

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



SEPTEMBER 1991

'The Day A Golf Course Drowned'

was the startling headline ten years ago. On January 5th 1991 Jim Paton's nightmare came true, caused by a monstrous storm dumping its full icy wrath directly over West Kilbride golf course during the afternoon. The destruction took less time than it takes to play a round of golf, the desolation indicating a score of 'two under', two holes gone to a watery grave. A 16 hole Championship course seemed a distinct possibility. Like many a good drama this one had a happy ending, for on April 1st - just 84 back-breaking days after the tempest - a proud Jim Paton and a relieved club committee, presented a rebuilt West Kilbride to the cream of Scotland's youth for the Scottish Boys Matchplay Championship.

'The Great Debate' on putting green construction was taking place within 'Greenkeeper International'. Jim Snow, National Director, USGA Green Section wrote that, "Admittedly, there is little that is foolproof in the world, but USGA greens are by far the safest bet when it comes to green construction. For all of the criticism, no-one has come forward with a scientifically based, time-tested method that's better, or even cheaper. During the past year we've heard from every imaginable corner of the game about how the USGA ought to change its specs to make them easier, faster and cheaper". Rest assured, however, that the USGA is not going to put its name on construction methods designed primarily to make green construction easy, fast and cheap - without including the foolproof.

Confessions of a Greens Chairman

There can be more more fitting author for this latest STRI publication than Malcolm Peake, a man whose passion for golf course conditioning and knowledge of what is required to achieve the best possible results are second to none.

Without mentioning any names, many Chairman of Green-Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper relationships are adversarial but Malcolm takes a more enlightened approach - finding out what needs to be done and then working closely with his Course Manager to make it happen. In Malcolm's case at Temple Golf Club with Course Manager Martin Gunn, the relationship between the two is as good as you would find anywhere and the results they have achieved at Temple bear testimony to the quality of their working relationship.

Confessions of a Greens Chairman includes brief history of Temple Golf Club but not in the usual sense. It describes the course management practices and philosophies including minutes from Greens Committee meetings and charts how the course's came in the 1970s with the introduction of an irrigation system coupled with new harder golf balls.

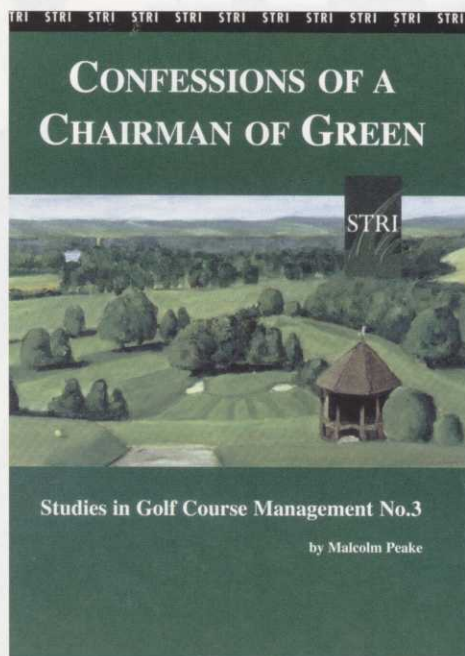
Malcolm then reports on the resurgence of the club from 1990 beginning with the arrival of Jeff Peris of the STRI as agronomist and Martin Gunn as new Head Greenkeeper.

The book looks at the approach

required to reinstate the course - intensive aeration programme, hefty investment in staff, machinery and compound - none of which were popular with much of the membership and all relevant to other golf clubs which need to take the same approach.

The book then takes in the new holistic course management approach and the ecological management which has gone on at Temple together with practical advice on Greens Committees and the need for continuity as well as the politics which often cloud the issues.

Confessions of a Chairman of Green by Malcolm Peake is a must read for anyone taking on such a role but it should also be required reading for everyone involved at committee level at golf clubs. In addition greenkeepers themselves for whom Malcolm has the utmost admiration, should have a read as the book gives an insight into the thinking of Chairmen of Green which could be invaluable. SM.



Published in full colour the book contains 34 illustrations and six cartoons. Copies can be obtained direct from STRI or via the on-line bookshop on the STRI website www.stri.co.uk priced £11.95 plus post and packing.

The Oatridge Eight



The recent Oatridge Agricultural College prize giving ceremony saw eight student greenkeepers being honoured for their achievements. They are Back Row Left to right: Jeffrey Bailey, Steven Ness, Lee Girbon, Paul Dumma, Adam Sherwood. Front row: Steven Gray, James Spiers and James Shanks.

New device comes to the aid of bunker rakes



An idea aimed at encouraging golfers to use the rakes provided for them has been introduced by Newart and Accessory Distributors.

"Rake up" is a clip on support lifting the hand clear of the sand and preventing the handle from lying in often damp or wet sand.

The clip is designed to self adjust and fit a variety of handle thicknesses and can be reused when the rake is eventually discarded.

Lifting the handle clear of the sand also allows the ball a clear run into the centre of the bunker with minimal obstruction.

The Rake Up is priced at £3 each and is packed in 10s and 50s.

For further information Tel: 020 8275 0018.