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# Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Richard Clarke, of Royal Eastbourne Golf Club, won the Assistants' Over 25 Category in the 2001 BIGGA Essay Competition with this fine composition.

## A fine set of figures

As I write, it is now two months on from Harrogate and memories are still fresh in the mind of a truly wonderful week. My particular highlights include a wonderful education programme running throughout the week; the bizarrely funny Brahms and Liszt at the Banquet, and an inspirational talk by Roger Black, whom, I note, has obviously used BTME as a springboard to a presenter's role on BBC TV's Tomorrow's World. Even the very best can enjoy professional advancement, if only they come to Harrogate!

Mulling over the attendance figures it is great to see a vindication for the decision to extend the show to three days, which was taken following extensive consultation with the industry. Four consistently packed halls, featuring all the familiar industry names and faces - both on the stands and in the aisles, as well as new The Golf Club Show, which enjoyed a very successful debut in the King's Suite. More than ever Harrogate is a not-to-be-missed Showcase for everything to do with golf... except, of course, the playing of the game!

Just to put you in the picture, Tuesday saw 2,445 visitors; Wednesday was a record individual day for BTME with a mammoth 4,040 visitors, while Thursday was visited by some 2,144. That produces a sum total of 8,629, 10.1% up on the 7,833 who attended BTME 2001, and reveals a relatively even split for the three days - an absolute bumper sandwiched between two very solid days.

As everyone who exhibits, or visits, a Show will know it is the final day where you expect to find the lowest number, so that the 2,144 Thursday figure is one of which we at BIGGA are particularly proud.

To put it into perspective, here's what I wrote in a press release at my first BTME back in 1996. I must be in line for a gold watch or something by now.

A total of 2,312 visitors went through the doors on Wednesday (day 1) and 2,159 made the same journey yesterday (day 2). Last night, on your behalf a team of BIGGA mathematicians poured over calculators to come up with a figure of 42.9% - the increase on Thursday of last year. The number crunchers can also tell us that the aggregate for the Wednesday and Thursday is 4,471, yes 4,471, a massive 25.2% up on the 1995 two day total.

It means that this year's final day figure of 2,144 was on a par with the record breaking opening two days of the '96 Show.

It's amazing how your brain sometimes plays tricks on you. I could have sworn back in '96 that you would have needed a shoe horn to get

anyone else in but, six years on, our final day figure is similar to those but it is regarded by some as a quiet day. It just shows how far we've come. Heaven help us six years from now and BTME2008. We probably will need a shoe horn then.

Meanwhile, roll on Harrogate '03.

Scott  
MacCallum  
Editor

## Making his mark at Milford Haven

Milford Haven Golf Club has recently appointed their first course manager.

Kevin Rawlins took up this key role in the autumn. Already the 33 year-old, is making his mark on the rolling 18 hole parkland course, set on the edge of the UK's only coastal national park.

As a result of his appointment, the Pembrokeshire club is also embarking on an ambitious five-year programme.

Kevin's climb up the green-keeping career ladder began as an assistant at Camberley Heath Golf Club, followed by a six year stint at Wentworth as Deputy Head Greenkeeper.

He believes in leading by example, and enjoys being hands on

out on the course. He is full of praise for the hard-working team he inherited - First Assistant, David Smart, and greenkeeper Charlie Young. The club are currently recruiting a trainee to complete the ground staff team, which Kevin foresees as going from strength to strength.

"Kevin has proved to be huge asset to the club in the time he's been with us. The results he's already achieved on the course speak for themselves," said Club Captain Andrew Smith,

According to Kevin, there is loads of potential at the club, with the luxury of plenty of space for expansion, two acres of nursery turf, and a large store of topsoil that can be exploited in a



Above: Kevin Rawlins, recently appointed as Course Manager at the west Wales club

strategic programme of course improvements, including rebuilding the bunkers in revetted style - unusual on a parkland course.

## Top man in Sussex

**Steve Phillips, Course Manager at Cowdary Park GC, won the coveted award of Sussex Greenkeeper of the Year for 2001. This award is presented by The Sussex Professional Golfer's Union for Excellence in consistently preparing a Golf Course to the Highest Standards for all Professional events. Steve commented that his head Greenkeeper Jonathan Smith and his Team played a key part in winning the award.**

Right: Steve Phillips, holding the award, Jonathan Smith to his right and his team from left to right, Bernard Penny, Darren Freeman, Leigh Holloway and Anthony Hill.



## Scottish Education Conference a success

The BIGGA Scottish Region Conference was again held at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline in March. An excellent venue with first class facilities and easy access from the motorway.

The speakers were covering a variety of subjects all relevant to the industry today.

Ged Cunliffe, Technical Sale Manager for Biotol, opened the Conference with a paper on Biological Solutions for any fine turf area. This was a most interesting and informative subject.

Next was Philip Langdon, of Wardle Consulting Engineers Ltd, on Irrigation Systems Assessment.

