the works' pursuing their own agenda regardless of the consequences and the interests of others.

They were accused of adopting a policy of preservation rather than conservation, though this was denied by Keith Duff, representing English Nature, who softened antagonism from the delegates with the confession that



he was one of a rare breed of environmentalists by also being a golfer!

Some decisions emanating from the European Parliament also attracted the wrath of many, who felt much of the legislation was draconian and unnecessary.

It was at this point there was a suggestion that the R&A could play an important role where there appeared to be unresolved differences, a mantle they were quick to accept, despite Sir Michael's earlier comment that the conference was for discussion not decisions.

Throughout the two days of intensive debate, the conference discussed irrigation, changing pesticide legislation, planning problems and the recently launched 'Committed to Green Foundation', headed by David Stubbs. This is the organisation that has taken over the role formerly held by the European Golf Association Ecology Unit. (Note - See last month's interview with David Stubbs by Scott MacCallum).

Committed to Green is currently funded by the R&A, the European Tour and the European Golf Association to promote environmental awareness in golf course management and design and construction, but Stubbs said he believes it should have a wider base, encompassing more sports than golf.

He told delegates that an approach had been made to the football authorities, which prompted Chris Kennedy, Wentworth's Course Manager to ask what common interests he had identi-

fied between golf and soccer.

Many felt that by expanding into other sports it would dilute the effect the organisation had set out to achieve in the Valderrama Declaration, though this was not accepted by some of the European representatives.

A Belgium representative said that what is lacking in the UK is a National Ecologist. The continentals would like Committed to Green to be expanded into other sports to give golf a bigger and better profile.

To close what had been two stimulating days, Michael Meacher, Secretary of State for the Environment, left the Commons early on Friday to give the conference an update on how the government were tackling the effects of climatic change, new pesticide regulations and pending legislation on water abstraction.

He said, referring to questions on coastal erosion, he accepted there was conflict on occasions between various departments under his control and agreed at times local officials used the written rules rather than the guidance notes.

Asked how clubs should react when met with bureaucratic intransigence, he suggested there was always a higher authority and if that did not work, take the matter up with a local MP. Finally he added, one can write directly to me.

Summing up, Mr Meacher said the way forward must be by consultation, not legislation. The R&A are in the van of environmental protection. ➔

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On course for change

NOTES

Water

Water is a commodity that we in Britain take for granted, though perhaps it is opportune to reflect on Thomas Fuller who wrote in the mid 17th century - "We never know the worth of water until the well runs dry".

Golf course irrigation, relatively new, but now regarded as essential will have to adapt to changing conditions. Mains water surprisingly used by two thirds of UK courses is certain to become far more expensive or discouraged altogether, extraction licences are to become 'time limited' and even where courses have their own supply such as bore holes it is likely amounts will be strictly controlled.

The predicted warmer, wetter winters will provide the opportunity for water storage and this is to be the government's policy, either held in lakes and ponds or perhaps underground tanks.

There could also be a trend to use re-claimed sewage effluent, where the quality of the water is quite safe for irrigation, but below the standards required for drinking. It also has the advantage of being far cheaper even when delivered by tanker into storage tanks.

Robin Hume suggested water costs can be cut dramatically by conducting an audit on annual usage. How much do you use? Are there any leaks on the

system? Are the sprinklers spaced correctly? Is there surface run-off when the system is operating?

He said an on site weather station can prove invaluable in saving water or failing that greenstaff should have access to up to date predictions of rainfall from their local meteorological centre.

And food for thought from the floor... It was reported that Hayling Island golf club have a 15 acre lake to meet their irrigation requirements. They also have a tangible investment with an annual income of £12,000 from the sale of fishing tickets to local anglers!

Turnberry

Put a highly experienced greenkeeper on the rostrum and invariably there will be a great deal of sense. Make the speaker George Brown, Turnberry's highly thought-of Course Manager and the presentation will be educational and not without some sharp witted humour.

Brown's two courses on the Ayrshire coast are quite unique. Twice these links have been torn up to build airfields, firstly during the 1914-18 war, then again in 1939 and with the construction of three concrete runways for U-boat hunting bombers it seemed that golf at Turnberry was doomed for ever.

It was Frank Hole, a British Transport executive who fought the government for sufficient compensation to re-build the links and this he did with Mackenzie Ross, recreating first the Ailsa course and then the Arran, putting on the map two of the finest golf courses in the world.

So good in fact, that had the Ailsa not been there, the Arran would have been more than a suitable venue for

the Open Championship.

Turnberry has had several owners since it was sold off by the railway company, but that long low glittering white hotel with its distinctive red roof still attracts golfers from all over the world.

As George said, 45,000 rounds of golf a year and as a round is now exclusive to hotel guests, they are always looking for that final game before flying to Japan, Australia or the USA, even if it means a 6.00am tee-off.

Maintaining two courses to a standard of perfection for twelve months in the year creates problems. His answer is aeration to greens, tees and fairways to minimise compaction, though if he adopted the usual method of tackling a green at a time with a hollow corer followed by top dressing, play would be disrupted.

His solution is to work on three greens at the same time, but only hollow tine half of the putting surface, leaving the remainder for play to continue. By this method he can complete

a course in 12 days and still keep play continuous without resorting to alternative greens.

Similarly he has adapted his verti-drain by adjusting the gears and altering the tine spacing to produce holes between 2 - 3 inches apart to cause less disruption to the surface. Slitting is undertaken on all the greens at least once a month.

Taking up Professor Pethick's argument that nature must take its course and nothing will stop the eventual erosion of the dunes, George showed how he has successfully harnessed wind and sand with the aid of simple, cheap chestnut paling.

The fencing is staked into the top of a threatened dune at an angle and as the sand builds up and covers the fence another is erected on the top. The dune then becomes stabilised with up to four fences buried in the sand one on top of the other.

This would seem to be a method that could usefully be tried on other links with similar problems.

Pesticides

Pesticide use has been increasing condemned by the 'Greens' as nothing more than chemical warfare on the environment. A description put with fervour and feeling by Mark Davis of the Pesticide Trust.

His view, certainly not shared and which most believed was totally overstated, was that the hi-tech courses rely more and more on pesticides without considering the alternatives.

He said that world-wide there were over 1,000 chemical products that had been approved and used, many containing acute toxicity which in the long term can produce chronic health affects. He added that in the UK there were 72 chemicals being applied to the

environment which were suspected to be endocrine disrupters or in other words can cause cancer.

His argument was for organic methods rather than chemical, though he appeared to have few solutions to worm control and none at all to an invasion of leather jackets.

Woodhall Spa's Peter Wisbey, no doubt with tongue in cheek, suggested the use of a fine tines perhaps with barbs for spearing, though George Brown thought closely spaced deep slitters could be more effective!

The research requirement by COSHH of all new products was highlighted by Richard Minton, Scotts Marketing Manager. He said it

required up to ten years research and millions of pounds investment extending to 100 individual tests before a new product satisfied European law. This could be a valid reason for the high cost.

The agricultural industry was by far the largest market for pesticide products, accounting for 97% of the products sold. Amenity and private gardens took up the remaining 3%, with gardens taking the larger share.

With these figures one can but wonder why golf courses are believed to be such pollute of the countryside, especially when on an average sized course of 120 acres it is only the greens and tees that receive a chemical application.

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A fine crop



Above (L-R): Rod Feltham, Johanna Feltham and Chris Briggs

Sure you can still see that original house from the window of the new offices on a small industrial estate in the village of Sandford but in every other respect you would need extremely powerful binoculars to look back and view the beginnings of the company from where they are now.

"In our first two years we reached where we hoped to be in five and if we'd said, ten years ago, that we'd be as heavily involved in London and the Home Counties, and indeed the entire south of England, I certainly wouldn't have imagined it," said Rod, who has 30 years experience of the amenity industry under his belt.

The rate of expansion of the company is almost at odds with Rod's own philosophy which is to take a cautious approach and not over stretch.

"It would have been easy to have said 'we're going into London and we'll need 'x' number of reps, let's put them in.' We didn't do it that way. We took on one rep and as the business grew, gradually took on more reps to the extent that in the five years since we opened our Bracknell depot we've taken on five," he said, by way of illustrating just that philosophy.

"It just evolved that way. Business came in and we needed to expand...and we still need to expand as there are some

areas - Norfolk and Suffolk - where we haven't got anyone. We certainly haven't finished expanding," he smiled.

Avoncrop Amenity Products was launched with a team of five who'd worked together for another company in the Bristol area, which had sold out, and it was to another former colleague Rod turned for assistance when the decision to strike out on their own was made.

"Avoncrop Ltd supply the commercial horticulture sector and the Managing Director is David O'niens. David and I worked for the same company in our raw, younger days and had remained friends ever since," explained Rod.

"He started Avoncrop Ltd in the early 70s and in 1989 we decided that we would form a sister company called Avoncrop Amenity Products to serve the local authority and sports club sector."

The two companies are entirely separate in their operation and are just linked at the top.

"My wife, Jennifer, and I are 50% partners with Avoncrop Ltd. It's virtually unheard of that a company should

A fine crop

M E M B E R



be in partnership with two individuals. In fact initially there were no forms to cover such a situation at the tax office," laughed Rod, as he remembered the incident.

"We decided to adopt the Avoncrop name because it had become widely known in commercial horticulture and we also decided to use the same logo."

From the beginning Rod was keen

me that's not right. As far as I'm concerned we're a team and every member of that team is equally important."

When Avoncrop Amenity Products was launched it was operating exclusively in the West Country and South Wales but since then - as well as the London breakthrough already mentioned - they cover the whole of the south of the country and much of the midlands.

"If you draw a line east to west through Stoke-on Trent that is about our border line. It roughly covers the Wash to Aberystwyth," explained Rod.

If there was a defining moment for Avoncrop Amenity Products - an occasion when the opportunity to move from being a regional West Country company to something somewhat larger - it was in '95 when, together with Avoncrop Ltd, they took the decision to take on a substantial depot, deep in the heart of the Home Counties.

"As we grew we began to get vibes that we should be moving into the London area but we felt we couldn't service them satisfactorily from our Sandford depot. So we decided to take the plunge and take over a large warehouse and offices in Bracknell. Our daughter, Johanna, who had joined us from a firm of accountants went up there and now runs that depot," said Rod.

"The cost was high but we felt we could do a good job. We worked out that within a 15 mile radius of the depot there were around 50 golf clubs."

It is a nice twist that Johanna Feltham runs the Avoncrop Amenity Product side of the Bracknell business and Chris O'nions, son of David O'nions, runs the Avoncrop Ltd side.

The Bracknell and Sandford teams get together at least twice a year while Rod does the majority of purchasing for both depots. Johanna, in her other role of Company Accounts Manager, travels to Sandford once a week on accounts business.

"There is a bit of healthy in-house competition about the size of our respective turnovers and until recently Sandford always held the upper hand but I think the scales have just about tipped in Bracknell's favour with about 51% of the total turnover coming from there," revealed Rod, with mock sorrow.

"There was a degree of inevitability about that but it has happened quicker than we'd thought," he said, while Johanna, on one of her visits to Sandford, looked on and smiled.

One of the other major appointments made by the company came 18 months ago when Chris Briggs, previously with Levingtons and Scotts, joined as Business Development Manager.

"The relationship between the distributor and the manufacturer is important and Chris was brought in to keep Technical Managers up to date with the new specifications of products and new recommendations from our manufacturer partners," said Rod.

"In the 10 year period that Avoncrop has been in existence technological advance has been greater than in the 30 years previous, such is the rate of

change," explained Chris.

"I organise technical training meetings where manufacturers give presentations and training sessions either here or on their own sites.

"Our team sell a number of different ranges and to do this effectively they must carry a lot of information around in their heads. They are also in close contact with the manufacturers and their reps on the road and, if they are ever in any doubt about anything, can always give them a call."

Among the companies for which Avoncrop distribute are Scotts, Barenbrug, Green-Relaaf, Terralift, Aventis, Pattison, Tacit, Amenity Technology, Vitax, Rufford and Famura while they also have their own brand fertilisers and top dressings.

"One of our policies was to have a very wide portfolio of products to offer the customer so that he had a choice but over the last couple of years we've looked to trim this a little," revealed Rod.

Rod, Chris and the Technical Managers are finding that the information required by the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper is becoming much more sophisticated.

"They are becoming degree orientated," said Rod.

"When I first started in the West Country the greenkeeper had followed his father and possibly his grandfather into the club. It was handed down. There are still a lot of guys like that and they are very important to us but the new breed are coming in and keeping us on our toes."

Avoncrop became a Silver Key Supporter of BIGGA in 1995 but had been heavily involved in the Association from day one.

"We worked very closely with the local Sections and worked closely with Gordon and Marion Child in the first two years of Westurf to get it off the ground. They did all the hard work but we gave assistance and that is typical of the relationships we've had with the Sections in the area," said Rod.

"We have always tried to sponsor a golf day or a seminar within each Section and as we have grown over the last five years we decided to put a little more in and become a Golden Key member.

"It is very important that we keep our team educated and it follows that it is important that our customers are the same. By helping the Education and Development Fund we can do that."

Avoncrop is also involved with the IOG while Rod is particularly proud to be the English representative of the European Golf Distributors' Association.

"We meet once a year and have general discussions on various trades, means of trading and products throughout Europe. In fact through this means we have introduced products like Green-Relaaf and Terralift to the continent which benefits the manufacturer."

If the rate of growth continues for Avoncrop Amenity Products who knows what the next 10 years will bring but one thing of which you can be sure, Rod Feltham will take a great deal of pleasure in plotting each path the company takes.



Above: Johanna displays one of the products from the many ranges Avoncrop stocks

that the company should be more than about merely selling products. They should also provide a service to clients.

"As business grew we took on more field staff and we were always extremely careful in who we appointed believing that we needed highly competent, technical people to provide the in depth back-up service we wanted to provide."

They also took the decision to start their own fleet of vehicles and now 98% of deliveries are completed this way.

