

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

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



OCTOBER 1991

'Just where is all our water?' was the question posed in 'Greenkeeper International' as greenkeepers faced another year - the fourth - of water shortages. Rainfall for August in England and Wales had been only 32% of the average when taken long-term while the rainfall for the first 19 days of September was 1% of this long term average ... The main sufferers were in the south east and East Anglia - reeling from hosepipe bans and with tougher restrictions set to be imposed. The forecast for most of England read doom-laden for the greenkeepers - continuing dry!

Roger Evans of the STRI wrote on a problem created by concern for the environment - WORMS. He concluded that earthworm control is more difficult now than in the past, due to the increasingly responsible attitude taken by public opinion towards environmental matters. Effective chemicals may well be banned but there is every possibility that we may be able to keep worm populations down to acceptable levels by other means which are not ecologically unacceptable.

A leading American golfer turned golf course architect was reported to have sent one of his experts to report on the building and maintenance of a course in Scotland. His report concluded 'and if you follow my instructions you will have the best greens in England' ...

Tribute to former Turnberry Head Greenkeeper, Jimmy McCubbin

Jimmy McCubbin, who died after a long illness, borne without complaint and cared for by his devoted wife, Agnes, on July 29 aged 85, was a great friend of mine.

We first met when he took over the head post at Turnberry in the run up to their 1977 Open. He was responsible for the huge success of that event and in particular for restoring, in a very short time, links which had been neglected and mis-managed.

We had three years to get what was almost total disaster into condition suitable for the world's most important Championship. This was achieved to the surprise of many pundits, and illustrates how it could be done in very short order by following traditional methods and not taking too much notice of the members!

Although Jimmy had served his greenkeeping apprenticeship at Maybole, when he joined Turnberry Hotel in 1935 he started literally at the bottom in the kitchens before becoming Head Gardener, from which post he moved to take on the management of the course. When he retired in 1982 he had 47 years service with the Hotel.

When the R&A gave me the task of getting back MacKenzie Ross' wonderful links I needed someone with an instinctive feel for traditional greenkeeping and Jimmy came with no baggage! For over two and a half years I walked the course every month with Jimmy and for his part he built up a devoted team, faithfully implementing an agreed policy. The result was a highly successful Open for which

Jimmy rightly took his deserved plaudits, showing what could be done in a very short time to restore any course ravaged by the feed and water school. The 1977 Open was indeed the jewel in Jimmy's crown!

Jimmy was a quiet man of total integrity, who could and did inspire loyalty in his staff and got the best out of them. He trained many youngsters in the sound basics and many of them have gone on to very senior positions.

I am not alone in remembering him with affection and respect but so many of his contemporaries have left the fray. One things of the old Scots toast ...

Here's tae us, Whae's like us?
 Damn few. An' they're all deid!

Jim Arthur

David Stansfield

Agronomist David Stansfield has announced he is now carrying out consultancy work on behalf of a new company, David Stansfield Ltd. Although this is a new venture it will be a continuation of David's 23 years' experience of providing input into established course management, new course construction and course redevelopment projects. Over these years David's clients have included many of the leading established golf clubs throughout Europe. In addition he has been appointed Project Agronomist for new works in locations ranging from Canada to Poland and from Northern Scotland to Southern Portugal. More details can be obtained by telephoning 01535 656849 or on www.dstansfield.co.uk

GCA commission

The UK's Golf Consultants' Association has won a prestigious commission to assess potential golf course sites in Greece. The GCA has been appointed by the Fuji Bank (London) who are currently undertaking a tourism study on behalf of the Greek Government and Hellenic Tourist Organisation. One objective is to develop Rhodes as a golfing destination. "This is great news for the GCA, it effectively means that we will be helping to develop golf course sites in Greece and putting Rhodes on the map in terms of golfing excellence," said Bryan Griffiths, Chairman of the GCA. The GCA boasts a collective experience of 275 years client service in more than 50 countries involving 2,150 assignments.

Sisis' silver staff



Andy Walker, Product Evaluation Manager with Sisis, clocked up 25 years service with the Macclesfield-based company and begins his second 25 years with a gold watch presented to him by Joint Managing Directors Robert and William Hargreaves. Territory Manager, Robert Chesham, also celebrated his Silver anniversary with the company in May making a total of 10 Sisis staff with service of more than 25 years.

Sulphur burner installed at St Andrews

St Andrews Links has installed a sulphur burner to improve the quality of the borehole water which is used to irrigate the courses.

The burner, no bigger than a domestic cooker, heats raw organic sulphur in the form of small yellow pellets and converts it to a gas - sulphurous dioxide - which, mixed with water, becomes sulphurous acid. When this,

entirely safe liquid with an acidity level similar to lemonade is added to the irrigation reservoir it reduces significantly the pH level of the water from around 8 to between 6.5 and 7.

"We are always looking at ways of improving the condition of the golf courses. This is an environmentally friendly and effective solution to a problem which affects all the courses on

the Links," said Links Superintendent, Gordon Moir.

"As there has been high rainfall this summer we have conducted only a small trial but this showed early signs of improvement in targeted areas. I am looking forward to seeing the overall results in the long term."

The company providing the burner is AquaSO2.



Oundle GC clinch trophy

Oundle Golf Club clinched the final Midland Region Golf Management Trophy day at Ryston Golf Club, Downham Market. Pictured at Oundle Golf Club are: Head Greenkeeper, James Dair; Club Secretary, David Foley; Chairman Of Green, Mike Scholefield; Club Captain, Tony Hilton. Also pictured is Nick Martin, of Scotts.



After a recent East of England Section event at Spalding Golf Club the Order of Merit winner for the year 2000, Les Howkins, Head Greenkeeper at Cleethorpes, along with the '99 winner, David Hornsey, of Woodhall Spa, were finally presented with their BIGGA Blazers, kindly donated by Tower Sport. Pictured left to right are: Gary Cooper, Tower Sport, Les Howkins, David Hornsey, Kevin Hodges, Chairman of EOE Section and Graeme MacDonald, Section Secretary.