Philip provided an insight into irrigation systems. A topical subject and well presented by Phil. Despite the weather this winter, and the amount of rainfall we have had, his talk was of benefit to everyone who has a watering system or indeed anyone who was considering installing one.

After the break the double act of David Withers, from Textron, and Brian Goudie, of Scottish Grass Machinery, spoke on 'A Salesman's Role'. This was something different from previous years and was presented very well. The talk covered all aspects of the salesman's role, having a

good salesman/customer relationship and the benefits that can be gained from this partnership.

Finally to round of the morning session, was Ruth Mann of the STRI, who presented her paper on Pest and Disease Survey. Ruth explained the reasoning behind the survey and the research being carried out. This topic was of great interest to the members and generated a great deal of discussion.

After lunch, John Caven, Director of Golf at Meldrum House, Aberdeen, spoke about his role in the 'Creation & Marketing of a 5 Star Golf Facility'.

John provided a most valuable insight into marketing and presentation involved in promoting this kind of facility.

A figure well known to everyone involved in greenkeeping, Jimmy Kidd, from Gleneagles Hotel, was next to speak. Jimmy spoke about Gleneagles bid for the Ryder Cup 2009. The requirement for any club to run such an event staggers belief and Jimmy in his usual competent manner provided an enthralling insight into what is required.

The final speaker was Paul Miller, from Elmwood College.

Paul's talk was on 'Integrated

Plant Management'. Paul with his experience in this field gave a very interesting and topical paper on a subject relevant to greenkeeping.

The Scottish Region of BIGGA are once again indebted to the speakers for providing such interesting and informative talks on subjects relating to the fine turf industry.

During the Conference the Chairman had the pleasure of announcing the first ever winner of the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich. This award is presented in memory of one of the stalwarts of greenkeeping. Harry had served the Association in many capacities and was particularly involved in the education of greenkeepers and it was only fitting that this award be presented to the Student of the Year. The winner of the award for 2001 was Mark Cummine, of Buchanan Castle Golf Club.

The Scottish Board would like to thank the Patrons for their continued support and the members who attended this year's Conference. The numbers were once again over the 160 mark and it is thanks to you that the Conference is the success it is.

Peter J. Boyd,  
Scottish Regional Administrator

## BIGGA forges closer links with international associations

Right: At the GCSAA Banquet during the Orlando Show a memorable speech by Walter Woods was followed by presentations, including this portrait, to the Old Tom Morris Award winner by outgoing GCSAA President, Tommy Witt

Below: Association chiefs get together in Quebec City. Pictured are Steve Mona, GCSAA; Ken Cousineau, CGSA; Neil Thomas, BIGGA with Marie Thorn, Senior Turf Specialist with Syngenta.

Below right: Pictured at the recent CGSA Conference and Show in Quebec City are Vince Gillis, recently retired Executive Director of the CGSA with CGSA Past President, Doug Meyer.



## Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award winner

Lee Relf, 21, from Colchester, a final year HND Sports Turf and Golf Course Management student at Writtle College, is the 2001 winner of the Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award Scheme.

To win the award, Lee submitted two 5,000 word dissertations, which he then followed up with 20 minute presentations to a panel of judges.

The GEGAS initiative is supported by FEGGA and sponsored by Textron, and is a 12 month educational and practical training programme for young greenkeepers from around the globe, based at The Gleneagles Hotel.

It is open to students who are looking beyond a basic greenkeeping career and wish to develop their skills

to become golf Course Managers of the future. The scheme can accommodate a maximum of eight students, who are selected from colleges and educational facilities in the UK and now, with FEGGA as a partner, from across Europe. Textron's sponsorship includes an expenses paid visit for the winning student to visit the GCSAA Show in the USA.

The scheme was established in 1994 and has grown year on year providing students with all the necessary greenkeeping skills, together with a unique opportunity for personal development during their year-long work placement.

"Lee is the first winner of the award since FEGGA added their support for the scheme. His dissertations and

subsequent presentations were of the highest order and worthy of the accolade," said Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estate Director at The Gleneagles Hotel.

"During his 12 month placement he, and the other students, have had the opportunity to experience the alternative styles of maintenance required for soil and sand based greens. They have been able to work on the championship courses at Gleneagles and develop their greenkeeping talents. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together students from all over Europe to train and gain experience and we are extremely grateful for the sponsorship from Textron that makes it happen."

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FOR GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS

## Ernie Hart

It is with great regret that I report the death of Ernie Hart.

Ernie was born in 1923 and apart from the War years spent most of his working life connected with our industry.

He was the East Anglia Section President and one of the biggest supporters of BIGGA I have ever had the honour to have known. After his retirement some 14 years ago Ernie would spend some of his time visiting golf clubs around East Anglia encouraging greenkeepers to join the Association. Last year Ernie was put forward for and granted Life Membership of the Association for all the work he had done for the East Anglia Section.

Ernie was a friend to everyone and always there to help, he will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.

Ian Willett  
East Anglia Section Secretary

If you've got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turfcare industry, drop us an email, and we'll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers. We'll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to:

[updates@bigga.co.uk](mailto:updates@bigga.co.uk)

quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest - it's that easy!