"It is expensive to have your own fleet but on the other hand you do have control right to the end and that pays dividends. I believe the person who delivers the order is as important as anybody in the company. You often hear the phrase 'top management down to the lorry driver or warehouse man' but to



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Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

Central

The number of new members joining the Section is on the increase again this month and we extend a warm welcome to Stuart Bryceland, from Dullatur GC; Philip Butler, from Dunfermline GC; Robert Marshall, from Deer Park G&CC; Steven Turner, Ian Jarvis and John Aitken, all from Alloa GC, and James Bone, William Nisbet, Ian Kinley, Keith Martin and Will Philips all from St. Andrews. We also have Bruce Cruickshanks, from the Roxburgh GC, and his brother, Stuart, from Deer Park G & CC transferring to the Section. This brings the total increase in members this year so far to 26, which can't be bad considering we still have nine months of the year to go.

Congratulations go to Steven McAuchey, who has taken over as head man at Burntisland Golf Club and we wish him every success in the future.

The second draw for 'Club 2000' has taken place with the winner being Mrs Whitlaw, with ticket No. 249, who, believe it or not, is from the same area as last month's winner, Auchterarder!

Obviously Auchterarder is the place to live at the moment if you want to win £50 a month.

I think I will make up the whole of next month's report with the names of everyone who still hasn't returned their tickets for the draw. Yes, all 157 of you!

I take it that everyone who was at Harrogate enjoyed themselves and it was good to see so many Central Section members there, along with some former members. I met Craig Stewart and his wife. Craig was a founder member of the Section and gave us great support before moving to Germany some 13 years ago. I also met Ross Wilson, who was at Kinross before moving down south. Ross, here is the phone number you are looking for - 01577 862 235 as I don't think we exchanged cards before leaving Harrogate... or did we?

As the Section will be 20 years old later this year, does anyone have any

thoughts on how we should mark this occasion, if so, just get in touch with any committee member with your ideas and we will try to implement them.

Remember, next month's Spring Tournament is the final qualifier for this year's National Championship, which is again being sponsored by Charterhouse and Scotts. So, if you had a decent score at Balbirnie last autumn, get your entry in quick for St Andrews and you could be on your way to this year's premium golf tournament.

John Crawford

North

Several more new members to welcome to the section this month. From Cruden Bay there is David Sinclair and Gareth Evans; from Aberfeldy we welcome David Carr and Bob Masson; from Craigie Hill, Perth comes Colin Maclaren; from Carrbridge comes Michael Mann and, last but not least, we welcome Russell Horne from Hazelhead.

Unfortunately we are losing a few members though as Paul Murphy has decided to take his Downfield staff into the Central Section to cut down on the travelling. We thank Paul and his lads for supporting us over the years and ask the Central Section to keep a few spaces at their functions available so when Paul phones you in the morning of the event you can squeeze him in! - only joking, maybe.

The 200 Club cards will be with you by now, so please support your Section again this year and help us raise much needed funds. We are very grateful to MacNab Sports for sponsoring the 200 Club this year.

BTME was another great success this year and it was good to see that over half the North Section Committee were in attendance as well as many other members. The show is getting bigger every year and it is good to see more and more companies we deal with in Scotland present, either with stands or on Parent Company Stands.

The whole week was very well run, from workshops, conference right through to the Seminar programme. We had a bowling evening and a football evening as well as the two banquets. What more can you ask for. And as for the Bootleg Beatles, what

a night! Top that Neil. The raffle held during the show had some very good prizes and I was lucky enough to win a weekend stay at the Majestic Hotel in Harrogate for two. It will be strange going into the bar at night and not seeing the place full of greenkeepers. All I need to do now is persuade the wife to go on a weekend when Leeds are at home!

My talk to Captains and Greens Convenors last month was well attended, with twice the numbers we anticipated and, hopefully, they now have a better understanding of the way we work and just how complex a job greenkeeping is nowadays. Early feedback is very positive with a follow up seminar possibly in the near future at Clubs with no full-time staff.

Finally, last month the Section was represented for the second year running by a member attending the GCSAA show. This time Gordon Moir, St Andrews was present at the show, in New Orleans. I hope he had as good a time as I did last year.

Iain Macleod

West

Welcome to another round up of Section news.

By now you should all, hopefully, have received your 100 Club letter and acted accordingly to secure your ticket number.

If you would like to enter the draw please phone me for available tickets on the number below.

The annual Greenkeepers v Convenors match will be played at Cowglen GC in March. The spring meeting will be held at Ranfurly Castle GC on 27 April. And finally, football news. A match was played on January 13 between West Section and Division C Police. Stuart Taylor has kindly faxed me a blow by blow account of the game.

A poor performance from the boys this time with a distinct lack of composure in front of goal and at the back. Midfield needed the strength from a couple of players missing from the line-up as the fixture was arranged in haste. All credit to the lads who played, they didn't give in and all said and done could have produced a result if Gerry Bruen hadn't missed a penalty just before half time.

The police side had played together and it showed as their play was far

more fluent while we could string no more than two passes together. Alistair Taylor had a superb game giving an excellent account of himself producing some fine saves, even though the third goal was unseen due to the sunshine. The rest of us were mediocre to say the least and a few changes will be required for the next game. Thanks must go to everybody who made the effort and to Bob Graham, of Strathclyde Police C Division, for creating the challenge.

The venue of Fir Hill was superb with a great surface to play on. A rematch will be forthcoming. The next game against the East Section has been arranged for 20 February. The final result was a win for the Police by 4-2. The goal scorers for the West were Gerry Bruen and Ian Smith.

The team line up was as follows: Alistair Taylor, Gary Burns, Stuart Taylor, Alistair Smith, Colin Scott, Gerry Bruen, Sandy Brawley, Ian Smith, Brian Hillen, Kevin Campbell, Sub David Kerr, Strathclyde Police.

Thanks to Stuart Taylor for that report and also his time and effort spent arranging these fixtures.

That rounds up the news for this time. Please call me if you have some information or anything you would like to put into the section news.

0141 776 1532/07050 173080

Gavin Jarvis

Ayrshire

Well, that's Harrogate done and dusted for another year. This year I travelled with the Scottish bus to the Moat House and took in the exhibition and seminar programme. This was, as expected, expertly organised and run by Peter Boyd. The show just seems to get bigger and bigger every year and with the new Hall Q this year, it just seemed massive. It was good to meet many friends old and new and enjoy one or three refreshments which helps create that special atmosphere at Harrogate.

It was good to see some of our Section members from Arran at Harrogate, I hope you enjoyed the trip. Talking of Peter Boyd earlier, I must apologise to Peter and anyone else who misinterpreted my AGM report. My surprise comment was attributed to the small attendance and not Peter's presence.

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The Spring 2000 outing will be held at Western Gables on Wednesday, April 26 which will also be our National Championship qualifier. Due to the prestige of our venue and to secure our visit, it was necessary to make some sacrifices. The day will be reduced to one round only and there will be a maximum of 40 players. This will be organised on a first come, first served basis with priority given to regular attenders, which does not include late applications. The cost for the day is £17. To avoid disappointment, get your application and remittance to Derek Wilson at The Bungalow, Irvine Bogside Golf Club, Irvine, Ayrshire. The venues for the Autumn and 2001 outings are at an advanced stage which I hope to have for next month's notes. Any other news or views call me on 01505 683278. See you next month.

Iain Barr



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North West

Firstly allow me to apologise for there being no Section news in the February issue of Greenkeeper International, this was due to illness. To those of you who were able to get to Harrogate, I hope you all enjoyed the show and found something of interest. I missed this year, I think the first ever, but I am sure it was as good as ever.

Well, even though I have been ill I have tried to keep on top of arranging the years golf events and the 'Mere Seminar'. I think everything is finalised except for the fixture lists which you should all receive shortly. The first event is the Mere Seminar on Thursday, March 16. This should prove to be a very good seminar with three speakers from the STRI and Martin Gunn, Course Manager at Temple Golf Club and winner of the Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Amazone Groundcare and Grass Roots. The three speakers from the STRI are Bob Taylor, Ecologist; Andy Cole, Agronomist and Jonathan Tucker, Architect. These seminars are costly to arrange, so

please support the Section and make every effort to attend. Golf Club Secretaries and members of Green Committees are also welcome.

The first golf event is the annual match against North Wales section at Hazel Grove Golf Club on Thursday 20 April and I will require a team to try to win the GEM Trophy. If you are interested, contact me on 0151 724 5412.

Bert Cross

North East

The Section would like to thank Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, for taking the greenkeepers to BTME. Once again a large turn out seemed to enjoy themselves.

Just to remind members that the Spring competition is at Bamburgh Castle GC on 13 April. Tee off time is 10am with a maximum number of 40 players.

The autumn competition is at Ryton Golf Club on a different date, now 21 September. Tee off 9.30 to 11am.

I have heard through the grapevine that the Cleveland match has been arranged but I have had no confirmation just yet.

We have had six new members join the Section up to now this year, so come on Head Greenkeepers who are only members themselves, get your staff recruited.

Jimmy Richardson

North Wales

BTME, well I couldn't make it this year and by the looks of things not many of you could either. The coach was only half full so it looks like a mini bus next year. Sorry.

Went to a couple of good lectures last month. The first by Dr James Beard at Carden Park. He was excellent. The future for us greenkeepers looks quite amazing as he talked about 'Star Turf' and all the computerised gadgetry coming our way.

That was followed again by the lecture on soil and water management at the Welsh College given by John Mullins and Justin Smith which, with the aid of computers, actually showed football pitches, race courses and farm land where, compaction, lack of nutrients etc., were a problem. Fantastic stuff. I've never seen a group of greenkeepers so intrigued

Our next lecture at the college is on March 22 at 2.30 by Ted Lloyd on the Rules of Golf and the Greenkeeper and Pat Flannery, of Shoreco-Survey, on surveying and levelling. Again, free to members a quid to guests.

One last thing. Any of you GTC assessors that haven't returned the letter I sent you, remember your qualifications will not remain current.

See ya.

Dave Goodridge.

Northern

I've just about recovered from Harrogate. Nice to see so many friends from last year and beyond in some cases. Many thanks to Dennis Cockburn and Gary Potter for helping me to man the Northern Region Stand on our stint, especially as I had a good night on the town the night before or was it the morning!

For those who went to the Northern Section and Rigby Taylor Seminar recently, I hope everyone enjoyed the event with the quality speakers lined up. Thanks to Mike Brear and Rigby Taylor for organising the event for us.

Annual Dinner Dance is in a few days on March 11, so all those going can look forward to a good night out!

The latest golf news is that the Spring meeting will be held at Bradley Hall GC on Tuesday, April 11. This event is kindly being sponsored by Ritefeed and is a qualifier for the National Championship. Other deferred events are as follows:

President's Day, Hollins Hall H&CC, Wednesday, June 21; Roses Match, Longridge GC, Wednesday, August 16; Invitation Day, Cookridge Hall G&CC, Wednesday, October 18. All entries for the golf events are to be sent to myself and must be received along with the FULL amount of £17.50 no later than seven days before the event. Entries will be on a first come first in basis, so book early to avoid disappointment. For the Roses Match, if you want a hand in beating the old enemy, then let me know of your availability so a winning team can be picked. This event is fully sponsored so all you have to do is turn up and win! At a recent committee meeting it was decided for the Xmas golf to give priority to those members who have played in at least two events during the year. This was done to avoid disappointment from

the regulars.

The Northern Region are having a new event called the Whitehall Bowl at Penrith GC. This used to be the Cumbria Cup and is now open to all Sections in the Northern Region. For further details contact Andrew Vincent on 07971 292626.

We welcome this month as new members: Tom Harrison, Oulton Park GC; Christian Martindale, Queensbury GC; Leslie Nelson, Boothferry GC; David Thorn, Alwoodley GC.

You can be assured of a warm welcome at any of our Section events. If you have any queries, don't hesitate in picking the phone up and giving us a ring. There is no other news at the moment, if anybody has any information or ideas for section events, either educational or social, then let me know. It is your Section. My address is 67 Asquith Avenue, Morley, Leeds LS27 9QS or telephone at home 0113 238 3188/mobile 07790 678572.

Andy Smith

Cleveland

Arrangements for this year's Spring Tournament are well under way. Sponsors have been found, prizes have been purchased, a venue sorted and a date finalised. All that's left is for you to turn up. The Tournament will be at Ramside on April 11. The first tee time is 11am. Please note, soft spikes must be worn. The competition format will be medal, full handicap in three divisions. 0-9 Hcp, 10-18 Hcp and 19-28 Hcp. The cost will be £10 including meal. Thanks to Roger Shaw, Course Manager at Ramside for allowing us the use of the course, and thanks also to the three main sponsors. Border Sports, Gem Professional and Sportlands.

A maximum 30 places are available, so book early to avoid disappointment by calling Barry Walker on 0589 658161 or myself on 0708 196558.

The Cleveland Shield knockout Tournament will again be sponsored by Carrs. Many thanks to them. Entries are now being taken. Last year's winner, the Beast of Bedale, Alex Russell, will be out to defend his title and Barry Walker will be hoping to go one better this year. He's been a beaten semi-finalist two years running. If you would like to take part,

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contact either of the two numbers above. Entry is £2.

My wife and I had our first child on 9 January, Lauren Morgan, weighing 6 lbs 12 oz, was delivered by Caesarean section. Please send all cards and gifts c/o The Wynyard Club!

Oliver Shepard's quest for a life partner has been fruitless. There was a poor response to his appeal in last month's magazine. The search continues, he won't give up as the force is with him.

Any news call me on 0780819 6558.

Steven Jaques

Midland Region

East Midlands

Congratulations should go this month to Ian Needham, of Beedles Lake Golf Club, who, on March 1, became Captain of the Club for the Millennium year. Also, at the same time, Ian's wife, Janet, became Lady Captain of the same Club. Ian is also the Course Manager at Beedles Lake GC. On behalf of the Section I would like to wish both Janet and Ian a most successful year.

This year's BTME again proved a great success, although I personally only attended one day, it was great to see some new faces from within the

Section at the show. Also it was nice talking to our two former Section Secretaries, Gordon Mitchell and Tony Howarth, about old times.

On January 11 the Section ran a trip to Pride Park, home of Derby County FC. We were kindly given a tour of the ground and facilities by Mark Robinson, Head Groundsman and Keith Bonser, Tour Supervisor. We were also allowed to look around the trophy cabinet, which is now home to the old Watney Cup.

On behalf of the Section I would like to thank Mark, Keith and Colin Tunnicliffe for such an entertaining day which was even enjoyed by the Leicester City supporters of our Section. Also our thanks should be extended to our former Chairman, Dave Leatherland, who organised this trip.

