

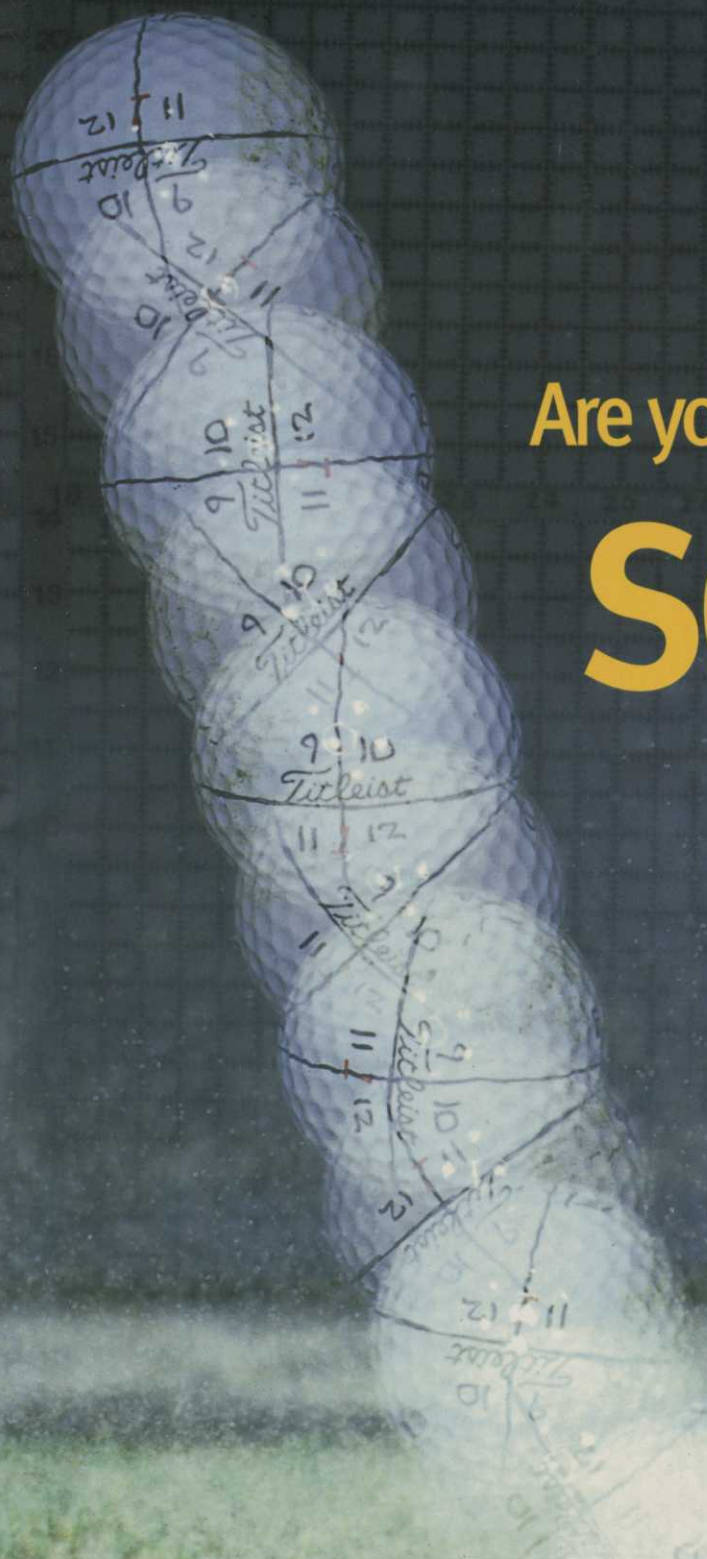


March 2001 – £3.50

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL

Are your greens up to
scratch?



FAST, TRUE & CONSISTENT GREENS

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These courses know the secret...

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- The Belfry
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TRUE-SURFACE
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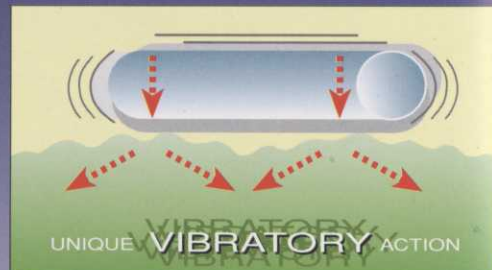
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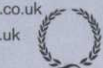
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper

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TIME TO TALK

www.bigga.org.uk

HAVE YOU CLICKED ON YET?

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

FOR GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS WITH GREENKEEPERS

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Renewing a Link to the past

One of the most interesting pieces of news released in the last few weeks was that Royal Liverpool Golf Club, better known as Hoylake, is to return to the Open Championship rota, having last hosted an Open in 1967. Coming hot on the heels of Carnoustie's return in 1999, after a gap of 24 years, it is another example of the R&A's policy of widening the Championship rota.

I don't suppose I'm alone in welcoming this development, particularly as none of the existing venues are being removed.

The Open is an amazing, unique, wonderful event. Every year something happens which quickens the pulse and causes your jaw to drop. Think back over the last few years. We've had Costantino Rocca's amazing putt on the final green at St Andrews to force the play-off with John Daly; Justin Rose's holed chip from the rough to signal the end of his amateur career closely followed by Brian Watt's extraordinarily difficult bunker shot to force a play-off with Mark O'Meara both at Royal Birkdale; then of course there was Jean Van De Velde and local hero Paul Lawrie at Carnoustie and, last year, Tiger Woods at St Andrews becoming the youngest ever to complete the set of Grand Slam events. History in the making.

Before that we've had the Duel in the Sun at Turnberry in 1977; Tony Jacklin at Royal Lytham; Sandy Lyle at Royal St George's; Nick Faldo's 18 straight pars at Muirfield and the first ever four hole play-off at Royal Troon.

Each venue on the current rota has offered something worthy of permanent space in our memory banks and extending the rota will give yet more opportunities for memorable moments.

There are so few classic links courses in this country, and even fewer with the infrastructure to host a modern day Open Championship that the R&A and Royal Liverpool Golf Club must be applauded for taking the initiative and spending the money necessary to make Hoylake a venue again. Since Roberto De Vincenzo won the Championship there in 1967 the Championship has become unrecognisable with a tented village, which should be rights now be known as a town, and media exposure which requires an army of journalists, photographers and broadcasters. I understand extra land has been acquired by the club to ease some of the pressure this brings.

What it does mean is that a wonderful course will again be given the exposure that it deserves and the world's top players will be presented with a challenge they haven't faced before.

That can only add something to the Championship and give, all but the older among us, a new experience for which to look forward.

May I pass on my congratulations to Hoylake and in particular Derek Green who, even now will be making preparations for The Open's return.

The one downside might be for members of the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team who thought they had completed the set when they worked at Carnoustie two years ago. They will now have to wait until at least 2006 to add the final notch to their personal Open Championship belts.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Robert to provide support for Marriott

York-based independent turf consultant, Robert Laycock, (left) has been appointed by Marriott UK to provide agronomic support to the 11 Course Managers at golf courses located at Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs throughout the United Kingdom.

Encompassing 16 separate golf courses in England, Scotland and Wales, the appointment by Marriott UK involves the provision by Robert of advisory visits as well as detailed soil and plant analysis, as required by the individual Course Managers.

Robert's appointment was confirmed by David MacLaren, (pictured right) Director of Golf Operations, Marriott UK: "This appointment is part of a world-wide strategy by our parent, Whitbread plc, aimed at reinforcing Marriott Golf's position as the number one provider of quality golf and associated hotel and leisure facilities in the United Kingdom," he said.

"Although we are very proud of the work carried out by all our



Course Managers, it was felt that they deserved additional independent technical support to help maintain Marriott's golf facilities in peak condition throughout the year."

David explained that Robert came highly recommended having worked closely over the past two years with the Course Managers at Marriott Hanbury Manor and

Marriott Forest of Arden. Both courses are PGA European Tour venues and have hosted four English Opens between them since 1997.

"I am naturally delighted to have been chosen to provide independent agronomic input and technical support to such an important group of golf courses," commented Robert.

Charterhouse present dealer awards



Charterhouse Turf Machinery, the specialist distributor of turf and grounds care equipment, recently presented their 2001 Dealer Awards. The awards recognise outstanding achievements made by the company's 18 Tractor Dealers and 34 Turf Machinery Dealer Outlets throughout the UK. Awards were also presented for development and success in reaching and surpassing targets in other key business areas.

Pictured above are Philip Threadgold, Sales Director Charterhouse Ltd; Ian Royston, Risboro' Turf - a division of Turner Groundscare (Winner of Turf Machinery Dealer of the Year); David Jenkins, Managing Director, Charterhouse Ltd; Richard Campey, of Richard Campey Ltd (Winner of Tractor Dealer of the Year), and Tony Scambler of AJ Scambler (Target Achiever).

Peter claims UK territory

Bernhard and Company has appointed Peter Hampton (right) as their new UK Territory Manager. This follows the company's continuing development as leading manufacturers of professional grinding equipment.

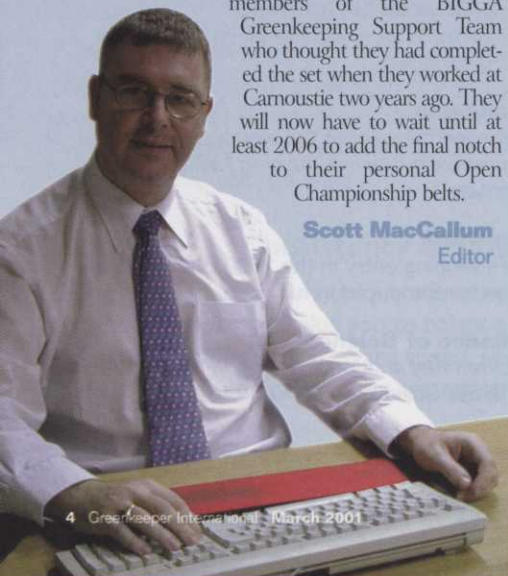
Peter was previously the company's US Territory Manager for Western North America.

He has been responsible for business and field support to distributor salesmen supplying

Express Dual Grinders from The Mississippi to the West Coast, including Canada.

"Having been in the grass machinery industry since 1963 Peter has a wealth of experience and has been involved with many innovative changes in the industry," says Stephen Bernhard, Managing Director.

A Trade Member of BIGGA for over 25 years Peter numbers many UK Greenkeepers as his friends.



Have your say and help BIGGA grow

BIGGA is big – and getting bigger! We want that growth to continue, and we have therefore commissioned an independent market research study, with two aims:

We want to know what our members, and those with whom we work most closely in the golf industry, think of the services we offer and the way we deliver them.

We are also looking for new ideas, particularly in the areas of sales and marketing, so that we can protect and enhance the income base on which our continuing growth depends.

The study is being financially supported by the R&A, and will be carried out by Mike Williamson, of MW

Associates, a specialist golf research company which carried out a similar study for the Sports Turf Research Institute in 1999.

Mike will be sending questionnaires to about 2000 BIGGA members, and talking to representatives of golf companies, golfing organisations, and golf clubs. The survey work will be undertaken in March and April, with the full research report going to the BIGGA Board in June.

We do want (and I'm sure we will get!) frank opinions and good ideas from as many of our members, clients, and those we work with as possible. So:

If you receive a questionnaire from Mike, please do complete and return it. BIGGA is YOUR Association, and we very much want your input to this study.

If you are contacted by Mike or one of his colleagues, please do spare a few minutes to pass on your views and suggestions.

If you do NOT receive a call or a questionnaire (since these will only go to a random sample of members), and you would like to participate in the survey, please contact Mike Williamson and he will be delighted to include you. Mike can be contacted at:

MW Associates, PO Box 6677, Edinburgh, EH14 3YB Tel/Fax: 0131 476 6677
e-mail: mw.assoc@virgin.net

We want BIGGA to get better as well as bigger – so please do help us with this important research.

Neil Thomas, Executive Director



John Shaw Machinery host seminar series

Toro dealer John Shaw Machinery staged a series of one-day seminars designed to assist all those involved with the maintenance of sports and golf turf throughout the area it serves across southern England.

For the three events, titled Sports Turf Maintenance - the Future, the firm, based in Sussex, brought together a group of top speakers that attracted a large attendance from golf and grounds care professionals.

Eddie Seaward, Head Groundsman at The All-England Club, Wimbledon, gave the keynote address. He told the interesting story behind the redevelopment of the Wimbledon complex and provided delegates with a personal insight into his turf preparations for The Championships.

The other expert speakers were Andy Brown, of The Toro Company; Neil Squires, from the STRI; health and safety consultant John Albutt, of John All butt Associates; and John Westrope, Humberclyde Grounds care Finance.

The audience was made up of a cross-section of head greenkeepers, their staff and senior golf club officials, as well as grounds men from the sports turf side of the industry.

Venues were Kings Hill GC, West



Pictured at Kings Hill GC are, from left, David Cole and Miranda Meadon from John Shaw Machinery, with Eddie Seaward, Neil Squires, John Westrope and Andy Brown

Malling, Kent; The Wentworth Club; and Singing Hills GC, Albourne, West Sussex.

John Shaw's marketing director David Cole hosted the events. He said that since its inception his company

has focused on the professional turf maintenance market. Their new company slogan was Providing Solutions for Grounds care Professionals and it was against this background that they had put on these seminars.

Graham launches internet project

A new greenkeeping website www.golfingsupplies.net has been launched by Graham Pickin, Head Greenkeeper of Thornhurst Manor, Doncaster.

"The net has plenty of greenkeeping resources, but they are a little bit fragmented. I thought it would be a good idea if I could browse other greenkeeping web sites including golf courses and suppliers, also join in with a discussion forum and possibly find a bargain in a golf course equipment auction or even get rid of some old machines that are lying around the sheds all in one sit," explained Graham.

The site is completely free and no monies are passed through the site at all. At the auction the successful bidder has the sellers details sent to them automatically via email.

Top level changes at British Seed Houses

British Seed Houses has announced two senior management changes at its Lincoln head office. British Seed Houses director Simon Taylor becomes unit manager for the Lincoln-based operation with overall responsibility for all seed business done from the site.

Jon Chippendale becomes amenity seeds manager and is now responsible for all grass seed, wild flora and granular fertiliser sales into the amenity sector.

Apology for email address error

In last month's magazine under the heading Grand Tour Scholarship 2001 we listed Bettina Schrickel's email address incorrectly. It should have read rtjbettina@aol.com and not ftjbettina@aol.com as we listed at the end of the piece. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

www.tonyhusband.co.uk



Angus Horticulture launch new range

Angus Horticulture are the manufacturers of the "Turf Rise" range of fertilisers.

The programmed approach has been devised by the "FACTS" qualified personnel of the company to allow greenkeepers and groundsman to look after their turf to a high standard with optimum input.

Turf Rise Spring spread at 50 grams/sq. metre will get the grass off to a good start in the spring. Turf Rise Summer is in granular or liquid form applied 4 - 5 times throughout the season, timing depending on the demands of the management of the course, greens, pitches and Turf Rise Autumn applied in September - October with enough potash to harden up the turf ready for the rigours of winter.

Made with raw materials including seaweed powder and lignite which helps the cation exchange in the soil, the "Turf Rise" range gives the greenkeeper the best chance to manage his turf in an efficient and effective way, producing his greens to the satisfaction of players and committee alike. The following is a list of some of the distributors throughout the U.K and Europe.

Phil joins namesake

With a name like Seedhouse, Phil was destined to work for a seed company. The latest member to join the Johnsons Sport and Amenity team, Phil has an easy job of attracting customers. They all want to talk about his name!



Phil plays a very supportive role to the team, dealing with inquiries and processing orders. He has completed the STRI residential course "The passport to perfect courses" and can act with authority when advising customers on mixture selection.

He is very confident about the range he is selling. "Johnson's Sport and Amenity range of grass seed mixtures represents the best choice for turf grass. From rugby pitches to golf courses, the new range can cope with the best of British sport and the worst of British weather," quotes Phil.

Awards presented to Textron dealers

Broderick Grass Machinery Ltd has won the Textron Distributor of the Year Award for 2000.

Noel Broderick, (pictured top) Dealer Principal, accepted the silver trophy and commemorative plaque from Harold Pinto, Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Product's Managing Director, and former three times world motor racing champion Jackie Stewart, at an evening awards ceremony held at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate during BTME.

Textron dealers from the UK, Eire and Europe attended the ceremony, which recognised business excellence in all areas. TH White Ltd of Tetbury in Gloucestershire, scooped two awards as did European dealers Svenningsens of Denmark.

"Broderick's have demonstrated exceptional performance across all areas of their business and tremendous commitment to the Textron franchise with the recent opening of their new premises in Co Tipperary. They thoroughly deserve the title of Textron Distributor of the Year," said Harold Pinto.

A special award for Outstanding Service to the Grounds Maintenance Industry was presented to Len Breakwell, (pictured bottom) of ET Breakwell Ltd, the Solihull-based Textron dealership. The company celebrated 60 years of trading in 2000, 40 of those as a dealer for Ransomes turf maintenance equipment.



£150 BIGGA voucher for Vitax winner, Alan Court

One of the first duties of Clive Osgood, as the new Chairman of BIGGA, was to make a draw on the Vitax stand for a £150 voucher for BIGGA merchandise. The lucky recipient was Alan Court of Bradley Hall Golf Club, Halifax, who gained an extra benefit from attending the BTME exhibition. Alan (left) is pictured being presented with his voucher by Gary Potter, Technical Representative of Vitax.



Advanta Seeds aim for Headstart with first Internet site

Advanta Seeds UK has launched its first Internet website at www.headstart-advanta.co.uk.

The clear and colourful pages, which are easy to navigate, explain the features of Headstart - the biological seed treatment applied to all Advanta's amenity grass seeds.

Seeds treated with Headstart emerge faster and stronger than untreated seeds. The seedlings also have an improved natural resistance to diseases, and are less prone to drought stress.

The treatment, which is non-toxic and completely safe, contains only natural substances including cytokinins and enzymes. These encourage cell division, and help mobilise food reserves within the seed. It also

has chelated trace elements, which are readily available to the young seedling. Water attractants draw moisture from the soil to help the start-up process.

"Headstart is particularly useful where groundsman and greenkeepers are under time, or weather pressure, to establish new swards or repair existing ones," explained Advanta's Amenity Sales and Marketing Manager Dave Phillips.

"With so much work postponed from the autumn and the rain continuing to fall, Headstart could make all the difference between success and failure, for any reseeded work carried out this spring.

"We want our customers to know what Headstart is and what it can do. The website will answer any ques-

tions, and also provides a quick and easy way to contact us, through the response form on the last page."

Get a Headstart...

Headstart is a revolutionary biological seed treatment that can speed up germination by 20%.

Headstart helps greenkeepers and groundsman establish new turf or repair key playing areas when under pressure against time in weather conditions.

It also helps prevent disease and is used on the highly successful 'Turf' and 'Designer' ranges of grass mixtures from Advanta.