## The Grand Tour Scholarship 2002

The Grand Tour Scholarship invites golf course design and turfgrass management students for the third time to apply for a journey to leading golf courses throughout the United States. The scholarship is once again sponsored by the TORO Company and offers a unique learning experience to future leaders in our industry. The trips are going to take place in August and are organised by the founder of The Grand Tour Scholarship, Bettina Schrickel, golf course architect (EIGCA) and president of Lioness Golf LLC.

The scholarship offers four students the opportunity to visit a variety of famous historic and modern golf courses on the east coast and west coast of the United States, respectively. The Western Route leads to 22 golf courses in three weeks; the Eastern Route includes 25 courses and takes four weeks. Courses to be visited include Augusta National, The National Golf Links of America, TPC at Sawgrass, The Country Club in Brookline, Cypress Point Golf Club, Pebble Beach Golf Links, Riviera Country Club and Pinehurst. Experience has proven the benefit of two students travelling together to share knowledge and impressions and split the task or driving across the country. Students will have the opportunity to walk each golf course, study the layout and talk to the Superintendent.

Golf course design and turfgrass management students from all over the world are invited to apply for the scholarship. Last year's successful candidates came from England, Germany and the United States. Applicants shall be at least 21 years old and have demonstrated significant efforts and results in their educational career.

The scholarship covers costs for flight tickets, rental cars, fuel and hotel accommodation for the duration of the journeys. Students will be provided with the Scholarship Route Book that includes detailed directions, useful tips and safety advice. Applicants must be in possession of a valid passport and drivers license.

Deadline for application is May 15, 2002. The Grand Tour Scholarship Committee, will select successful candidates according to the contents and quality of application documents.

For application forms and further information, please contact Bettina Schrickel by e-mail: [lionessgolf@aol.com](mailto:lionessgolf@aol.com) or telephone: (+1) 954-647-3436.

## Toro for St Andrews Bay

Toro has supplied a complete range of turf equipment to maintain the two new cliff top championship golf courses at the £50 million St Andrews Bay Golf Resort & Spa.

The spectacular complex, which includes a 209 bedroom luxury hotel, enjoys breathtaking views over the Firth of Tay, and is the only golf club in the world with views of two Open Championship venues - Carnoustie and St Andrews!

Set among 503 acres, 55 of which are designated as SSSI, the gently undulating courses - The Torrance, which opened in September, and The Devlin, opening next summer - have been kept as natural as possible with the replanting of native flowers and gorse. Toro has been awarded an exclusive five-year lease agreement at St Andrews Bay.

"I was asked what I wanted on the



course and said 'Toro,'" said Course Superintendent, Neil Ballingall, who was Course Manager at Moray Golf Club before joining St Andrews Bay.

The picture shows, front, Neil Ballingall, third from left, with from the left Scott McNeil, of dealers Henderson Grass Machinery, Lely's George Macdonald and Henderson's Graeme Millar, with the St Andrews Bay greenkeepers.

## Long standing relationship

In 1932 the founder of Sisis, William Hargreaves, visited the Board of Greenkeeping Research (now STRI) at Bingley to show his netball posts and tennis net supports. In conversation with the first Director, Mr R.B. Dawson, he was advised to consider designing machinery to maintain the growing number of sports grounds and golf courses.

Over the years SISIS has maintained its friendship with the STRI and 70 years on William Hargreaves Joint Managing Director of Sisis and grandson of the founder and current Director of the STRI, Dr Gordon McKillop, met up to look at a Sisis Aerator circa. 1936 in the History of Turfcare exhibition held during BTME.



Then and now: Sisis and the STRI



## Training numbers are on the increase

THE number of golf greenkeepers undergoing training has leapt 20% in the past 12 months, according to new figures from the GTC. There are 2,817 greenkeepers in formal training in the current year, an increase of 445 on the previous year.

The news has been welcomed by the GTC and bodes well for the quality of golf courses in years to come. The increase is attributable to more and more employers opting for work based training solutions.

N/SVQ Levels 2 and 3 continue to be the qualifications most in

demand, but Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma numbers have also shown healthy growth.

The online Internet learning option is also proving popular, especially at Level 4. One establishment where online learning is taking off is Boston GC in Lincolnshire, where greenkeeper John Osborne has just completed NVQ Level 2 Sports turf.

"Although this type of learning does not suit everyone, in John's case it has really paid off," said Secretary Stephen Shaw.

"For the club the benefits are obvious as the greenkeeper spends less time away from his club, but we decide on training on a case-by-case basis.

"The most important consideration is what the individual greenkeeper wants. They have to be comfortable with the kind of training they receive."

The GTC's Education Director David Golding concurred.

"While the growth in training numbers is very encouraging, we at the GTC encourage all employers to invest in staff training as it is the only sure way of ensuring better golf courses."