This year's East Midlands v East of England Golf Match for the Toro Shield will be hosted by Burghley Park GC on Tuesday, August 15. Tee off time 3.45 - 4.30 pm.

Antony Bindley

East of England

The winter Education Seminar held at Newark Golf Club was very well attended, 50 members, and made our Section a good profit. The event was sponsored by County Crops now named Alpha Amenity. Thanks to Andrew Astle for his support and sponsorship.

The programme for the evening was kicked off by David Stansfield, of

PSD Agronomy, who talked about 'Why we need an agronomist'. Then Derek Smith, of Johnson Seeds, talked on 'selecting seed' and last we had Mark De-Ath, Headlands Amenity, who told us 'What we are buying in Fertilisers'.

New fixture cards will be with you soon. They have been sponsored by Barenbrug's Ben Petijean and Aitken's Peter Fell, so I hope more members will be available to play and attend events organised this year.

There is to be a trip in the spring to the Scotts Amenity factory in East Yorkshire, where you can see how fertiliser chemicals are made, tour the labs, discuss future developments etc. There will be a buffet and drink free of charge and a bus if sufficient members show interest. Let me know if you are available. The first twenty members go, so reserve a place.

G A MacDonald

Midland

As there was no report in the February issue of this magazine, I have some news for you to catch up with.

I would like to start by wishing Edward Stant all the very best in his new position as Head Greenkeeper at Penn Golf Club. Ed worked for a long period at Walsall Golf Club before taking this, his first Head Greenkeepers position. Best wishes from all the Midland Section.

All the new season's fixture list and competition information should have

now reached all of you; if by any chance you have not received yours, here is the fixtures. 28 April, South Staffs Golf Club. 19 July, Walsall Golf Club. 20 September, Penn Golf Club (27 holes). 6 December Christmas competition and AGM.

There will be only one knockout competition this year and that will be the doubles. We have arranged three matches. They are as follows: 21 August against the Stewards to be held at the Wrekin Golf Club. There will be a match against the North West, no date or venue as yet and finally the usual match against the East Midlands but again, no date or venue has been arranged at this time.

The new committee has now been formed and these are the positions for the coming year. President, Alan Kite, Chairman; Peter Richmonds, Secretary; Jonathan Wood, Competitions; Rhys Thomas and Ed Stant, Treasurer, Kim Blake. Other members of the committee are Andrew Smith, Peter Holtham and Nigel Couchman.

As a committee we will be producing an agenda for the coming year so we have something to focus on regarding the events for the coming year. When this is complete, I will put a copy into this report.

Finally, I will ask any of you who have ideas or information for this article, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me on 01562 861434 or 0370 956238.

Jonathan Wood

Your greens' quality is riding on it.



Kent

I would like to begin with a belated thank you to Mrs Cross for the courtesy of the course at Darenth Valley and for her kind donation.

Thanks also to Paul the chef and staff, Kate and Becky, for being fantastic waitresses.

Congratulations go to Kneale Diamond on his recent appointment as Course Manager at Hanbury Manor Golf Club.

Kneale was a strong supporter of the Kent Section and also a member of the committee. Our thanks to Kneale for all his hard work and we wish him all the very best in the future.

Replacing Kneale on the committee will be James Duncan, of Boughton Golf Club. James will be trying to keep you up-to-date with all the latest news in the Kent Section and will be grateful to hear any news or gossip that you have. He can be contacted on 01227 750281.

The new committee is: Gary Debenham, Secretary / Treasurer, Trevor Hindmarsh; Chairman. Barry Jackson; Vice Chairman. James Duncan, Press Officer. John Fullagar, Committee.

Once again this year we will be producing a fixture card with forthcoming events. This should be with you around the end of the month.

We are also looking for venues for next year, so if your club is available please contact me.

James Duncan



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

Essex

New Members: Three new names this month, Gareth Dowsett and Derek Blake, both from Orsett Golf Club, a long standing producer of fine committee members, and David Banks, from Colchester Golf Club, a long standing producer of single figure golfers, Head Greenkeepers excepted.

Education: John Sinclair - 01702 589063

After taking on the scribes position I thought it my duty to attend one of the Section events other than a golf day. But when it dawned on me that the first such event was an evening lecture, I suddenly was not as keen. I was expecting to be sat down in front of a salesman who relentlessly shoved his product under my nose for two dull hours. In reality it was quite the opposite. John Mullins, of Supaturf, who incidentally are celebrating their 40th anniversary this year, headed a well rehearsed and researched discussion on water management and wetting agents which all of the 20 attending members listened to attentively. John tells me that for those not attending, a fact sheet may be available if you contact him on 01455 639639. Believe me, it's well worth reading.

The next lecture to be held at Writtle College is provisionally booked for 23

March in room U3. The subject detail has not yet been finalised, so please contact John nearer the date.

The first of two D32/D33 Assessors moderation meetings for this and subsequent years, was held at Chigwell GC on 26 January. The meeting was chaired by Peter Jones who is contactable by anybody interested in gaining the D32/D33 award at the GTC on 01347 838640.

Golf Fixtures: Dominic Rogers - 01375 892353

The first, and for some time the most important golf fixture of the year is the 'Spring Trophy' National Qualifier, especially for those trying to emulate the great Andy Sheehan and make it all the way to the finals. This year's event is held at Forrester Park Golf Club on Wednesday, April 12. Details should already be with you, if not, contact John Selwood on 01279 833123. Get your entries in asap as this one fills up very quickly.

Invitations for the Gentleman's Dinner and Golf Event were sent out at the beginning of February and if you did not send yours back almost by return of post, chances are you're not going. Good luck to all our Section members who are travelling down to Walton Heath Golf Club on 10 March.

Congratulations: Four of our Section members have recently passed the Higher National Certificate in 'Sportsturf Science' at Writtle College. Our very own Secretary, Martin Forrester, Stapleford Abbots GC;

Keith Chinnery and Gary Stewart, both Colchester GC, and Colin Mumford, who has left his post as Head Greenkeeper at North Weald to continue his education. All finished their two year day release course in January. Being in my second year of the course myself, I am sure that Martin, Keith and Gary do not envy Colin one bit, the further hours he will spend with his nose in books revising for yet more exams. Well done one and all. All four have implied to me that they would recommend it to anybody considering taking up the challenge, but be prepared to forego your private life for two years. Would-be agronomists should contact Stewart Brown at Writtle College 01245 420705.

Help! Hopefully this will be a regular feature of my reports. It is for any members who are considering the purchase of new machinery or having contractors carry out some work on their course and would like the impartial advice of greenkeepers who already own the particular machine or have used the contractors before. Additionally, it could be used for anybody that wants to pick the brains of other greenkeepers for information of any kind. This is how it works. Send me details of your prospective quandary. I will put it briefly into print and let the thousands who read the magazine answer your questions. Easy! My address is 17 Templar Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 3FA Steve Crosdale.



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BRINGS QUALITY TO THE SURFACE

Ad Ref 61

Surrey

Your committee had its first Millennium meeting on January 24, 2000. By now all members should have received the programme of golf venues for this year. Please make sure that if you want details and application forms for these golf days you must return the enclosed completed slip to Ian Sellars your Section Secretary, Mobile 0976 709145.

The golf events for 2000 are as follows: May 4, Merrist Wood Medal Competition - Soft spikes only; June 30, Gatton Manor; Cresta Cup; To be advised the end July, Sunningdale, The McMillan Tankard; 30 August, Addington Palace; Sept/Oct Laleham; November 30 Tyrrells Wood Turkey Trot.

Scotland v England Hankley Common, date to be advised.

The Huxley Bowl has been renamed the Sisis Bowl and application forms will be sent with this year's events form. The Sisis forms should have been returned by March 1 and the first round matches played by end April.

Congratulations to Clive Osgood on being appointed BIGGA National Vice Chairman and a thank you in advance to Clive for arranging for South East Region to have its Gentleman's Evening once again at Walton Heath on March 10.

A warm hello to Tony Bremner who has joined Surrey Section, from Sussex, after being appointed Head Greenkeeper at Dorking Golf Club.

It is hoped that some non-golfing/educational/social events will be announced later, so keep watching this space.

The writer would also like to confirm his move from Patissons to Tacit.
Brian Willmott



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

Westurf at Westpoint Wednesday, April 12, 2000

Again indoors at Westpoint in Exeter. Bigger and better than ever. Four Education seminars this year: Shaun Simones PhD, "The benefits of Microbials in Turfgrass Management"; David Shelton, "Sportsturf Drainage - now affordable for the majority?"; Nigel Church, "Maintain to save" (Essential machinery maintenance); Nick Prall, of the Environmental Agency "We need a bore-hole. How do we go about it?"

These seminars are absolutely free to all attendees. How can you afford to miss them?

There will be entertainment. See how long you can stay on the Rodeo Bull and try your hand on the golf simulator. There will be competitions for both of these with proceeds going to a cancer charity. There will be first aid demonstrations and of course all the leading suppliers and manufacturers will be represented. This is the only show in the South West where you can see and compare all the latest machinery,

technology and amenity products.

Your golf course/bowling green/cricket pitch is only as good as the people who look after them. The trade work very closely with the greenkeepers and groundsmen and have experts who can help and advise. Why not come and meet them all. You can learn so much.

Oh, and don't forget to bring the person who signs the cheques.

Paula Humphries

South Wales

It's the time of our evening lectures and they began on January 8, at Pencoed College, with Tony Horne, with an insight into the amazing construction of what used to be the Cardiff Arms Park now known as the Millennium Stadium. Tony showed us slides from the demolition of the existing ground to what almost seemed an impossible task to complete the new stadium in time for the 1999 Rugby World Cup. Tony also touched on the turf tiles looking into the construction and movement of them which seems expensive but opens the stadium up to a host of other things.

Thank you Tony for what was a very informative lecture. Thanks also to our friends of the IOG in attending the combined evening lectures which must have been the most attended evening to date.

I'll bring you up to date with the changed schedule for our February lecture next month. Looking to March 8, again to be held at Pencoed College, we have a First Aid Evening by the British Red Cross. On to April 5, our annual quiz.

This years Westurf at Westpoint is to be held on April 12 and is a must for all members to attend for what is an excellent day.

With spring just around the corner, next month dates will be finalised for our golf fixtures and cards will be sent out to members as soon as they have been processed.

Congratulations to Russell Anderson, from the Celtic Manor Golf Resort, who has been appointed Course Manager at Cardiff GC and to Ray Hunt, Course Manager from the Forest of Arden who is now appointed Head Greenkeeper at the Pyle & Kenfig GC.

Richard Hatcher

Devon & Cornwall

The first event of the new year for many members was to attend BTME 2000 held in the lovely town of Harrogate. The Region's now annual trip to the show departed on time from Exeter but those of you who have travelled with the Region know that our trips are not boring and this year was no exception as both the coaches were pulled in by the Police for a safety check at Sedgemoor services. The hour delay was quickly picked up as the second coach was checked first and was sent on its way to the other pick up points. Then, at Tamworth we were informed that the M1 was shut due to an accident. Our coach drivers then took us on a tour of the Midlands, after avoiding a second

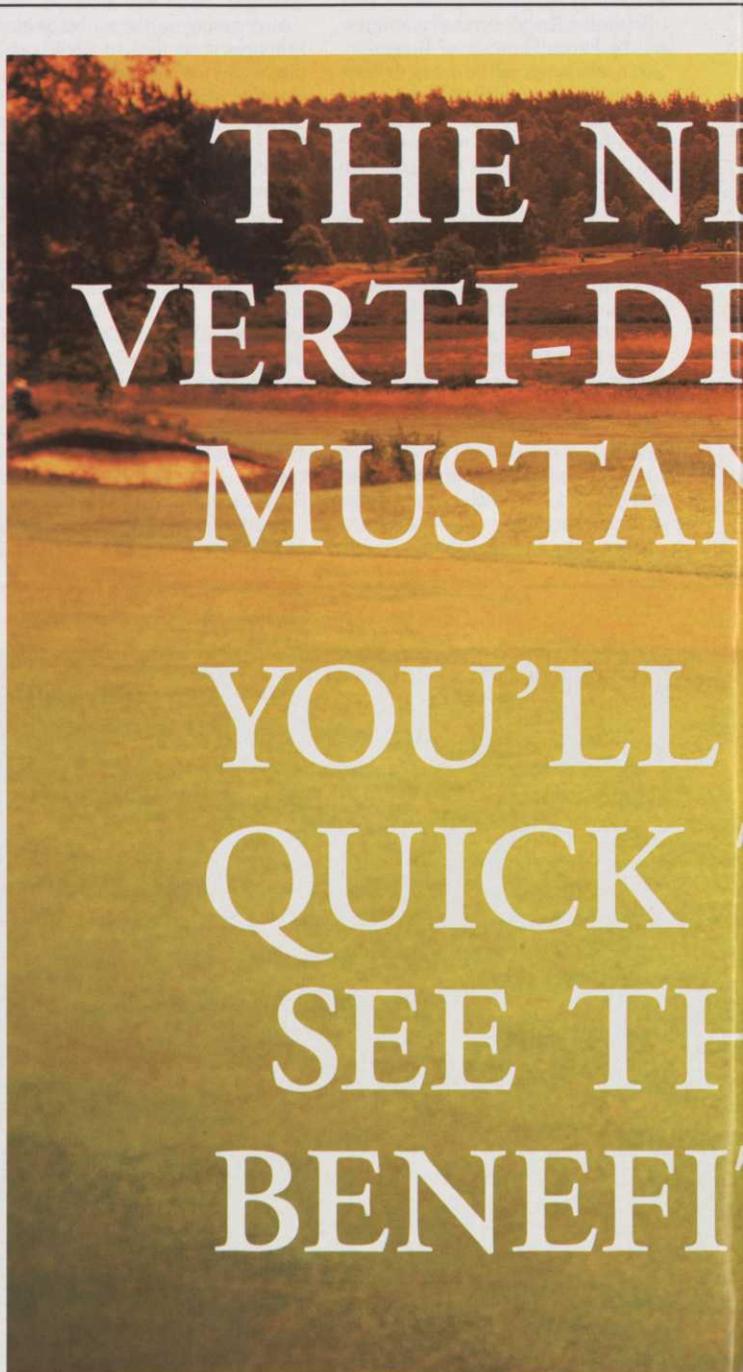
road accident before rejoining the M1 and finally arriving in Harrogate at 6pm. On the Thursday morning, those who were having a lay in were awoken by the fire alarm and three fire engines arriving at the hotel. The fault was in one of the lifts and Paula, our Regional Administrator, was trapped in one. Strong John managed to open the doors, just like James Bond, and they were able to make their way out of the hotel. The journey home went off without a hitch.