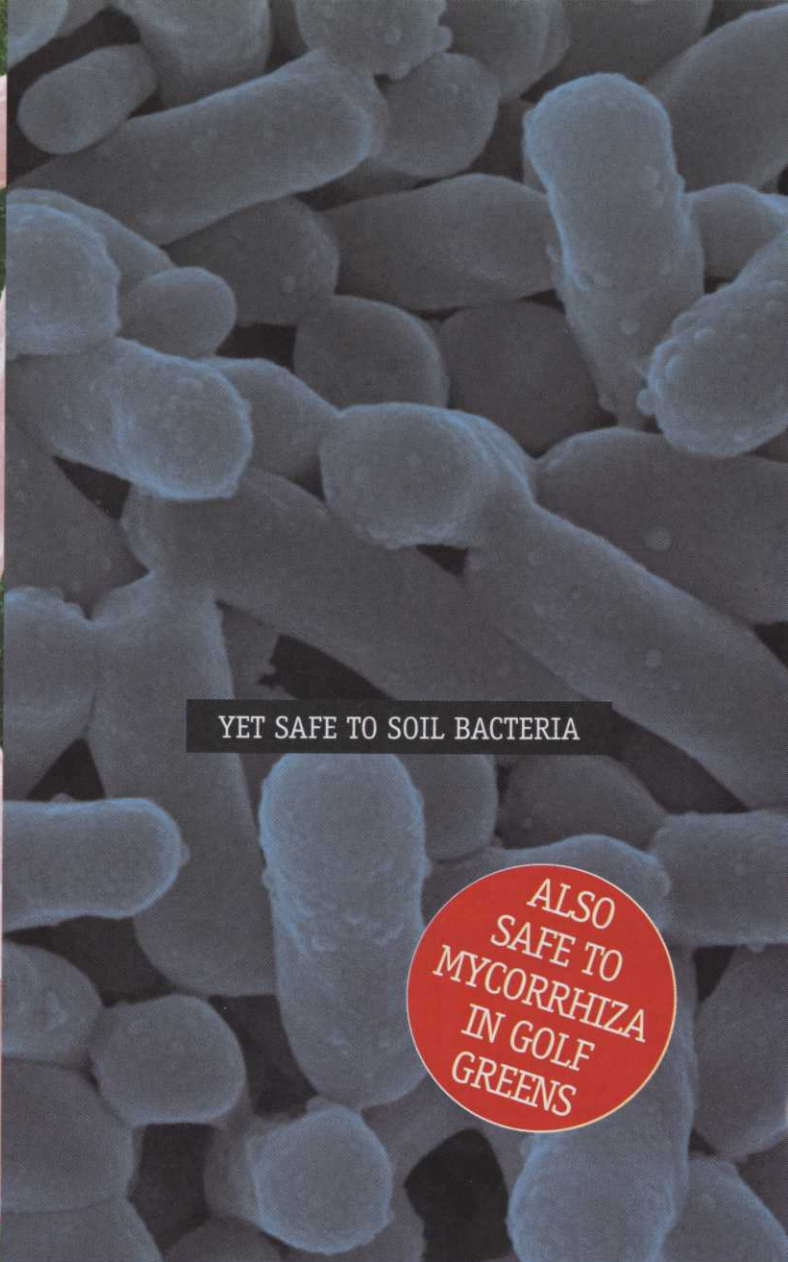
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ALSO
SAFE TO
MYCORRHIZA
IN GOLF
GREENS

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT RIMIDIN

Friends and Foes... under the microscope. Crippling turf diseases like Fusarium Patch, Red Thread, and Dollar Spot are easy prey to the systemic fungicide Rimidin*. Having both a protective and curative action, Rimidin is fast acting, long lasting, reliable and cost effective. Yet Rimidin has been proven safe to those all-important beneficial soil bacteria. Take a closer look.

RT
rigby taylor



Volunteers required!

Volunteers required for the following events:

Volvo PGA Championship, The Wentworth Club, May 25-28, 2001

The Association will again be providing a support team for this prestigious event, this year, for the first time, it will operate on each of the four competition days. Each team member will be allocated a match and will walk the course with the game, raking any bunkers found by the players. In addition, should adverse weather conditions prevail, you may be required to assist the Wentworth greenkeeping staff in keeping the course playable.

You will be responsible for your own transport arrangements to the course and there is no provision for overnight accommodation. You may apply to help on any or all days and usually all those who apply are given the chance to participate on at least one day.

When applying please give details of your polo shirt size as this may be provided together with daily meal vouchers.

Helping at this event will not prejudice your chances of a place on The Open Championship Support Team.

The Open Championship, Royal Lytham & St Annes, July 19-22, 2001

The BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team at The Open Championship will be involved in early morning course preparation; bunker raking, while matches are in play, and evening course repair. You must be available from Wednesday evening, July 18, through to the close of play on Sunday, July 22. While all transport, accommodation and meals will be provided between these dates it is the team member's responsibility for travel from home to the venue and return. When applying please give your polo shirt size.

Full BIGGA members only may apply in writing, for either or both of these events to: John Pemberton, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark Alne, York, YO61 1UE. Should you require any further information John can be contacted on 01347 833800 or via email: john@bigga.co.uk

The Wentworth support team will be co-ordinated by the BIGGA South East Region and Derek Farrington, the Regional Administrator, is available to offer help or information. Derek can be contacted on 01903 260956 or mobile 07850 162401.



Rolawn, Europe's largest cultivated turf producers have signed a long-term haulage contract with K & J Logistics Ltd. K & J who are based in York have worked with Rolawn since 1997. They have a 40 strong fleet of trailers of which three trailers will carry the Rolawn livery. "Our customers demand a delivery service which matches the quality of our turf - it has to be the best available. In order to maintain this level of service we require more commitment and specialised equipment than ever before," said Paul Dawson, Rolawn's Operations Director.

Moore aim to give 'more' mower for your money



With the Moore Mower now in full production, with both its 36" cylinder and 44" rotary mower heads, it is not surprising that Frank Moore is busy adding attachments to his innovative brainchild.

Now a novel Dumpbarrow has gone into production. A practical means of shifting materials such as hardcore, ballast, builder's sand, soil or manure, the attachment can be fitted to the Moore Mower in a couple of minutes with minimal effort.

Designed to carry 100kg, its low pro-

file makes hand loading easy; for unloading, the body is tipped hydraulically to a vertical position and will empty completely in a few seconds, making the whole operation extremely quick, especially where the load must be carried some distance.

A prototype has been in use for several years and has shifted tens of tons of various materials, often at confined and otherwise inaccessible sites. RRP for the attachment is £396+ VAT.

For further information contact Frank Moore, telephone 01308 862653.

Royal Mid Surrey GC appoint Inturf as turf supplier

Inturf has produced turf that exactly matches the specific requirements of Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club.

Royal Mid Surrey, at Richmond, approached the York based company to grow turf for a major redesign that will involve the re-turfing of 36 greens. Rapid establishment is essential to bring the holes back into play quickly, and to minimise loss of green fee revenues.

Under its Custom Grown Turf service Inturf imports prescribed rootzone and seed that matches the conditions where the turf will eventually be laid. The company then grows it for the client, strictly following the highest standards of turf management. For Royal Mid Surrey Inturf is growing the turf on a USGA specification rootzone. The Club has selected the grass mixture itself, choosing varieties that will give an equally proportioned bent/fescue sward. The project at Grantham involves growing some 20,000 m² of turf - enough to cover about three soccer pitches.

Royal Mid Surrey's turf is currently being cared for at the 350-acre Grantham nursery by seven of Inturf's turf management experts. They are implementing a strict greenkeeping regime, with much of the work being done by hand. Their final task will be to harvest the special turf, ready for installation.

ESD Waste2Water launch new recycling system

ESD Waste2Water launched their new Recycling Wash-Off System for Golf Course Equipment at BTME.

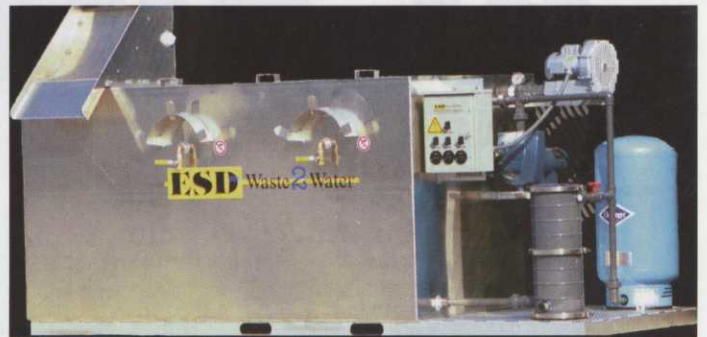
The system is installed as part of the wash-off facility, replacing traditional interceptors etc. The contaminated water is biologically cleaned and recycled for continual re-use, potentially saving very significant amounts of water.

The system provides a rapid breakdown of Organic contaminants including: Oil, Grease, Petrol, Diesel, Pesticides, Fungicides etc., into Carbon Dioxide and Water.

A range of capacity sizes are available to suit wash-off requirements from a small 9 hole course up to a 54 hole golf complex and beyond.

With environmental consideration of everything we do now so important, the benefit of this new closed-loop system, which saves very significant amounts of water and at the same time removes a number of major potential contamination areas, makes this one of the most exciting developments for some time.

For more information contact Tim Earley Tel. 01782 373 878.



The best ever BTME attracts praise from MG

I wish to personally thank all the BIGGA staff for the tremendous organisation of the education conference & BTME show. I have attended several in the past decade & I thought this to be the best to date. It has become a piquant, landmark event which all greenkeepers should aspire to attend.

I found the education conference contained both theatre (Human Resource Management) & a most insightful update on environmental concerns throughout day 2. The holistic approach to sound environmental management is a theme which will become common place in forthcoming years. The fact that only a handful of greenkeepers knew what a SWOT analysis is, proves there was knowledge to be gained from Martin Gunns presentation.

The SWOT analysis will soon become a very important management tool, enabling greenkeepers to clarify information for their respective clubs in all areas of concern.

The entire BTME has become a springboard for new products with the

representatives now housed in excellent indoor facilities, conducive to discussion between trade & customers. The new hall proved to be an attractive addition to previous exhibition space.

The keynote speaker certainly left no one sleeping in the aisles. I'm sure everyone's heart missed a beat or two after the crackle of the 'sonic boom' on video. His connection of integrated teamwork required for success is the integral recipe necessary at all golf courses around the world.

The theme for members to get involved with CPD proves that as an industry, we are carving our future in line with the very best in other areas of employment. This will be very important in ensuring the future security for all greenkeepers, whatever their educational achievements attained to date.

The greatest aspect for me at the National Education Conference/BTME is the communication of recent experiences, ideas, strengths & weaknesses between greenkeepers themselves. Over the 4½ days I attended, I must have

talked to well over 100 greenkeepers & several dozen trade members. I discussed issues with greenkeepers from several parts of Europe, including Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany & Poland, alongside American, Canadian & Australian superintendents. The knowledge gained from these encounters would take several months to assimilate from books etc & it is all completely free to those who can communicate to improve themselves & impart their experience to others. In the end this makes those that attend richer for the experience & will help to make them better greenkeepers / managers at all levels.

I hope this may inspire other greenkeepers to attend in the coming years & discover for themselves what a great experience this week can be & thereby supporting BIGGA to become a stronger, worldclass association in which we are all proud to be members.

David Winterton, CMS, MG.

Plea for help from Belgrade

I would like to acquaint you with my profession and some of the problems in our country in this respect. I am an assistant at the Faculty of Forestry, Department of Landscape Architecture.

My subject is Management and Maintenance of Lawns and, in our country, it is still in the phase of development. Unfortunately, I am the first person who defended a Master of Sciences degree in this field and nobody has ever defended a doctoral dissertation dealing with Lawns.

My obligation to the Faculty and also my desire is to prepare the thesis in such a way that it has multiple benefits.

Moreover, I would like to tell you, that in my country we haven't even got a Golf Course. Concern for this sport is presence. I think, in the close future, my country will need to make the first Golf Course in Yugoslavia. Because of that and my concern for Management and Maintenance of Lawns as well as Golf Course, I would like to be trained in this way.

Since my country who's been in war and long-standing isolation, I haven't financial possibility for cost of some course. In some occurrence I am ready to learn and work in order to pay, cover cost of course. University of Belgrade and me like assistant have minor financial facilities.

Thank you very much in anticipation. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Nenad Stavretovic, M.Sc.
Faculty of Forestry, Department of
Landscape Architecture, University of
Belgrade, Kneza, Viseslava 1, 11030
Belgrade, Yugoslavia

John wishes team best wishes for 2001

After 11 years at Golfclub Neuhof near Frankfurt I have moved to Golf Park Gut Wissmannshof in Staufenberg, Niedersachsen.

I would like to wish all the lads a good season for 2001.

John MacKay, Gut Wissmannshof 2A
34355 Staufenberg, Germany

BTME thanks

I wanted to express my thanks and appreciation for the hospitality I received while at the BTME 2001. This was my first trip to the UK and I was quite pleased with warm reception that was extended. Everyone was very warm and friendly during our visit. A special thanks to Ken and Sami for their help and support. Hopefully a return visit will be possible and a chance to make additional friends.

Stuart Cagle CGC, MG



Stuart receives his award from Sir Michael Bonallack and Elliott Small

BIGGA gets familiar with industry professionals

A one day course designed to familiarise members of the trade with BIGGA and the wider golfing industry was held at BIGGA HOUSE at the end of February.

Attended by several people relatively new to the industry as well as a number of more established industry figures the day was an excellent opportunity for an exchange of information.

The morning consisted of a look at BIGGA's membership and education initiatives as well as a tour round the many other bodies and Associations within the game of golf itself.

Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing

Director of Hayter, then gave a talk on the Trade's, and his own, view of greenkeeping and greenkeepers.

The afternoon session offered an opportunity for greenkeepers to give the audience an appreciation of their work.

Philip Taylor, Course Manager, at Alwoodley Golf Club in Leeds talked on his work on a members' golf club while Andy Campbell MG, Golf Courses and Estates Manager, Carden Park Hotel and Golf Resort, spoke on life on a proprietary-owned development.

The day closed with an Open Forum at which many issues pertinent to the industry were discussed.



This month, BIGGA'S Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, looks at the future of Education and Training and asks you to get involved

Education and Training - The future

BIGGA has been offering its members the chance to take part in education and training since it was formed in 1987. The majority of newcomers to greenkeeping are now trained and assessed to meet the National Standards of NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf and some progress to Level 3 Sportsturf Maintenance and Level 4 Sportsturf Management.

Others take the more academic route and study for HNC/HND in Golf Course Management with some moving on to study for a first degree. Those who have attained a formal qualification should not sit back and stop learning, as learning should be continued throughout your career.



Training providers are now starting to offer what the industry has been requesting through the GTC for some time, for example distance learning and at work learning and assessment, so that greenkeepers continue to develop their careers.

BIGGA introduced its Continuing Professional Development Scheme in 2000, to encourage greenkeepers to

take part in Life Long Learning so that they can adapt their skills to the requirements of today's golf courses.

Anyone who attended the Annual General Meeting in Harrogate in January, would have heard Neil talk about the changes that were due to take place in the coming months with education and training being just one area where change may take place.

This is your chance to have your say to determine what education and training should be offered by BIGGA, where should it be, how much should it cost and how long should it last.

Think about where you fit into the model shown below and contact me or Sami, your Section Secretary, your

Regional Administrator, your Course Manager or any member of BIGGA staff and let us know what you want.

The model shows that entry to greenkeeping may be for those already holding an academic qualification or by those not yet qualified.

Unqualified entrants should be given induction training eg. health and safety, working hours, holidays, pay, pension, golf etiquette, uniform, communications with golfers etc and on the job training. They could also be sent to a training provider who would give them the appropriate underpinning knowledge and skills training. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

Some greenkeepers may wish to continue as assistants and not progress to

Level 3, however, continuing training, eg First Aid, Chainsaw, Spraying etc may be required. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

For those wanting to progress to Level 3 do we need to 'drip feed' training or are they ready to take on the higher level tasks and duties and prove competence. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

If they are ready to move to the next Level then a training provider can offer the appropriate underpinning knowledge and skills training, however, assessment should be done at work.

Some greenkeepers may wish to continue at this Level and not progress to Level 4, however, continuing training, will be required. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

For those wanting to progress to Level 4 do we need to 'drip feed' training or are they ready to take on the higher level tasks and duties and prove competence. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

If they are ready to move to this next Level then a training provider can offer the appropriate underpinning knowledge and skills training, however, assessment should be done at work.

Once reaching this Level, continuing training is still required. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

Entrants with academic qualifications also need induction training and will need to prove competence before doing unsupervised work. Where they fit into the model depends on experience and skill level. Nevertheless, they will need continuing training and development. Does BIGGA have a training role here?

BIGGA and the GTC are committed to life long learning by encouraging golf clubs and greenkeepers to 'buy into' the training options available. Training at the appropriate level is available to all greenkeepers. Use it or fall behind.



Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

The Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, please contact BIGGA on 01347 833800



Golden Key Circle Company Members

Company	Tel: Head Office
Amazon Ground Care	01579 351155
Bernhard and Company Ltd	01788 811600
Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd	01428 661222
Gem Professional	01254 356611
John Deere Ltd	01949 860491
Hayter Ltd	01279 723444
Kubota UK Ltd	01844 214500
Massey Ferguson (AGCO Ltd)	02476 851292
PGA European Tour	01344 842881
Rain Bird	01273 891326
Rigby Taylor Ltd	01204 394888
Scotts UK Professional	01473 830492
Textron Turf Care	01473 270000
The Toro Company/Lely UK	01202 319987

Individual Members

Mike Eastwood, J H Fry, J H Greasley, David S Robinson, Stuart Townsend



Silver Key Circle Company Members

Company	Tel: Head Office
Ernest Doe & Sons	01254 380311
Heath Lambert Ltd	0113 246 1313
Ocmis Irrigation	01460 241939
Sisis Equipment Ltd	01625 503030
Weed Free	07000 481011

Individual Members

Clive A Archer, John Crawford, Bruce Cruickshank, Douglas G Duguid, Alan Holmes, Iain A MacLeod, Robert Maibusch MG, Richard S Mullen, Elliott R Small, Steven Tierney, Raymond J Warrander, WJ Rogers, Kenneth Jones



The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Following a major reorganisation, Amazon Ground Care have,

unfortunately, withdrawn their sponsorship of the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. However, with support from the R&A, the Competition will run as normal this year. Information leaflets are being sent to all golf clubs in Britain during March and requests for entry forms need to be returned to BIGGA House by 12 April. Entry forms will be sent to interested clubs by return. You should be thinking about your entry NOW. The competition is designed to reward those clubs that integrate ecological management with normal golf course management practices to ensure that golf and the environment are compatible. Why not enter? Your club could win the first prize of £4,000, a runners up prize of £500 or a special prize for the best environmental project. All clubs visited by the judges will be offered the chance to purchase a copy of the detailed report on their course, which will also include an action plan. If you do not receive your leaflet then contact BIGGA HOUSE.



The TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

The TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

Competition is now open to Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers/Superintendents in the whole of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. With prizes like a TORO Workman 2100 Utility Vehicle and a two week trip to the USA, plus TORO Greensmaster 1000 pedestrian mower for Runners up in the National Final plus £250 for the winner's greenkeeping team. Additionally, each country finalist ie those in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales will receive a plaque and a framed certificate.

The Winner in 2000 was Ian Ritchie from Portmarnock Golf Club in Ireland. This year could be your turn. Application forms will be sent to all head greenkeepers/course manager/superintendents in Great Britain and Ireland, during March, but if you need a copy then contact BIGGA HQ. Return your application as soon as possible to reach BIGGA HOUSE for British entries or the GCSAI for Irish entries by 27 April 2001.



