

Duncan McGilvary's article in last month's magazine under the heading "Should we lead or should we be led" has already produced exactly the type of response he requested.

He ended the piece by urging you to respond and "show the 'powers that be' within the golfing world that we are ready and willing to take on the responsibility necessary to ensure not only the efficient management of our golf courses but our own futures."

As I write, the November issue has only been with you a few days but we have seen, by our standards, a huge post bag. You can read some of the responses on the Letters' page.

All agree that the job would be far easier if qualified, professional Course Managers had the autonomy to make decisions on the well being of the golf course without having to consider the opinions of a group of lay people in the shape of a Green Committee.

However, Duncan's point was also about how to get to that ideal state of affairs and how do qualified professionals persuade golf clubs that they should be given a freer rein to get on and do the job..

As one of the correspondents says, "we wouldn't tell an electrician how to wire a house or a mechanic how to fit a new engine".

The difference in golf, however, is that while an electrician and mechanic have one right way to do a job and many wrong ways, in greenkeeping there is a perception, rightly or wrongly, that you can choose from a range of approaches. That brings "opinion" to the table and, let's face it, everybody has one.

The Course Manager has, therefore, to persuade the Green Committee that his opinion carries more weight than that of the collective group of club members who make up that Committee.

Put it another way. The Committee can feel that, unlike on issues such as wiring houses or fitting engines to cars, its opinion on matters agronomic is worth hearing. Of course that, in the vast majority of cases, is nonsense and a typical case of little knowledge being a dangerous thing. However, subjects on which a Committee can, and does, have valid comments to make are the obvious matters of course tidiness and fault finding.

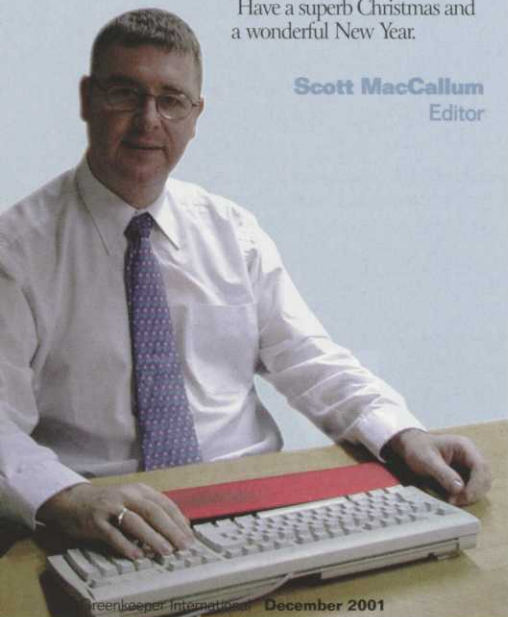
If the Committee can tell a Course Manager about a broken sprinkler head, or a litter bin which hasn't been emptied for weeks, it can then make the jump to wondering if the agronomic welfare of the course is also being "neglected".

One of the answers, therefore, is not to give a Committee any ammunition. By beating the committee to the punch on what might be otherwise regarded as the small things, it might ultimately give you more freedom to look after the more important issues.

I hope this doesn't come across as a case of teaching egg sucking methods to mothers but more a case of adding a few personal thoughts to the interesting issues raised by Duncan.

Have a superb Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

**Scott MacCallum**  
Editor



## Gentleman's dinner a big success

The average golf club might have about 20 Members in the Spikes Bar when a proud golfer returns from his round having scored a hole-in-one. Not so for John Cook, the Chairman of Green at Orsett Golf Club, who chose the 155 yard par 3 17th hole at Walton Heath Old Course for his magical moment. On this occasion however there were 100 golfers plus another 20 guests ready to enjoy the evening banquet and entertainment at the South East Region's Gentleman's Dinner. Needless to say, in keeping with tradition everyone enjoyed a drink with John in the form of an after dinner brandy!