## Textron trip a success

One hundred and thirty greenkeepers representing Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Wales augmented by a small party from the Middle East and South Africa attended the GCSAA Show in Orlando recently, courtesy of Textron Golf & Turf and their dealership network.

Numerous airlines were kept busy as greenkeepers flew in from all parts of the globe and assembled at the Crowne Plaza Resort Hotel on International Drive for the four day visit. Day two saw the party taken by coach to the nearby Orange County Convention Centre, where they were guests on the Jacobsen stand.

The following day the guests were taken to Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill Club and Lodge. An early lunch was followed by a series of focus groups with members of Textron's UK and USA product management and engineering teams. The group was split into five teams and moved between the five sessions where they were able



to discuss the future development of equipment across Textron's entire product range.

"We have been delighted with the response to the focus groups from our greenkeeping colleagues. There has been free and frank exchange of views with a whole range of issues debated, from product enhancement to the future of greenkeeping on both sides of the Atlantic. It has provided an excellent opportunity to spend really valuable time with end-users and I think everyone was able to appreciate

the all-round benefits of the visit," said Glynn Patrick, Textron's International Sales Director.

Andrew Hall, Head Greenkeeper at St George's Hill Golf Club, in Surrey, added, "The whole four day trip was terrific, especially the focus group sessions at Bay Hill. We came away feeling that the Americans were listening to the Europeans, which was very encouraging. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all the other guys in the group: the atmosphere was terrific, the company and hospitality equally so."

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## Introducing a course policy

I very much enjoyed a short visit to Harrogate and meeting so many old friends after a number of years. Discussions, debates on generalities and technical subjects over a beer, a coffee or in the dining room left me with the profound impression of a major change in the profession of greenkeeping since I had last been involved.

Now there is so much confidence and total command of the subject and the ability to communicate precisely and convincingly. Much of this has to be due to the educational programme so well run by BIGGA and others. But it also owes something to the support of clubs as well, of course, to those who have taken up the challenges which faced them.

We all know that every course and club is different. But I was surprised to hear of so many common problems. And yet one of the tools to overcome many of these problems has not been taken up as strongly as I had thought. Even in the March issue of Greenkeeper International Chris Haspell from Denmark and Barney Wright both refer to it. I am talking about the Course Policy - Chris calls it a Plan - and although we got it going some ten years ago it has not been executed as widely as I had believed. The advantages of such an approach supported by Committees and agreed by members, are substantial.

- It clearly defines roles and responsibilities of Committees, Secretaries, and Course Managers
- It simplifies communication with members and avoids misunderstandings
- Ensures continuity and avoids piecemeal decisions
- Improves morale and efficiency of greenstaff
- Establishes a code of conduct of all on the course which enhances safety

If you are still not convinced read Chapter 6 of Malcolm Peake's "Confessions of a Chairman of Green".

Duncan McGilvary has made some excellent points which will surely be followed up. If the implementation of a Course Policy needs a little help Ed McCabe or myself are available if contacted at our club, Brokenhurst Manor GC.

Arthur King, Lyminsteron

Email your news, views and letters to:  
**scott@bigga.co.uk**

## A right to reply from Denmark

Having just read the February issue of Greenkeeper International I feel I need to reply to three of the letters written in the magazine.

I would first of all like to thank Alex McCombie for his kind words regarding the article that I wrote in the January issue of Greenkeeper International and also the positive reaction I received from colleagues at Harrogate. It appears that it has made people realise that the future is not about green is beautiful but the grasses that we are trying to grow and our goal must be to achieve greens that can survive with limited fertiliser, water and no chemical control. This will become the reality in the UK in the near future and if you have 100% Poa greens you should start worrying now and make that change.

Alex is right in that Education is the key if golf members are to understand what needs to be done to ensure quality greens in the future when you have no chemical control.

Imagine the scenario. You have poa greens, no fungicide and it is October. It has been raining for two weeks and is 14 degrees. You have a serious outbreak of fusarium. What can you do? The answer is nothing except watch as 50% of your green is taken out by the disease. Now who will be blamed for the poor state of the greens? You of course and your job is on the line as your greenkeeping abilities are questioned.

The above scenario is the reality now here in Denmark except through educating and communicating with

our members they accept that the greens will have problems until we eliminate the poa. Are your members ready to accept the same?

I should also like to thank Richard Penley-Martin, Secretary, Stoneham Golf Club, for his comments and making me aware that the Secretary is responsible for running the whole company and not just one part of it. This is not the case at many clubs today.

I am however happy to say that outside of the UK European clubs are run differently and that Course Managers are allowed to solely manage the golf course which is the reason they are employed in the first place and at our club the Club Secretary has absolutely nothing to do with the running of the golf course and I answer directly to the Board of Management.

I would like to make Richard Penley-Martin aware that after years of ex RAF employees taking on the Secretary's role at golf clubs it would appear that at forward thinking clubs experienced Course Managers who have also gained management skills through education courses put on by BIGGA are now taking over the running of golf clubs as General Managers which can only be good for the future of any golf club having an expert in golf course management communicating to members on a daily basis.