The TORO Student of the Year Competition

Now in its twelfth year, the search to find the TORO Student of the Year has

begun. Competition details and entry forms have been sent to colleges and training providers and all entries should reach BIGGA HQ by 11 May 2001. The main points of the competition are:

1. The winner receives the TORO scholarship to the USA and visits to the TORO factories and to the GCSAA conference and show in Orlando.
2. The winner's greenkeeping lecturer wins a visit to the GCSAA conference and show in Orlando.
3. The two runners - up win an all expenses paid visit to the Learning Experience 2002 at Harrogate.
4. Regional finals will be held in six locations during late June and up to eight students will be selected for the National Final which will take place on 29 and 30 October 2001.

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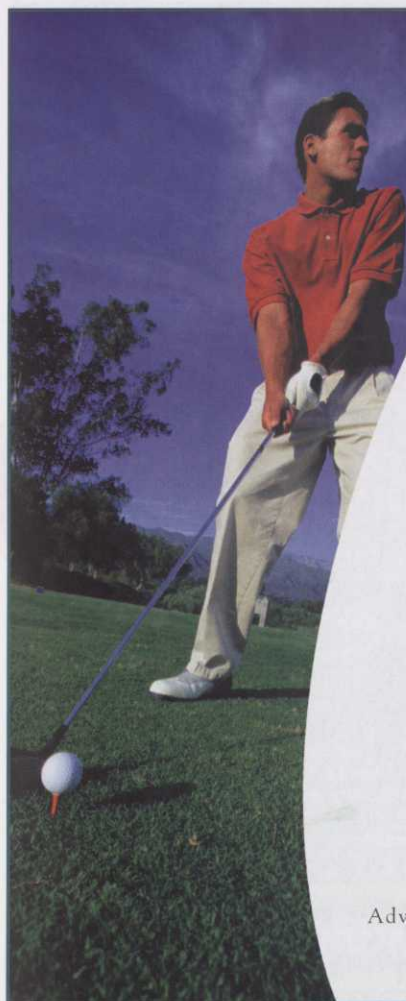
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BIGGA'S Membership Services Officer, Tracey Maddison, would like to welcome 160 new members to the Association and highlight a new membership benefit for all BIGGA members...

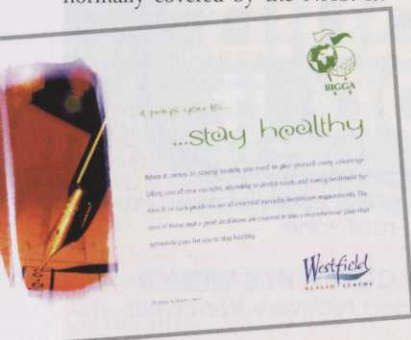
It pays to stay healthy

For 2001 BIGGA have joined forces with Westfield Health Scheme to bring you a specially designed health care plan. You can choose a plan that most suits your lifestyle, to cover you for the cost of minor medical treatments not normally covered by the NHS. In

this way, you will always have the funds to pay for dental treatment, glasses or contact lenses, physiotherapy and a whole host of other treatments, including consultation by a specialist. By ensuring that you have the funds, you can ensure that you have the treatment when you most need it, as opposed to when you can afford it. Check out your membership pack for full details and an application form.

Special offer for all BIGGA Members, join straight away and receive immediate benefit from the 1st of the following month* (normally six month waiting period).

*Pre-existing conditions are excluded from this offer for all grants other than Optical and Dental.



You've got mail!

If you've got an email account why not send an email to the membership department, where we can place you into our exclusive members email address book. We can then keep you up to date with membership news and events as they happen.

Send an email to:
membership@bigga.co.uk
tracey@bigga.co.uk
susannah@bigga.co.uk
or via the website at www.bigga.org.uk

February's Monthly Membership Draw Winner

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA sportswatch. Our congratulations go to February's winner, James Grainger of Ringway GC.

BIGGA welcomes...

Scottish Region

Dudley Aitchison, Central
Paul William Black, East
David Richard Blair, Ayrshire
Graham Brand, Central
Alan Alexander Breen, Central
Victoria Canine, West
Richard James Colley, Central
Graham Stuart Dawson, North
James Dowie, Central
Derek James Downie, Central
Alexander John Latto, Central
Peter Donald McVicar, West
James Peace, North
Caroline Ann Ross, North
Ryan Ross, North
Stuart Anderson Russell, Central
David Robert Smith, Central

Northern Region

Peter Eric Aldridge, Northern
Dean Bagley, Sheffield
Harold Bayliff, N West
Gavin Nigel Beacham, N West
Alec Beard, N West
Jonathan Colin Betts, N West
Alistair James Bolch, Sheffield
Joseph Cassell, Sheffield
Neil David Clarkson, Northern
Andrew Charles Cox, Northern
Christopher Philip Davies, N Wales
Lee Michael Davis, N West
Colin Denny, N West
Chris Michael Dodson, Northern
Sam Facey, N East
Paul Marc Forrest, Northern
Jamie Paul Harris, Sheffield
Roger Graham Heeley, Northern
Paul Hill, N West
Kenneth Craig Howard, N Wales
James Bryan Litherland, N West
Christopher Long, Sheffield
John Douglas McCollum, Sheffield
David Lee Monk, N West
Ian Thomas Moore, N West
Steven Nixon, Sheffield
Aeron Owain, N Wales
Iwan Pugh Jones, N Wales
Martin Roberts, N Wales
Richard Shields, N Wales
Jason Paul White, Northern
Graham John Wilson, Northern

Midland Region

Keith Abercrombie, Midland
James Bonfield, Mid Anglia
Chris Collins, BB&O
Adam Paul Cook, Mid Anglia
Peter Digweed, Mid Anglia
Paul Dixon, E Midland
Wayne Richard English, E of England

Steven Stewart Gilbert, E Midland
Daniel Gilbert, Mid Anglia
James Edward Goodall, Mid Anglia
James Head, BB&O
Allan Malcolm Holdon, E of England
Darryl Keen, BB&O
Ashley Knott, Mid Anglia
Lee Paul Mitchell, E Midland
Jason Simms, Midland
Adam Strong, BB&O
Keith Brian Sulman, E Midland
Kristian Robert Summerfield, BB&O
Edward Thompson, Mid Anglia
Daniel Walker, Mid Anglia
Gary Martin Wiltshire, BB&O
Christopher Phillip Young, Midland

South East Region

Kevin Bacon, Sussex
Simon Darren Bonner, Surrey
Tony George Brookman, Surrey
Steve John Brown, Kent
Ian John Brown, Sussex
Daniel Burn, Surrey
William Nigel Beacham, London
Ben Edwards, Surrey
David Edwards, Sussex
Kevin Lee Finch, Kent
Michael Gahem, Surrey
Paul Harrington, Surrey
Simon John King, E Anglia
Gavin Kinsella, Surrey
Trevor Lambert, E Anglia
David Michael Lyons, London
Darryl Manion, Kent
John Montgomery, London
Warren Jon Partridge, London
Ian Alan Peddle, London
Matthew Rayner, Surrey
Ben Scrivener, Essex
Alan Michael Smith, Sussex
Paul Terry, Kent
David Warner, Surrey
Andrew John West, Surrey
Michael David Wigston, Kent
Ian Stewart Wood, Essex
Neil John Worger, E Anglia
Stuart Wren, Essex
Laurence David Wright, E Anglia

S West & S Wales Region

Philip Leslie Brown, S Coast
Joseph Cassidy, S Coast
Stuart Anthony Hallam, Dev & C'wall
Steven Hewitt, Dev & C'wall
Stewart Damien Kent, Dev & C'wall
James Donald Krzyzanowski, S Coast
Llewellyn Thomas Matthes, S Wales
David Miles, S Coast
Patrick O'Sullivan, Dev & C'wall
Tony Ryder, S Coast
Gary Tuckett, Dev & C'wall

Northern Ireland

Roderick McGladery,
Michael Coleman,

International Members

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Mark Timberlake, Germany
B T Wainscott, Holland
Terje Haugen, Norway
Peter Whitworth, Portugal
Ingvar Fjellman, Sweden
Kent Hedberg, Sweden
Rolf Von Avx, Switzerland
Waldemar Szadny, Poland
Kenneth Burlinson, USA
Douglass P Larson, USA
Charles Tadge, USA

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David Eccles, East
Peter Dale, N West
Brian Jones, N West
Ashley Oakes, N West
Martin Smith, N West

Associate Members

Christopher Peter Cay, Northern
Kevin Balluz, E Anglia
Wilson Hendry, E of England
Jon Welling, Surrey
Terrance Hirst, Dev & C'wall
Kierran Donohoe, N Ireland
Patrick Doyle, N Ireland
Sylvain Duval, Italy

Student Members

Albert Holmgrensson, Central
Richard Banning, N West
Richard Briscoe, N West
Charles Miller Henderson, N East
Ben Kay, N West
Thomas Philip Kay, N West
Glenn Ford, Midland
Simon Andrew Harlow, Kent
Robert Davies, S West
Shaun Richard Dvull, S West
Richard Harber, S West
Chris Paul Moon, S West
Andrew Mark Roberts, S West
Tony Robinson, S West
Luke Edward Ryder, S West
Martin Peter Slater, Dev & C'wall
Jamie Craig Smith, S West
Mark James Watson, S Coast

Check out your April edition of
Greenkeeper
for all of the new members
from February 2001!

Get online, it's

Since BIGGA relaunched its website in June last year, we have been constantly updating and adding new and improved content for members and visitors alike. As part of our continual programme of improvement we are now proud to announce the launch of our brand new 'Time to Talk' Bulletin Board. This service will enable all Greenkeeping members of BIGGA to discuss any topic of interest relevant to their profession, online.

How do I chat online?

'Time to Talk' is located in the BIGGA website Members' Area, and can be accessed by logging into the Greenkeeper Members Area. Simply enter your surname and date of birth, and once in the Members' Area, click on the Bulletin Board icon. A second window will automatically open, from where you can either

register (if you are new to the Bulletin Board), or Login, if you have previously registered. Once you have completed the registration process, you can login, and go to the Home Page of the Bulletin Board. From here you can organise your home page to meet your own requirements and select and view any of the discussions ongoing. You can create a new topic, or reply to an existing one. How about;

Getting help and advice from fellow members?
Renewing friendships with colleagues?
Sharing ideas and challenges online?

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THE BEST SEED UNDER THE SUN



Past BIGGA Chairman, Dean Cleaver, now administrator for FEGGA, takes a personal look at the GCSAA Show in Dallas

A triumph in Texas

On arriving at Dallas/Fort Worth, it then took a further 10 minutes to drive out of the airport. The size of the airport in actual area was quite amazing, being larger than the island of Manhattan. I suppose that's not surprising, as Texas is larger than France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Luxembourg combined.

Dallas ranks among the top cities in the nation for convention and meeting attendees, with more than 3.8 million people attending more than 3,600 conventions, leaving more than \$4.2 billion behind.

I arrived in Dallas on Wednesday, February 14, ready for a busy four days, the GCSAA show is the biggest Superintendents show in the world and attracts 23,000 attendees over the week.

The week had actually started on the previous weekend with their annual Golf Tournament. The tournament was played over three days, with 700 competitors playing over six different golf courses.

Now if you're looking for education, this show certainly offers choice. The seminars and workshops start on the Sunday and run through to the

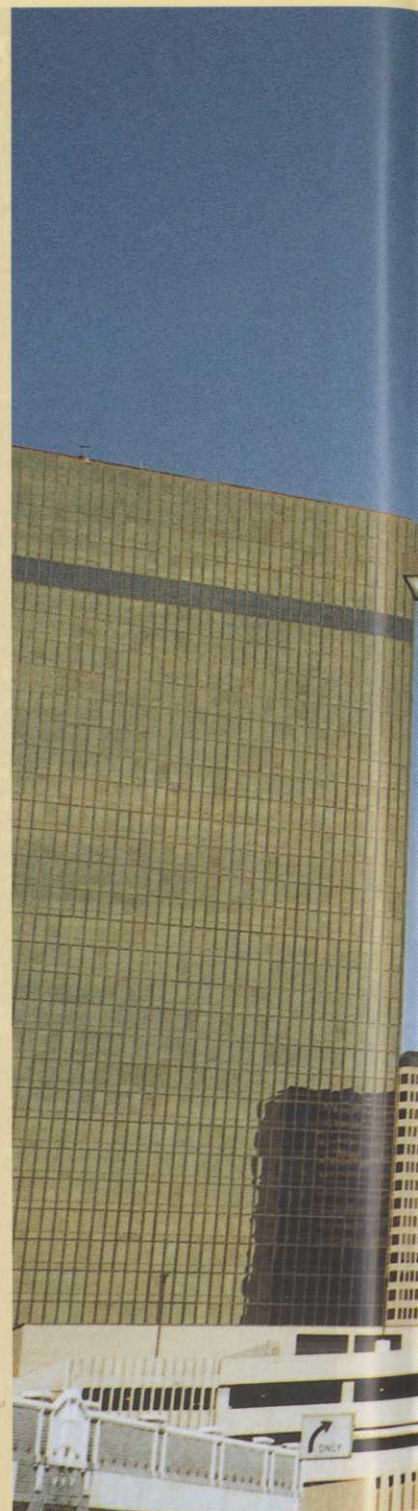
following Sunday. There are a total of 119 seminars and workshops, covering all aspects of golf course management, including agronomy, business communication, golf course management and personal/professional development. There are also discussion groups held during the week and also a complete afternoon session given by the USGA Green Section covering all aspects of their research programmes.

For me the first event was to attend the GCSAA's opening session at the Adams Mark Hotel, this is one of Dallas's premier hotels, and an excellent venue to start their 75th anniversary. The evening was to celebrate lifetime achievements for three Superintendents, also the winner of the Leo Feser award and the National golf tournament. We were also able to view the GCSAA Foundation video, this showed the benefits golf was enjoying through the work of the foundation. The year 2000 saw the foundation raise some \$4.5 million. The evening concluded with the keynote speech given by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr, remembered as the hero of operations

Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

I then moved onto the Rain Bird reception held at the exotic Dallas Aquarium. What a great place to hold a reception, winding your way through the Rain forests sipping a cool beer, eating the finest ribs and meeting with old friends, the perfect end to a very long day. Time I headed back to the hotel.

Thursday saw the opening of the exhibition and anyone visiting the show for the first time will be hit by the enormous size, coupled with the luxurious layout of the exhibition, featuring some 700 exhibitors. The Dallas Convention Centre's expansion for the year 2002 will feature the world's largest 203,000 square-foot, singular column-free exhibit hall in the world.





One new feature to the Dallas show was to split the main exhibition from the GCSAA's services, allied Associations and education. This area being called the GCSAA Park proved to be most successful.

The services offered by the GCSAA are considerable, and really are too many to list in this article. However to give you an idea, it takes 90 GCSAA staff to cover all activities at the show.

Being the industries biggest show, it will always be the launch pad for new products. During the limited time I had to view products, I came across the new Toro pedestrian 21" Flex. This machine is fully floating, featuring a cassette type cylinder that drops straight in and out, and cer-

tainly should be a well-received product within the industry.

Rain Bird featured some new products, one being the new remote video display unit (RVDU). Rain Bird claim this as a first within the irrigation industry, featuring a remote visual display capable of real-time field irrigation control. The RVDU further integrates Rain Bird's state of the art, map based central control technology into the superintendent's busy schedule by providing the freedom of wireless visual access and instant system control from the place its matters most-the golf course.

Thursday also sees the GCSAA hold their Golf General Session, this will focus on winners and survivors. Winners of the Old Tom Morris

Award, the Presidents Award for Environmental leadership and the Environmental Stewards Awards will be honoured, and attendees can enjoy a motivational talk from an American hero in the name of Capt. Scott O'Grady.

The Old Tom Morris award is GCSAA's highest honour, and is awarded each year to an individual who, "through a continuing lifetime commitment to the game of golf, has helped mould the welfare of the game in a manner and style exemplified by Old Tom Morris."

This year's winner is Tim Finchem who is the US PGA Tour Commissioner. Recently under his direction the US PGA Tour has helped ensure that Superintendents

receive media attention. Superintendents are interviewed weekly on PGA Tour radio, and the role of the superintendent was featured on a segment of the PGA Tour television show "Get Golf with the PGA Tour" featured last summer. GCSAA fact sheets are now included in PGA Tour mailing to the media and are distributed to the media at all PGA Tour tournament sites.

The afternoon saw many of the national Associations from around the world attend the International Summit. The meeting saw significant changes this year, after a period of dropping numbers. Canada and FEGGA co-organised the event in conjunction with GCSAA, and at this point I should thank Vince Gilies, Joe

A triumph in Texas



Bedford and Don Brentheur who all did sterling work in organising the summit.

The Summit was to look at how best we can all work together to promote and represent golf course management on a worldwide level. It does not take long to realise that despite all our cultural differences, we all deep down have the same beliefs and indeed problems relating to managing our golf courses.

GCSAA had kindly contracted a professional facilitator on the recommendation of both Canada and FEGGA. Tony Nash from Canada was to carry out this duty, and a great job he did to extracting large chunks of information from us all and we finally concluded with a list of priorities to work with over the next 12 months, all in three and a half hours.

A big central point for all International visitors is the

International Resource Lounge. This is a place where all International delegates old and new can meet during the show, whether to share business or a drink. It is also a good place to pick up Association magazines. Translators are also on hand to assist with any translation that may be required.

Thursday evening saw me braving the weather to attend the European Textron reception, this is a clear indication of the amount of Europeans now attending the GCSAA show and conference. It was again nice to meet up with friends old and new, and to share experiences on a much wider scale. With regard to braving the weather, many of us visiting the show from Europe were hoping to experience some nice weather considering the wet period we have had over the last five months. How disappointed we were, just as we arrived, the rains followed and followed and followed. I don't know how much fell during the week, however I do know that during the period Thursday afternoon and Friday morning five inches of rain fell.

Friday evening saw 1,100 people attend the President's Dinner. This has always provided an experience for anyone attending outside America, although in recent years the proceedings are less formal and in my opinion makes for a more enjoyable evening at the end of a busy show. The President's Dinner is held in honour of the GCSAA's President's past year, and anyone who has had the pleasure of meeting Scott Woodward will know what a pleasant man he is and also what a great ambassador he has been for the Association.

The cabaret was split into two parts; the first part held during the meal were the ice sculpturers, who created the GCSAA logo from ice. The second part proved to be something quite special for all rock and roll fans. The band called the World Classic Rockers, was made up of mega rock stars in their own right, stars from groups such as the Eagles, Moody Blues and Toto, this was truly a memorable experience to finish what was a tremendous week – see you in Orlando in 2002.

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Paula Humphries previews Westurf 2001, the third year the Show has been held at the Westpoint Arena in Exeter

Westurf revisited



This year sees the third exhibition to be held in the Westpoint Arena at Exeter. The show is earlier this year as, now that we are under cover, we are experimenting with bringing the date forward to March - hopefully before the grass has started growing again and this should enable more greens staff to attend.

There will be an outside arena for the demonstration of machinery and where machinery can be tried out by yourselves. There will be three educational seminars during the day. A

central arena will provide entertainment. This year sees the welcome return of the Adams Axe Men, a fast display of rustic skills combined with a lot of humour. The Heart of England Falconry team will be demonstrating how you can use these lovely birds in the control of rabbits. There will be a golf competition (indoors) and all the leading suppliers of machinery, irrigation and amenity products, mobile phones etc. will be there to meet you as will representatives from the leading colleges in your area.