The show itself just seems to get better each year and is now one that

you can't afford to miss. On Wednesday night, Amenity Technology put on an evening for delegates which was simply just buzzing with atmosphere.

Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator and Stuart Ashworthy, of Amenity Technology, who had organised the superb trip. Also I would like to congratulate all the staff at Head Office for organising a superb BTME.

The Section's first meeting of the year was sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds and held at The Warren Golf Club on Wednesday, January 28.



Without doubt, the new Verti-Drain Mustang is the fastest, most effective aerator on the market today.

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



The Warren's new Head Greenkeeper, Kevin Rawlings, must have wished he had started his new job a month later as more than 50 members attended the meeting but I am sure his fears were soon put at ease with the friendly atmosphere which is always present at our meetings.

The day started with our golfing members competing over the clubs links course for prizes kindly donated by Barenbrug UK, our non golfing members were treated to a guided tour of the sheds and course by Kevin before returning for lunch.

After an excellent lunch Alan Lomas, Business Development Manager of Barenbrug UK, presented the mornings golf prizes as follows.

1. Neil Williams, Stover, 42 pts;
2. John Parr, Exeter, 41 pts on back 9;
3. Richard Daly, Exeter, 41 pts.

Alan continued after the prize presentation with a short Company presentation of Barenbrug before concluding the day with his educational presentation on "The Importance of Overseeding".

The Section would like to thank our meeting sponsor Barenbrug and

Alan Lomas, for without them this meeting would not have taken place. Also our thanks must go to Kevin Rawlings and his crew for all their effort on the day. Last but not least, our thanks must go to The Warren Golf Club for allowing the section use of their facilities and all their staff who made our day run so smoothly.

Our last meeting of the winter programme will be the Rhone Poulenc & Supaturf meeting which will be held at Yelverton Golf Club on Tuesday, March 28. The day will start as always with golfing mem-

bers competing for the Supaturf Trophy, Head Greenkeepers, Rhone Poulenc Trophy, Assistants.

Westurf is now just around the corner both in terms of date and venue, As you are aware, the show is to be held at Westpoint, Exeter on Wednesday, April 12. This must be a show you can't afford to miss, so let's see a big attendance from the section and support the region, so the region can support you.

Remember that Westurf is now at Westpoint, Exeter on Wednesday April 12.

Richard Whyman.



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South West

This year's BTME promised and delivered a truly memorable event in Harrogate during January. The actual trip up to Harrogate was an epic journey. Firstly the coaches were pulled over by the police who discovered some 'minor technical problems' with the coaches including a cracked chassis. Delay was further increased by an accident which caused virtually the whole of the M1 in Yorkshire to be gridlocked.

However, we got there eventually thanks to Amenity Technology who very kindly sponsored the coaches.

The show itself really was an impressively large event, spread over a vast area and attended by virtually every company in the country connected with greenkeeping. However, an American exhibitor pointed out that the equivalent show in the USA was five times bigger than BTME in Harrogate.

It was nice to see so many familiar faces and some very famous faces networking and discussing the very latest theories on how to achieve those perfect greens.

Overall most people were amazed by the quality of the show and the excellent value of the whole week.

Paula Humphries should be congratulated for all the hard work required to organise a trip right down to the very last detail. Amenity Technology should also be congratulated for putting on a huge spread of drink and nibbles at the Old Swan Hotel. That event was certainly well attended.

This leads me to the next meeting of the greenkeeping industry which is Westurf, which for the second year will be held at Westpoint near Exeter on April 12. This under cover event is a chance to meet all the local dealers and suppliers, and at the same time raise much needed funds. Remember, Westurf is only one month

away, so book your ticket now by telephoning Paula on 01288 352194. Also contact Paula if you would like to attend the Pre Westurf dinner dance planned the night before in Exeter on April 11.

The next golfing event for the Section is the Spring Tournament at Clevedon Golf Club on April 18. On the topic of golfing fixtures a few people have spoken to me about the possibility of holding a golfing day outside the Region at one of the top courses, perhaps near London. The day could include a bus trip to the course, a talk, a look around the facilities, meal and a chance to play the course. If you are interested in this idea please contact me on the number below.

I have already started to organise more education and training courses this year, with a number of dates earmarked. There is an abrasive wheel course on 12 April with a few places still remaining. A PA1 Foundation Spraying Module will take place in May with a few places also to be filled. Further Spraying courses will take place later in the Summer. A first aid course will take place in September so book early to avoid disappointment.

I announced at the AGM last November that I will stand down from my position as Education and Reports officer at the next AGM, this coming November. If you would like to take over this position, please contact me on Tel: 01249 783382.

Paul Cunningham



South East

Grey days, wet days, frosty mornings, ropes, posts, white

lines, temporary greens, all conjure up thoughts of how different golf courses look throughout the winter months. But in the dark dreary days of winter there is a small break in the overcast skies and it's called Harrogate.

The BTME show was excellent; good seminars, great workshops and a thoroughly professional show of sportsturf machines and suppliers. Personally I would recommend the show to any greenkeeper, regardless of status, to attend. Mind you, it wasn't all hard work. The apres seminar entertainment was good too. I'll not publicly mention any name for fear of recriminations, but I hear Terry Crawford had a great time at the infamous Jimmy's Bar.

Joe Paulin, of Golden Eagle Agronomy, gave a presentation on Monday, January 24 on the problems of growing in a new golf course at Belvoir Park Golf Club.

Different turf management practices were discussed and Joe focussed his talk on the work carried out at the Monarch's Course, Gleneagles and the London Golf Club. The good turn out of members found Joe's obviously extensive knowledge on this subject very beneficial. Many thanks Joe for an excellent night and for spending your time chatting to us. Any member who didn't attend missed a great night's education.

Joe Paulin can be contacted on 01247 468182.

New members to the Section this month are Ian Martin and Robert Morrison. Please feel free to come and join in any event.

Warren Burnside, from Malone Golf Club, returned to work after being involved in a car accident before Christmas. Good to see you back at work and fit and well Warren. Warren took advantage of the Personal Insurance Scheme which BIGGA provide free with

membership and obtained £300 on top of his sick pay while he was off. This is one of the many benefits of being a member of BIGGA and if you are reading this and you are not a member, then why aren't you?

Commiserations to Michael King from Royal County Down, who broke his leg on a works night out. Michael claims he slipped on the ice but Alan Strachan remembers a dry night, free from any frost! Too many sodas maybe, who knows, but we wish you a speedy recovery Michael.

Also congratulations to Perry Orr, from Malone Golf Club, whose wife is expecting their second child. Perry tried to keep this under wraps but Graham Wylie found out and well, now the whole countryside knows.

February 2 saw a meeting of the North-East and South-East Sections at Greenmount College. A few members of each Section attended to iron out any behind the scenes problems that may arise from the two Sections amalgamating. This was a productive evening and the two parties agreed that an EGM was to be held on February 16, 2000 at Greenmount College to elect one committee to govern the Northern Ireland Region.

See you next month. Roll on the summer.

Iain Harrison



See you all next month



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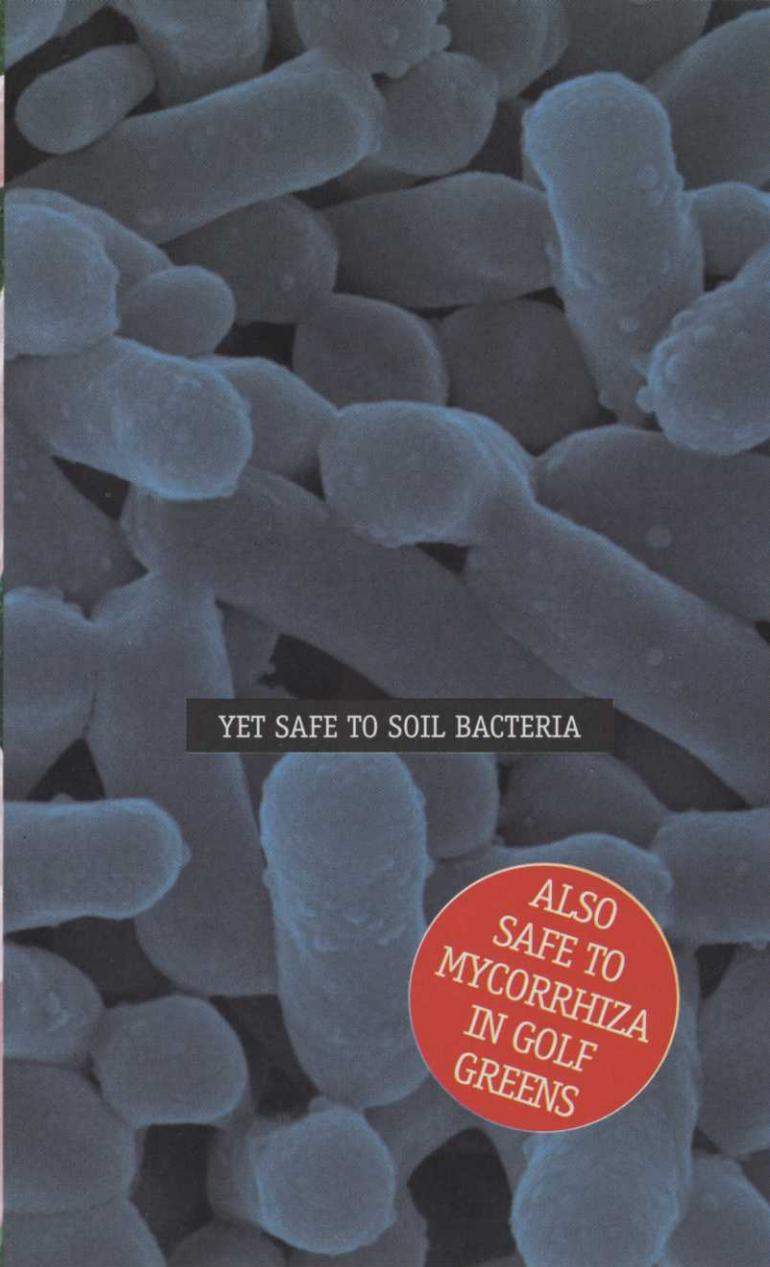
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PAR 4

S.I. 8

Roland Taylor looks at modern day course furniture and gives some advice about how it could be put to best use

Finishing touches

With all that is involved in turf management on a modern golf course, it is easy to overlook other aspects that are going in to making it one which golfers will want to join or keep returning too. Most courses that have been constructed over the last two decades are commercially based simply due to the investment involved. Attracting members and visitors requires more than paying attention to the playing surface of the course.

Image

Modern marketing has indoctrinated the public and, as a result, has heightened their expectations - none more so than in the field of leisure activities. Public perceptions have become one of the most important elements in any business, and, make no mistake, the majority of golf courses are operating in this league. It is a highly competitive world and so the road to success means standing out from the rest. These days having a corporate identity is very fashionable and this usually includes a logo. These are ideal for including on suitable items of course

furniture such as flags and tee signage. The presentation of each hole is important and money spent on this certainly enhances the image.

Today's work environment is highly stressful so when it comes to leisure, people want to feel relaxed and comfortable. For a majority of golfers the tranquillity and visual aspects of a course are part of the enjoyment of the game. Creating the right image and atmosphere is what it's all about.

For things to run smoothly people need information and instructions, but this should be done discreetly, otherwise it can be irritating and unsightly. Therefore the inclusion of any signage, whether out on the course or around the complex, needs to be carefully thought through so that it blends into the surroundings without being intrusive.

As far as responsibility for course furniture and signage is concerned this will depend on each club. At a new venue it will probably be the architect, but for older, established courses it may fall to the Course Manager or greenkeeper.