Finally, I have to thank the Happy Head Greenkeeper, Leslie Howkins of Cleethorpes Golf Club, for his let-

ter. I am sorry to hear that the attitude of people like myself and Duncan McGilvary bring on problems ourselves because we stand up for what we believe in and what is in the best interest of our profession. I am afraid that I must be working in a different profession to Leslie. If you go back to Duncan's original letter he talks about, "Don't rock the boat" and "Take the salary and do as you are told" and here is a greenkeeper who readily accepts these statements and says he is happy.

Remember that we are custodians of our golf courses for only a short space of time and it is our duty to manage and leave that golf course in the best possible condition for the next generation of golfers and also the next Head Greenkeeper. But who would like to take over after Leslie?

"If they want slow, bumpy greens that they can stop the ball on with a driver and don't aerate them as it makes them miss so many putts who are we to argue."

Leslie goes on to tell us that this is where all his skill, knowledge and experience is used and then tells us that he accepts that the course is not aesthetically pleasing or that he is not producing a good golf course and we are accused of bringing problems on ourselves!

Here is the perfect example of one man being led and not leading.

Ian C Tomlinson, Course Manager,  
 Rungsted Golf Club, Denmark

## Ian gives thanks for Stateside trip

I would like to thank Bernhard & Company and BIGGA for allowing me to be part of the team of delegates that visited Orlando this February. The trip was a great success, it was an experience not to be missed and very educational, it was fascinating to compare golf course in America with those in Britain. I had the pleasure of speaking to many Golf

Superintendents from all over the US and it was nice to hear that they hold such high regard for the courses in Great Britain. I have already spoken to a lot of greenkeepers throughout my section telling them of the visit and how beneficial it was.

I have planned some talks at our golf meetings this year and I will be talking to various Course Managers

when I go to assess their lads involved in their NVQ's.

Please also pass on my thanks to all the team for the co-operation that went on behind the scenes between Bernhards and BIGGA.

Well done everyone.

Ian Willett, Course Manager,  
 Thorpeness GC

## Playing with others' lives

I read with interest the letter by Barney Wright in the March issue re. "Respect". Greenkeepers have always had to put up with members knowing better than them, but I have found over the last decade or so that it has become worse.

Our profession must be one of the few which is criticised by everybody. You can go into any clubhouse and there will be a set of members who

know just how the course should be run. These members hold court and people tend to listen to them.

Greenstaff take more flack than other golf club staff. You cannot educate these people. If you put on an open night and ask the club agronomist to talk they stay away, but the next day they are back holding court. These people are playing with others' lives.

The job is hard enough without

sniping from your own lines. More and more good greenkeepers are leaving the trade every year taking with them years of knowledge but as has been said in the bar many times, "anyone can cut grass".

There are more good members than bad ones, it's just the good ones say nothing.

K. Heslop, Head Greenkeeper,  
 Brancepeth GC, Durham



## Legislation is the key

Re Richard Penley-Martin's letter in February's issue. Just a few observations. You are a manager and you understand that your Head Greenkeeper is as well. Good, that's the way it should be. I have been in greenkeeping for nearly 30 years, 23 at my present club Denbigh. In the past, and this is tongue in cheek, a Secretary had to have the right accent, drink the right whisky and carry out the wishes of the committee unconditionally. That is not now the case. In the time I have been in my present job I have seen a dozen Secretary/Managers come

and go they have all been good men and I have had a good working relationship with all of them. They have all made it their business to understand the greenkeeping side of things. They have left because they weren't allowed to manage. Secretary/Managers and Head Greenkeepers do have good relationships because our associations keep us informed of all legislation etc.

Gone are the days when old Tom can climb a ladder to clean the gutters of the clubhouse and golf clubs now need truly professional people to run their affairs

both on the course and in clubhouse who should be paid accordingly.

Which brings me back to my original letter. It will be legislation that forces the way the average members' club is run, this is why I feel there aren't as many volunteers as before, they are starting to realise where there's blame there's a claim and who in their right mind wants to take up a position with out pay that could end up with them on the wrong side of a court case.

P.S My dad was in the RAF.

Dave Goodridge, Denbigh Golf Club

## Sharing the knowledge

I have been reading the letter from Mr T. A. Smith in this month's magazine 'In defence of NVQs' and I feel it deserves some sort of response.

I could not believe the comments Mr Smith made about keeping information from the club members on how we maintain the golf course and mocking record keeping and report writing, indicating for those greenkeepers to get out on the course and do some work, then finishing the statement with the comment 'if they don't ask then don't tell them'.

Is this the year 2002 or is it 1802? These comments and attitudes are out dated, untrue and have to change or greenkeeping as a professional industry will never be taken seriously. Science and industries can only progress with the sharing and understanding of knowledge. I feel it is our duty to share the knowledge we have with not just people in our industry but also the people who keep our industry alive - the paying customer.