Westpoint has a fully licensed bar and a superb cafeteria. All pre-registration forms will be put into a random draw for a fabulous prize.

The Pre Westurf Gala Dinner will be held at the Southgate Hotel in

Exeter on March 13th. The three course meal will be followed by entertainment and the cost is £50 p.p. sharing or £75 single room to include dinner, b & b and entertainment.

For further information on exhibiting, applications for pre-registration forms or to book the gala dinner, please contact Paula Humphries on 01288 352194

Seminars

Turf Management - The Microbiological Route Explored - Richard Millar and Phil Caunt, of Biotol

Traditional Greenkeeping - Jim Arthur, agronomist

Design and Construction - Jim McKenzie, Celtic Manor Resort



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NEW

The latest in learning resources from BIGGA

The fifth in the series of BIGGA Training Videos - Irrigation - was launched at BTME 2001.

Although it may not have been apparent in recent months, water is a precious resource and extraction is becoming increasingly difficult and expensive. At the same time irrigation is a vital tool to the greenkeeper and the 28 minute video looks at using it to its best advantage with the Why, What, How and Where of irrigation. The video features interviews with recognised experts in their field, graphics and film showing why irrigation is needed, when to apply and what equipment to use. "This video is not only of benefit for training greenkeepers in the art of good water management and irrigation, it would also be very useful for communicating to the wider golfing community," said BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson.

The other four videos in BIGGA's

Education & Training resource video 5

British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association

Irrigation

This training video looks at the Why, How, What and Where of Irrigation



portfolio cover, spraying; golf course preparation; golf green construction and golf course ecology. The production of this video was only possible through the generous support of the Association's Golden and Silver Key Supporters who donate to BIGGA's Education and Development Fund. Irrigation is produced by Goodwood Videos, who also produced the Golf Course Ecology video, and is priced at £15 for BIGGA members and £25 for non-members.

Contact the BIGGA Education Department for further details on 01347 833800 or via education@bigga.co.uk

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York Golf Club faced up to the worst weather conditions for 400 years but still completed the most successful project in the club's long history. Scott MacCallum paid the team a visit.

Reigning in the Rain



Above: (l-r) Michael Rogers, Chris Martin and Howard Stephenson



Right: The team with their John Deere kit



The abiding memory for many of the latter part of last year and the beginning of this was the horrendous weather - records set for consecutive days of rain, scenes of people perched on roofs as homes were

flooded and all sorts of chaos for people attempting to travel from A to B.

Golf also took a hammering. Courses were closed for weeks, if not months, on end with some more suited to Cowes week than the Royal and Ancient game.

Among the worst areas hit was York.

The ancient city appeared in the national headlines having battled against the worst flooding to hit for 400 years and only sterling work by the army, who built sand bag barricades along the sides of the river Ouse, prevented a much greater disaster.

While all this was going on the green staff at York Golf Club, located in the village of Strensall a few miles north of the city, were embarking upon the largest in-house course reconstruction programme in the club's history. In succeeding they could certainly be said to have "reigned in the rain".

In what is likely to be a two stage two year programme all 51 bunkers on the course are being redesigned and rebuilt to wipe out what has long been regarded as the course's weakest link.

"We have a great golf course but probably the worst feature of it over the years has been the bunkers," explained Howard Stephenson, who made it his mission to improve matters when he became Chairman of Green last April.

"They used to become silted up



and get very wet and in truth were not particularly good. When I took over as Chairman of Green I felt that it was something with which we could make an impact on the course," he explained, as we, together with Head Greenkeeper, Chris Martin, and Deputy, Michael Rogers, sat in the attractive well appointed clubhouse.

The Greens Committee met out on the course and agreed that the bunkers should be the main priority and that as well as rebuilding and designing them re positioning and draining should take place wherever necessary.

Howard's enthusiasm for the project was matched by that of the team who saw it as something really to get their teeth into.

"We talked about it between ourselves and, although we set ourselves some pretty stiff targets, we all felt that it was doable and that we would just crack on," explained Chris.

The aim for this winter was to do 25 greenside bunkers, which they deemed to be the most important, with 15 of those done by

Christmas...just around the time that the heaven's opened!

"The flooding affected us quite a lot because we'd planned to do certain areas which we couldn't get to and had to change our programme to suit. We bought sheets of board and laid these down to prevent wear and tear and have been very careful around the areas of the green," said Chris.

In the six weeks before Christmas the course was only open for around a week but, while this was unfortunate for the members, the upside was that the team could work with very little disruption. In fact the entire 4th fairway was under two feet of water which is unheard of for the course.

"It stayed for days then just began to recede when we'd have another downpour and it would all come back again," said Chris.

"We bought a pump to pump some of the water away and it's proved a very useful tool," added Michael, who joined the club from Royal St George's last year.

"It can pump 60-70,000 gallons an

hour and there are certainly jobs we wouldn't have been able to do without the pump."

Michael's role was that of project co-ordinator with responsibility for selecting the sand and he ensured a large number were examined before the decision on the final one was taken.

"The sand was the starting point. It was the thing we had to get right so took advice from Stuart Ormondroyd, at Bingley, and sent samples across for analysis. The recommendation was Nottingham - Number 6 which is a sort of tan colour with black specs which we think will fit in well," revealed Michael, who added that previously the sand was of an orange hue.

"As luck would have it Sandmoor in Leeds had started to use the same sand so we went across one morning to take a look. The greenkeeper there was extremely happy with it," explained Michael.

With the sand decided upon the next task for Chris and the team was to plan the practicalities of the job -

the hiring of the plant; the cost of the gravel; blinding layers and drainage pipes and to ensure that timings were all agreed.

"It was difficult to work out volumes required exactly until we started the job but we knew a certain amount of materials that we'd need so we got them in before we started and they as soon as materials became low we ordered more," said Chris.

"We are very fortunate in so much as we have some excellent suppliers, who we can ring up in the morning and the material is there in the afternoon. It means that the work never stops and the worst scenario is overnight for virtually anything," explained Chris, who said that they used Greenpride for rootzone, JH Walker & Co for gravel and blinding layer sand and Lindum for turf. The club also struck up a good relationship with the plant hire company who allowed them to take machinery on a long term loan basis.

The first bunkers to be tackled were those surrounding the 9th green, a

Reigning in the Rain

Equipment Inventory

2 John Deere 2243
 John Deere 2653
 John Deere 955 with front loader
 John Deere 365 Trailed hydraulic
 John Deere 455 Bunker rake
 John Deere Aerocore
 6x4 Gator
 Iseki 4270 tractor
 Richard Long versatile
 Richard Long top dresser
 SISIS Technicore
 SISIS Slitter
 Thatchaway Units
 Hardi Spray Unit
 Tornado Blower
 Cushman



Far page: One of the new bunkers complete with steps

Above: Bunker drainage going in

Above right: Another fine example

venue located a mere 100 yards from the team's base. However, while that may have been the plus of the chosen debut site, the inherent problems involved in the 9th hole made it anything but the ideal starting point.

"We picked the 9th because it was close and we could waste very little time toing and froing and because there was a decent temporary green and we could take the whole thing out of play," explained Chris.

However....

"Drainage was the main problem. We were not sure where the outlet pipes would be but luckily we found a concrete chamber which gave us a good depth for an outlet pipe. We traced this through the trees releas-

ing blockages as we went before we could even start the bunkers," added Chris.

Once they had overcome the initial problems the team set about planning the location and shape on the new bunkers.

"Looking back, knowing then what we know now, Chris probably wouldn't have started on the 9th but on the other hand we learned so much so quickly and the team developed so many skills it was probably a good move," said Howard.

"I see it for a slightly different perspective as they probably don't see how their performance has improved as much as I do. In the early work they may have been a little tentative about doing certain things whereas now everyone is tuned into what we are trying to do and everyone is

much more confident in taking things on himself."

It is a point which Michael elaborates upon.

"Initially we'd get everyone's opinion before me moved on and we'd perhaps have too many people on the job at the one time but we've learned from that now," he said.

While always working to a plan a little bit of license because they were aware that things could change depending upon the conditions they met when they started work.

It took them three to four weeks to complete the work on the 9th hole as they took their time to ensure they got it right but now, having this experience under their belts they have speeded up and the shaping is achieved which much more ease.

If a nagging doubt about having



bitten off more than they could chew entered Chris' mind it didn't show.

"If it had come to the point where we felt we were pushing ourselves too much we'd have eased off and slowed down a bit...but it never came to that," he said.

Members were kept informed via regular newsletters and the feedback has been very positive.

"We hope the members will be pleased with all the work we've done this winter," said Chris.

For construction work that has been carried out by the greenkeeping team, being maintenance friendly has not been at the forefront of their mind, although after the first year it should be more easy to maintain.

"There will be more fly mowing while the turf is given a chance to knit but there is a lot more character

to the bunkers now than before when they could be said to have been too symmetrical," said Chris.

The team has also taken the opportunity to improve other hump and hollow areas surrounding the greens and bit in additional drainage where required.

Having achieved their pre Christmas target of 15 the team are well on their way to hitting the winter programme target of another 10 and with each member of the team becoming a specialist in a particular area the skills they have acquired will stand them in good stead for years to come.

The second phase will begin in September of this year while some of the fairway bunkers, because of their size, might well stretch into a third winter.

By the end something will have been done to every one of the club's bunkers whether it be the installation of drainage or a bit of reshaping.

"Alan Coates is our main man on the digger; Robert Pilgrim is the drainage king, only happy if he's up to his waist in water; Philip Bradley is our turfing and shaping man while apprentice Alastair Bolch can turn his hand to most things. It's a team effort and it can't be done without the work of the individuals," said Howard, who oozes pride in the work of his team.

"It is one of the most successful projects the club has ever undertaken...it is certainly the biggest," he added.

York Golf Club is extremely proud of its status as one of the best courses in Yorkshire and to maintain that

position huge investment is made on giving the greenkeeping team the tools to do the job. This is illustrated by the modern John Deere kit which fills the maintenance facility.

"We are always looking for ways to improve and that includes our machinery fleet," explained Howard.

"We are all about best practice and if we find someone doing something better than us we'll take it on board. We're happy to nick ideas and hopefully people will do the same with our ideas," he explained.

While it has been the York weather that has hit the headlines over the last few months it perhaps more fittingly should be the work of the hard working and dedicated York Golf Club team who have triumphed in those difficult times.





Roland Taylor lifts the lid, or should that be the grass bucket, on the greens mower

Short back and sides

It is easy to forget just how much precision is required for a cylinder and bedknife to produce a high quality finish. The concept was originally developed by Edwin Budding from his system for cutting the nap off cloth, which was developed well over 170 years ago, and had to be highly accurate to avoid damage to the material. The environment in which it worked was clean with very few hazards, and the cloth could be kept level. These conditions are very unlike those in which a modern mower works, which are relatively hostile. Dirt, dampness and abrasives abound and mowing surfaces are very rarely flat. Blades can be quickly dulled and are sited in a position where there is always the risk of damage. Under these conditions if a greensmower is not correctly looked after, things can soon go badly wrong.

Getting the best results

As most readers are well aware the critical factor for achieving a quality finish is the reel to bedknife adjustment. This also plays a significant part in the mower's over-all performance. If the reel is set tight to its bedknife then the result is similar to applying a brake and all the components are placed under extra loading. To compensate, the engine governors open up and more fuel is consumed. In addition, heat builds up in both the reel and bedknife causing further

damage and possible scorching of the turf. The finish on the green deteriorates fast.

If the reel and bedknife are "off" adjustment there is less chance of heat, but the same applies as far as the rest of the mower is concerned, and the poor quality of cut will be obvious. Sand or dirt can be trapped between the cutting surfaces causing bluntness and damage.

Most modern greens mowers have either a 9 or 11-bladed reel with optional bedknives. The number of cuts (clips) per metre depends on the speed of the reel and the forward motion of the mower. Again adjustment can affect the finish, but there are other influencing factors. These include slack drive belts or chains, incorrect engine speed and the volume of grass being removed.

The height and frequency of cut also plays a significant role, especially in the speed of greens. In the past one method of overcoming the problem of a slow green was to close shave. The adverse results this produces far outweigh any advantages and today it is not recommended, even as a stop gap measure. By removing a large amount of the leaf area, the natural process of photosynthesis - so vital to healthy plants - is drastically reduced. The plants become weak and susceptible to disease, poa annua and other weeds will become quickly established in the thin turf. Mowing

should be carried out frequently with the machine set at 5mm. Regular light verticutting or grooming will deal with lateral growth and help to open up the turf to allow light and air to penetrate and circulate. It will also contribute towards speeding up a green.

Moving forward

When one looks at the history of cylinder mowing, it is surprising that it was almost 100 years after their introduction that a multi-bladed machine specifically designed for greens - the Ransomes Certes - was introduced. This was a push model, in spite of the fact that motorised mowers had been introduced over 20 years earlier and were being used on golf courses for cutting the fairways.

Greenkeepers had to struggle, pushing these greensmowers until the 1950's when manufacturers recognised a potential market and introduced petrol engine models.

Prior to the Second World War the need to speed up the mowing of greens was met by the introduction of the Overgreen, which towed three Certes push mowers. This machine was a forerunner to the triplex mowers that appeared in the UK from America in the 70s.

Now, 30 years on, the high profile that golf enjoys throughout the world has led to a plethora of greens machines. The biggest decision for

Short back and sides



most of today's greenkeepers is whether to go for a walk-behind or triple mower and which model to buy.

Some, or all, of the following factors are likely to play an important role in helping decide which one.

Types, size and location of greens

If greens are heavily undulating, stepped, or if access is restricted, then a pedestrian model is almost certainly the best choice. On large greens the highly manoeuvrable triple is the answer. These can also be used on small greens but problems may occur if the machine has to be constantly turned on the actual playing surface because of the surrounding landscape, such as banks.

Time and staff

As we all know there are never enough hours in the day, or enough members of staff to carry out the host of tasks needed to keep a modern golf course in tip-top condition. A triple can make considerable savings in time and labour.

Personal preference

There are arguments for and against both these methods of mowing greens so, at the end of the day, it is what best fulfils each course's requirements. For some clubs, one compromise is to regularly mow with triples and use hand machines for competitions and special events.

On the market

Pedestrian

These come in cutting widths from 41cm (18") to 66cm (26") and are powered by petrol engines. There is generally a choice of bedknife thickness and ranges of optional equipment including turf groomer or verticutter, rotary brush, smooth or grooved front rollers.

Triples

Petrol, diesel and electric powered versions are available and working widths range from 1.50 metres up to 1.78 metres, depending on the make. All cutting units are fully floating and

Your greens' quality is riding on it.



there are ranges of alternative turf maintenance units such as turf groomers, verticutters and brushes from each manufacturer.

Demonstration

Because greensmowers (pedestrians or triples) are designed for a specific application, it is hardly surprising that the technical data is often very similar. Therefore the only way to make a true comparison between different makes and models is to mow a green! This is why a demonstration is so important. Whilst the time factor alone would not justify seeing all the makes and models available, certainly more than one should be accessed under identical conditions. When dealing with nature there are so many variables that no two greens will be alike. To obtain a true picture, all the mowers demonstrated should be viewed on the same day and in as close a locality to each other as possible.

A demonstration is not only a chance to evaluate a mower's performance but also an opportunity for operators to access its ease-of-use and to decide whether they are going to be happy using it.

For the future

The indications are that making mowers more versatile in relation to general turfcare maintenance has increased over the last few years. A number of machines are now on the market with interchangeable cassettes or attachments. Other changes likely to occur in the future will involve power sources, as possible legislation on exhaust emissions takes effect.

The one thing that is unlikely to alter to any degree is the actual principle of the cutting system. Budding was a clever guy, and golf, like so many other sports, has a lot to thank him for.



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greens up to

scratch?

After yet another 'winter of discontent' at most of our inland courses it's not only the frustrated golfers who are desperate to see dry, playable surfaces, green-keepers too must be praying for a cessation of hostilities from above.

But do players expect too much from our bruised, battered, rain-sodden, frost-bitten and long-suffering patches of turf that we call putting greens, or do they deserve better? What standards of performance and playability should they expect and how can greenkeepers achieve that delicate balance between maintaining healthy, vibrant and sustainable turf and providing pace and bite through the competition season? How can we measure or judge the performance of the greens and how can we improve those standards? If someone could come up with a simple solution to these issues Agronomy would become a redundant occupation, fortunately for me and my colleagues the answers are not simple and are always different.

I'd like to start this discussion, somewhat controversially, by looking at the end product from the client's perspective. After all it is the club member who, effectively, pays all our wages. In simple terms we are the supplier and they are the customer and if we don't get it right they will look elsewhere (or we will go elsewhere!). What are the standards of performance that they judge the greens by? And how can we improve those stan-

dards to keep our customers coming back for more?

Green Speed

This must be right at the top of the list for most players as the key parameter for judging the greens, particularly from May through to September. Inevitably it is also the major area of conflict between the interests of the pace-hungry golfer and the grass loving green-keeper.

Green speed is easy to measure with the now well established Stimpmeter. Not only is it a reliable and quick test, but we also have a recognised set of standards to compare our results to. I truly believe that we should be regularly checking green speeds and keeping records of each measurement, matching it with other data that influence the result like time of year, cutting height, time after last cut, last fertiliser treatment, etc. It is also worth checking the speed after certain operations are implemented, just to see which have the greatest influence; what difference does a double cut make? What about a 0.5mm height reduction? How does it change during a hot, dry day? What about the influence of verticutting, grooming and top dressing? The list is endless. Sounds like a great idea for a research project to me!

This information would be a really useful ally for the greenkeeper, you would have a set of objective data so that when the players protest that the greens were much faster this time last

year – the evidence would be there. You would also know the likely effects of any one management operation, giving you the flexibility to choose the more turf friendly option – great for tournament preparation.

Currently we understand that the single major turf factor that affects green speed is cutting height, probably followed by surface firmness (which is related to thatch, moisture status, compaction, soil type, construction, etc). Third on the list would be grass density and texture (influenced by species, fertiliser, management, etc). But because mowing height has the biggest effect it is in this area that greenkeepers come under most pressure.

There is no doubt that this pressure is increasing and summer mowing heights continue to be pushed to the limits of endurance. Here I believe that greenkeepers have an obligation to stand up for the integrity of their beliefs, if only for the reason that there will be a pay-back for such practices. In the long term, and paradoxically, it will be the quality of golf that will suffer. Short term increases in green speed as a result of excessively close cutting (3mm or less for sustained periods) are directly correlated with poor winter performance, much increased susceptibility to stress (drought, disease, cold, stagnation, etc) and will encourage Poa annua at the expense of bent. A balance is possible and when sensible mowing heights are combined

Are your greens up to scratch?



Picture courtesy of Greenstak 0113 267 6000

with other less damaging management techniques everyone should be happy. (See mowing article by Noel Mackenzie in last month's issue of Greenkeeper International).

Smoothness

There is no doubt that maintaining a strong, resilient and full turf cover will directly produce a smoother surface. The major causes of 'bumpiness' relate to weaknesses in sward coverage and the presence of blemishes like worm casts, weeds and disease. Particularly relevant at this time of year is the unevenness caused by the differential growth rates of the grasses in the spring. Most courses with high bent populations in their greens will be reaping the rewards in terms of the quality of the surface at this time of year. Those with full *Poa annua* swards will not notice this effect but the poor quality of the sward and the pick-up of growth will lead to unevenness for the reasons detailed above. One good reason to aim for bent domination of the greens.