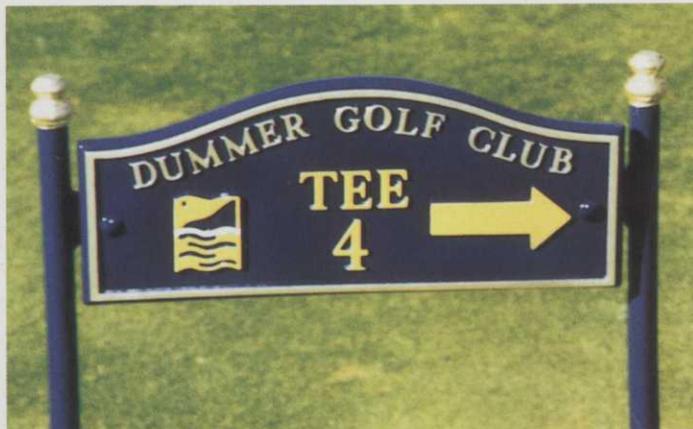
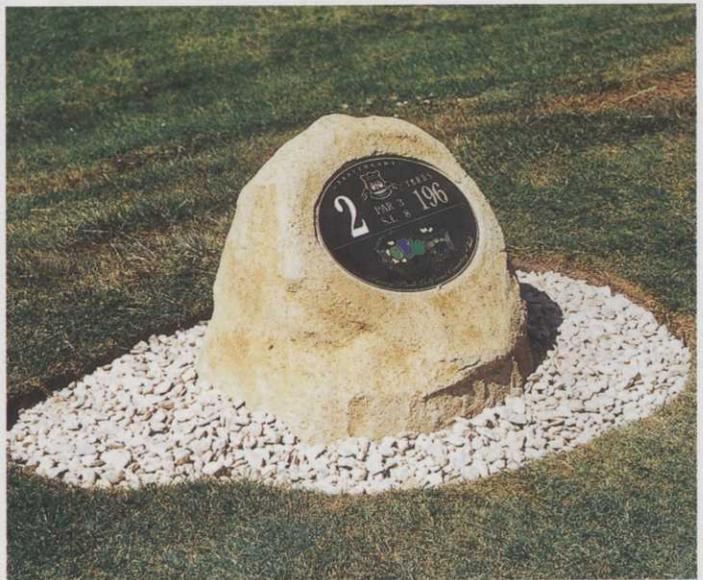
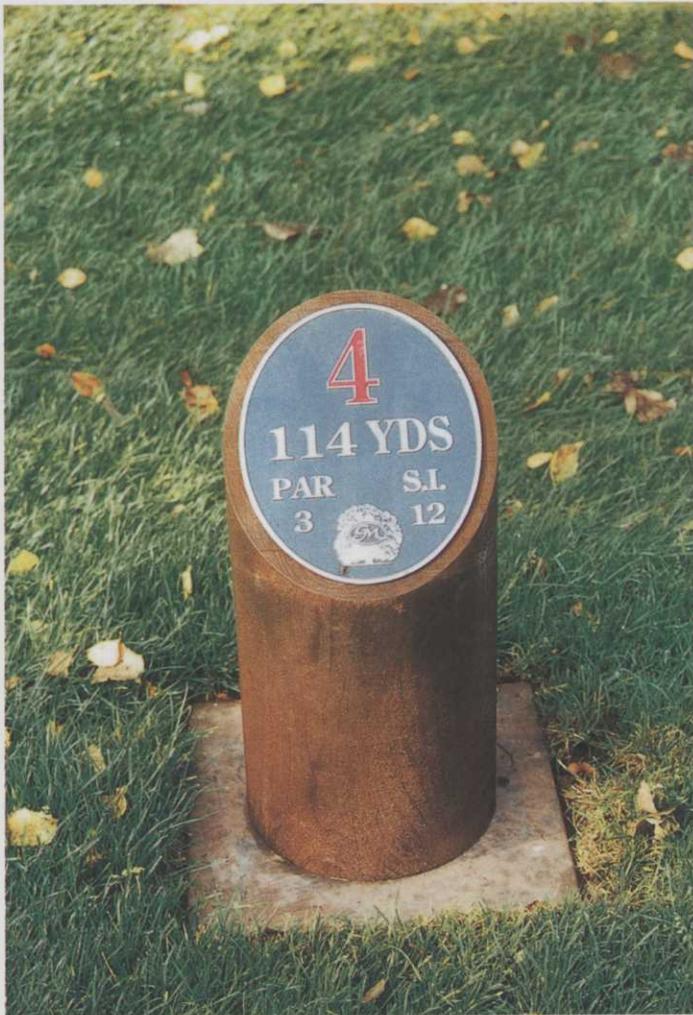
Taking stock

Golf is now playable virtually 365 days of the year, although spring and summer are naturally the busiest periods. Now is an ideal time to take stock and look to improve the present situation. As most courses are relatively exposed, winter gales and the accompanying rain or snow can play havoc with course accessories, especially signage. Some renovation work will very likely have to be carried out and, quite possibly, replacements are going to be required. In this situation you will need to take a look at what is available and to check out the latest technology.

Latest technology

In recent years, modern technology has introduced processes that produce some very adaptable compounds. Manufacturers have turned these into highly durable accessories that can take most of what nature throws at them for years to come. The selections on offer can be blended with the environment where they are going to be located. For instance, a course, which is situated in a specific geological area,

Finishing touches



can have artificial boulders that match the natural rock found in that location. This means that man made additions can be naturally blended into the landscape to enhance an area where they are sited. Likewise logs can be used in a woodland setting. If this material is being used ensure it is of the highest quality hardwood and treated for longevity.

Whichever base product is used plates or plaques of either zinc, slate or cast bronze can be attached to provide information. Using a photographic process, a logo, and diagrams of the hole - in fact virtually anything can be etched onto these plates. The surfaces are then coated in epoxy resins and polyurethane. This protects them from sunlight and the ravages of weather as well as keeping them looking good for many years, with only a minimum of maintenance.

Siting

When siting any new signage it is

important to take into account how it will be kept free of the grass that will grow around it. If no provision is made to deal with this problem then it may result in much time consuming grass cutting. Small items can be lifted out of the way, but large boulders and posts cannot be moved. One solution is to dig out an area around the object and line it with weed depressant material such as butyl or polythene. This is then covered this with a layer of stones, pea grit or wood chippings to a level just below the surface of the surrounding turf. You can then mow easily to the edge.

Routes

There is another exercise worth carrying out at this time of the year. Most readers will know their course like the back of their hand, as will the members. But what about visitors? Have you ever followed the directions on a signpost for a particular village or town only to find at the next junction the

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name is not on the board or there is no signpost? Are there any areas on your course where this could happen? Try walking the course imagining you are a visitor and check all the pathways (especially in wooded areas) - you may be surprised.

Generally, signage on a course imparts information whilst around the clubhouse or complex it is more likely to be instructive such as where to park (and where not to!) or directions to facilities. However, the type of signage can be all of the same design so that a corporate image runs throughout.

Minimal usage

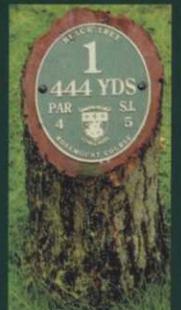
Whatever the policy of the club there is one important factor that should be at the forefront of any decision about signage - minimal usage. This has proved to be more effective than when it is overdone.

When looking to purchase new signage it is worth consulting specialist

firms since they have the experience and can advise on design and the best and most effective positioning.

Summary

Those clubs with a membership waiting list are fortunate, but there are plenty of others who need to attract new members and visitors. The initial impression of a club and the overall images perceived are all-important. It is not just the greens, tees and fairways upon which potential new members will judge a course. There are a host of other factors that add significantly to the total picture. Course accessories, including signage, are just one of the facets. These should not be taken for granted as they could contribute to the reason why someone fails to join or return. If it is done right it makes life easier for the players, they notice the care, attention to detail and investment, plus you are increasing the chances of them returning for another round.



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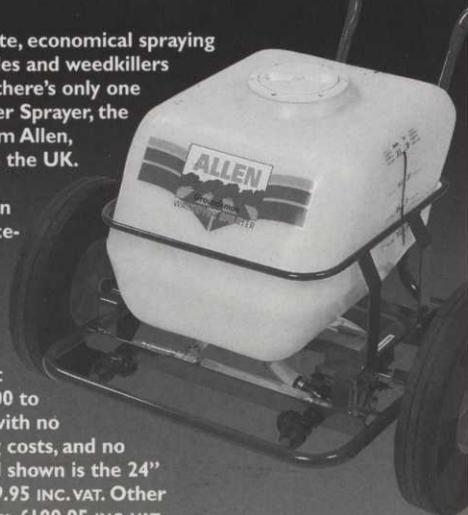
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Ad Ref 649

Jason Taylor, Deputy Course Manager at the London Club, spent a week at Valderrama assisting in the preparations for the American Express World Championship events. He reports back on how he got on...

Valderrama adventure



My adventure starts in the Superintendent's office at the London Golf Club back in the spring '99. I'd decided that I would like to be involved in the set up for a major tournament. After checking the European Tour dates, I had a list of a few possibilities, but one European venue stood out above all the others - Valderrama. This was a golf course which I had heard many times being described as Europe's best.

After sending a letter to Jaime Ortiz Patino, the Club President and proprietor of Valderrama, I received an e-mail back requesting a meeting at his London office in Bond Street.

At this meeting I discussed what I would like to do and why, with Jaime Ortiz Patino and he said he would be happy for me to visit during the week of the American Express Championships on the 1st to the 7th November.

He also said that his assistant would be able to help me find accommodation for the week. All that was left was for me to arrange flights and time off.

In the week before I left for Spain I contacted Jaime Olano, the Superintendent at Valderrama, to finalise the arrangements on my arrival.

At the airport and on the coach to Valderrama, I kept seeing large bill-

Valderrama adventure



boards with Tiger Woods on, with the words, "Meet me at Valderrama." When I arrived at my hotel it was quite late so I had a meal in the restaurant and booked a Taxi for 4:30 the following morning so as to be at the course for 5am.

After pulling up at the very grand main entrance I was given directions to the maintenance compound. As the taxi pulled up I met Jaime Olano

who was also just arriving. He took me into the maintenance compound and gave me a brief tour of the yard and the various buildings around it. The first thing I noticed was that every piece of equipment was red and he explained that the club had a policy of only buying Toro equipment as they felt that this was the best, and delivered the highest standards of after sales service.

After this tour Jaime introduced me to a number of his colleagues. The majority of the staff were sat around a large table in the mess room tucking into coffee and bread rolls. This happened every morning and was a very pleasant way to start the day. The guys were all very friendly and interested in why I was there. The only problem was that none of them spoke much English and I spoke no Spanish.

One of the guys whom I was very happy to meet a little later was Ken Woods, an ex-Myerscough student, who had moved over to Spain to work full time at Valderrama. He spoke fairly good Spanish and this helped me to communicate with the other staff.

There was a large plan on the mess room door which listed everybody who was working during the event and exactly what they were going to

be doing in the morning and afternoon of each day. I was down to join one of the three crews raking bunkers in the morning shift which was from 5am to 10.30am. There were two other members of my crew, Juan, who spoke no English, and Pedro, who spoke a few words. We did however manage to communicate through a mixture of Spanish, English and sign language.

While getting ready to travel out onto the course I was wondering how we were going to see the bunkers to rake them, but on leaving the yard the first thing I saw was Jaime Ortiz Patino, whom I immediately recognised from our London meeting, dewing off a floodlit green. All the greens were lit by floodlights either mounted up in the branches of the cork oaks which surrounded most of the greens or by temporary lights mounted on stands which were removed during the day.

The bunkers, rather than being raked, were actually swept, using soft yard type brushes, with a 12 inch band rough raked around the outside. Instead of using sand in the bunkers crushed marble was used. This made for a brilliant white colour with a coarser texture than sand. When you were in the bunker with the sun





reflecting off of the marble it looked more like snow than sand.

As the sun started to rise I was able to see the true beauty of the course. The first thing that you notice is the majestic cork oaks, which frame all the holes at Valderrama. Most of these are at least 200 years old.

The golf course was originally designed by Robert Trent Jones. When Jaime Ortiz Patino acquired it in 1985 Robert Trent Jones was asked to come back and redesign it, with hosting a major championship in mind.

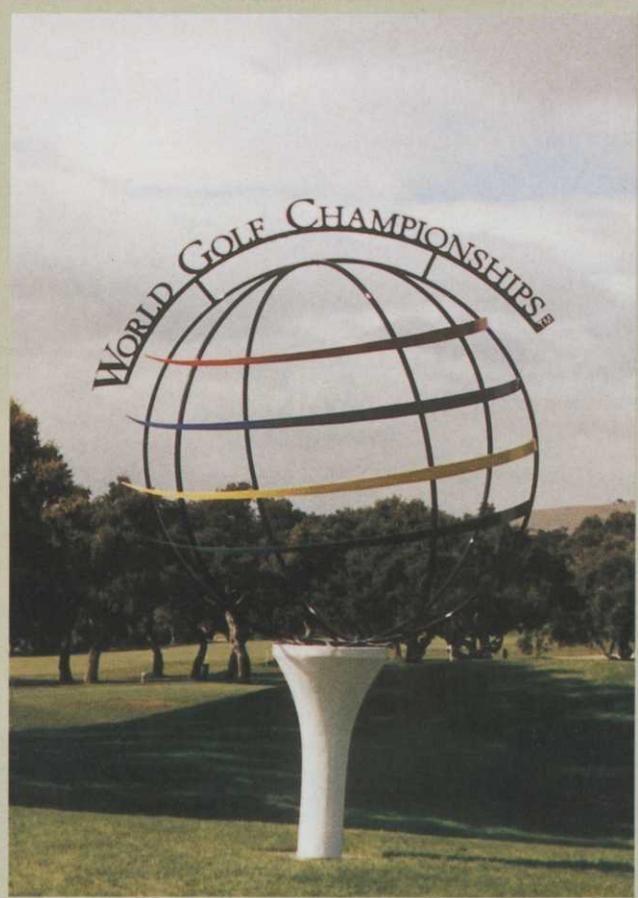
The final hole to be redesigned and constructed was the 17th and Trent Jones suggested that Seve Ballesteros design this. This he agreed to do and created a hole which is a long par-5 with the green guarded at the front by a lake. The green actually slopes forward towards the lake and many players found this to their peril. The most memorable of these was Tiger Woods on the final day. This made him take eight shots on the hole. He did, nevertheless, go on to win the event.

While we were raking the bunkers, the greens which consisted of Pencross creeping bentgrass were being cut using Toro GM1000 hand mowers which had spotlights fitted

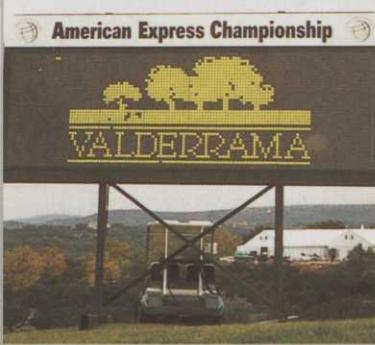
to them, and were powered by an alternator which was run off of the engine via a fan belt. The greens were double cut in the morning to a height of 3.17mm and then single cut in the afternoon after play had finished for the day. In the mornings the greens were all stimped to check that they were not only fast enough but that they were all of a uniform speed. If the overall speed needed increasing on all or just selected greens this was done by extra mowing or rolling. The speed of the greens for the tournament ranged from 11.5 to 12.5 feet. The roller that was being used had only just arrived at the club from America and was being operated by Charlie, an American who had come over to roll for the event and to instruct the staff on the rollers operation. It was a hydraulically powered machine which was much bigger and heavier than any roller that I have previously seen being used on greens in this country.

The Pencross tees and approaches were also cut in the dark again using Toro Pedestrian machines with spotlights mounted on them. The tees were cut at 11mm during the tournament and the approaches at 8mm.

The Bermuda grass fairways were again cut in the dark every morning



Valderrama adventure



at a height of 9mm using Toro GM3200 Triple mowers. The only way in which these differed from those which are widely used on greens is that they had slightly grooved tyres, a rollbar and lights fitted. There were eight guys mowing fairways and these would stripe fairways in pairs, one working in an 8-2 direction and the

other at 10-4. The fairways at Valderrama really did look superb and when I asked Jaime Olano how he achieved this he replied that they were basically scarified and fed. He said he wished that the rest of the surfaces were as easy to look after.

