

John Deere's most northerly mower?

Shetland's only 18 hole golf course, on the main island at Dale, acquired a new 3235A lightweight fairway mower last spring - shortly after the arrival of new Course Manager, Ian Donaldson.

"It was one of the priorities when I came to the club, as there were quite a few older machines that needed replacing," he said.

"The fairways were being cut with an outdated set of trailed gangs, so I ordered the new mower from Orkney dealer Bobby Flett in March.

"I'd had a demonstration of the 3235A at my last course, so I knew what I wanted. As far as I'm concerned, there's no other fairway mower to touch it, and I've tried all the other makes.

"We use the machine twice a week for a total of 24 hours cutting the fairways, and the only problem in more than 500 hours of operation has been a hydraulic drive motor that was replaced quickly under warranty with no fuss.

Picture shows (left to right) John Deere dealer Bobby Flett, Shetland Golf



Club Course Manager Ian Donaldson, Club Captain Ronnie Gair and John

Deere Territory Manager Richard Charleton with the 3235A mower.

Football Groundsman of the Year Award

Mark Robinson, head groundsman of Premiership Derby County's Pride Park Stadium has been named IOG Professional Football Groundsman of the Year at Saltext.

His award, a silver plate and holiday for two, was presented by IOG director Carl Pass who sits on the playing surfaces committee of the Premier and Football Leagues. The final judging, on groundsmanship skills including management and maintenance techniques, was carried out by Carl and IOG Director and National Treasurer Alex Millar.

"I am deeply honoured by this award, particularly as it has been given by fellow professionals who know the pressure we are under," said Mark. His pitch was named top in the Premier League earlier in the year by STRI judge Stephen Baker. The other contenders for the top IOG award were:

Division One:
Steve Patrick of Blackburn Rovers.

Division Two:
Steve Drew of Bristol City.

Division Three:
Mike Heather of Cheltenham Town.

Financial support for GCSAA exhibitors

The largest trade show in the world for the golf course management industry, the GCSAA Conference and Show in Dallas on February 15-17, 2001 will once again be financially supported by British Trade International under the SESA programme.

The Agricultural Engineers Association will act as the sponsor and the grant is available to all UK based

companies involved in exporting from the UK.

Support for eligible exhibitors:
60% of expenditure on stand space and construction, up to a fixed ceiling of £2,300.

First Time Exhibitors Package:
A structured package of information and advice, in addition to the basic grant for those companies exhibiting with support for the first time in any market.

Applications for the grant must be received by the Agricultural Engineers Association before 15th November 2000.

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In last month's issue we used a red cross to illustrate the article on the winter health check for golf courses, and in doing so we inadvertently contravened the "Statute ruling" which states that the Red Cross symbol is protected by statute and may only be used by member groups, societies of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement. We apologise unreservedly to the Red Cross for the breach.



Education matters: Both old and new

I feel that I have to comment on the statement in Steve Isaac's article, in last month's issue, that there has been a slight rethink on the subject of autumn fertilisers, on the part of those with dominantly annual meadow grass greens who see their turf turn a sickly yellow. Surely he and they have heard of the greenkeepers' friend, sulphate of iron, which imparts colour for the benefit of those who equate colour with quality, without all the harmful effects of fertiliser. It also, needless to say, acts as a mild fungicide, hardens the turf, acidifies the root zone (discouraging worms) and blackens moss.

Applying NPK fertilisers as late as the end of August would be regarded by many experienced traditional greenkeepers as too late anyway, but

such fertilisers in autumn not only encourage *Poa annua* to dominate but set up fearsome *Fusarium* attacks. When students in both Greenkeeper International and other turf magazines report through articles a big swing in the States towards traditional (low fertiliser) standards save in the case of 'resort' courses, we should not allow such heresies as autumn fertilisers to be given credence here. Needless to say the fertiliser firms are all in favour of the extra sales.

To advise NPK in autumn because greens look sickly (if they are dominantly annual meadow grass) is equivalent to letting a drying-out alcoholic go back on the booze just because he is suffering.

May I also comment on two other articles. First my congratulations

to my old friend Duncan Gray in Talking Heads, who is brave enough to say what many think, that overseeding greens is something invented by the seed trade as a sales ploy.

On the subject of the editorial on education, when will we accept that colleges today are inventing more and more courses not for the benefit of our profession but to serve their own interests? The trend today is for more and more on-course training, supervised by visiting lecturers and under their own head men - far more economic and efficient.

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Toro thanks

Can I just say what an enjoyable afternoon I had meeting Jimmy Neilson for the first time and walking my course with him under the premise of his judging our efforts for the Toro Excellence in Greenkeeping Award. I was previously under the mistaken impression that there was nothing for me in an award scheme like this - after all there must be thousands of people nominated, some who will be less deserving than me and some who will be more. If all your judges have as much enthusiasm and experience as Jimmy Neilson, and are willing to pass that on in the same encouraging and motivating manner then every one of those nominees will have had a worthwhile experience.

Meeting a man willing to share a lifetime of knowledge is worth more to me than any trophy. Jimmy, I look forward to meeting to again soon.

Simon Freeman,
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