Once decent growth does get underway, repeated light applications of top dressing will significantly improve surface smoothness, and may also help to promote the best conditions for improving pace – a management technique with direct and indirect implications for golf green improvement and one which Grass Science tries to encourage even at the low budget clubs.

Ball impact response

What is it that affects the response of a golf ball when it lands on the green? We all know that the skill of the player is the biggest factor, the

club and the ball selection also have an influence. But what is it about the turf that makes a ball stop quickly, retain back-spin or bound off into the trees behind the green?

Research work carried out by Steve Haake towards the end of the 1980's attempted to identify the factors that influence golf ball impact response. Somewhat inevitably he discovered that surface hardness had the biggest effect. Although the picture is not as simple as you might imagine. Excessively soft surfaces always stop a range of shots played into them, but this has little to do with backspin retention. It is much more likely that backspin will be retained on firm surfaces, this is because the time of contact between the turf and ball is reduced and hence the backspin is not converted into top-spin. As surfaces become harder backspin retention is increased but the energy of impact is not absorbed and the ball will simply bounce off a surface that is too hard. A turf with good resilience and some 'give' will reward a well struck shot, providing enough give to absorb most of the impact energy, yet firm enough to allow enough backspin to be retained so that the ball grips on its subsequent impacts. In other words well maintained, thatch free, healthy turf that is neither over nor under watered and drains efficiently.

Interestingly Haake also found that backspin retention was increased on bent dominated greens compared to *Poa annua* greens. An effect that may well have been related to the factors described above rather than a direct species link. In other words the bent tended to favour the firmer, drier greens.

Spatial Consistency

This is my term to describe the differences (or hopefully similarities) in performance between the greens around the course. Despite the best efforts of greenkeepers to produce uniformity of putting surface performance, the main factors which influence this parameter are very much out of their control i.e. construction and location. The differences in playing quality between a newly constructed sand dominated green and a traditional 'push-up' green are significant, particularly ball impact response. Similarly a green located on an exposed plateau at the top of the course will behave completely differently from a green placed in a hollow and surrounded by trees. When the two factors combine the potential for inconsistency escalates to worrying proportions.

Although it has now become something of a cliché, I still find myself reminding clubs of the dangers of reconstructing individual problem greens and creating 'one green which behaves completely differently to the other 17 on the course'. It is much more productive to take a long term, holistic view of the problem and many courses are now 'grasping the nettle' firmly in both hands and are embarked on complete green reconstruction programmes. On the other hand it may be completely unnecessary to consider reconstruction, especially if it's just one or two greens that are causes for concern. There are other much less costly and less disruptive ways to improve problem greens to bring them in line with the rest. Every golf course has its own unique circumstances and clubs would be well advised to seek the assistance of a qualified Agronomist to discuss the various options available.

Temporal Consistency

Another fancy term, this time to describe the way greens change in performance through the year. Again a critical issue on golf courses these days because of the year-round nature of the game. No surprise that the method of construction has a huge effect; simply put, sand dominated greens are more consistent through the year, soil based greens tend to fluctuate according to weather conditions. Location is important too, greens that are exposed and dry quickly will perform better under wet conditions, the greens that collect water and are shaded will suffer when it's wet.

Species composition makes an enormous difference to the year round changes in the performance of a putting surface. Just like the differ-

ence between well drained greens and wet ones, *Poa annua* greens will fluctuate considerably from season to season; they produce seed heads through the late spring, are prone to drought in the summer, tend to lose colour and growth through the autumn, are prone to cold, waterlogging and disease stress in the winter and after all that look pretty awful in early spring. In contrast bent dominated turf is much more consistent in its performance through the year, and is much less prone to all the stresses that seem to hit *Poa annua* so badly. One very good reason for continuing the long term battle to improve the species composition of golf greens and, in particular, avoiding excessively close cutting in the summer.

Summary

The intention of this article is to highlight the standards of performance by which players judge our greens. An appreciation of these standards provides the green-keeper with a new perspective on the management of the course and, in particular, provides a focus for long term course development issues. The article also links the likely effects of specific turf management factors on playing quality and includes ideas for the manipulation of these factors to get the best performance from the greens. These suggestions are briefly summarised below:

- Keep records of green speed by taking regular stimpmeter readings throughout the year and take a note of weather and maintenance factors.
- Adopt a sensible, turf friendly approach to mowing height and use other less stressful maintenance methods to retain green speed.
- Maintain a programme of regular, light top dressing through spring and early summer to improve smoothness and pace.
- Sound turf maintenance practices that create a firm, resilient surface will favour skilful approach play.
- Take a long term, holistic approach to green reconstruction, there may be other less costly and less disruptive ways to improve isolated problem greens.
- Adopt a management programme that tilts the competitive edge towards bent, but not at the expense of good putting surface production – a balance is achievable and therein lies the true art of greenkeeping.

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TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on the changing weather trends

Weather trends

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Jim Paton.
Course: West Kilbride Golf Club, Ayrshire
Region: Scotland
Course Type: Links
Staff: Course Manager plus five



Name: Ian Buckley
Course: De Vere Northop Country Park Club
Region: Northern
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus three groundsmen and one mechanic (250 acres to look after)



Name: Barry Holt
Course: Burford Golf Club, Oxfordshire
Region: Midland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus four



Name: Raymond Day
Course: Saunton Golf Club, Devon
Region: South West and South Wales
Course Type: Links (36 holes)
Staff: Course Manager, plus ten, plus a mechanic



Name: Robert Lucas
Course: Royal Blackheath Golf Club, Eltham, London
Region: South East
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager plus seven



Name: Ken Moore
Course: Scrabo Golf Club
Region: Northern Ireland
Course Type: Heathland
Staff: Course Manager plus four

1

1. In your experience what changes to the regular weather patterns have you notice over the last 10-15 years?

The winters are definitely a lot warmer and wetter. We get very little snow in this area because of the gulf stream

Winters are a lot wetter, but we have also had a lot of rain in summer in recent years. We used to have three to four days of snow at a time, but now it's much milder

There have been very definite changes in the last four or five years in particular. We don't seem to get winter now, although there is some frost and a little snow and there is a lot more rain. I have never known a winter like this for floods in the area.

In this part of the world we tend to get colder springs and now warmer winters up until Christmas. There are cooler temperatures in April these days

We have lost our traditional seasons and we now have warmer summers and winters.

Winters are wetter and warmer. We used to get a lot of hard frosts in Northern Ireland, but we don't seem to get them now. We get a bit of snow after Christmas usually.

HEADS

2. How has this affected your cutting and feeding regimes?

We are cutting for far longer periods now. We hardly touched it in winter for years but I remember a couple of years ago the staff were off from Christmas to New Year and when we came back it was only just possible to out the grass with mowers because there was so much growth.

We try to keep our greens (USGA) fed as the water goes straight through. I use high potassium content as a pick-me-up. Cutting was once a month in winter, but nowadays we struggle to get on the greens as it has been so wet. To give an example of the changes, I can recall seeding in January some years back and getting good results.

Milder means you have more cutting to do. I have cut greens almost weekly this winter, whereas before we could go weeks without cutting when it was very cold. I don't use feeds in winter, apart from sulphate of iron and perhaps a bit of seaweed to harden off the greens.

The early feeding has been affected and now we put a bit or iron on, partly for cosmetic purposes to keep people happy. Cutting in early spring is a bit less and the height of cut remains up for a bit longer.

Cutting regimes are now lasting 10 months whereas before it was more like eight. In November end March we originally cut once a month, now it is more like two or three times.

Basically we have stopped cutting earlier because of increased rain. The grass doesn't grow much after September. We didn't fertilise the greens until May 2 last year and the fairways were not done until May 17. East winds are the reason, keeping the temperatures down and resulting in a lack of growth.

3. Has the type, or severity, of turf disease affecting the course changed over the past few years?

We are very lucky because we are not bothered too much by disease but we had some Fusarium in November and December, quite a bit more than in years gone by.

Fusarium has certainly got worse over the years. Years ago we didn't really see any in winter.

Certainly. As it is so mild we got more disease, mainly Fusarium. There's no change of type but disease is more severe.

We have altered the feeding programme on greens in the last couple of years and we have reduced disease by more aeration and putting on a bit of feed. It's a question of trying to get a balance.

Anthraxnose has reared its ugly head in the last four years, but Fusarium hasn't really altered because we get more chance to aerate in the warmer winters. There is no major problem at the moment but maybe there will be in time because of the changes.

Things haven't really changed at all. We get a spot of anthracnose and some Fusarium, but there is really no major problem.

4. What other work have you done to protect your course in terms of new drainage or irrigation for example?

We have worked on the drainage a lot. The drains that were in were very old and they were also covered by ash, which had gone solid, making it difficult for water to drain away as it wasn't reaching the pipes.

The course was built six and a half years ago and since then we have been putting more and more drains in. The builders of the course didn't leave any drainage plans so we have almost had to start again. Irrigation has been updated for similar reasons. I think some of the old irrigation is four feet deep.

We have upgraded the irrigation system around the greens and introduced a watering system on the tees. We have also put in a few more laterals on the greens and done some deep aeration, also using a drill and fill machine.

In the last five years we have redone the main drain through the course and improved the drainage at the top end of the course, known as the gull pit. We have added irrigation to high wear areas.

We have put in new irrigation, including the fairways, in the last 12 months and this will help to counteract the warmer summer periods. Drainage work has increased over the last year as well.

A year ago we finished irrigation on the course. Previously we had only six holes with sprinklers. Drainage is not good, but we are planning improvements and money will be put into the budget for this.

5. If changing weather patterns continue what long term affect do you think it will have on your golf course?

The warmer winters mean that there is a lot more play now and the season is extended to 12 months. Many come to play on our course from the Glasgow area when their courses are closed. Global warming has also seen a big difference in tides and we spent £100,000 on shoring up the edge of the course because of coastal erosion, using armoured rock, some of them three and five tonne pieces.

When the course dries out - we have been closed a lot - we will be doing a great deal of aeration. If winters remain mild we expect to have more players on the course and so more compaction — another problem.

There is going to be a lot more wear because milder winters are encouraging golfers to play more. It has often rained overnight and then been fine during the day so there is more traffic damage. We have also more damage from rooks pecking for leatherjackets and chafer grubs in the mild winter.

We have no control of English nature. You might say nature does what it wants and that stops us from doing what we might want to do. Because we are a links course we may suffer from even more traffic in winter as our course is often open when others are closed because of the wet conditions.

Our membership is ageing and so the change in weather pattern will see more golf in winter. This has resulted in us considering a change to USGA greens from the traditional method to give a 12 month service rather than 10.

Basically it will result in a lot more winter golf and with that in mind we are changing to a 50-50 soil sand mix from 100% soil on the greens

Kristian Waagen, a Briton abroad reports from Meland Golf Club in Norway, where different problems require well thought out solutions

Against all odds

Life at Meland Golfklubb

Meland Golf Club is on the island of Holsnøy, on the west coast of Norway. Average rainfall in the region is about two to 2.5 metres each year. The average winter temperatures fall between 1.5°C and 3°C. The average summer temperatures fall between 10°C and 15°C. The highest summer temperature recorded was a staggering 30.1°C. The lowest winter temperature was minus 16.7°C.

When I was considering the job at Meland back in 1997 I had some concerns about this information which I came across while researching the area on which the golf course was to be built. Questions pertinent to drainage and rootzone materials were forefront considering the amount of rainfall, also the low temperatures in the spring, which would take forever to warm heavy wet soils.

However, the interview process and openness of the Club Manager resolved many issues of concern and I accepted the job in November 1997. I moved my family from America and found myself supervising the final stage of construction, working closely with the Norwegian construction company, the Architect, and the club project development team.

The real work began in earnest in the summer of 1998 as more and more of the course was seeded my two staff members and I juggled our time between overseeing construction and maintaining a developing golf course. We grew with the course and I made many observations in relation to soil conditions, fertiliser response, drainage, and the weather - observations that later were instrumental in developing the maintenance plans for the course. The course opened (well six holes anyway) in August of 1998 and was highly publicised throughout Norway. However, no tee times were taken that year upon my advice that the course was simply not ready to sustain play.

May 1999 saw the opening of the first nine holes with the second nine following later in August. The course was closed in October for the winter period and we opened all 18 holes in the end of April 2000. In November of 1999 we were listed as one of the Top 100 courses in Europe - although sneaking in at number 100.

Rainfall is without a doubt the main concern. Its impact, because of the sheer volume, cannot be ignored in the day-to-day management of the course. The staff are supplied with rain suits and work outside in all weathers to ensure the course is presented to a high standard at all times. The people from this part of the world do not stop what they are doing because it is raining, if they did they would never really do much at all! The golf course is therefore expected to be open at all times rain or shine which of course brings with it a host of problems in managing high traffic areas such as tees and greens.

Between April 1 and October 16 last year, despite receiving 31 inches of rain, we were only closed on four occasions, and on two of those we

were open again by lunchtime.

The course is closed from mid October to the last weekend in April and sees intense play during the short summer season. During the mid-summer period when there are almost no hours of darkness you can see golfers out on the course from early morning to 11pm. The conditions and circumstances at Meland dictate its management as at any other course and the remaining article discusses some of that management. During the planning and construction of the course the weather was at the forefront of everyone's mind and a brief description of materials and techniques used is given here.

Tees

The tees are constructed on a solid base of blasted rock, having removed the peat down to bedrock. The sub-grade was finished using crushed rock ensuring all large cavities were filled to prevent settling. A 10cm drainage layer was then installed using a 2-4mm pea gravel, and where necessary drain outlets were led away from the tee area and tied in with main drainage lines or natural water channels. The rootzone material used was the same as used in the greens. The specifications on the sand are to the recommended USGA specification and a composted material was added at the source prior to shipping. The ratio of sand to compost is 95 to 5 by weight. The blended mix was tested for percolation rates and the actual ratio was adjusted to give us the

Above right: The 16th tee, May 2000

Below: The Meland team with Kristian in white shirt





required rates of percolation, which ended up at 177mm/hour. The finish depth of the root zone was 20cm. Tees are seeded with a blend consisting of the following:

20% Bargreen, *Festuca rubra* spp. *commutata*
 25% Barcrown, *Festuca rubra* spp. *litoralis*
 25% Enjoy, *Festuca rubra* spp. *commutata*
 10% Highland, *Agrostis castellana*
 10% Baron, *Poa pratensis*
 10% Nugget, *Poa pratensis*

Greens

The same method of construction was used in building the greens and the tees. The difference being that in the greens we have a 30cm root zone depth as opposed to 20 cm as found in the tees. The greens are seeded with L-93 creeping bentgrass. This particular species was chosen for its natural resistance to many diseases specifically *Fusarium*, *Typhula* and leaf spot, that were typically the main concerns at other courses on the west coast of Norway.

Fairways and Semi Roughs

After much blasting, clearing, and filling these areas were finally capped with clay excavated on the site. Topsoil that was removed from the areas of the property that actually had any, was stock piled and blended with imported sand with particle sizing that ranged in size from 4 to 16 mm. The idea was to create a more freely draining soil. All the blending was performed at a central site and trucked out on to the course where

it was then spread to a depth of 15cm over all areas that were to be maintained fairway and semi-rough. The fairways were shaped to move water away from play areas using contours, mounding, and swales. Drainage was installed extensively during the construction period with the knowledge that water had to be removed quickly from the surface to allow establishment and future management.

The fairways and Semi Roughs were seeded with the following blend:

25% Bargreen, *Festuca rubra* spp. *commutata*
 20% Barcrown, *Festuca rubra* spp. *litoralis*
 10% Highland, *Agrostis castellana*
 30% Ryegrass, *Lolium perenne*
 15% Baron, *Poa pratensis*

Course Management

Operating the golf course in typically wet conditions, with heavy play creates a lot of compaction in high traffic areas. Maintenance of the course under these conditions compounds the problem of compaction. The management of the course is centered therefore around aerification. We aerify everything and often.

Fairways

Fairways and semi roughs are aerified using a pull behind Aero-king 9672 either with hollow tines or knives, and a Charterhouse vertidrain. We hollow tine in the spring, mid April time, to open up the soil and assist with drying, with the idea of increasing soil temperatures more

rapidly resulting in a jump on growth. Fertility is timed to coincide with this and if necessary damaged areas will be slit seeded. At this time I use a 15-0-0 ammonium nitrate fertiliser, supplemented with Ca and Mg. This is one of only two times I feel safe using such a readily available form of nitrogen as it is typically a stable period with almost no rain. From May to September we aerify with the knives each month running a different direction and to a depth of 10cm both in the fairways and semi roughs, with high traffic areas receiving extra attention. The vertidrain is then used in the fairways and foregreens in the autumn around the middle of September, when we go down to the interface between root zone and sub grade, which is about 15cm below the surface.

Fertiliser applications are split between using granular products and foliar products. We use a slow release product, 28-3-10 sulphur-coated toward the end of May, with a second 15-0-0 in July, finishing with a 10-5-25 50% slow release in the beginning of September.

The total amount of nitrogen applied in the season is 2.5 lbs of N per 1000ft². (1.2 Kilo N per 100 sq. metres) this includes the foliar applications of iron sulphate and micronutrients at very low rates spaced 28 days apart.

We use no plant protectants on the fairways and see very little disease activity, other than an occasional spot of red thread.

The fairways are maintained at 15mm and are mown three times a week with two Jacobsen LF128 4WD units returning clippings. Irrigation is kept to a minimum to promote firm fairways and discourage moss, algae, disease and *Poa annua*. In respect to weed management we have moved away from blanket spraying and now spot spray when needed.

Drainage issues are addressed as they occur and due to the extensive drain system installed during construction we don't have to trench too far before being able to tie into and existing run. All additions are added to the drainage maps supplied by the building contractor, continually updating for future reference.

Tees

In the spring we hollow tine the tees using 5/8" tines removing the cores. At this time we also topdress and overseed the tees still using the original blend. This all takes place about two weeks prior to opening. Germination is observed and new seedlings start to fill in voids from left over damage from the previous autumn. Each month from May to August we hollow tine, overseed and topdress the tees. Each Monday, despite two sand boxes being present on each tee, we fill all divots by hand and use a lute to smooth out the damaged areas. The combination of divot filling, aerifying, dressing, and overseeding have preserved conditions, maintaining turf cover and level tee boxes.



Fertility is geared towards promoting strong growth and recovery. The total amount of nitrogen applied to tees between April and October is 3.5lbs of N per 1000 sq. feet. (1.75 kilo N per 100 sq. meters) which includes the foliar applications of iron sulphate, chelated nutrients, and kelp derived products. Low rates at frequent intervals and the use of iron sulphate maintains steady growth, eliminating surges in growth and unnatural flushes of colour while supplying the plant with sufficient nutrients to grow, recover, and resist attack from disease.

Like fairways no plant protectants are used and back pack spot spraying for weeds has only been necessary one time in three years. The tees are monitored closely for irrigation purposes maintaining sufficient moisture in the soil profile to maintain and encourage germination and divot repair. The sprinkler heads all have adjustable arcs and surrounds receive almost no water as the heads are adjusted to cover the teeing surface only. Tee

surrounds are cut with a push type rotary for about one metre wide, with walkways mown out for player access.