When our shift finished at 10:30 we were free to do what we wanted,

be it watching the golf or going home for a siesta. The afternoon shift started at 4:30 and finished at 7pm. During the afternoon I carried out a number of different tasks which included hand watering, clearing leaves and the large cork oak acorns from the green surrounds.

Valderrama has to be one of the most beautiful golf courses anywhere in the world. I think the longest lasting impression on me will be the sun setting and casting shadows through the cork oaks. At this time the whole course has an almost magical feel about it.

The golf course at Valderrama is kept green using a Toro Network 8000 irrigation system that utilises almost 3000 sprinklers. Jaime told me that the system was very user friendly and that he was more than happy with it.

One thing that I was very surprised about was how relaxed all the staff were considering that it was such a major event. When I mentioned this to Jaime Olano he simply said that the staff at Valderrama dealt with these type of events on a regular basis and to them it was not really anything out of the ordinary. He said that he trusted his staff and knew that they were more than capable of carrying out their specific tasks to the high standards required.

All too soon it was time for me to leave Valderrama and return to the UK. I had had a very enjoyable week and had learned a great deal. Visiting a course during a major event is something that I would definitely advise others to do if the opportunity arises.

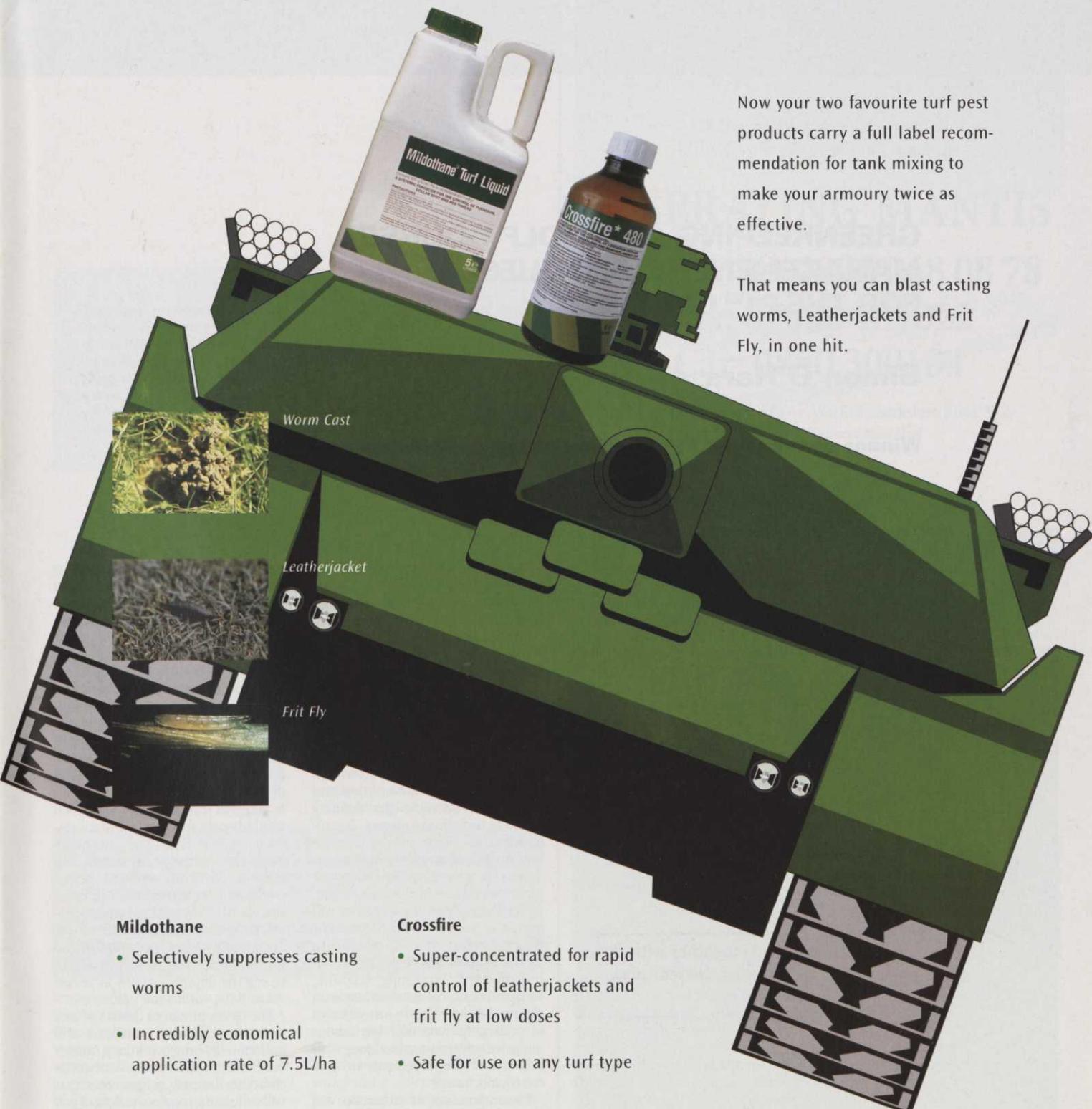
Finally, I would like to give my thanks Mr Ortiz Patino for giving me this opportunity and Jaime Olano and all his staff for helping me and making my visit such an enjoyable one.



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Simon O'Hara was the Over 25 winner of the BIGGA 1999 Essay Competition. Here is his winning entry.



BIGGA ESSAY COMPETITION

GREENKEEPING AND GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Simon O'Hara

Winner of the Over 25's Section of the BIGGA Essay Competition

The Millennium is fast approaching, bringing with it a baffling array of predictions from a wide range of pundits. Will the Year 2000 bug really cause our computer controlled irrigation systems to unleash a flood of biblical proportions, or will a plague of locusts infest the world's golf courses after developing a taste for fine turf grasses. Such cataclysmic outlooks, for the start of the 21st century are obviously somewhat fatalistic. Perhaps a more prudent view would be to regard the new millennium as an opportunity to implement a series of resolutions

Golf course management is undoubtedly going to face numerous challenges in the next century. The ever increasing popularity of the sport will continue to tax the industry.

which could take turf grass management to new levels of excellence. We must adapt to the challenges of the 21st century by adopting management practises that will satisfy increasingly restrictive regulations. To this end we must continue to invest time and money in education and research. The potential developments that are listed below will form the foundations for devising strategies and techniques that may be applied in the forthcoming century.

The likelihood of any monumental changes that will irreversibly change the way we manage turf grasses is perhaps insignificant. It is more likely that we may employ the concept of evolution in the context of future developments in the greenkeeping profession. The 21st century should witness an extension of current turf management trends which thereby should place a great emphasis on education, for just as 'Location' is the catchword in the real estate world, so then will 'education, education and re-education' become the defining motto of turf grass managers. A commitment to share and accumulate knowledge will pay dividends in our desires for a better understanding of turf management techniques. Along with education it is likely that we will see an extension of all the current trends in turf grass management, such as a continued emphasis in conservationism, increasing scientific breakthroughs, tighter restrictions on chemical usage, the re-introduction of previously successful but labour intensive cultural practises along with a constant improvement in golf course machinery.

The importance of education will be, as it always has been, recognised as one of the defining goals of greenkeeping in the 21st century. The successful establishment of a large number of existing colleges that offer

turf grass management courses is to be welcomed. The future of such centres is assured as we strive to better understand our turf grass environment. Research and Development has become accepted as one of the most important investment opportunities in all current business ventures. It is likely that this trend will be continued and extended in terms of turf grass management. It must be hoped that these colleges will further develop as centres of excellence and develop in conjunction with scientific research centres, both of which would benefit from each others presence, facilitating the mutually beneficial exchange of ideas and information. To this end the various world-wide greenkeeper associations, such as BIGGA, will continue to provide a vital communication service between the research institutions and the turf grass manager, as well as providing the opportunity for increased networking within the industry.

The development of centres of academic and scientific excellence will undoubtedly bring with them numerous benefits. Such centres will devise computer training programmes that will simulate an endless variety of golf course environments that will facilitate both tried and tested turf grass management techniques as well as offering the potential to employ new experimental ideas without the dan-

The importance of education will be, as it always has been, recognised as one of the defining goals of greenkeeping in the 21st century. The successful establishment of a large number of existing colleges that offer turf grass management courses is to be welcomed. The future of such centres is assured as we strive to better understand our turf grass environment.

ger of damaging a single living grass plant. Such systems would enable students to practice different techniques within differing parameters of budgets, staff numbers, climate and soil structures.

The need for continued investment in education must run parallel with the advances of scientific exploration in matters relating to the study of the turf grass plant. If there is to be any dramatic advances in turf grass management it is probable that it will come from this field. Investment in this area will undoubtedly bring great

The golf course machinery manufacturing industry is another area that will continue to develop. This industry will probably follow common manufacturing trends whereby under increasing pressure from market forces we will hopefully witness greater competition

rewards. We are already witnessing the successful results of new strains of resilient turf grasses which are providing greenkeepers with greater assurance than ever before. Advances in genetic engineering will probably be of greatest consequence for the future. The various institutes that currently exist for research such as the Sports Turf Research Institute, the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research and the

Institute of Professional Soil Scientists will undoubtedly provide key developments in our industry.

The scientific advances of these institutions include IGER's research into a mutant gene in *festuca pratensis* that may well lead to the development of 'evergreen grass' which stays green even in dormancy. Similarly, at Nova Scotia Agricultural College and other institutes, there are attempts to develop greens quality cultivars of *poa annua*. Another very worthwhile area for investigation is that of biological control of turf grass

pests and diseases. Research that contributes to the development of cultural practices and biological controls which can alter the turf grass environment such that it favours the antagonistic microflora. These are just some of the many areas currently being investigated. Such developments though are unlikely to produce permanent solutions to our problems, that is why it is vital that we maintain and extend our invest-



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ment strategies in these institutions and encourage interaction between the scientists and ourselves.

That education is perhaps the single most important arena for development in the future is not in question. The existence of centres of excellence for the study of turf grasses will become increasingly important especially if current trends on the restrictions of chemical usage continue. In such circumstances it will be to the past that we will turn in order to lay foundations for the future. It is vital that we uncover, record and research the many and varied cultural practices that were employed in the early 20th century greenkeeping profession before such information is lost forever. Many of these practices may

While machinery will be able to do many more complex and varied tasks it will also do so more safely and in an increasingly worker friendly environment. The use of alternative energy sources to power golf course machinery will obviously be pertinent in future years.

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have previously been so labour intensive that chemical solutions which achieved the same result were considered far more practicable. However, with the advent of so many advances in the manufacture of labour saving machinery it is conceivable that we can now re-employ these previously disregarded practices.

The golf course machinery manufacturing industry is another area that will continue to develop. This industry will probably follow common manufacturing trends whereby under increasing pressure from market forces we will hopefully witness greater competition which will result in more robust labour saving devices which will perform an ever increas-

ing number of tasks. It is likely that the 21st century will see the successful transfer from inflation tyres to minimal compaction tracks. Advances in equipment such as the Hydroject and Verti-draining will bring enormous benefits. While machinery will be able to do many more complex and varied tasks it will also do so more safely and in an increasingly worker friendly environment. The use of alternative energy sources to power golf course machinery will obviously be pertinent in future years.

The advances in matters relating to turf grass management as outlined above are becoming increasingly evident in the last year of the present millennium. For the turf grass man-



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ager the stresses brought about by increasing regulations from the European Union and other bodies, especially in matters relating to conservationism, vis a vis Pesticide, Health and Safety and Labour regulations, will become more prevalent in the next century. Increasing bureaucracy will necessitate additional skills for the turf grass manager, therefore computer literacy and a good working knowledge of related legal matters will become increasingly important along with good diplomacy skills. Increasing regulations will also advocate the continued trend towards conservationism. It is probable that golf courses will someday have to become virtually self sustaining, especially in matters of water recycling and effluent disposal.

It is arguable that the next century will bring with it increasing pressures for the Golf Course Manager. What may be dismissed as gimmicks by some may someday become commonplace. Recent developments have seen the construction of indoor golf courses as well as the

possibility of providing twenty four hour golf by means of extensive floodlighting systems. In a similar context market forces will pressurise golf clubs to place greater emphasis on achieving extended targets for the number of rounds possible per annum. If such developments do

ever increasing popularity of the sport will continue to tax the industry. Such pressure is inevitably going to take its toll, but the successful adoption of continued evolutionary developments in all facets of the supporting industries should overcome these problems. It should be

The development of centres of academic and scientific excellence will undoubtedly bring with them numerous benefits. Such centres will devise computer training programmes that will simulate an endless variety of golf course environments that will facilitate both tried and tested turf grass management techniques as well as offering the potential to employ new experimental ideas without the danger of damaging a single living grass plant.

occur across the spectrum of golf courses it will inevitably lead to greater difficulties for the Golf Course Manager as course presentation will inevitably suffer.

Golf course management is undoubtedly going to face numerous challenges in the next century. The

noted that golf course management techniques will essentially not change, what we do now is what we have done in the past and what we will continue to do in the future, and that is to apply the knowledge and machinery in the best possible manner.

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



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TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on how course closures can affect their club

Course Closures

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Steve Dixon
Course: Kingsknowe GC, Edinburgh
Region: Scotland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager plus four



Name: Mark Mennell
Course: The Fulford GC, York
Region: Northern
Course Type: Parkland and heathland
Staff: Head GK plus five, plus one part-timer



Name: Adrian Porter
Course: Greetham Valley, Oakham
Region: Midland
Course Type: Mixture of parkland and links-type
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus seven and two casuals in summer for 45 holes



Name: Kevin Green
Course: The Kendleshire, Bristol
Region: South West and South Wales
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager plus six



Name: Stefan Antolik
Course: Cooden Beach, Bexhill-on-Sea
Region: South East
Course Type: Seaside
Staff: Course Manager plus four



Name: Clem Beattie
Course: Allen park Golf Centre, Antrim
Region: Northern Ireland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus four, plus one part-timer in summer. Also three part-timers on the driving range.