The event should have happened last March but had to be postponed due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic but the Region was indeed fortunate that Walton Heath Golf Club could accommodate us later in the year. With very heavy rains on the Saturday and Sunday things were looking very doubtful. Neighbouring courses had been closed due to the rain but Clive Osgood, Mick Haynes and their Staff did a

tremendous job in having ready for us on a beautiful sunny autumn Monday morning a course in superb condition and the Region's thanks are very much due to them for enabling the event to take place.

The Region's thanks are also due to the Trade who stayed with us during the postponement. It was nice to see Alan Stow who came out of retirement to renew a lot of old friendships.

The golf was incredible. The "Shullockie Putter" was won by James Seisun, Highgate Golf Club, with an unbelievable 42 points playing off 8. A full list of prize winners who received their prizes from Walton Heath Captain Peter Souster after first enjoying a superb banquet and after dinner entertainment from Bob Webb were:-

Cat 0-9. 1. James Seisun, 42 pts; 2. David Badham, 40 pts; 3. Mark Harvey, 37 pts. Cat 10-17.1. George Brown, 43 pts; 2. Lee West, 41 pts; 3. Richard Dunmow, 38 pts. Cat 18-24. 1. Malcolm Smith 35 pts; 2. John Jennings 31 pts; 3. Rae Sergeant

35 pts. Guests. 1. Gary Ogilvie, 39 pts; 2. Peter Russell, 36 pts.

Greenkeeper/Club Official. 1. John Davidson/Rae Sergeant; 2. Jon Hill/Chris Allen Longest Drive. Ian Semple. Nearest Pin 7th. John Payne. Nearest Pin 11th. Tony Bremer. Nearest Pin 17th. John Cook.

Lastly the Region must mention and thank the Companies that sponsored this event and provided so many wonderful prizes:

Aventis Environmental Science; Avoncrop Amenity Products Ltd; Bioseed Ltd BSP Landscapes Ltd; CMW Ltd; Ernest Doe And Sons Ltd; E. & S. Sports Grounds Ltd; Farmura Environmental Products; GEM Professional Ltd; Grass Roots Trading Co. Ltd.; Prime Irrigation Ltd; Rigby Taylor Ltd; Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd; The Scotts Co (UK) Ltd; John Shaw (Machinery) Ltd; Sheerwater Leisure Ltd; Sherriff Crop Care; Sisis Equipment Ltd; Tacit Ltd; Vitax Ltd.

Derek Farrington  
South East Regional Administrator

## Turf industry recovers

According to the Turf Growers Associations 11th market survey, carried out during the summer, members are well-placed to meet this demand over the coming year, having recovered well from the floods of autumn 2000 and the cold, wet start of 2001.

Autumn and spring sowings are largely in balance with crops heading towards maturity at sufficient levels to meet projected sales during 2002.

However, the survey shows that a market slow-down was being anticipated by members with sowings planned for this autumn leaning towards prudence.

According to TGA spokesman, Graeme Forbes, events occurring in the USA and Middle East since the survey was completed have heightened concerns also of a global slowdown and even a recession.

"Any fall in consumer confidence is likely to have a knock-on effect on the house building market, which is a key outlet for cultivated turf," he commented.

"Clearly, turf growers will be watching home and world events closely as they go through the winter and approach the spring sowing period."

## New man for Reco

Reco has appointed a specialist demonstrator for the Kioti range of compact tractors launched at Saltex this autumn.

David Broad has a degree in agricultural engineering from Harper Adams College and previously worked in the European export department at Renault Agriculture.

He has practical experience of tractor operation, including shop floor assembly, servicing, in-field operation and dealer product training.

He will be available to demonstrate Kioti tractors and provide detailed training to dealers and end-users as part of Reco's support for its range of ground care equipment.

## Happy retirement to Claus

Claus-Detlef Ratjen has been a long time friend of BIGGA and many of its members. Many years ago now he had a vision for uniting greenkeepers on a European basis and as Chairman of the German Association he worked unceasingly to that end.

