

Feature listing from November '98

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, OTO profile, BIGGA Silent Auction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

April 2000: Fortrose & Rosemarkie GC; Utility Vehicles; Irrigation; Seed breeding; Gem Professional profile.

May 2000: Ross-on-Wye GC; Top Dressing; Course Mapping; Compact Tractors

June 2000: National Championship preview; Spraying; World Education Conference review; Environmental Management; Mowers

July 2000: Open Championship Preview; Dougal Duguid Court Case Report; Pest Control; Avenit's profile; Course Conditioning

August 2000: Open Championship review; Water Features; Saltex preview; Charcoal; Malone GC; Royal County Down; Grand Tour Scholarship

September 2000: Blowers and Sweepers; Berkshire College Academy; National Championship roundup; Gordon McKillop interview; Winter health checks

October 2000: Toro Awards Preview; Ronald Fream; Irrigation; Saltex Review; Pest Control; Woburn GC



Guess What?



September, rain, the two have been inseparable in 2000 and the old saying that the weather will change with the month is definitely not right this year. As I write this Monday October 9, it has been non-stop heavy rain since 10am. It is now 8pm and the forecast says same again tomorrow. Anyone trying to get hollow coring done has my sympathy: It's a case of trying to catch a dry day between all the wet ones. I was lucky to catch one of those days on September 21 when I had lunch with the East Section lads at their autumn meeting and tea with the Central Section, also at their autumn outing. Thank you to both Sections, it was a grand day, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Thank you also to the Central Section, of which I am a member, for the lovely goblets they presented to me in honour of my year in office.

Guess what? It started raining again that evening. The next weekend and it was off to Lytham for the Charterhouse/Scotts BIGGA National Championship. On the Sunday I was looking forward to playing Royal Lytham for the first time. Guess what? It rained from the 1st tee till we eventually had to call it a day at the 11th. My thanks to Paul Smith, Course Manager at Royal Lytham, sorry I didn't get a chance to see you, hopefully I will another time.

Next morning Old St Annes Links were in fine shape and a beautiful day for the first round and there was some

good golf played to match the day. Monday night and we had a great evening at the Banquet. Good food and good company with our special guests Leon Gaskell, President, and Ted Walker, Captain of Old St Annes and Jim McFeat, Captain, June Miller, Ladies Captain and Harold Fielding, Secretary from Fairhaven, and an excellent speaker in John Welch.

Guess what? Tuesday and it poured down again but it did not deter our intrepid competitors – glad I wasn't playing – who battled through to the end. Well done to our 2000 Champion Dustin Houghton and also to Noel Crawford whose 75 scratch, one over par, round Fairhaven was tremendous given the appalling conditions. It was another great

tournament for which we thank all at Old St Annes and Fairhaven for their hospitality and especially to Geoff Whittle, Course Manager at St Annes and Peter Simpson, Head Greenkeeper at Fairhaven and all their staff for the excellent condition of both courses.

Lastly, but only because I saved them to last, our sponsors, Charterhouse and Scotts, who made it all possible. Once again a big thank you for your support.

By the way, if Richard Minton tells anyone that I don't pay my debts – he beat me easily at Old St Annes and he did play well – anyone who drops the bet to 1- after seeing my first drive has no courage of conviction.

Only one small point spoilt the event for me, this was the prizewinners who did not stay to collect their prizes, especially as we had the prizegiving finished by 5.30pm.

The next weekend and it was down to Aldwark for two days of meetings. However, a clear the head day followed, when I was invited to join the Northern Region at Penrith where they were playing for the Whitelaw Bowl. What a marvellous set of prizes with the Bowl itself simply magnificent. The sponsors, Course Care with John Wood MD and Andy Vincent have to be congratulated for their support of this tournament. I think the winner, was a bit overawed with the size of the bowl. I know I was a bit nervous holding it. It was a great honour for me to present the trophy in honour of Lord Whitelaw who did such

a wonderful job for BIGGA in his 10 years as President.

Well, summer is over and it's time to think that over the next few months Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers will be looking at ourselves and our staff and deciding who needs more training. There are so many opportunities for us to increase our knowledge and training on a myriad of subjects. We have Regional training courses spread all over the country; Regional seminars, the Learning Experience at Harrogate with Conference, Workshops and Seminars and some Sections run courses in their own area. I know people in other industries and professions who cannot believe the opportunities that we have set out for us and they do not believe the low prices either. We should all be taking advantage of these whenever we can.

I find the attitude of some golf clubs somewhat surprising in that they do not encourage their staff to improve themselves in either learning new skills or adding to what they already know. Recently a Club Manager told me they have a great Head Greenkeeper, but unfortunately he lacked some managerial skills. Why not send him on one or two BIGGA courses, I said, Brin Bendon or Frank Newberry will certainly help him to add these managerial skills to his already considerable skills as a greenkeeper. Surely it's daft to lose a good man or appoint someone over him if all it needs is some specialist training to help him and also help the club.

Most greenkeepers start off as apprentices and work their way up and have not had the chance to learn managerial skills such as man management, budgeting, work allocation, report writing and other skills like these. In this day of educational enlightenment when the governments are always encouraging us to learn new skills it surely behoves the clubs to set aside monies to each year purely for education and training. If you do not have this in your budget, put it in this year, it makes sense.

A man's greatest strength develops at the point where he overcomes his greatest weakness