

## Exceedingly Good Greenkeepers

Have you caught the advert on television which shows two greenkeepers watching an inept golfer knocking divots out of the course. One turns to the other and asks why the club had allowed him to become a member. The other says something along the lines of "Mr Kipling? He can't play golf but he does make exceedingly good cakes."

Now there are three elements to this advert. One. Mr Kipling's cakes, which I have no doubt are exceedingly good. Two. Golf, which is being used as a vehicle for selling the product. Three. Greenkeepers, who are central to the plot.

Now it may be argued that it would have been nice to see them doing something a little more dynamic than drinking tea, a bit of aeration work or top dressing, bunker edging perhaps but let's not be greedy. The advert may be for Fondant Fancies or Cherry Bakewells but at least it recognises the fact that golf courses need to be maintained and that the job is done by greenkeepers.

That is a huge stride forward because any recognition for the work that you do is positive and if someone like Mr Kipling, the cake manufacturer not the inept golfer, feels that greenkeepers can help them sell cakes, then great!

As we have said many times communication is the key, using cakes or anything else, and the need for that has been hammered home once again through the excellent aeration survey produced by the Berkshire College Greenkeeping Liaison Committee by Ray Clark and Martin Gunn and the BB&O Section. It appears on page 17 this month.

The response to one particular question leaps out. "If you do not aerate your greens as often as you would like, which reason best describes why?" The overwhelming response - some 54% - was "Golfer Pressure" which was 30% higher than the next highest answer "Lack of Resources". Now you can accept lack of resources as a practical reason, particularly at smaller clubs, but the fact that golfer pressure is making such an impact is frankly appalling.

Golf club members should hang their heads in shame and if that doesn't tell us that communication about the need for aeration, and many other greenkeeping practices, is desperately needed to be improved I don't know what does.

It would be interesting to see if the BB&O results, and I understand Ray and Martin had a 100% response rate, are reflected over the rest of the country so please let me know via snail mail, email or fax.

If it is the case it shows that we have a really huge education job to do.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to use this column to congratulate Paul Smith and his team on the magnificent condition in which they produced the course. It was a wonderful Open, made all the more so by a course which reaffirmed its place as one of the finest links courses in the country.

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor

## Henton & Chattell and Breakwells sign up to John Deere

John Deere has signed ET Breakwell Ltd and Henton & Chattell Ltd as Commercial and Consumer Equipment dealers in the Midlands. The two dealers had previously been part of the Textron stable.

Between them Breakwells and Henton & Chattell have over 120 years in the grounds care industry and both will now be selling and servicing John Deere's full line of professional, golf and turf and domestic equipment, including the Roberine and Sabo brands.

"We are delighted to welcome these two leading dealers, with such a strong history of machinery, sales and service to the John Deere network," said Graham Williams, Deere's C&CC Division Manager.

"Their experience and established customer base will strengthen our position in the Midlands and enhance our continued growth in the UK grounds care market," he added.

Breakwell's employs 65 people across the business, with 22 in service and parts. It will now be covering the West Midlands, Staffordshire and part of Leicestershire for John Deere.

"In order to maintain a high level of after sales service and ensure our continued success in the grounds maintenance industry we see our future with John Deere," said Len Breakwell, Managing Director.

Henton & Chattell also



John Chaloner and Len Breakwell with Graham Williams seated

employs 65 people with 28 in service and parts. Its new territory for John Deere covers Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and part of Leicestershire.

"We have taken a commercial

decision that our long-term future lies with John Deere, and its plans for expansion in the grounds care marketplace," said John Chaloner, Managing Director.

## A new 'yellow patch' of bent grass

A new problem of bent grass has recently been identified across the UK and Ireland.

Mark Hunt, Product Manager, Headland Amenity Limited, initially spotted the unusual patch problem back in 1998 on a small number of recently constructed courses and with the support of Headland Amenity began looking into the problem.

During the next two summers, more courses began to show up the symptom extending across England and Ireland. With the assistance of Cropcare, Headland's Irish distributor, samples were taken and analysis began.

"It became apparent during that period that the problem didn't fit a specific recognised turfgrass pathogen, though it closely resembled a particular turfgrass disease, a situation that led to a number of 'dead ends' and inevitable frustration," said Mark.

Towards the end of last summer, Dr Kate Entwistle, The Turf Disease Centre, UK, was called in to identify its cause, but because

of its period of activity, it wasn't until this summer using fresh samples from the UK and Ireland that progress was made.

Kate was, however, able to discuss the problem with Dr Joe Vargas Jr., Michigan State University, during last year's Myerscough Turf Conference, since Joe had been independently asked to become involved in the identification of this peculiar phenomenon. Work is still ongoing to determine the complete nature of this new condition, but they have found that the symptoms are definitely associated with the establishment of a root knot nematode of the *Meloidogyne* genus.

"This is an extremely exciting discovery for us," explained Kate.

"I have been aware for some time that several types of nematodes increasingly appear to be associated with problems on amenity turf, but this is the first time that I have seen *Meloidogyne* causing such dramatic symptoms on putting greens in the UK and in Ireland.

"We hope to have further details

very soon and are looking at publishing an article on the condition in a forthcoming issue of *Greenkeeper International*," said Kate.

The problem shows itself as pale green or yellow/green patches or rings which appear around May/June and remain throughout the growing season until they disappear from the putting surface around November time. Only very occasionally does the sward thin or show dead areas within the affected patch.

"We fully appreciate the concerns of the Course Managers presently involved in this investigation with regard to finding a cure for this disfiguring problem. However, we need to be absolutely certain what we are dealing with before we can make any recommendations. Misidentification and incorrect advice at this stage for control could actually exacerbate the problem," said Kate.

For further information contact Kate Tel: 01256 880246.