

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

Call for help 1

I am writing to you in the hope that some of the readers of "Greenkeeper International" may be able to help me. I have been the Course Manager of Manchester Golf Club for the past five years, undertaking in that time several changes to the working practices of the club, and doing quite a lot of course improvements. During the past five years I have become very interested in the original layout of the course, original teeing grounds, bunkers and of course drains.

I have gained valuable information from some octogenarian members of the club and I have some fairly old maps, but this is not enough.

I need to find out more information on the course which was designed and built by the late, great, Harry Shapland Colt. I have searched the Internet for a website remotely connected to Colt but to no avail. Would it be possible for you to print this letter as a request for information from any reader of the magazine to enable me to continue, and hopefully be successful in my quest for more knowledge about Manchester Golf Club and Harry Shapland Colt. I can be reached by good old fashioned pen and paper at Hopwood Cottage, Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester M24 2QP, by mobile telephone on 0777 3056268 or via e-mail at peter@golmgc.fsnet.co.uk

Thank you in anticipation.

Peter Thomas,
 Course Manager, MGC.

Call for help 2

I have a question that perhaps someone at BIGGA could help with. A reader of ours has been seeking information about a Short-Cut brand greens mower which apparently is of British manufacture. He needs a part to make a repair, but cannot find any information about this mower. Neither can I. Is there someone at your organisation who might be able to supply some contact information about this mower manufacturer?

If you have any information, I would greatly appreciate your help. It is possible that this Q&A could be written up and published, in which case I will be happy to quote/cite someone from your organisation. Thanks very much.

By the way, we enjoy receiving your magazine!

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Give 'Committed to Green' a chance

The Linlithgow Golf Club Committed to Green Committee has followed with interest your articles and letters on the introduction of Committed to Green Awards.

As we see it, there appears to be a misunderstanding of the underlying principle behind the concept. We feel that our experience should clarify the simplicity of what is required and show that all the requirements for Committed to Green status can be achieved by the average Golf Club when a small group of interested people devote a little time and thought to the subject.

We formed our committee after attending a talk outlining conservation management on the course by our Course Manager, David Roy, in November 1997.

After the talk he invited interested members to form a management committee to develop and control the existing 'Conservation Management Plan' for the course. It was quickly realised that the newly introduced Committed to Green project was a

much better vehicle for our endeavours. Since the inaugural meeting on 26 January 1998, we have progressed from David's original management plan to being in strong contention for achieving the Committed to Green Award.

The committee set about using the criteria of Committed to Green as the basis of a working plan. By addressing each of the issues involved and making contacts with appropriate organisations and firms, we progressed the Committed to Green criteria into a revised 'Management Plan' for Linlithgow Golf Club. This was very much a shared effort and from the enthusiasm of the committee, the support of the Club Council and local publicity, the membership of the club became aware of the Committed to Green Award and its importance in environmental terms.

Using the Committed to Green programme has concentrated our minds on how a Club can benefit from thoughtful course management techniques and the introduction of simple, good housekeeping policies. The

results have been most rewarding. For example, by seeking expert advice we have instituted regular small improvements to the course which, after two years, are now quantifiable and to the benefit of membership. Within the clubhouse, by addressing power and water usage, we have been able to considerably reduce charges. These are but two of the many examples that could be quoted.

Our experiences have shown that any Club with a group of interested members supporting the greenkeeping staff can qualify for the Committed to Green Award. It is possible to protect and care for nature and the environment while enhancing members' enjoyment of their chosen sport. We therefore strongly recommend the Committed to Green Award in its present form - let us not condemn it before it has been given a fair trial.

A. Keith Longstaff, Chairman,
 Linlithgow Golf Club, Committed to Green Committee

Ordering of Iseki spares causes frustration

What have you been doing in the last five weeks? It has been a busy time for us greenkeepers. (When is it not?)

Why the last five weeks, you ask? Well, that is how long I have been waiting for a shaft, idle for my Iseki TA 537 F which is about the same size as your thumb.

Although a very well designed and user friendly piece of machinery, the ordering of spares is to say, at least, frustrating. OK so she is nearly six years old, but she can mow semi-rough, mow fairway aprons, scarify, slit and pull a trailer. She is an important member of our staff.

The Iseki TA 537 F is serviced regularly and in accordance with the service manual. This is carried out by my experienced mechanic and I have computerised records to verify this.*

The members and committee look to me to make the purchase decisions. I have to arrive at a business plan to put to the finance committee before the Iseki or any other piece of equipment is purchased. When there is a long breakdown it reflects on my judgment. This I do not take lightly.

Quite rightly the members do not want to know my problems, but just want the course in very good condition as it has always been. Rightly so,

* Record of events

Date purchased:	01.10.1994
Hours used per year	600
Service intervals:	200 hours plus a winter service

Breakdown history:

28 October 1998	Steering pump break
29 October 1998	Parts ordered
11 November 1998	Parts received
Time Waiting	13 days

Breakdown:

Gears and Bearings worn out in gearbox.	
25 February 2000	Parts ordered

Progress to date:

March 25	Parts arrived
March 29	Tractor back in use
Time machine out of use	33 days

as we are professionals in this industry.

What if my Toro Greensmaster 1000 had broken down, I wouldn't be able to mow my greens? Just imagine how long the grass would be? BUT it hasn't.

What if my top dressing or fertiliser hadn't been delivered on time and it was now five weeks late? I would not be able to improve my course to the standard I am looking for. Not top dressing and fertilising in time. How would my course look? BUT it hasn't happened.

I know that while any of my machinery is out of action, the jobs it was set to do are falling behind. In some cases this time window will have gone and we will not be able to do these vital tasks. The course will not be presented to the members as well as it can. OK so I have other machinery capable of cutting the semi-rough etc, which, considering the long wait we are enduring, is just as well. If your car broke down and the mechanic said 'Don't worry guvnor, I will have it fixed in five weeks or more' would you put up with that? No you would not.

When prospective buyers of an Iseki machine make enquiries they should be made aware of the time it can take to get some spare parts. On the face of it, some parts seem to be as rare as rocking horses... We are all professionals, but we need help from the manufacturers of turf grass machinery to prove this to the people who can judge us very harshly at times.

We therefore need them to be professional too and supply parts as soon as they are needed.

If this were not so serious it would be funny!

Cedric Gough, Course Manager
 Broadway Golf Club