His efforts came to fruition in March 1996 with the formation of the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Associations. Claus was the guiding light behind this Association and went on to become its Chairman. Greenkeepers throughout Europe have much to thank him for as today there is a close unity amongst greenkeepers and their Associations.

At the recent German



Greenkeepers Association Conference in Dortmund, BIGGA Chairman, Clive Osgood expressed the Association's appreciation of all that Claus-Detlef had done for greenkeeping and greenkeepers. In making a presentation to him on behalf of his many friends in BIGGA, Clive thanked him and wished him a very happy retirement.

# A call for regulation

Donald Steel reiterated his call for regulation of clubs and balls at the sixth American Society of Golf Course Architects International Golf Conference held in St Andrews recently.

During the same conference in 1997 he had urged the lawmakers to exert tighter control on the manufacture of clubs and balls, and suggested that the lawmakers consult with architects on the subject.

At St Andrews this year, he reminded Society members, who include 150 leading North American golf course architects, of his earlier statement and what has happened in the interim.

"In those four years, the advance in the realms of the manufacture of clubs and balls has perhaps been more dramatic than in any other four year period in the entire history of the game. There is no wish to be over dramatic, but there is a definite fear that the situation is riding out of control," he said.

After its latest St Andrews meeting the Society declared that there should be a "line drawn in the sand soon" or technology could render many courses obsolete.

In his talk Donald pointed out that five players on the European Tour were averaging 300 yards on their drives.

He noted that Donald Ross had said, "the most dramatic shot in the game is the well-struck long iron" and added that modern equipment has made that shot almost extinct.

Donald stressed that the American Tour players all have averages well above Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus when they were in their prime.

"Taking Jack's driver distance as 260-265 yards, and bearing in mind he was regarded as blisteringly long off the tee throughout his distinguished career, it is a sobering thought that the first 140 on the current European Tour are longer than Jack was in 1970," he explained.

"If a course could be created that demanded that Tiger Woods had to hit long irons for his second shots to the par 4s, mid-irons to the par 3s and the par 5s were all three-shotters you would need a course of at least 8,200 yards, and even then I doubt they would contain him," said Donald.

"Golf course architects are not magicians. Not so long ago, we positioned fairway bunkers about 240 yards from the back tees, then 260, and I recently watch on television while two young professionals gave not a second thought about carrying two bunkers at 280 yards.

"My own personal feeling is that golf and the length of courses were at their best when Tom Watson was at the height of his powers, a time when he needed a perfect drive and 2-iron on

the final hole - 473 yards - at Birkdale to win the 1983 Open. Perhaps that can be kept in mind as a model, but a question nobody has answered is why it has always been the courses and clubs, at great expense, that have had to adjust to cater to new equipment when a far easier solution has been at hand: Control the ball," he concluded.

The ASGCA called for the USGA and R&A to develop reasonable parameters for both clubs and balls.



## SGM Masterclass

The latest innovations on the newest models of Textron machinery were unveiled to greenkeepers and officials from 90 top golf courses at a recent Scottish Grass Machinery Fine Turf Masterclass.

The open day followed a recent announcement by SGM that it had sold 100 Jacobsen fine turf mowers, in deals topping the £3 million mark, in the past 12 months. SGM estimate that the sales of Jacobsen equipment accounted for 55% of all fine turf equipment sold in Scotland last year to top courses including the Roxburgh, Royal Burgess, Airdrie, Alloa and Blairgowrie.

The event was split into three fine turf areas where specialists in tees, fairways and greens had the opportunity to exhibit the latest innovative designs. Ian Bridges, Regional

Manager of Textron, demonstrated the new Greensking VI greens machine, which is the lightest mower in its class due to the resourceful use of metal and components.