Tees are hand mown with 26" Jacobsen 526 mowers at 10mm; all clippings are collected and distributed in the maintained rough in out of play areas. The size of the tees adds up to a total of 6500sq. meters and tee rotation is performed daily. The tees are split into left, middle and right zones and we work each zone on a weekly rotation. This gives each area a clear two-week rest time, at minimum, allowing for recovery from both foot traffic and divots. Verticutting is performed each month during the growing season to remove thatch, horizontally growing shoots and helping with the control weed development.

Greens

Starting with hollow tining in the spring using 5/8" hollow tines the aerification program for greens is quite intense. The aerification programme this last year is outlined below:

April

Hollow Tined using 5/8" hollow tines to a depth of 7.5cm on a 2x2 spacing

May

Hollow Tined using mini tines to depth of 6cm on a 2x2 spacing

June

Solid Tined using 3/8" solid tines to a depth of 7.5cm on a 2x2 spacing

July

Solid Tined using mini tines to depth of 6cm on a 2x2 spacing

August

Hollow Tined using 5/8" hollow tines to a depth of 7.5cm on a 2x2 spacing

September

Solid Tined using mini tines to a depth of 6cm on a 2x2 spacing

Fertility applications with granular and foliar products between April and November sees a total application of nitrogen of 4.75lbs N per 1000 sq. feet (2.3 kilo N per 100 sq. meters) No herbicides have been used on greens to this date. Some Take all Patch was observed the first year and its development was held in check by using acidifying fertiliser and iron sulphate. We used an Andersons 13-2-13 ammo-

nium sulphate on a three weekly interval split with applications of iron sulphate.

Greens are hand mown six days a week at 3.5mm, there are no weeds, no moss and if you find a poa annua plant you might be considered lucky! Each operator spends 10 minutes before mowing the green fixing ball marks, and handpicking any poa annua trying to establish itself. From the first day we trained all the staff to identify that wonderful little plant even at 3.5mm and we haven't budged from the programme. They mow the same greens each time and know every bump and dip. Pride plays a huge part in the success of adopting this type of practice and competition to have the best set of greens is as strong as I have ever seen in a greens staff. The five staff members who mow greens walk every step of the way, it takes them three hours to mow four greens each, return to the barn, wash up and be ready for the next task.

All have been trained to observe and report on anything amiss, from a



bunker not being raked, identifying a possible irrigation leak and specifically being aware of the quality of cut, not just with their machine but with those of others. Also I find the extra 20 minutes it takes to walk between four greens observing and enjoying the surroundings promotes a higher standard of employee and one who is more apt and able to report back to the senior staff.

Plant protectants were used in the first establishment year when *Fusarium* seemed to be enjoying the presence of all those young seedling plants. The last two years though I have made a total of four applications of Iprodione one each Spring and one each autumn as preventative applications.

The greens are verticut every three weeks after which they are topdressed and brushed. Several greens have severe slopes and scalping was a huge problem when we started to drop the cutting height. To solve this problem we hand dressed the slopes each week and used the lute to work in the dressing. This had the effect over one

summer of softening the severity of the slopes and the areas of scalping slowly shrank in size and are now almost undetectable. The walk mowers are fitted with groomers, however, I have no hard and fast rule about using them. Visual quality more than anything dictates their usage, horizontal growth and perhaps tournament preparation may see more frequent use if green speed becomes an issue.

Flags are moved and we have three sets of aluminium cups that are rotated around, sanded and repainted before being used again. Each day the cup is wiped clean preventing the build up of algae and dirt within the cup. We also use a three-colour flag system to indicate the location of the hole on the green. Red flags indicate the front third of the green, yellow the middle third and white the back.

The greens are monitored closely for irrigation purposes and are typically allowed to dry considerably between deep watering. It often rains before the need for irrigation occurs, with May and August being the two months that

I can truly control soil moisture. I have spent numerous hours defending keeping the greens firm and dry and I know I am not alone on this subject.

Staffing at Meland

Full time staff at Meland consists of the Golf Course Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, the Equipment Technician and two Greenkeepers.

During the golfing season we bring on additional help starting in April with the addition of one seasonal employee and two Student interns, one from England and one from the United States. In the middle of June the main influx of summer help begin bringing staffing up to 12 for the months of June, July and August. Last year we had 16 people on the payroll but at any one time we only had 12 reporting for work. The scheduling of staff is a task in itself as everyone takes at least one-week vacation, even the seasonal people.

Since writing this piece Kirsten has moved from Norway to take up a position as Centre Director for Open Golf Centres in Bournemouth

Above top: 8th tee, fairway and green, Feb 1998

Above middle: Same hole, June 1998

Above bottom: Completed 8th hole, May 2000

Far left: Double cutting the 5th green, May 2000

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Contracts Manager, Swan Plant Services Ltd.



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BIGGA
ESSAY
COMPETITION

David Roy, of Linlithgow GC, winner of the 2000 BIGGA Essay Competition for Head Greenkeepers/Course Managers, reveals his winning entry

Write stuff?

Managing without chemicals Is it possible and how would I cope?

When asked to consider whether it is possible to manage a golf course without chemicals, my thoughts immediately turned to European legislation and the impending likelihood, that at some stage in the future, there may be very few chemicals with which to combat turf problems. That this often talked about change in attitude has come about at all is due to a recent shift in the way in which European governments view the natural environment and how it is con-

trolled, which is perhaps how the title of this essay came into being.

Ever since the first alchemist attempted to use science to turn lead into gold, man has lived with the notion that nature can be distilled and separated into elements and that these can be used to twist and bend our environment to suit our needs.

Man has seldom, if ever, accepted that the human race should live within the bounds set by mother nature, but

recently there has been enough publicity about the European Community's attitude towards chemicals to suggest that this may be changing.

The golf industry is obviously bound to be affected by any change in pesticide regulations and I, in turn, will be affected, but how will I cope?

Read on...



BIGGA ESSAY COMPETITION

Managing without chemicals

Is it possible and how would I cope?

It must be accepted that a golf course can be cared for and excellent playing surfaces produced without the use of chemicals, but what is required to change for this to happen? I will readily admit to using any pesticides that I consider appropriate to solve a specific turf problem, but is this really necessary? The amount of resources placed at our disposal for the maintenance of a golf course are based on what is available in terms of the pesticides that can be used to save labour; but what if these are to be withdrawn? Are we producing better courses by utilising every available pesticide or are they simply different from those on which the game was first played?

There are probably only a handful of problems associated with the care of a golf course that can be solved most easily by the application of chemicals, but we have become used to the amount of time that this saves. There are very few Greenkeepers who would deny that all of the most common turf problems can be controlled without the use of chemicals and it is probable that the only thing that prevents this from being the case is the golf culture of today. It is the pressure brought to bear on Greenkeepers to save time that drives the use of chemicals to control the common problems associated with the production of fine turf.

I am sure that the skills and knowledge exist to manage turf problems culturally, but are golf clubs prepared to find the necessary extra resources to do this and to continue to present their courses in their current fashion. I am old enough to have experienced highly labour intensive practises on a golf course that are no longer necessary - but where has the time saved gone? Instead of spending weeks mixing, spreading and dragging twenty tons of top dressing by hand we routinely carry out this operation in one day giving us the rest of the week to cut as much grass as is humanly possible.

Without too much trouble, we can pinpoint what was different on the average golf course in Britain twenty years ago. Fairways were cut once per week with trailed gangs, large areas of rough were only cut once per year and bankings or verges rarely saw a scythe. But golf was quick to adopt each new technological advance in grass cutting techniques and fairways are regularly cut twice per week with ride-on mowers, acres of rough are now kept in check with an array of implements and trimmers have shorn unkempt corners in every course.

This attitude towards unquestioningly accepting "progress" has had a great influence on the way that chemicals are used to help create golf tracks that allow two hundred people to speed around in average round times of four hours. The thought of returning to the type of course that abounded fifty years ago with rank roughs, slow fairways and unkempt margins is abhorrent to most golfers used to the manicured motorway golf of the twenty-first century. Many golf clubs have grown to a point that their course has to be set up to accommodate over one thousand members playing golf twelve months of the year, and if the time is coming when chemicals are no longer to be used on fine turf and manual labour is to be used instead, will this type of course continue to be viable?

If the choice between using labour intensive cultural controls for weeds, pests and diseases and using chemical pesticides is taken away from us, what will change and who will find it more difficult to cope? I would like to argue that it would be the modern golfer, rather than the modern Greenkeeper who would find it more difficult to cope and the entire culture of golf management will be forced to make difficult decisions about the type of courses that can be produced without the use of chemicals. In order to explain this more clearly, it is neces-

sary. to look at what thinking shapes the way in which golf courses in this country are managed to see what rationale there is for not embracing change.

It is rare in both traditional members' clubs and modern proprietary facilities to see golf courses that either cling on to, or were designed with a course set up that is radically different from those facilities that are seen as normal, or desirable. But what influences the way that many golfers think that a golf course should look like? Presumably there must be some influence from television, but this cannot explain the contradiction we see when golfers marvel at the Old Course and its policy of minimal fertilising, yet pressurise their own club to produce a lush green course with all the contingent problems that this brings.

A golfer's view of how his or her own course should be set up must also be influenced when he or she plays at a club that employs a massive amount of resources to produce a specific type of course and it is perhaps this that has the greatest influence on current course set-ups. The golfer's entirely human desire to improve their own environment by matching the standards set by their recent experiences has led to direct comparisons between the very richest golf courses in Britain and the very poorest. The average golfer may not openly admit that they wish their own course to be as manicured as Augusta National or the impressive new multi-million pound course that they were privileged to play last year, but these are the standards that they have perhaps subconsciously set in their mind.

Many golfers are reluctant to accept that if their club or course can only afford to employ four Greenkeepers, then the standards of presentation and quality of playing surface must be different from a club or course that can afford to employ forty. This, as I have already said, may be a subcon-

scious reluctance, but it is at the root of most of the pressure that is brought to bear on a Course Manager of the average course in Britain. But, if a course is presented in such a way that allows the Greenstaff time to carry out many more labour intensive weed, pest and disease control and preventative measures will it be a poor course or simply different? I have a strong belief that if labour on a golf course is released from the shackles of endless grass cutting to concentrate on tasks such as top dressing, aeration and hand watering, the resultant change would not create poorer golf courses, but simply make them more challenging.

In the quest for length on old established courses in Britain, most of the blame has been laid at the door of golf club and ball manufacturers and all the improvements that they have made to golf equipment. Little consideration has been given to the ability of the modern bogey golfer to spray the ball with impunity and still find it. It is only due to the widening of fairways, semi-roughs, the cutting of bankings and so on that has resulted in the reduction of many courses to the label of "pitch and putt". Perhaps if the same courses were set up in the same manner they were forty years ago there would be far fewer eight degree loft, massively oversized drivers in the bags of players and more judicious use would be made of the far more forgiving three wood. Accuracy rather than distance would become the most desirable talent for a golfer.

Was the way in which Carnoustie was presented for the Open in 1999 unattractive or unfair? Was the resultant media frenzy deleterious for golf? Did golfers stay away in their droves? Carnoustie was given mixed reviews by every golfer that watched the Open that year, but nobody denied that the way in which it was presented was in any way artificial or that the best

golfers in the world were severely tested and that perhaps many more courses could be presented in this way.

If we were to reduce drastically the amount of rough cutting (and by this I mean all areas of rough grass) to maintain the most important playing surfaces without the use of chemicals, and that this policy was accepted readily by the golfers, then there would be no problem - golfers would be able to continue to pay the same fees for a round of golf. If, however, the golfers were reluctant to accept an increase in the amount of time spent looking for balls, that many more shots would be played from deep rough instead of semi-rough and that average round times would increase, then far more resources would have to be made available in order to achieve the course set up they desire and still have time to devote to tasks such as hand weeding, top dressing and so on.

There will undoubtedly be changes in golf course management over the next twenty years. The scientific industry that has produced complex chemical compounds has proved recently that it can produce equally effective methods for the control of these same problems without the use of chemicals. These naturally occurring preventative measures are used routinely in the form of seaweed solutions, carbohydrate feeds, microbacterial compounds and so on, but the science involved in producing these is still in its infancy and is still not holistically used.

If, or perhaps when, every tool is harnessed to both prevent and control turf problems and golf courses come to accept that changes in current practises are inevitable, then I have no doubt that I will cope with the removal of chemicals as a management aid and that Greenkeepers everywhere will prove once again that turf management is not simply a case of cutting grass.

Have you got the Write stuff?



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Prizes:
Winners of each category would receive £500 with 2 runners up in each category receiving £100.

Send your entry to:
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The 2001 Essay Competition is sponsored by BIGGA (Education and Development Fund). The essay winners will be invited to attend a week-long seminar and conference of golf and greenkeeping at the end of the year. The winning essay will be published in Greenkeeper International magazine. The winning essay will be published in Greenkeeper International magazine. The winning essay will be published in Greenkeeper International magazine.

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Scott MacCallum headed west to Bolton to learn about BIGGA Golden Key supporter Rigby Taylor's consultancy agency Grass Science...

● The appliance of Science



Clockwise from top right: Grass Science's consultants Chris Peel, Tim Colclough, Noel MacKenzie and Andy Cole

In the last six years an advisory service has grown from a standing start to become the second largest in the country... with its sights set on the number one slot.

Grass Science now has four full time consultants, working under the direction of Director of Agronomy, Brian Robinson, each offering advice to golf clubs, operators of amenity turf and on environmental issues up and down the length of the UK.

The company was born out an appreciation of Rigby Taylor Chairman, Bernard Hedley, that customers were becoming increasingly interested in advisory support and that the industry itself had become more technical and research driven.

"We were conscious that advice was becoming more and more important to customers and in 1995 we felt that we'd got to the stage where we wanted to offer advice in a more formal manner. We felt that there was an opportunity to build a separate division of Rigby Taylor which would be dedicated to offering advice on a commercial basis," explained Bernard.

Brian Robinson, a former Groundsman of Lancashire County Cricket Club, who had for the five previous years been managing one of Rigby Taylor's sales teams, was asked to take the project on board.

"Brian was a good example of someone whose natural inclination was to give advisory input to customers and he too was keen on the idea. So Grass Science was born with in the beginning Brian basically managing a department of one with the help of

some internal resources. The business flourished thanks to Brian's enthusiasm and capacity for hard work and within six months we'd appointed consultant Chris Peel, from ADAS, and the business continued to develop from there," explained Bernard, as we sat in the Bolton Headquarters of Rigby Taylor.

The next major leap for the company came last year when two further appointments were made with a fourth consultant being added earlier this year, all from the STRI.

"We appointed Andy Cole and Noel MacKenzie, both well known and well established agronomists about nine months ago with another, Tim Colclough, joining the team earlier this year."

"Our sales reps were used to offering advice and still do and this is welcomed by their customers, but now we also have a team of consultants whose entire focus is advisory input," explained Bernard, when tackled about the potential conflict of a product supply company setting up its own advisory service.

He added that while a consultant may visit a course three to four times a year the rep may visit 12 times a year so the greenkeeper is always going to hold great store on conversations with his rep.

Grass Science is marketed independently of Rigby Taylor and maintains links with other parties out in the field, whether they be contractors and supply companies.

There is a financial link between the two organisations but in terms of man-

Brian Robinson, right and Bernard Hedley, left



agement the two are 100% divorced from each other.

"Brian has no responsibilities to Rigby Taylor and there are no Rigby Taylor managers with any responsibility for any Grass Science management," explained Bernard, who offers the only genuine link as Chairman of both companies.

Indeed convincing customers and potential customers that Grass Science was an independent company was never a problem.

"It was always more of an issue in theory than in practice. I'm not aware that there has ever been an occasion when a client has felt uncomfortable about the Rigby Taylor/Grass Science link," said Bernard.

While it was something Brian did consider prior to Grass Science being formed, he is happy to admit that it has never become an issue.

"Even from the word go it was never a concern and over the last three years it has got less and less so to the extent that it is never brought up at all now. That was particularly obvious at BTME this year."

The benefits which come from having a link are informal. If a Rigby Taylor rep sees that a customer has got a need for advice he'd be happy to recommend Grass Science. Likewise if a Grass Science consultant is looking to give a product solution he'd be happy to recommend a chat with the Rigby Taylor rep.

"That's the way it works and to be honest pretty much every consultancy tends to have a leaning towards a good product supply company, one that he

trusts, knows will deliver a solution and not do his reputation any harm if he recommends it," said Bernard.

That said there is nothing to prevent Grass Science consultants looking elsewhere for solutions to problems.

"There are no restrictions preventing the consultants developing contacts with other supply companies. In fact it is positively encouraged to ensure their product knowledge is as comprehensive as possible," explained Bernard.

It is a point reinforced by Brian who pointed out that it is not unusual for one of his team to recommend a product for another company.

"We approach our work as a professional organisation which has merit and credibility and to do so it has to stand alone. So there have been cases, quite a number of cases, where it has been necessary to specify other materials... which doesn't make the Rigby Taylor reps too happy," he confessed.

However, such occasions offer the opportunity to assess the Rigby Taylor product range and see whether there is a gap that requires filling.

"As a product supply company we are looking to supply a need and one of the best ways of recognising a need is to be aware of what consultants generally are recommending to their clients," said Bernard.

"The way that Rigby Taylor benefits from our relationship with Grass Science is that we are able to tailor our product

range to find solutions to the problems that the consultants are identifying.

"This has been the case in terms of grass seed development and in some fertiliser formulations within our range," said Bernard.

As an aside he recalled how Rigby Taylor first got involved in fertiliser production 50 years ago when it mixed up the fertilisers prescriptions the STRI recommended to particular clients.

"In large measure we are doing no different now only we have our own consultancy service which enables us to work that much more closely. But the same processes take place."

Bernard and Brian are keen to stress that each consultant brings a specialist skill to the team but that the individuals do offer a collective approach to their work.

"Andy and Noel have specialist golf knowledge; Tim's particular strength is in training while Chris has skills as an expert witness," explained Brian, whose own specialities are grass seed and environmental issues.

While those specialist skills are regarded as important the team, to use a footballing analogy, does play the same formation.

"We didn't want people at opposite ends of the consultancy spectrum and that, although they are individuals they will offer advice which is along the same lines," said Bernard.

"The team is able to dovetail so that if another member of the team has to stand in for whatever reason the advice would

be of the same calibre. People have had to change slightly to fit in with that approach," explained Brian, one of whose projects has taken him to Scotland on a regular basis over the last two years.

He has been contacted by the Highlands and Islands Development Agency to look at the Cairngorm Ski Lift Company project to build a funicular railway.

"It is a site of special scientific interest and my role is to ensure that everything is reinstated to how it was... not just after this project but following the bulldozing work that was done in the 60s when the original ski lifts were put in. So far we've photographed rock structures and plants so they can be reinstated just as they were."

The work has enabled Brian to plant our trial plots for grasses to see how they cope at 1,000 and 2,500 feet.

"Taking this work into the mountains has enabled me to research how grasses cope with extremes of weather and this will be of benefit to many golf clubs in years to come," he explained.

The future for Grass Science looks rosy with continued expansion on the cards.

"We see Grass Science developing a wider geographical spread over the next five years certainly throughout the UK while we do believe that Europe remains an attractive proposition," revealed Bernard.

Their sights are still firmly set on becoming the number one consultancy in the country but they are also rightly proud of the strides they have made since Grass Science was formed.



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North

There was a record turnout of North Section members at BTME this year, it was great to see so many folk travelled down to Harrogate, I hope you all thought it was worth the effort and that you will go down again in the future. As ever it was a great week, with record attendances and full of quality events. The new hall meant more stands than ever and the trade show was excellent, with lots to see and buy if you had the budget!

