

A LOOK BACK TO A DECADE AGO
Back Lapping
 FROM GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

Take a time-honoured look back through the pages of Greenkeeper International from a decade ago



AUGUST 1991

Britain's First Master Greenkeeper

The magazine reported that Laurence Pithie had become Britain's first Master Greenkeeper. Course Manager at Minchinhampton Golf Club, Laurence wrote that 'Education, has, and always will be the foundation upon which BIGGA exists, for through training and education it can promote confidence, improve technical knowledge and engender motivation, which leads in turn to greater respect. Managing today's golf courses requires not just practical experience but a wealth of technical expertise in understanding the theory and practise of turfgrass management. If we are to change the public conception of being 'the greenkeeper that cuts the grass', we must improve our image'.

Today Laurence Pithie is Director of Maintenance for American Golf.

Diminishing Prospects?

Greenkeeper International was downbeat about the prospect for new golf course projects. A report estimated that some 30 golf course cum hotel sites were in the hands of the receiver. It was understood that one estate specialist had no less than 80 potential courses and 40 existing courses on its books with precious few buyers. Developers were being chided for having responded too soon to the 1989 R&A report predicting a need for 700 new courses by the end of the century.

Speaking of the Architect

'Those beautifully turfed golf courses that you enjoy are not laid out casually on the back of an envelope. Nor are they the result of pushing a little dirt around and throwing some grass seed on the ground. They are the result of talented and skillful people devoting what is often the better part of three years to plan, design and construct ... Just as becoming proficient as an expert golfer requires years of play and countless hours on the practice tee, so too is a long apprenticeship needed to be a real golf architect in fact. Just as the great player makes the game look easy, so the best of golf course architects often make their work look easy too. Don't you believe it. I have a lot of dirty clothes and worn out shoes to prove how tough it really is!'

Robert Trent Jones Jr.

Top student for Gaunt and Marnoch

Golf course architects Gaunt and Marnoch have recruited the top graduate from this year's European Institute of Golf Course Architects' Professional Diploma course. Dimitri Van Hauwaert, 32, from Belgium, who won the 2001 Toro Student Golf Course Architect Award, will head up the new Gaunt and Marnoch office in Antwerp and will spearhead the company's activities in Continental Europe.

"We're delighted to welcome Dimitri to our company. He is exactly the kind of person we are looking for - fluent in many languages, strong business acumen, tremendous golf design achievements in only a short space of time, not to mention his golfing prowess as an amateur international," said Co-Director Steven Marnoch.

"In recent months we've conducted a very frank assessment of our business and the future market potential. The progress we're making in the UK is really pleasing but we want to expand further the company's activities on the Continent," explained



Steve's partner, Jonathan Gaunt.

As part of his prize Dimitri will fly to the Toro Company's Headquarters in Minneapolis and its irrigation division in Riverside, California and attend the GCSAA Show in Orlando.

The winner of the associated Barenbrug Award was Richard Myers, who will visit Barenbrug's Dutch Wolfheze breeding station and tour links courses on the east coast of Scotland.

Swan Golf Designs land new contracts home and abroad

Swan Golf Designs Ltd has secured a commission to renovate Brickendon Grange Golf Club in Hertfordshire.

While a significant project for Howard Swan, Brickendon Grange will fail to help him to add to his growing collection of air miles.

The practice now looks after 25 courses including some as far afield as Reykjavik, Beirut and the Continent of Europe although his furthest commission is half way round the world.

The practice is redesigning the Ras Al Hamra Golf Course in Muscat, Oman where the nine hole brown course is being revised and is likely to become the Sultanate's first green and grassed layout.

The course is being lengthened and a full irrigation system installed to allow effluent water from a nearby refinery to be used to water the new grass. The course is designed to allow the recycling of all water so conserving to the maximum a resource whose value is immense in such a part of the world.



RainBird hold seminar at Gleneagles

Gleneagles was the venue for RainBird's annual Training Day attended by Course Managers and greenkeeping staff from courses across Scotland and Northern England.

The event, now in its second year, provides an introduction to new users of Rain Bird's computerised irrigation control systems and is also a refresher course for those already familiar with the systems offered by the company.

"Here at Gleneagles we have invested over £500,000 in our Rain Bird irrigation system and it has proved a worthwhile investment but only because we have received the relevant and necessary training," said Scott Fenwick, Golf Courses Superintendent.

"Effective water resource management, with its associated environmental implications is vitally important - hence the massive advances in irrigation technology over the last decade," said Mark Ganning, RainBird's UK Field Service Manager.