The day ended with an opportunity to participate in the machinery driving competition and the chance for delegates to perfect their golf swing with John Caven and Neil Marr, from Meldrum House Golf Club. Each delegate left with a computer-generated profile of their golf swing.

"The day was one of our most successful open day's yet. Again, Textron had a great range of new products and it was a good opportunity for our customers to meet with the experts," said David Melroy, Managing Director of Scottish Grass Machinery.

## Satellite operation

To extend the areas serviced by their existing specialist distributors, Sovereign Turf has set up a number of new satellite operations to supply turf and grass seed.

Mill Race Nurseries, one of the largest wholesale nurseries in the South East of England, and Sibleys Green Nurseries based at Thaxted operate under the umbrella of Sovereign's distributor Crowley Turf. Significantly extending the area previously covered, clients from Harlow, Bishops Stortford, Braintree, Chelmsford and Colchester right out to the East coast can be serviced.

"This move is part of our on-going expansion plans designed to double the business in five years. It provides experienced agents who can promote our turf and seed to landscapers, local authorities and sportsturf managers," said Steve Williams, Sales Manager.

## St Andrews Bay

Sam Torrance, Europe's Ryder Cup Captain has opened the Torrance Course at St Andrews Bay the £50m golf resort, spa and conference centre, his first ever course design.

The 7020 yard, par 72 course set on cliff tops overlooking St Andrews will be joined next summer by its sister course the Devlin providing 36 holes of true championship golf.

"I've been asked to design courses previously and said no, but it's only once in a lifetime that you get asked to build a course with such a dramatic setting - especially at St Andrews. This time it had to be yes," said Sam.

The £7m design is part of the exciting new resort that opened earlier in the year, the vision of Don Panoz, an American pharmaceutical magnate. St Andrews Bay is the first European property of Chateau Elan Hotels and Resorts.

"Our investment has been significant at St Andrews Bay and our next phase of development is on schedule including the Devlin course. Although this year has been a difficult one for the entire UK tourism industry, we've developed a product and level of service that provides a point of difference to both the business and leisure sectors," said Don.

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year [www.tonyhusband.co.uk](http://www.tonyhusband.co.uk)



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



**DECEMBER 1991**

Elliott Small paid tribute to Cecil George on his retirement as 'a man 'o many parts: greenkeeper; educator; committee member; secretary; chairman; president; editor; poet and sometime singer of 'auld Scottish songs'. Cecil had begun his greenkeeping career in 1943 at Whitecraigs Golf Club finally settling at Lenzie Golf Club where he spent 37 happy years. Above all perhaps Cecil remains synonymous with greenkeeper education with his active interest continuing to this day. He remains closely involved with BIGGA and his contribution to each AGM remains eagerly anticipated.

Jim Snow, as National Director of the USGA Green Section, covered the topic of winter play on greens. It is common knowledge that three topics are simply too controversial and should never be brought up at social functions; politics, religion and winter play on greens. The last mentioned topic - few subjects raise such an emotional response from greenkeepers and golfers alike. Jim concluded that winter play can do an inordinate amount of damage to the health and playability of the greens in relation to the number of rounds. Every club considering winter play should question whether or not it is worth the risk of damaging the greens and affecting their playability for a significant period of the regular season by allowing a relatively small percentage of the Club's members to use them all the time. In the view of most head greenkeepers, turf grass scientists and agronomists, it is not.

## Allen Power open day

Allen played host to nearly 200 dealers and their salesmen in a recent series of demonstration days in Scotland, the north and south of England. The first day at Murrayshall Hotel and Golf complex near Perth was well attended by dealership representatives from all over Scotland and the far north of England.

The entire range of Allen equipment was at the disposal of dealer sales personnel to test and try the machines in a variety of demanding situations.

Also in attendance from the suppliers was Mark Barnett from Honda who went through the new engines and Tim Mitchell from Friendly Robotics who manufacture the Robomow robotic mower recently taken on by Allen.