1

1. Under what circumstances does your golf course close?

1. Severe flooding and heavy snow. Our course is in a valley and if we get excessive rain it tends to flood.

1. We close because of flooding or snow. Really the course closes itself in these circumstances. We go on temporary greens in very frosty weather.

1. Snow is the only reason we really close. The course is well-drained and takes water well, while we play on temporary greens in frost.

1. We close because of adverse weather conditions or waterlogging, snow and sometimes heavy frost. We have seven temporary greens on the back half of the course so members can play some golf when the rest of the course is closed.

1. It floods regularly, particularly at high tide when the sea comes over the boundary wall. We had 100 acres under a foot of water at one time.

1. We close mainly because of waterlogging as we are on heavy ground. Also because of snow and when we spray.

HEADS

2. Is the decision left solely to you or do other people have an input?

2. It is mainly my decision, although I have to inform my greens committee Chairman about the closure.

2. It is solely my decision whether to close the course. I tell the professional who informs the General Manager, or vice versa.

2. I make closure decisions. Our course is proprietor-owned and sometimes he comes down to suggest we close, but never to say we stay open.

2. It is solely up to me on whether we close. I am responsible to the Directors so I would inform one of them and also the pro shop.

2. Closure is left solely to me, or my Deputy if I am not there. We get no committee interference. In our case closure is self-explanatory.

2. I decide when we close because of flooding, but if it is 50-50 on a frosty day the Manager has an input and we decide between us.

3. On average how many days is your course closed per year?

3. We were closed for five days in 1999 and there have been times when snow has caused us to close for a week. I would say it is five to 10 days on average over the last eight years.

3. I remember we closed for five weeks because of heavy snow a few years back. I would say we are not normally closed for more than 10-12 days each year.

3. We closed on seven days last year, but I would say the average is five to 10 days each year.

3. Our course is only three years old so we protect it whenever we can so that it doesn't suffer. At the moment we are closed on average 25 days per year but I would hope that this will be reduced to 10-12 days when we get thoroughly established.

3. We closed for 17 days last year, but haven't been closed yet this year. I would say 15 days is the average.

3. Because our course is on clay land it tends to get very wet after heavy rain and we have been closed 14 days during one year. Quite often we close a number of holes and leave some open.

4. What arrangements are made to inform the membership of a closure?

4. We have a general notice board next to the pro's shop and near the 1st tee where we can slot in course closures and also when there is any disturbance such as spraying, verti-cutting or top dressing.

4. We have "Course Closed" signs at the entrance gate to the course in the car park; next to the pro shop and also at the back of the 1st tee. I also use a mobile phone to inform the pro shop.

4. We announce closures on the notice-board in our car park near the changing rooms and also telephone the Seniors' Captain on Mondays or the Lady Captain on Tuesdays if we have to close.

4. We have a "Course Closed" sign in the car park and if there is a chance of re-opening after rain members are kept informed on an hourly basis at the pro shop where they would book in to play.

4. We inform the pro shop by 8am on the day of closure. Similarly if there is a need to ban trolleys or buggies.

4. We have a "Course Closed" sign at the entrance to the course and also halfway up the driveway. Reception is informed so that members can telephone in and be told of the situation.

5. Is there any one main reason why your course closes and if so what is planned to improve the situation?

5. Kingsknowe has a drainage programme for the next three years where we will upgrade everything. The low lying areas are verti-drained weekly and overall there is hardly a day goes by when we don't verti-drain.

5. The main reason we close is flooding after heavy rain. We verti-drain a lot and have drained every bad spot on the course in the 10 years I have been Head Greenkeeper. But we are luckier than many because if we have had heavy rain in the morning and it stops by noon, then by 3pm it is playable once more because of the good drainage.

5. Snow is the only major problem, but we also occasionally close to do hollow-tining and top dressing for a day. When everything looks a bit tired in winter we might give one of the courses a rest for a day or two.

5. Flooding is the main reason why we would close. We have a schedule of aeration, solid tining and slitting in spring, summer and autumn to improve matters. This is done on a frequent basis, particularly on the walk-on, walk-off areas near the greens and tees.

5. Our course is very flat and it floods regularly near the top end close to the sea. We have 11 kilometres of dykes and have created 16 ponds in the eight years I have been there. We also have a new reservoir and we can pump 3,000 gallons of water a minute off the course. Occasionally we get tide-locked.

5. As I said our ground is very heavy and we are doing all we can to improve matters by installing an improved pipe drainage system. We also aerate, slit and solid tine as often as possible.

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Ad Ref 189

Noel MacKenzie of the STRI discusses the intricacies of cutting your turf to the correct height.

A close shave

Since the first Budding's lawn mower was manufactured in 1832 there has been a steady development of mowing technology by manufacturers which has helped to develop highly accurate machines capable of cutting in excess of 200 cuts per metre travelled. In addition, modern machines are fitted with a variety of "whistles and bells" such as groomers, brushes, etc., all designed to enhance the final finish. Used correctly the modern mower can produce the highest standards of finish that players have ever experienced. Furthermore, these high standards of cut are found from the elite championship courses with the highest aspirations through to the local clubs with less demanding players because the machines capable of achieving such high standards are now basic items of maintenance equipment.

However, whilst greenkeepers now enjoy the latest state-of-the-art equipment it is still common to find mowing equipment and the basic operation of mowing being insufficiently considered.

The intention of this article is to highlight matters relating to the

height of cut since this is probably the area where most misjudgement occurs. For the purposes of this discussion we must assume that the mower is well maintained, has sharp and accurately adjusted blades and an operator fully acquainted with effective and safe use of the machine.

What's your height of cut?

During advisory work I will always ask the height of cut being employed by the greenkeeper. Whilst many greenkeepers can answer my question to a fraction of a millimetre I must confess to being amazed by the number of answers which indicate no knowledge of the height of cut or only a vague indication. Where vagueness is noted the common response is, for example, "About 3/16 of an inch." Inspection of the mower, however, may reveal a height of cut totally different to that perceived by the greenkeeper. In one such instance I was informed that the greens were being cut at 5 mm but checking the mower found the height of cut set at just 3 mm!

Another common response is to refer to "notches" which are encoun-

tered when the operator adjusts the machine. Don't get me wrong, the height of cut may create the optimum finish when the mower is set to the "third notch" but the point to get across is that this is a qualitative statement rather than an exact measure and could therefore be open to interpretation. An accurate measurement gives a quantitative value to the cutting height in operation which is more easily communicated to different staff members. Additionally, most courses are cut with more than one machine or the machine may have three cylinders so there may be differences between the height of cut obtained with the third notch for example on one machine or cylinder unit compared with another. This could have a noticeable effect on the speed and finish on the greens out on the course.

Setting the height of cut and mower gauges

The mower gauge is the tool for this task and is simplicity itself to use, though there are different designs. Mower gauges will normally be supplied with a machine when

A close shave

purchased. If you do not have one then order a device from the mower manufacturer.

A good greenkeeper should check the height of cut frequently, ideally every time the greens are cut, along with whether the blades are set correctly, lubricant levels, etc.. Often such checks are not made and this is where many problems may start which can result in poor quality of finish and damage to the greens. These checks are best done in the afternoon before the sheds are locked up for the day. By preparing the machinery the night before use the minimum amount of time is lost in fueling, lubricating and adjusting machinery first thing in the morning when time is pressing to get ahead of play. In addition, if a machine has a problem it is better to find this out before you need it rather than when you need it, remember; "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure!". Furthermore, fiddling with temperamental machinery in the cold of morning is an experience few people enjoy so better to avoid this and do any fiddling in the warmer hours of the previous afternoon.

What should your height of cut be?

This is a real "How long is a piece of string?" question. What may be appropriate on one course might be totally unsuitable for another even under apparently identical conditions and this may have potentially disastrous consequences.

Let's start at the beginning with text book values for greens:

Summer time = 5 mm (3/16 in.).
Winter time = 6-8 mm (1/4 - 5/16 in.).

However, whilst these might be ideal text book values it is common to find heights of cut varying considerably from these. For example, a course with firm greens might cut with machines set at 4 mm in sum-

mer and only 5 mm in winter whereas a softer, clay-based parkland green may struggle to cope with much below 5 mm in summer and less than 8 mm in winter.

There is not scope within this article to discuss in depth what your height of cut should be in every instance. In practice the heights of cut normally employed are dependent on:

- Experience of the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.
- Weather/climate conditions (both current and forecast).
- Frequency of mowing.
- Recent mowing and maintenance operations.
- Machine type employed (ride-on or pedestrian), flat or grooved front roller, floating or static head design.
- Usage of the course.
- The agronomic composition of the greens e.g. fescue intolerance of mowing below 4 mm or so.
- Sward Vigour.
- Tolerance of greens to drought stress.
- Sward stress tolerance and disease susceptibility e.g. anthracnose susceptibility in close mown *P. annua* swards.
- Firmness of greens (related to thatch content, drainage and construction).
- Irrigation system efficiency and effectiveness.
- Topography of surface.
- Emphasis placed on other operations to maintain green speed e.g. verti-cutting, grooming, rolling, etc.

If you are an experienced greenkeeper then you may take some of these factors into consideration without even thinking about it, but it still doesn't do any harm to have a look at the list above from time to time with fresh eyes to make sure you've not neglected any item. Like all maintenance operations on the course make sure records are kept of cutting heights.

If you are a trainee or less experi-

enced greenkeeper then don't be afraid to ask your supervisor/manager why he/she has chosen the height of cut employed. He/she may not always be able to answer this accurately but if you can understand the basis of the decision based on experience then that is a good start. As you progress through your career you will gather the knowledge of others and use it to make your own decisions in the future.

Having decided on the height of cut to employ you can go ahead and set up your machine in the workshop.

You've set your height of cut... but what's your height of cut?

Now your mower is set at the desired height of cut you are ready to cut the greens, or are you?

Beware, the cutting height set on your machine does not always equate directly to the grass length produced. For example, its winter on a wet golf green and there is some thatch presence which makes the surface soft. The mower has been set for 6 mm but the weight of the machine makes it sink into the surface by 2-3 mm. The result is that the green is being cut too closely, the actual cutting height being 3-4 mm (which might be lower than summer height!), which will stress the grass considerably and reduce the quality of the playing surface. Under the above conditions it may be necessary for mowing to be postponed until the surface has dried or, if this is not an option, raising the mower cutting height setting by a further 2-3 mm to achieve the desired results.

Knowledge is a powerful tool and unfortunately the greenkeeper has not, until relatively recently, been able to assess the actual cutting height on the green. Nowadays though, mowing prism gauges are available to allow assessment of the cutting height on the ground to be made. For example, at STRI we have

seen examples of a pedestrian mower set at a height of cut of 3 mm but using a prism gauge we find that the sward is left at 2 mm. These differences may seem very small, after all we're only talking about a millimetre or so aren't we?

Well a millimetre might be rather small to you and I but try to imagine you are only 3 mm tall and someone wants to take 1 mm off you, not a pleasant thought is it!? In percentage terms this equates to 33%, or about a third of the plant. Even if the height of cut was set at 5 mm but came out at 4 mm this would still equate to 20% removal of the plant's leaf material! These large percentage reductions in leaf area must cause significant stress to the plant by reducing photosynthetic productivity and therefore plant vigour. Conversely, if a sward is under stress we can see what a big difference raising the height of cut by even half or one millimetre can make.

These thoughts become even more relevant when we consider that a green's surface can soften or dry dramatically within 24 hours and this could have a major impact on the real cutting height imposed on the turf. Nowhere is this more relevant than on overly thatchy or poorly drained greens. Turf nursery greens provide an opportunity to check mowing heights with a prism before going out onto the course (provided your turf nursery area is very similar in construction to your greens).

Changing the height of cut

When changing the height of cut the amount of millimetres should not, in my opinion, be the only measure of the change. I would suggest instead that greenkeepers think in terms of percentage change alongside the actual measured change. Realistically, for turf mown at 5 mm and with control of cutting heights almost impossible at less than 0.5 mm increments the best we can man-



age is changing the height of cut by about 10%.

Through the year conditions change and the greenkeeper must be ready to adjust the mowing regime to achieve optimum results. In the springtime great care must be taken not to push the grass too hard too soon by cutting close before growth is properly established. On coastal courses proper growth may establish sooner than on inland sites, especially on those inland courses with wetter greens based on clay which take longer to warm up and allow growth. As a general rule of thumb keep the height of cut up in the spring until growth is properly underway before slowly lowering it for the main summer season.

Summary

Remember, changing the height of cut even by a small measurement has a sudden and dramatic effect on turf being maintained at 5 mm or less. Furthermore, the mowing height set on your mower seldom, if ever, is accurately reflected in the length of

grass after cutting. Mowing constitutes the main management tool used in greens maintenance and its importance in sward health, agronomic composition and wear tolerance are often overlooked.

There is often a great deal of demand for pace but we should remember that the average golfer can find putting on fast greens very difficult indeed. In addition, windy sites really become very difficult to play if greens are too fast i.e. over about 10 feet using a stimpmeter. Consistency of putting surface is more important than pace (within reason). On courses with varied green construction mowing practices may need to be considered very carefully, especially if sward species composition is different also. Such situations may even require one mower to be set up differently for particular greens in order to maintain consistency in the playing surfaces from green to green. Try to avoid stressing grass through overly close mowing and too frequent application of other treatments in pursuit of pace which may cause

uneven growth, additional inflorescence (flower) production from *Poa annua*, pest invasion e.g. moss, pearlwort, etc., disease and even loss of grass cover. It should also be remembered that other maintenance inputs can be adjusted to reduce the stress of mowing practices e.g. irrigation, frequency of verti-cutting and grooming, etc.

Take care when selecting heights of cut, especially during the changing seasons of spring and autumn when the grass growth can be unpredictable. Is a consistent height of cut ever right?. In essence, probably not since no two days are identical. However, the weather and wear pressures which the grass is exposed to can be broadly consistent and therefore the height of cut can be set at a certain level for short periods, but I would urge you to review cutting heights regularly.

Noel MacKenzie B.Sc. (Hons), MBPR, is the Turfgrass Agronomist for the STRI's Southern Office.

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When the going gets tough then the South West and South Wales region get going! Paul Jenkins, Course Manager at Lilley Brook Golf Club, looks back at the origins of Westurf, and forward at the second visit to Westpoint

Welcome to Westurf



Question: What has been known to be baking hot, freezing cold, soaking wet, windy, dry, outside and now inside?