The Tuesday night football match was played in cold pouring rain so it was not surprising that the Scots lads won 4 - 1. There was a shortage of English lads this year, so we cunningly gave the English team some Scots who have been working in England for a while so had gone a little soft! Sorry George.

We had some great evenings, with the Canadian contingent numbering 40 this year, and I am sure our party that were in Canada last month had a great time as these guys know how to party, they could almost be Scottish! Roll on BTME 2002.

Congratulations to Ian Cowper, of Tain Golf Club, who became a Dad last month.

His partner, Samantha, gave birth to Adam and all are doing well. As a result of the imminent birth, Ian had to miss his Patrons Award trip to BTME, but every cloud has a silver lining for someone and Jock Urquhart, also of Tain, stepped in and thoroughly enjoyed his first visit to Harrogate and returned full of ideas that will keep me on my toes for a while.

Congratulations also to Gordon McKie, of St Andrews, who next month gets married to his fiancée, Susan. We wish them every happiness.

Bobby Mackay and his staff at Royal Dornoch have been very busy recently building five new holes on the Struie course as part of an upgrade that will see two great courses in Dornoch in the near future, we look forward to playing it when it opens.

It will soon be Spring and I hope by the time this report is read that the weather has been a little kinder to us to make up for the hardest Winter we have had for many years, it is a good job we have such understanding members at our clubs.

I hope you are all sending your money to Stewart McBain for the 200 Club, please do it now while it is fresh in your mind and Stewart does not have to chase around after you for it. Thank you.

Iain Macleod

East of Scotland

Well here we are another month another article, as I sit and write this on February 6 and look out the window at the course which is covered in a foot of snow I wonder when we are going to get a decent spell of weather as since the turn of the year we've had snow, deep frost then more deep frost then a thaw for a week then some rain then more snow when will it come to an end as its only six weeks till the start of our season and some other courses as well. Hopefully March will be better.

The amazing thing is we spent a week at BTME in Harrogate and the weather was superb the whole week. Strange isn't it?

As normal the Section is quiet just now but a few bits of news for you. Firstly people on the move last month are Paul Hares, formerly Assistant Head Greenkeeper, has left Melville to take up a post with Standard Life and Shaun Cunningham, Assistant at Monktonhall, has taken Paul's job as Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Melville Golf Club. So best of luck to them in their new positions. Well I have already mentioned it but I must say BTME 2001 was excellent once again and every year it just keeps getting bigger and better. Well done to everyone at BIGGA HOUSE and all the organisers of the show the seminars and all the other activities that are going on that week and I speak for everyone when I say it is a credit to you all so keep up the good work and we will see you all next year at BTME 2002.

Peter Boyd, the hotel and the package you put together was first class once again so that's another reason as well as the show etc that we are getting more Scots making the journey south every year.

Peter, I hope you enjoyed your holiday in South Africa preparing yourself for the new season - that's if you took the clubs with you that is. Now don't forget Ian and Richard I am still waiting for your essay about your trip to Harrogate and I won't forget so I'm just reminding you both. No excuses please.

I hope to see you at the BIGGA Scottish Conference at Dunfermline on March 6 which will be past by the time you read this but I hope to see you anyway.

Well that's it for this month, if you have any news let me know just as Steve Halliday, Head Greenkeeper at Melville GC, did because it's quite painless really. The usual numbers are 01968 661313 (home), 01968 661721 (office), 07719 580449 (mobile) or e-mail: cly263@netscapeonline.co.uk about anything you want as long as you think it will be of interest to the members. So come on, do it now!

PS - I have just heard the forecast and the rain is going to lash down and the wind is going to whip up so that so sounds familiar, but if it doesn't it won't leave any lasting impressions on me!

Chris Yeaman

Ayrshire

I'll start by extending a belated New Year's greeting to everyone, all the best for 2001 and hopefully we all can have a good playing season. My apologies for a vacant column over the past months this was down to family commitments with the birth of my second daughter born in November and a bout of family 'flu at New Year before last month's deadline.

The AGM produced a very small turnout and there were no significant changes. The following committee were elected to serve for 2001. Chairman, Iain Barr, Largs Kelburn; Past Chairman, Duncan Gray, The Pines; Secretary, Derek Wilson, Irvine Bogside; Committee, George Brown, William McMeikan and Jimmy Johnstone all Turnberry. Jim Paton and Brian Aiken (New member), West Kilbride. Brian Finlayson, Barassie. Dennis Tweddell (New member), Bonnyton. Robert T Bruce, Stewarts. There are vacancies for Vice Chairman and committee which remain to be filled. The outings will be finalised at February's committee meeting and will be posted in next month's column.

The Patrons' Award winners were Martin Lothian, from Turnberry, and Colin Murray, from Brighthouse Bay, who were presented with their award at the Patrons lunch and also received a trip to BTME at Harrogate, congratulations to you both. Also many thanks to all the Scottish Region patrons for making these awards possible.

People on the move recently are Scott McLean from West Kilbride to Wentworth as Assistant and Joe Bell who moves up from Deputy Head at Kilmacolm to Head Greenkeeper at Millport on the Isle of Cumbrae.

Jim Paton is organising computer courses in Ayrshire which are run in house by BIGGA through our Education department with Ken Richardson. Anyone who is interested should forward their name to Jim, Derek Wilson or myself.

That's all the news for this month, any news or views call me on 01505 683278.

Iain Barr

West

On January 22-26 I had the good fortune to visit the BTME exhibition at Harrogate for the first time and must again thank the Patron's of our Section personally for making the trip possible. The show itself is very impressive with every kind of machine you could ever want but could never afford being on display.

The educational programme and craic enjoyed afterwards in the company of colleagues will always be a highlight of this event. One night in particular stand's out in Trotter's bar where an educational programme on losing a bad "habit" was very well attended. I can never remember so many greenkeeper's standing so quietly in sheer admiration. It certainly opened my eye's.

Congratulations are to be extended to Colin from Glasgow GC, who

made his TV debut on the January 30, not the CCTV type but national television. My nine year old will need therapy for year's to come after his face filled my TV screen.

On a more serious note congratulations are to be extended to Joe Bell, from Kilmacolm GC, who has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Millport GC. Joe has worked at Kilmacolm for 13 year's and both Ronnie and the West of Scotland Committee wish Joe every success in his new position. Is that the Glasgow fair holiday's booked for Ronnie.

Once again congratulations are to be extended to Ronnie and his staff at Kilmacolm GC after they were given Committed to Green Recognition by the Committed to Green Foundation. Kilmacolm GC is one of only 15 golf club's in the whole of Europe to be recognised with this award.

On an educational note Ronnie tell's me that a moderator's meeting is due to be arranged sometime. In March, a mail shot will be sent out in due course.

I have also been informed that eight greenkeeper's are now working their way through an SVQ Level 4 with GOSTA training, the committee wishes you all the best in achieving your award's.

A warm welcome is extended to our new Section member's these being Robert Brown; Gordon Ewan Logan; Robert McDowell; Michael McLerie; William Hamilton Muir and Darren Welsh. We look forward to meeting you all at the up and coming Section outing's.

Finally we hope Elliott has enjoyed his year as Chairman and I am sure your staff will have your wellies warmed up at Tulliallan ready for your return to duty.

Well that's all I have to report this month, again if any Section member does have anything they would like added to the column feel free to contact me on 01355 236335 or 01355 266862.

Brian Bolland.

Central

This month we extend a warm welcome to another nine new Section members, and they are Graham Brand and Alan Breen, from Carnoustie Golf Links; David Smith, from Glenalmond College Golf Course; Richard Colley, from Dunfermline Golf Club; James Dowie, from Brucefields Family Golf Centre; Alexander Latto, from Thornton Golf Club; Derek Downie, from Ladybank Golf Club, and Dudley Aitchison from Anstruther Golf Club. As before, hopefully we will have the pleasure of meeting some of you at forthcoming events.

News of two former Section members, David Murdoch, formerly of Dunfermline Golf Club and now of Liphook Golf Club received his Master Greenkeeper Award at BTME. at Harrogate and Ian Ross, formerly of the Dukes Course at St. Andrews, is now working in Norway as Head Greenkeeper at the Miklagard Golf Club in Osteras.

Congratulations go to them both with every success for the future from everyone in the Section.

As usual there were a good number of Section members at Harrogate again this year and I'm sure everyone must have enjoyed a bigger and better BTME. Any member who has not attended this event should mark it in their diary and start planning now for 2002 as it is an enjoyable week on both the "educational" and social sides of things.

Entry forms for this year's Spring Tournament, which is being held by courtesy of the members of Scotsraig Golf Club in Fife, should be with you shortly and once again I would ask you to return your form, with the correct remittance, as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

The winners of the January draw in "Club 2000" are D. McOwat, £30 with number 357 and D. Wilson, £20 with number 385. The winners of the February draw are M. Lindsay, £30 with number 320 and P. Butler, £20 with number 166. Thanks to S. Connah, T. Edwards, W. Swan, A. Paterson and D. Gillon for purchasing their tickets, although outwith the allotted time, were still in time to be included in the first draw. Thanks again to everyone who has supported this Section fund raiser.

John Crawford.



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

North West

I have just completed the fixtures for the year, and by the time you read these notes you should all have received your fixture list for the year I would like to thank Rufford Soil Technology for once again sponsoring the printing and distribution of the fixtures, and once again I ask you to support the Section events, and make it all worth the time spent organising. If for any reason you have not received a list of fixtures, or if you are a new member please give me a ring and I will send you one immediately.

I have been informed that Paul Worsencroft, Head Greenkeeper at Knutsford Golf Club, has been involved in a car accident, and his wife and two children were also in the car with him at the time Paul has broken both legs, and his wife is still very ill. Thankfully both of the children were uninjured, they are six months, and three years old. I am told the driver of the other car was killed outright, so I suppose they are lucky to be alive. I am sure we all wish them a speedy recovery, and soon put this nasty episode behind them. I must mention also that Knutsford Golf Club are very supportive of him, and that his job is safe no matter how long it takes. I wish more golf clubs took this attitude.

The Mere Seminar is on Thursday, March 22 with a programme for the day based on how to overcome the problems caused by the inclement weather over the last 12 months. There will also be a demonstration of gravel

banding on greens, and a talk on the right soil and sand mixtures for root zone. The cost for the day is £20 including lunch, and non members and club officials are welcome. All entries to be sent to me at Hanhill Lodge, Hanhill Road, Liverpool. Tel. 0151 724 5412, or mobile 07761 583387.

Cheques made payable to BIGGA N/W.

We have a match: against the N/Wales Section at Abergele Golf Club on Thursday April 19 and I require a strong team of 16 members to win the GEM. Trophy This annual tournament has been played for many years, mostly on a friendly basis, and is once again sponsored by GEM Professional so there is no cost to you. All you have to do is get there. If you are interested give me a ring as soon as possible.

The following week on Monday April 23 we have the "Spring Tournament at Mere GCC, with the tee available from 1.30pm. Lunch will be served at 12.30 and an evening meal follows the completion of the golf. We are restricted to 50 competitors so get your application in early with your cheque for £15 to Bill Merritt. 225 Liling Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool. 1.4 QRB Tel 0151 284 4416. Evening dress, jacket and tie. That's it for now, any news or views please contact me on 0151 724 5412 or Mobile 07761 583387.

Bert Cross

North Wales

Well the month of January brought us all some proper weather even though it did go to the other extreme of freezing, at least we were able to move soil etc around the course to get some of our construction work completed. But oh yes the rains came again and our course is yet again saturated and closed.

The extreme weather conditions have brought about the need for extreme greenkeeping, with many courses so wet and the grass still growing the only solution was to cut fairways and rough during the freeze, the results have meant courses are now playable, with good definition of fairways and memberships that can now play again, everyone happy! it just shows that at times we just have to throw the rule book out of the window.

On March 21 you can visit Bathgate Silica at Archild Quarry if you are interested please contact John Hammond on 01270 762828; our spring meet is at Ruddlan Golf Club on April 5, entrance is £12 under 21, £15 members and £20 Guests, the North Wales vs North West match will be played at Abergele Golf Club, date to be announced, anyone interested in getting our shield back please contact our match secretary Jeremy Hughes.

At the college, Graham Wright would like to hear from any Head Greenkeeper's who are interested in giving talks to NVQ level 2 students on afternoons in the summer.

The Section welcomes back into the fold Mr Andrew Campbell, MG. You know it makes sense mate!

Finally, our Section at this moment in time has two of our members serv-

ing as captains of golf clubs, they are Wyn Mostyn, who is the Captain of the Plassey Golf Club, and Terry Adamson, Captain of Northop Country Park Golf Club. I was wondering whether any other Section wishes both of them every success in their year of office, maybe they could influence the weather seen as that's what us Greenkeepers are supposed to do!

Dave Goodridge

Cleveland

Very little to report this month. Two members of staff at the Wynard Club have successfully completed their NVQ Level 2 at Askham Bryan College, Stephen Taggart, and Gary Hutchinson both passed with flying colours the course also included the PA 2 which they both also passed.

After being advised by the police (three times) Shaun Carroll, Deputy Course Manager of Eaglescliffe Golf Club has abandoned his attempt to break the land speed record through Yarm High Street, he can now be seen travelling to work with a queue of traffic behind him. Once he has safely arrived at work Shaun has the responsibility for servicing and Maintaining machinery at Eaglescliffe Golf Club and he boasts the fact that in three years only one piece of machinery has had to go away to be repaired, well done Shaun for setting an example for others to follow. A BIGGA Committee Meeting has taken place at Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Club to discuss various issues, including forthcoming events and golf tournaments.

A newsletter is being prepared and will be sent out when things have been confirmed, any news please contact me on 07719193381

Steven Jaques

North East

On behalf of the Section we would like to thank Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, once again for providing a coach to Scotsturf. From what I have been told he put quite a spread on, and also prizes for raffles etc. Thanks again Terry.

Matfen Hall are about to start another extra 9 holes in the Spring I believe on the other side of the road should be a good test of golf as there is already a fairly large pond on site.

Tyneside GC again has kindly offered their services for our winter seminars the first one was in January and given by Robert Laycock the agronomist, and there was a good turn out with 30 greenstaff attending and a few of them had a travelled 70 miles round trip. Robert, I must say, gave a very interesting talk and the Section thanks him for his time and effort.

February 8, and the talk was given by Peter Hampton, of Bernhards of Rugby, on reel maintenance again this was another interesting subject with the greenkeepers who attended finding out one or two things that would make the tasks easier, it's only a pity that only a third of January's turnout bothered to be there. Still it was their loss.

Don't forget April 5 is the Spring Comp at Warkworth and the Autumn

Competition at Hexham on September 21.

Due to a problem with email the North East notes have not appeared over the past few months so apologies to the members who have missed out on their Section Notes.

Jimmy Richardson



Midland Region
Les Emery
Tel: 0116 287 9036

East Midland

This year has again seen another excellent Trade Show at Harrogate, with more products on show, more workshops and seminars. Although I was only able to attend the show for one day it was still great to see a few old friends, gain some more valuable information and to see what a fantastic Association we have. Once again I would like to encourage all members to support the show in future years, so we can remain successful. It was nice to meet up with the Canadian Greenkeepers prior to my visit to Vancouver, and make a few more friends. Also it was great to see an old friend of mine Steve Peters, now Head Greenkeeper of Blankney Golf Club. Steve and I both attended Reaseheath College, so we had plenty of happy memories to talk about.

The Section has arranged a Lecture evening, which is to be held at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club on Tuesday April 10. The speakers are to include our Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson; a representative from Bernard's Grinders and myself. As I am sure you are all aware by the time you have read this article I shall have recently returned from the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show in Vancouver which was kindly sponsored by Bernard's Grinders, and I would like to share my knowledge, that I have acquired from this wonderful trip by producing a talk for you all on this evening. Forms will be sent to you shortly and your attendance will be greatly appreciated.

Finally I would like to congratulate Chris Bates on his appointment as First Assistant Greenkeeper at Scraftoft Golf Club. Chris was formally Mechanic/Greenkeeper at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club.

Antony Bindley

East of England

The winter education seminar held at Newark Golf Club had Dennis Mottram as its key speaker. Dennis talked all day on 'Understanding Soils' The day was broken into various topics and members were involved in group participation, which added to the day. Nearly 50 members enjoyed a very informative seminar.

Thanks to all the excellent trade members for providing all the excellent raffle prizes which came from Barenbrug Seeds, Aitkens, Cannon's Turf, Rigby Taylor, Ruffords Topdressing, Alpha Amenity, Boughton Loams and Amenity Technology. A lot of members have

been asking about another computer course, if I can get enough support I will gladly organise the day, so let me know if you are interested.

The fixture list is now complete and will be with you shortly. A new sponsor this year for our second fixture is Amenity Technology which replaces the Les Purdy's Golf Day which unfortunately has packed in.

Graeme Macdonald

Midland

Firstly I would like to offer a warm welcome to our six new Members, Andrew Miller, Gary Watkins, Colin Woodward, Christopher Young, Keith Abercrombie and Jason Simms.

It was good to see some familiar faces at BTME which, again, offered an excellent opportunity to learn and develop professionally as well as mix socially. All in all a very rewarding week. By now each member will have received a 2001 Section programme - omitted on December 13 is the AGM 4.15pm start. Anyone wishing to offer a tournament venue for 2002 would be very welcome to contact Rhys Thomas on 07775581615.

Finally, British Seed Houses are proposing a visit to IGER Aberystwyth in July. Those interested in this excellent two day trip please contact Andy Smith 07977 145091.

Phil Gates

BBO

My apologies for missing last month's article but, I was very busy at the time breaking my New Year's resolutions. Most were broken by about am New Year's day apart from no smoking which I'm pleased to say is still going strong, but believe me the lads at work wish I hadn't.

Never mind, so it's into the new year and what have we got to look forward to? The members moaning about the temporary greens, more rain, the staff whingeing about the cold and then some more rain just for luck. But don't panic there is always the Section events to look forward to. Now before you get the rope out and start putting it around your neck we should have the golf days confirmed within the next couple of months so if you have had any problems with mailing from HQ ie. change of address or incorrect address then contact BIGGA HQ as soon as possible, that way we can be sure everyone is getting an entry slip.

The Section would like to wish Dean Thatcher, at Radgemore, a speedy recovery from his recent illness (meningitis). He has been off work since mid-July, but hopes to be back this spring.

Also we have several new members to the Section and would like to welcome: Geoffrey Carrigan, Drayton Park; Chris Collins, Reading; Matthew Flicks, Huntercombe; Alastair Higgs, Calcot Park; Michael Randall, Huntercombe, and Gary Wiltshire, Ellesbrough.

One last thing before I go and that is that I'd like to thank the blokes from Tacit for getting me even more plastered than I already was up at Harrogate. Well I think it was them

anyway. For anyone that hasn't been up to BTME then I'd recommend it for a night out, there really are some eye openers up there even by my standards!

Jon Scoones (01189 723334)



South East
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260956

London

It's been a quiet month on all fronts really. Just when you think the weather is starting to improve after Christmas we succumb to yet more rain and flooding. Who wants to be a Greenkeeper!

Still it's not all bad news around the Section. Some good from West Herts GC in that Andy Smith has been confirmed as Course Manager. Congratulations to Andy who can also look forward to the construction of new maintenance sheds in the very near future.