The culmination of the road shows came at Blenheim Palace, near Oxford. Over the two days 100 dealers and their staff had the Allen range presented to them against the stunning background of Blenheim.



## Try the Samuel Ryder Cocktail!

Celtic Manor has developed a cocktail in honour of the club's successful bid to host the Ryder Cup in 2010. The 20/10 might well have appealed to seed merchant, Samuel Ryder, as it is produced with ingredients which are based on grasses and herbs.

They include Zubrowka vodka, each bottle of which contains a blade of Bison Grass, Pikesville Rye Whiskey, and Galliano, the famous Italian herbal liqueur in a distinctive bottle.

### Preparation

25ml Galliano  
 25ml Zubrowka Bison vodka  
 25ml Pikesville Straight Rye Whiskey

### Preliminaries

Stirred not shaken over ice. Chill the glasses and shaker with ice and drain when ready for use. Add ingredients to shaker and stir vigorously for 30 seconds then strain into glass.

### Presentation

Garnish with the tip only of a sprig of fresh mint and a 1cm twist of lemon, preferably organic.

## Support boost for Hydroscape

Simon Squires has joined, the Hydroscape Group as the company's UK Technical Support Manager.

Simon's brief covers all technical aspects of the Hydroscape Group's distribution interests, ranging from Toro golf irrigation products, Otterbine Barebo (water) aerators, Global Atmospherics electrical storm warning systems to Sweetwater International sulphur burning units.

Simon recently worked closely with St Andrews Links Trust officials as Contracts Manager responsible for the second phase of the £940,000 irrigation update of the Old, New and Jubilee courses, completed in May of this year.

Prior to that, he managed phase one of the St Andrews project, involving irrigation for approaches, greens, tees and fairways on the Eden, Balgove and Strathyrum courses which was completed within budget and ahead of schedule, in 1999.

"We are delighted that Simon has become part of our team. He will ful-

fil a key role in providing technical support for the complete product range which we, a national distributor specialising in the use of water resources and its management - primarily in UK sports turf markets - view as extremely important," said Graeme Francis, Hydroscape's Marketing Manager,



## Leading the way

I read Duncan McGilvary's article in November's Greenkeeper magazine with interest and found myself agreeing with much that he said, as well as being very concerned. It seems strange that as a profession we have progressed so far in developing ourselves in the last 10 or so years, yet many greenkeepers are respected less now than their predecessors of 30 years ago. Then the greenkeeper's words were law. As you talk to many greenkeepers the recurring statements seem to be "It's what our members want", "We can't do that as it upsets our members" or "I want to keep my job".

There are far too many people writing about, and teaching, greenkeeping principles with those statements in mind. I can't think of many other industries that employ professional, well-trained managers to manage their major asset, and then expect them to be told by committees and members how to manage this asset and, of course, if this asset is in poor shape then it's the manager's fault.

In answer to Duncan's question we should, of course, lead. We are well-trained professionals who have been trained to understand how our courses should be managed. But we need strong minded greenkeepers who have a sense of tradition and of what is right, who want to lead and if they are not out there already then managers from other professions will eventually end up managing many golf courses with dangerous implications. These managers will have no sense of tradition and will undoubtedly change the face of British golf. As greenkeepers we need good training and first-rate leadership to help us in these difficult times. Where this comes from is the real question.

Golf clubs also need to look at themselves very closely too, as their aspirations for their golf course are far too often wide of the mark and against what is traditionally right. We live in an "environmentally friendly" world yet many clubs want to produce a totally artificial environment instead of a natural course that enhances it.

First and foremost we, as greenkeepers, need to come to the front and lead the way forward. We then need our members, committees and professionals to leave us to do what we do best, without having to pander to them and work our management around them.

They are the ones who need education. Who does that is the next question...

Alex McCombie  
 Deputy Course Manager  
 Parkstone Golf Club