Clue: It is always efficacious, enjoyable, educational, easy to get to, excellent, encourageable, enlightening and entertaining.

Answer: WESTURF!

I know, it's not the hardest question to ever grace these pages, but, could it be that some people struggled with the answer? Could it be that some of us greenkeepers, with our busy schedules have forgotten that when we attend Westurf, we do experience all of the above positive points. Greenkeepers from other Regions will have got the answer straight away as the little green eyed monster sat on their shoulders will be whispering "That's the great event put on by the South West and South Wales Region. What a jewel in their crown." So it is! We should all be proud of its continued success.

This year, as with last, Westurf will be held at Westpoint, Exeter on April

12. Westpoint is a purpose built, indoor exhibition centre, equipped with lighting, heating, bar, restaurant and toilets, together with an outdoor demonstration area. A very different vision used to greet us all as we pulled up and parked on Ivor's practice area at Long Ashton Golf Club, Bristol. Not knowing whether one would need sun tan lotion or eight layers of Gortex, was all part of the charisma that helped form the character of the show.

The first Westurf show was held in 1989. The success of the show that first year was very important as each Region had been given the remit of becoming self-sufficient. The catalyst for an event was there, the desire to

bring the trade closer to the greenkeeper at Regional level was there, but where, when and who?

*Enter stage left: Ivor Scoones and Long Ashton Golf Club. The practice ground at Long Ashton was offered as the venue by Ivor and the Club Committee. At that time the idea of a further nine successful visits to Ivor's practice ground was just a future dream.

* Enter stage right: Gordon and Marion Child. An event such as Westurf does not just happen. It needs careful planning, organisation and one or two sleepless nights, Gordon, then the Regional Administrator and his stalwart wife, Marion, took the challenge by the

horns. The result being ten very well organised and very successful Westurf shows held at Long Ashton. * Enter centre stage: Rod Felton. Rod at that time was running Browns of Bristol, a main supplier in the South West. Browns had the dealership for many of the major products at that time and held an Open Day each year. For Westurf to be successful, the larger companies needed to

Browns decided to fully support Westurf and cancel their Open Day, and so a show was born.

Following ten good years at Long Ashton, the time was right to move. The decision was taken to move Westurf to an indoor purpose built building. No more frostbite, wind-chill factor, sun stroke, soaked to the skin! Have you ever seen 500 greenkeepers huddled in one tent?

Westpoint at Exeter was chosen as the new venue. Westurf at Westpoint is an excellent event that every greenkeeper from student to Course Manager should visit and bring your Greens Chairman too. You will have a very pleasant and informative day, networking with the trade from your area and of course, your peers.

Westurf 2000 promises to be even more informative and entertaining with:

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New for 2000

Why not make an evening of it? A night's entertainment has been organised for the evening prior to the show. This is to be held at a hotel near by and will include overnight accommodation. The package will consist of dinner, jazz band, overnight accommodation with breakfast at a cost of £40 per person. The idea, for all you greenkeepers and members of the trade, is to bring your partners, treat them to what will be a great night's entertainment.

The following day, the day of the exhibition, you can lend your partner your credit card as shopping and sightseeing in Exeter is the order of the day.

Numbers are limited, so ring Paula Humphries today on 01288 352194.

I hope you can all make time to visit Westurf 2000. We have a region to be proud of with Paula at the helm and Robin Greaves, our new Regional Chairman, taking us into the new Millennium. Your support is always welcomed.

Paul Jenkins

Welcome to **Westurf**



Westurf 2000 Exhibitor information

Amazone Groundcare

Amazone Groundcare extends a welcome to all visitors to view their complete range of Groundcare and Amenity Management Machinery on their stand - Stand S. Visitors will also be able to see a number of machines working in the Demonstration Area - the Groundkeeper and Profi Hopper mower collectors being only two of the line. Also come and hear about the exciting new "WEST COUNTRY DEVELOPMENTS" - SEE YOU THERE!

Aventis

The newly formed 'Aventis' is exhibiting at WestTurf 2000. The exciting new company Aventis was formed from a merger of Rhone-Poulenc Amenity and Agrevo. This merger means many exciting new developments in the Amenity Sector and we look forward to speaking to you about how we can help you in the future as Aventis.

Come and talk to us about your problems with your weed, disease or pest control in turf. There is a new tank mix recommendation for Mildothane Turf Liquid® and Crossfire 480®, giving increased control of leatherjackets and frit fly as well as earthworm suppression and disease control.

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You will have the chance to take away the CD-Rom version of our new technical manual from the stand.

There will also be information on our new web site.

Avoncrop Amenity Products

Come and talk to the Avoncrop Amenity Products Technical team regarding all the latest trends, from Slow Release Fertilisers, Organic products and Microbial inoculates through to Liquids and Soil Conditioners. With the ever-changing trends in Golf Course Management it is important to keep in touch with new products and services that are available. We are happy to arrange Soil Analysis and advise on Fertiliser programmes and general maintenance based on the results. Our new comprehensive catalogue will be available for you to pick up from the stand demonstrating our unrivalled product portfolio.

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Golf Car UK

Golf Car UK shows wider club car utility range at Westurf. At Westurf 2000, Abingdon-based Golf Car UK will be showing an expanded range of CARRYALL vehicles from Club Car for construction, greenkeeping and general turf and maintenance applications on golf courses, parks and sports grounds. In conjunction with Fleet (Line-Markers)Ltd, the stand will be displaying the Turf II XRT. The CARRYALL line of utility and transportation vehicles from Club Car is the industry's only line of rustproof aluminium frame, chassis and cargo bed vehicles offering many advantages for turf work. For example, as surface-based nitrate and phosphate fertilisers are an important part of modern top dressing techniques, the aluminium construction of CARRYALL vehicles provides the necessary protection against the corrosive effects of surface spray from the turf. Competitive vehicles with non-aluminium undercarriages are much more susceptible to corrosion in these conditions. In addition, these vehicles offer impressive ground clearances, ranging from 11.3 to 16.8 cm (4.5 to 6.6 inches). The all aluminium construction offers another advantage - a low overall weight spread evenly across the 'A' Frame aluminium chassis, a key feature for turf work. Visit Golf Car UK and Fleet (Line-Markers) on Stand J'.

LINKS

LINKS are introducing 24 new products at the Show along with their Agent Mr Keith Tozer. New for 2000 are a range of Stone, Wood and Course Signs along with additions to their traditional cast and information signs. The life-like Stones come in three difference shapes and a choice of natural colours. Made from Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) they are strong, maintenance free, light and easily movable. The attached signs can be made from resin, etched zinc or stainless steel and natural oak. Course hole information and layouts can also be incorporated on the stones. Pro-Tee, the exclusive ranges of All Weather Mats and Platforms is now available in three sizes along with four new Driving Range Mats. The unique Pro-Tee system is proving very popular with golf courses and the guaranteed GRC Platform protects the tee areas and also allows the grass to breathe and grow. THE MATS THAT LAST have been outstanding this year due to their quality and price. Demonstration models are available, so please call. To the Litter Bin and Divot Boxes are now added an attractive selection of Clubhouse Planters in a variety of colours, all of which can be custom made and logoed in a Club's livery. Again, made out of GRC they are hard wearing and maintenance free. The majority of Links Signs, Bins and Divot Boxes can include hole information and layouts which are provided by Premier Plan Golf Designs. Links have installed a new logistics programme which will ensure a quick and efficient delivery service by the UK's No. 1 Golf Course Equipment Company. For further information call Graham Jackson on 01948 663002 or Keith Tozer on 01726 813318

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In line with our policy of continued growth in the Groundscare industry, JOHN DEERE LIMITED are looking for a Sales Demonstration instructor for the UK and Eire.

This position entails travel and will only suit someone who is prepared to be away from home on a regular basis. Part of the responsibilities will be to plan and undertake with the dealers an extensive demonstration programme of the more technical products, to instruct dealer salesmen on demonstration techniques and be able to present machines at customer and dealer meetings.

The instructor part of the position requires the successful applicant to provide instruction to dealer sales and service personnel on the company's range of Commercial and Consumer Equipment at the Company's Training Centre.

The successful candidate will have a mechanical background and aptitude and have a fair degree of knowledge of the turf industry. It will be necessary for the candidate to live in close proximity to the Company's newly built UK headquarters at Langar, Nottingham.

The salary and fringe benefits are those expected of a large, multi-national corporation and include a Company vehicle, free life assurance, contributory pension scheme, etc.

Application forms may be obtained from:

Mrs Glennis Oakes,
Personnel & Office Administrator
John Deere Limited
Harby Road
Langar
Nottingham
NG13 9HT
Tel: 01949 863230

THE LAMBOURNE CLUB

invite applications for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

A top quality candidate with a proven track record as a Head Greenkeeper is required to present and maintain to the highest standards this Championship length golf course set in 190 acres of breathtaking Cliveden countryside.

Suitable applicants should be qualified to NVQ Level 3, have the ability to lead and motivate staff, works programming with good attention to detail.

Attractive Salary commensurate with experience.

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Mr Wayne Sheffield
General Manager, The Lambourne Club,
Dropmore Road, Burnham, S Bucks. SL1 8NF.

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Northants NN16 8UN. Tel. 01536 510515 Fax. 01536 510691
E-mail; enquiries@boughton-loam.co.uk

LETCHWORTH GOLF CLUB

Requires an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

The successful applicant must have a minimum of two year's experience and preferably qualified to NVQ 1 and 2. Salary negotiable depending upon experience

No living accommodation

Apply in writing enclosing CV to:

The Secretary, Letchworth Golf Club,
Letchworth, Herts SG6 3NQ

ROWLANDS CASTLE GOLF CLUB

Seeks

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Salary according to experience

No accommodation

Applications with current CV to:

The Secretary/Manager
Rowlands Castle Golf Club
Links Lane
Rowlands Castle
Hants PO9 6AE

NORTHWOOD GOLF CLUB

Require a **FIRST ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER**

Minimum qualifications of NVQ Level 2 with PA1, PA2 and PA6A spraying certificates.

Candidate must have at least 5 years' experience and knowledge of all modern greenkeeping methods.

He or she should be pro-active and hardworking, with the ability to organise work programmes and deputise for the Course Manager.

Applications in writing, including full CV and salary expectation to:

The Secretary, Northwood Golf Club, Rickmansworth Road,
Northwood, Middx HA6 2QW

Feature listing from March '98

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

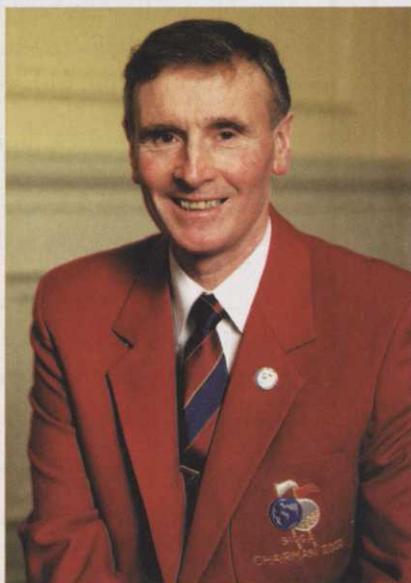
December '99: Agronomy; Security; Environment Competition Winner; Toro Award Winners

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

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



Environmental concerns



I have just returned from a two day Conference at St Andrews, organised by the R&A Golf Course Advisory Panel. The theme was 'On Course for Change' and I found it extremely interesting. Some of the predictions for the future were not exactly comforting, especially for links course with coastal erosion problems.

The cases for and against the use of chemicals on the golf course made for serious discussion and thought. The results of tests just confirmed to me that we are not heavy users of chemicals and that the amount of pollution from chemicals on golf courses is negligible, especially compared with agriculture and industry I wonder sometimes if we are being pinpointed as being easy targets for the anti pesticides lobby. Having been in this profession for many years I know that most greenkeepers have a great love of nature and have been and still are wardens or guardians of wildlife on their courses and actively encourage it. Very few greenkeepers spray for the sake of it... who wants to be bothered with spraying equipment if it is not absolutely necessary.

So, while I am a great lover of nature and the environment and will do I can to protect and nurture it, I also have to stand up and fight for the right to keep on using the limited pesticides

we use in the controlled manner we use them.

The interview on the Environment by Michael Barratt, a shrewd interviewer indeed with David Stubbs, was interesting. Mr Barrett asked some probing questions but we did not learn much additional information to that carried in recent issues of Greenkeeper International magazine.

All in all I enjoyed the whole conference which was attended by representatives from Golf Unions, Secretaries, Greens Chairmen/Convenors, Architects Colleges the R&A and many from European Golf Federations and, of course, Greenkeepers. A good cross section of the golfing world.

For all of you out there who have been doing a bit of hand digging using a spade this winter... well that's what we might call it. On a McAlpine building site it is better known as "A non mechanical soil displacement facilitator". Just remember that when you are in a Green's Meeting and calling a spade a spade.

I know BTME 2000 was well covered in the February issue but as I had written my February copy before BTME I wanted to say a few words about the whole week. It was certainly another success from Monday to Friday. From the Conference with its new concept, which was well received, through the workshops and the seminars the Education side was extremely well catered for and mostly highly commended. That does not mean that we can sit back as there are areas that can be improved and with feedback from members our Education staff are already working on these areas. However, if you were at any of these events and have ideas for improvements let's hear them now.

The show itself, with the new Hall Q, seemed so much bigger and certainly took longer to get round it.

On the social side, well if there's a show week anywhere with a better atmosphere I'd like to see it. When we look at what has been accomplished in the last few years we have to be very proud of the BTME week and when I say "we" I am not talking of just our staff and the Board of Management but of all of us greenkeepers who make it the success that it is.

One last word on BTME week, I know that after the show HQ is bombarded with phone calls and letters from many of you passing on your personal thanks for your enjoyment of the week. I would like, on behalf of members, to thank all of our staff in every department for all their hard work and professionalism not just during the week but in the organisation of it during the year previous.

In my last report I left you with good wishes for good weather in 2000. Don't despair, I am sure the better weather is on its way.

Keep smiling, I leave you with this thought:

**A cloudy day is no match
for a sunny disposition**

**Elliott Small
National Chairman**



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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