The comment stating that a little information in the wrong hands can be dangerous is perfectly true. However, it is our responsibility to educate the uneducated in such a way that they understand what the hell it is we are talking about. At the golf course I work on we have an information board (The greenkeeping board) in the clubhouse right outside the pro-shop. It was put in this location to encourage everyone who comes into the building to read it. On this board we have such information as a weather forecast for the week ahead (taken from the met office website), rainfall records from the past two years in bar chart form for easy comparison, the Course Manager's report for the month ahead stating what work is likely to be carried out on the golf course. There is a photograph of every greenkeeper who works on the course with their title underneath so everyone actually knows who we are. There is a section headed 'Green keeping methods and techniques in which every month I write a short report on an aspect of greenkeeping, such as Hollow Coring,

explaining in layman's terms the reasons for the operation. In the past there has been headings such as 'The top 10 questions asked to green staff by golfers' and 'Aeration - what it is and why we do it' to name but a few. This sharing of information has been nothing but a great success with golfers and visiting guests alike show their appreciation for the work we do.

It is not dangerous to share knowledge if it is shared correctly. I agree with Mr Smith with his comments that people do not want to know the exact science behind an operation; this is why you must explain in a language the non professional can understand and appreciate. This sharing of knowledge has given the members and guests to the golf course an insight into the skilled profession of greenkeeping and the comments such as 'why do you always have to do that now' are vanishing. The feedback we have received at committee meetings has been remarkable and very positive. The age old impressions of the greenkeeper as the man who just cuts the grass is disappearing and we are being looked upon as qualified professional people which surely can only benefit this profession.

Knowledge and education is the key for any type of progression in this industry and it is extremely important that we all understand that the NVQs are not the only way forward. It is clear by reading the magazine month after month that the NVQs are the flavour of the month where further education is concerned. It was quite disheartening to read the comments on the very next page stating that the Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates can breed people who know how to do the job on paper but might not be able to do it in reality.

This may be true to some extent, but I have worked with people with NVQs who also can't do the job very well. This may be down to poor training and just getting bums on seats at colleges, 'get them in, get their money, and pass them. I have worked with people in the past who's NVQ level 2 training

on weed identification consisted of a quick walk around the golf course with the lecturer pointing at the weeds and telling 25 students what it was - and that was it... or the level 4 which consists of one visit a year from your tutor to see how you're getting on, where's the training? This letter is not about putting down the NVQs or any other type of training but I would like to state that they are not the be all and end all of further education and that for an organisation such as BIGGA to point out that the HNC student may not be able to do the job is an unfair statement. This is also unfair to the student who has undoubtedly studied hard for the course.

I have completed NVQ training and I have also completed the HNC and found both of them to be extremely worth while courses. At this moment in time I am one year into my MSc in Sports Surface Technology at Cranfield University. I decided to go for the MSc rather than the other courses on offer because of the high level of teaching and the fact that it is recognised world wide as a top qualification.

The fact that this high standard of qualification even exists in our industry is a huge step in the right direction for our industry.

This profession is moving forward, lets all start singing from the same hymn sheet and recognise that all the different qualifications on offer to the greenkeeper have their benefits and this industry does not revolve around just one. There is a qualification out there to suite each individuals' career aspirations be it NVQ, HND, HNC or MSc, all of which have their own merits and all will undoubtedly increase one's knowledge and understanding of the job to what ever level you feel you can handle. Gaining knowledge and sharing knowledge surely can only be a positive way forward for us.

If we do what we've always done we will get what we always get - lack of respect. Let's move on.

Ian Chenery, Assistant Course Manager, Woodbury Park Hotel G&CC

## Huge thanks to well wishers

At 9am on the 22nd January this year I had two appointments, one with a surgeon's scalpel, and the other with the opening of the BTME. It seemed ironic that both should be exactly the same day and the same time as each other. I had always said that I would never miss a BTME, but on this occasion I had little choice. However, as days went by I became very much aware of another aspect of BIGGA membership, that of camaraderie, and the bond that runs through greenkeeping and our Association. I received so many cards, letters and phone calls from members and staff wishing me well, that I lost count, but I can assure you that every one was very much appreciated, as was the rum from Devon and Cornwall Section, and the box of fruit from the South West & South Wales Region. I wonder how they knew what to send.

I would like to thank every one of you for the kindness shown, you will never know how much it meant to me and Marion to know how many of you took the time and trouble to send your best wishes. I am getting fitter by the day and will soon be back among you all. Thanks again.

Gordon Child, Churston, South Devon

## Textron thanks

On behalf of myself and all the others who attended the GCSAA Show in Orlando Florida this year, I would like to extend a big thank you to Textron. The show was very enlightening especially for those of us who have never had this opportunity in the past. The hospitality, accommodation and indeed everything else during our stay was second to none. The group focus meetings were interesting and helpful to both Textron and their customers and I am sure will go a long way to ensuring more improvements and innovations in the future.

Ross Wilson, Course Manager, Parasampia Golf & Country Club

# YOU'VE GOT M@IL!

If you've got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turfcare industry, drop us an email, and we'll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers. We'll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to: [updates@bigga.co.uk](mailto:updates@bigga.co.uk) quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!



## BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson makes a plea for more feedback, advises on Regional Training and continues his Key Skills Corner

# Education and Training Feedback

There have been a number of comments posted on the BIGGA website referring to the National Education Conference, Workshops and Seminars held at Harrogate in January, some positive and others negative. Sami and I try to meet the education and training needs of all greenkeepers by arranging a variety of education and training opportunities at Harrogate and around the Regions. We regularly ask greenkeepers what subjects and presenters they would like to see for example, we issued 300 feedback sheets at Harrogate in January, but we get very little feedback. We interpret this to mean that the vast majority of BIGGA members are happy to let us do the work of selecting speakers and topics and are happy with the results. One suggestion that we do get is "more greenkeeper presenters". Who are they? Are they willing to speak? Are they worth listening to?

Let us know your ideas by writing, phoning, sending an e-mail to [ken@bigga.co.uk](mailto:ken@bigga.co.uk), using the bulletin

board, speaking to us direct, speaking to your Regional Administrator or Section Secretary.

### Regional Training

The Spring series of BIGGA Regional Training Courses is drawing to a close with greenkeepers attending courses as diverse as Basic Computing, Soil Science, Essential Management Skills, Budgets and Finance, Presentation Skills, Chainsaw Use and Health and Safety. We can afford to present such a wide range of courses at very heavily subsidised prices thanks to our Education and Development Fund. You could cover the cost of several years membership by attending just one course. For example each one day course costs BIGGA approximately £1500. Each delegate pays £30 and we average six delegates per course. Therefore the total subsidy is £1320 and dividing this by six gives a subsidy per delegate of £220. Who says it is not worth becoming a BIGGA member?

### The Connexions Card

The Government is keen to encourage 16-19 year olds, in England, to stay in learning and acquire the skills they need to flourish in adult life and has introduced a scheme called the Connexions Card. The card is available free of charge to over 2 million young people and it works by awarding points for regular attendance at school, college, at work based learning and for voluntary work. From 2002 onwards, active cardholders will be able to exchange their points for branded goods or services, interesting opportunities and exciting experiences. There is also a loyalty scheme whereby cardholders can receive discounts and special offers from a range of retailers including computer games, fast food, clothes, leisure activities, travel and CDs.

To get more information, telephone 0808172 3333 or look at the Connexions Card website: [www.connexionscard.com](http://www.connexionscard.com)



## 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 Neil Thomas, Executive Director on 01347 833800 or via [admin@bigga.co.uk](mailto:admin@bigga.co.uk)

### Golden Key Supporters



### Golden Key Company Members

Company	Tel: Head Office
Bernhard and Company Ltd	01788 811600
Gem Professional	01254 356611
John Deere Ltd	01949 860491
Hayter Ltd	01279 723444
Massey Ferguson (AGCO Ltd)	02476 851292
PGA European Tour	01344 842881
Rigby Taylor Ltd	01204 377777
Scotts UK Professional	01473 830492
Stoke Park Club	01753 717171
Textron Turf Care	01473 270000
The Toro Company/Lely UK	01202 319987
TurfTrax Group Ltd	01722 434000

### Golden Key Individual Members

Mike Eastwood; J H Fry; J H Greasley; WJ Rogers; David S Robinson; Stuart Townsend; Douglas Smith; Andrew Cornes; Andy Campbell MG, CGCS;

### Silver Key Supporters



### Silver Key Company Members

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General Legal Protection Ltd	01904 611600
Health Lambert Group	0113 246 1313
Ocmis Irrigation	01460 241939
RainBird	01273 891326
Syngenta Professional Products	0041 613 233 028

### Silver Key Individual Members

Clive A Archer; John Crawford; Bruce Cruickshank; Douglas G Duguid; Alan Holmes; Kenneth Jones; Iain A MacLeod; Robert Maibusch MG; Richard S Mullen; Elliott R Small; Steven Tierney; CJ Yeaman

## YOU'VE GOT MAIL!

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

Send an email to either:  
[education@bigga.co.uk](mailto:education@bigga.co.uk) [ken@bigga.co.uk](mailto:ken@bigga.co.uk) [sami@bigga.co.uk](mailto:sami@bigga.co.uk)

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The powerful organiser keeping your golf course green!

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Golf Course Managers into sharp focus. Not only are they expected to keep the course in excellent condition they

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OnCourse is a continually expanding company specialising in information technology for the game of Golf. Bringing satisfaction and enjoyment to golfers around the world is our highest priority. In doing so, we offer a complete solution of services aimed towards golf associations, golf districts, golf clubs and even the individual golfer. We want to share our expertise, knowledge, creativity and our effective management in leading the world of golf in the 21st century.