Going back to the incredibly wet weather I had an interesting tour of Browns in Chesham recently and if you think we've all got flooding problems think again. The weather coming off the hills around the yard at Browns means that without constant pumping the staff would by now have developed gills and fins. They do say that goldfish have a five second memory span so no change for the guys in stores department then! if you're reading lads it's just a joke - honest!

As I said in my last report our Spring Meeting will take place at Stockley Park GC in May - date to be confirmed. Please support the day if you can. A couple of recent appointments around the Section have seen Martin Guy installed as the new Course Manager at the American Golf-owned Oakwood Park and Guy Jenkins moving from West Herts GC to the Course Manager's position at Denham GC Every success to both.

As you may or may not know here at Sandy Lodge we have undergone some major redevelopment work in the late summer. But we're not the only ones - oh no! Ian Semple, at Old Fold Manor GC has overseen the refurbishment of several bunkers, carried out by Kestrel Golf, who incidentally were the contractor for our work as well. John Merriman, at Batchworth Park, can also look forward to another nine holes in the near future.

At Harpenden Common GC new maintenance sheds are the order of the day. Steve Brocklehurst and his team have recently moved in to the new building which is situated in a much more accessible position on the course.

Digressing wildly away from Greenkeeping just to blow my own trumpet for a moment myself and Rob Washbrook, Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Hadley Wood GC, last month reached the last 16 of the Herts Carpet Bowls singles tournament. See you in the final Rob!

Finally, Anyone looking for the ulti-



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mate driving experience should contact Peter Hopkinson, at Browns, who has a Y Registration VW Golf for sale - £950 o.v.n.o. Taxed until the end of March, no MOT and four slick no weather tyres. No time wasters please. Don't all rush to the phones at once!

Robert Phillips

Essex

By Train is Much Easier

With all the bad press the rail service has received recently you can appreciate why four of our members and two gentlemen from Rigby Taylor decided to take the safe option and hire a seven seater vehicle and drive up to the BTME in comfort. All went smoothly on the journey up to Harrogate and the same was expected on their return, but this was not to be. Steve Denton and Dennis Smith, Rigby Taylor; Martin Forrester, Stapleford Abbots GC; Adrian Cornell, Colne Valley GC; Peter Hurrell, The Warren GC, and Ian Squires, Orchard GC, ground to a halt at 11.30 pm just five miles from the M11 services at Stansted, no problem, phone the AA, get a replacement vehicle and be on their way. The rescue service company that were working for the AA, (lets call them the AB), said that a replacement vehicle would be delivered to the M11 services by the hire company, so off they went confident of getting home within the next hour or so. Just one thing prevented this from happening, no car at the services. Once again the AB, who it must be said did their best to get these people home, contacted the hire company, it's ok we can get another hire car at the other pick up point - Cambridge! By this point, (12.20am) temperatures were starting to rise, all except Mr Denton who kept a level head through the whole charade.

They arrived at Cambridge to once again be greeted by an empty space where a car should have been. Anybody who has seen Planes, Trains and Automobiles will appreciate what was going through their minds. They were however assured that a replacement vehicle was on its way, another one and a half hours passed. Finally, up rolled the smallest seven seater in the world, a Fiat Punto. Disgusted at what had passed Mr Denton took the bull by the horns and ordered a taxi to take them all home, quite a good deal really only £120 and they did all get home by 5.15am, nearly six hours after breaking down just 45 minutes away from home. Perhaps the trains aren't so bad after all!

Now onto business. The first of this year's Educational Evenings is to be held at Writtle College on March 22, the subject matter is not yet known but keep the date free in your diary. While on the subject of Education I have to congratulate Phil Allibon, of the Burstead Golf Club, and myself for passing the HNC in Sportsturf Science and The NVQ Level 3, two years, three for some, hard work gladly finished.

Upcoming golfing and social fixtures are Friday, March 9, The Annual

Gentleman's Dinner at Walton Heath Golf Club and April 25, our spring meeting at Frinton Golf Club. By the time this gets published you should be in receipt of your fixture list, if not contact Martin Forrester. (01245) 603131.

Finally a message to Gordon Scott, of Tothill Golf Club. Thanks for your letter, sorry it has been a while but rest assured you will be contacted by us to set up a possible golf day at your course. See you all at Writtle, if not Frinton or Walton Heath.

Steve Crosdale



South West
and South Wales
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352194

South West

Some of the Section have been on a memorable visit to this years BTME in Harrogate. On their behalf I would like to thank BIGGA headquarters for a very good show, it seemed to be a great success!

The coach kindly sponsored by Amenity Technology was a vast improvement, thank you. Our appreciation to Paula Humphries for her help and organisation was also shown by presenting her with a large bouquet of flowers.

It was great to see old and new faces around BTME even a gathering of Welsh and Southwest members were seen popping and trotting around Harrogate Town Centre. A new member 'Sid' I believe was tucked up watching "The Rock" on television on night one but then on night two and three I could give a good account of him but then maybe not! Our thanks go out to Richard Wyman who helped one member suffering from amnesia, who was unable to remember his name, room number, or how to open doors!

The Section are pleased to announce that Guy Woods, Course Manager of Bath Golf Club, has agreed to become Education Officer. We believe he will bring new ideas to the Section and we welcome your support, he can be contacted on 01225 333928 for all your training needs. Congratulations to Craig Fudge and Nick Perkins on their recent promotions to the new Head & Deputy Greenkeepers respectively of the Kendleshire, which is now under new ownership. Kevin Green is still involved in a new build in Bristol called "The Players".

Westurf is upon us so please support it on March 14 at Westpoint, Exeter.

The next event is the Spring tournament kindly sponsored by Scotts, at Thoulstone Park GC, on April 5. If you have not yet received any correspondence about the Sections events contact Kevin James the secretary on 07788427677.

Any member wishing to be considered for the team match on May 3 at the Manor House please contact Knobby Knight on 01225 760634.

Any news views or info please contact me on 01285 720112.

D. Bogen

South Coast

Have you ever been to the BTME Learning Experience? I went to my first one this year and I was very impressed by the two days. So if you haven't been before I can thoroughly recommend it.

The show itself was much bigger, and so was my hangover! It is now spread over more halls, so it takes an age to get round it all, but it is a good show with everything you've ever wanted there. Well done to everyone who organised the week.

Anyway, enough of BTME, and

back to our sunny little Section.

There are only two things to mention this month. The first is Westurf. You should have all had the information on the day by now, so please show your support for the day and try to come along.

If anyone knows anyone who would like to exhibit anything at the show, then let Paula know. You can contact her on 01288 352194. Stands are going cheap this year, so don't think that it's expensive.

The second item is the Spring Tournament. Chris Sturges works

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very hard organising the tournaments, so try and help him out by getting your names and money in early. The Spring Tournament is at the Army GC, Aldershot, this year. The price for the day is £21, this includes 27 holes, morning coffee, lunch and dinner. £21 is cheap for all that, so you would be mad to miss it!

Cheques should be made payable to BIGGA and sent to Chris at 40 Kinsbourne Way, Thornhill, Southampton, Hants, SO19 6HB. Don't forget to include your name

and address. If you have any queries, then you can phone Chris on 02380 494084.

Please remember that if you have to pull out of the event, then give Chris at least seven days notice. If you don't, then you are liable to still pay for the day, as the golf club will still charge the section. **You have been warned!**

The seminar at Sparsholt would have been and gone by the time this column goes to print, but if anyone is concerned about the fees charged by some of the speakers, don't wor-

ry. The Education Fund, and not the money taken for the day, pay for all the speakers' expenses. All the money taken for the seminar, as with other events, goes towards the cost of the venue and the food.

Well that's all for this month.

Mike Cartwright.

Devon and Cornwall

As usual the first event of the New Year for many members was to attend the BTME show held in the lovely town of Harrogate, the region's annual trip to the show

departed from Fingle Glen this year, the coach was excellent and the videos on board kept members amused on the long trip North.

The show itself just seems to get better each year and is now one that you can't afford to miss. Many members attended the Amenity Technology evening which I hear was buzzing with atmosphere

Congratulations must go to our Regional Administrator Paula and Stuart Ashworth, of Amenity Technology, who had organised the superb trip. Also, I would like to con-



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gratulate all the staff at head office for organising a superb BTME.

The Section's first meeting of the year was sponsored by Barenbrug Seeds and held at Royal North Devon Golf Club on Wednesday January 31. The day started with our golfing members competing over the clubs links course for prizes kindly donated by Barenbrug UK, our non golfing members were treated to a guided tour of the sheds and course by Head Greenkeeper Mark Evans before returning for lunch.

After an excellent lunch David Singleton of Barenbrug UK presented the mornings golf prizes as follows 1. Anthony Parker, Saunton, 38pts all on back 9; 2. Tony Gooch, Torrington, 38pts; 3. Kevin Dymond, Mortehoe & Woolacombe, 38pts.

Our afternoon educational talk was presented by Peter Wisbey, Courses Manager of the EGU Woodhall Spa, Peter gave an excellent presentation on his management policy at Woodhall

Spa, and also answered questions relating to Woodhall Spa and the EGU.

The Section would like to thank our meeting sponsor Barenbrug and David Singleton for their continued sponsorship. Also, our thanks must go to Mark Evans and his crew for all their efforts on the day. Last but not least our thanks must go to Royal North Devon Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their facilities and all their staff who made our day run so smoothly.

Our last meeting of the winter programme will be the Aventis and Supaturf meeting which will be held at Roserow Golf Club on Wednesday March 28, the day will start as always with golfing members competing for the Supaturf Trophy (Head Greenkeepers), Aventis Trophy (Assistants).

Remember that Westurf is now at Westpoint, Exeter on Wednesday, March 14.

So let's see a big attendance from the Section and support the Region so the

Region can support you.

Richard Whyman

South Wales

I gather BTME was again another success combining the National Education Conference which is supplemented by practical greenkeeping workshops including machinery maintenance, computer skills and golf course design & grass/soil science. The key speaker for the seminars was none other than the world landspeed record holder Richard Noble, of Thrust 2, Other seminars included health & safety and the environment issues. Well done to all the trade and the organisers of the exhibition.

In January we had our first evening lecture in conjunction with the JOG with 32 persons present. Keep it up! Geoffrey Davidson presented us with his extensive knowledge of drainage systems including the types, specification & design and soil texture. A

very interesting evening with practical demonstration and slides.

Bring you up to date with the Seminar next month although we look forward to a health & safety update on 14th of this month and on April 11, the Annual Quiz.

Richard Hatcher

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland

The Section had an educational visit to Coleraine and Ballymoney where we visited Geoff Connell, of the company Grass Roots, to see the product TDC9 being produced. Geoff gave us a very informative tour of the facilities showing us the different stages of production.

Mr Ivor Ramage, of the NOMIX company also gave us a detailed introductory talk on the NOMIX compact sprayer. He also kindly donated a NOMIX sprayer, herbicide and cleaner for a prize draw. The prize was won by Ballymena Club Club. I would like to thank Geoff and Ivor for their hospitality, the refreshments were very well received. After the visit to Grass Roots we all travelled the short distance to Groundsman Industries in Ballymoney. The company was formed by Bill Warke and specialise in making a variety of turf aerators and core collectors. The wide range of machines can be fitted to a Cushman, various sizes of tractors, or pedestrian models which can be used on smaller areas. Bill has designed all the machines himself and also the wide range of tines that can be used for whatever job is required whether for overseeding, thatch removal, or aeration. Neil McLaughlin, from Greenmount College was also on hand to give a talk on aeration. Bill gave us a tour of his factory explaining the different manufacturing stages that take place in constructing the machines and tines. The 25 members who attended would like to thank Bill Warke and his staff for the excellent food and drinks he provided.

The members found the afternoon visit very beneficial. The Section held a committee meeting in early January to formulate but golf days for the year so members will be informed in early spring of the dates and venues. A sub committee has formed to organise the next Educational Seminar which will be held in the autumn of 2002. the Chairman of the committee is Emmett Curran so if any member has any ideas for the seminar Emmett can be contacted at Downpatrick Golf Club on Tel.: 44612152.

I would like to welcome Robert Crooks and Gordon McBride Malone Golf Club back to the Section which brings our membership up to 110 and still growing. Please remember our next event is at Downpatrick Golf Club on March 27 starting at 2pm where we will play 9 holes of golf and attend talks by Liz Wilson, of JA Humphries on grass seeds and also Ian McClements the STRI agronomist will give a talk on a subject of his choice. Ken Henderson

SCOTLAND

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EAST	Stephen Dixon	Kings Knowe GC	Club: 0131 443 0235	
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NORTHERN

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N WALES	Trevor Johnston	Eastham Lodge GC	Club: 0151 327 3003	

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SUSSEX	Stefan Antolik	Cooden Beach GC	Club: 01424 846130	
LONDON	Ian Semple	Old Fold Manor GC	Club: 020 8441 2077	
E ANGLIA	Ian Willett	Thorpeness GC	Club: 01728 452176	
ESSEX	Martin Forrester	Stapleford Abbots GC	Tel: 01245 603131	Mobile: 07773 630323

SOUTH WEST / SOUTH WALES

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S WEST	Kevin James	Weston-Super-Mare GC	Club: 01934 626968	
S COAST	Fred Deamen	Alton GC	Club: 01420 82042	
DEVON C/WALL	Richard Whyman	Bude & N C/Wall GC	Club: 01288 352006	Email: richwhy@cwcom.net
S WALES	Peter Lacey	Pennard GC	Tel: 01792 233923	Mobile: 07971 914121

NORTHERN IRELAND

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR	Allison Sloan	Ballymena GC	Club: 02825 862757	Email: ajsloan@aol.com
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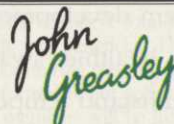
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Applications should have minimum qualifications of NVQ Level 2: PA1 and PA2 would be an advantage. Two year's experience and knowledge of all modern Greenkeeping practices is essential.

The successful candidate will be enthusiastic, conscientious and able to work well with an established successful team. Excellent prospects as well as further training opportunities.

Please apply in writing enclosing your Curriculum Vitae to:

**The Secretary, Hankley Common Golf Club, The Clubhouse,
Tilford, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2DD**



Require a

Course Manager

Linlithgow Golf Club is situated on a north facing slope, overlooking the historic burgh of Linlithgow and we are seeking an ambitious Greenkeeper who can continue the development of every aspect of the 5,800 yard golf course.

The applicant must have at least five years experience as a Greenkeeper and be qualified to S/NVQ level II (HNC or S/NVQ III would be an advantage).

A driving licence, tractor mounted spraying certificate and chainsaw proficiency certificate would be of additional value.

Good communication skills are essential (with IT knowledge preferable), as is the ability to play golf. Honorary membership will form part of the employment package.

The Club has well established conservation management plan, which will form an integral part of any routine course management and knowledge of standard conservation practises would be advantageous.

Start date for employment will be May 7th, with the closing date for applications being March 23rd.

Please send your CV and a report on your course management philosophy to:

**The General Manager, Linlithgow Golf Club,
Braehead, Linlithgow, West Lothian, EH49 6QF.**

Starting salary circa £17,000

HAGGS CASTLE GOLF CLUB

Require a

Qualified Greenkeeper

Applicants should have a minimum of 4-5 years experience and NVQ Level 2 or equivalent.

Applications in writing with CV to:

**The Manager, Hags Castle Golf Club,
70 Dumbrett Road, Glasgow, G41 4SN**

Feature listing from March '99

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, Toro 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; Avenis 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

November 2000: Grass Cutting Machinery; Clondeboyne GC; Drainage; National Championship review; Leatherjacket management

December 2000: Toro Awards; Making the most of your Dealer; Budget Boosters; BTME2001 preview; BIGGA/Bernhards CGSA delegation preview

January 2001: Communication; Tyres; Turf diseases; Kingsbarns Golf Links; Environment Competition Winner - Dyke GC; Talking Heads - Pest Control

February 2001: BTME2001 review; Winter Mowing; Irrigation; Broadstone GC; Hedges; Security



Why does it always rain on

Fridays?



I've only just started column writing but already I'm making it complicated for myself. This is a two parter. The first, I'm writing at home before I head off for the GCSAA Conference and Show and then, when I get to Texas, I'll compile the second part. I didn't think the life of a columnist would be quite so complicated!

Why is it that bad weather always seems to happen on a Friday? I know I'm not the only greenkeeper who feels this is more fact than opinion.

As I write it is Friday morning and we've had just under two inches of rain in two days. That's been followed by a sharp frost and as I sit here, we've got a sunny morning and members are arriving to play but the course is closed. Understandably they can't comprehend why they can't get a game when the weather appears so perfect but the frost coming on top of all that rain means it's just not possible to open the course. Now we've got an interesting decision to make about

whether we're able to play over the weekend.

As I said the weather problems always happen on a Friday - fact.

That said, the entire winter has been a problem. The rain we've had over the last few months has been unbelievable. At Walton Heath we've already painted everything three times.

Having thanked Elliott and Gordon last month I'd like now to take the opportunity to introduce you to my Vice Chairman and the newest member of the Board of Management.

Richard Barker is a man who will be known to many of you already as he is a regular attendee of most BIGGA events at national, regional and section level, while his face is regularly seen in the magazine. Although he looks, and is, a relatively young man still in his 30s he is in fact currently the longest serving member of the Board. I know he will be a big help to me and a huge asset to the Association.

Funnily enough only last year I remember him saying at a Board meeting that he wanted more work to do. Well, I think we'll have fixed that for him over the next couple of years.

Our new Board member is David Walden, from Peterborough, who is very much a greenkeeper's greenkeeper in every sense of the word. I know he has been a tireless worker for the Association at Section and Regional level and, as a former Greenkeeper of the Year, he will bring many skills to his role on the Board. Part 2.

The Texan welcome has been absolutely wonderful and everything possible has been done to make us feel at home... even to the extent that it has rained every day. In one night five inches of rain fell - would you believe.

Dallas is an awesome place in every way - I think that's the phrase you use in these parts and the GCSAA Show, which this year celebrated its 75th anniversary is an incredible occasion.

Our presence at the Show has been very much appreciated by everyone on this side of the Atlantic and our booth has been very busy. It is interesting that the thing which attracts most attention is our Master Greenkeeper Scheme which is very highly thought of by American Superintendents. Almost every conversation we have had at some stage gets round to talking about Master Greenkeeper and it just proves what an excellent programme it is for us.

One of the highlights of the week for me was the keynote speech by General "Stormin'" Norman Schwarzkopf of Gulf War fame who talked about what it took to be a great leader.

Another of the memories I shall take with me from Dallas was the sight of Iain Ritchie and Eddie Adams using the corridor of the hotel to test their new golf clubs.

Well that's it for this month. I'm off to put the finishing touches to the paper I'm giving at the Canadian Conference and Show in Vancouver.

Clive Osgood

Nothing looks better than a course that's completely green.

On a growing number of courses, the choice of colour in golf and turf equipment is John Deere green. Here's why:



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Effective, efficient and environmentally friendly. This root zone injection system injects liquids directly to the root zone.



4000 Series

Our new line of compact utility tractors have hitch lift capacities up to 1,134 kg, high torque engines, excellent breakout force and 540 rpm PTOs.

Turf Gator Utility Vehicle

A unique combination of toughness and quietness makes this Gator perfect for the golf course. Foot pedal start works just like a golf cart.



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Reelmaster 5400-D Similar to its smaller stablemate, the 5400-D's larger 32hp turbocharged engine gives greater pulling power for more severe cutting conditions or steeper inclines. Options include 2 and 4 wheel drive, cab and grass boxes.



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