## EDUCATION KEY SKILLS CORNER

Regular readers will have seen the first Key Skills Corner in last month's Greenkeeper International, where I left you with a poser about Full Stops. Check to see if you found all the errors:

**Welcome to BIGGA HOUSE. Today is Tuesday, the 3rd of March. The next Public Holiday, in England, will be Easter.**

This month's subject is full stops and alternative ways to end a sentence.

**For example, closing a sentence.**

The Staff of BIGGA Headquarters support the Jeans for Genes Charity.

**With abbreviations.**

Note that full stops could be placed in the acronym BIGGA (B.I.G.G.A.) but modern writing tends not to use them.

Abbreviations such as Mr, Mon, Apr could have full stops but modern writing tends not to use them.

**As a decimal point.**

The Golf Club Budget showed a deficit of £67.50.

**To show missing text.**

Item 4.11 on the Agenda should be amended to read "... referred to the Green Committee".

The only other punctuation marks that can be used to close a sentence are exclamation marks and question marks.

**Question marks should be used only for a direct question.**

What time does the shop open?

Exclamation marks do not, usually, have a place in business writing however, they can be used to highlight text for humour or great emphasis.

Here is an example for you to try, which incorporates errors with capital letters and with full stops and question marks.

**thank you for attending the recent annual general meeting of the south north east section i have enclosed a copy of the minutes for your information please contact sid jones if you wish to attend the next golf day do you wish to attend btme this year**

Good luck. Watch out for the answer in the May Edition of Greenkeeper International.

Neil Gibbons looks at the COSHH Assessments and how best to go about carrying them out

# COSHH ASSESSMENTS



## Introduction

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH for short) have been in existence for a long time but there is still, it seems to be, a serious lack of appreciation of what a so called COSHH assessment really means. This article is intended to give you the information to be able to carry out assessments correctly.

Not long ago I went into a company and, when I asked to see their COSHH Assessments, was proudly given a large file. However, when I examined it, it simply contained all the Safety Data Sheets. These are not assessments.

## Making an Inventory

So how do you start to comply with COSHH? Well, you cannot do anything until you know what substances you have.

Therefore, an inventory of all the substances within the organisation is key. It is best to consider individual areas to ensure you are thorough i.e. Greenkeepers, Clubhouse (including bar), Pro-shop. You may be surprised to find how long the list is, but do try to make sure it is complete.

All substances in use by your organisation should have been supplied with a Material Safety Data Sheet. If you do not have one for each of the substances you use, contact your supplier (found by looking at the packaging), who is obliged to supply one.

## Doing the Assessment

As I have said above merely having a list of substances you use and a file containing all the Material Safety Data Sheets does not constitute an assessment. The stages involved in an assessment are:

- Establish if the substances you use are hazardous and what is the type of hazard. The CHIP (Chemical Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations define classifications for hazardous substances. The main classifications are harmful, irritant, corrosive, toxic, flammable, oxidising. The container for the substance will be labelled accordingly.

- Establish the approximate usage of the substance (e.g. kg or litres per week) along with the frequency (how often) and duration of use (minutes or hours?).

- Record how contact with the substance occurs and brief details on how and where it is used. For example with small quantities of paint it could be 'used externally for general painting' or when mixing chemicals for spraying 'mixed with water and then poured into spray unit tank. Process carried out on concrete area outside (or in well ventilated area).

- Record what control measures are used to avoid exposure to the substance. This could be an extraction system, the use of a pump to avoid contact, or most commonly the use of Personal Protective Equipment (e.g. safety spectacles or goggles, gloves, overalls, chemical suit, wellingtons).

It is only after recording all this information that an assessment can then be made, and I hope it is evident that you cannot make one without it, because the conclusion has to be the answer to the following question;

Is the exposure to this substance which is hazardous to health suitably controlled to avoid it being harmful to the employee (or anyone else likely to be exposed to it)?

If your assessment concludes that exposure is not likely to be harmful then that is as far as you need go. A record of this assessment needs to be kept along with a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet.

## Further Control Measures

If the assessment concludes that exposure is still potentially harmful you must consider additional control measures.

The COSHH Regulations, as with other risk assessment processes, lays down a hierarchy of control measures you must consider:

- Do you really need to use it or can it be replaced by something less hazardous?

- Can you reduce the usage of it by changing the process?

- Can exposure be reduced by introducing some form of mechanical exposure control or handling device (e.g. a pump)?

- Can ventilation be improved?

- Can you reduce the exposure by changing the process or how the substance is used (operating procedure)?

- Is additional or better Personal Protective Equipment required?

## Monitoring

In my opinion one of the biggest problems in reaching a conclusion as to whether exposure is adequately controlled is that it is impossible to know the levels of the substance in the atmosphere without measuring it. Where exposure duration is short and infrequent it is unlikely exposure levels will be exceeded. However there is obviously a need to consider if monitoring is required. This needs to be carried out by a suitably qualified person and can involve monitoring of the workplace or personal monitoring.

It should also be noted that in certain cases involving the use of particularly hazardous substances (for example carcinogens) health surveillance of employees will be required

## Conclusion

I hope I have demonstrated that there is far more to a COSHH Assessment than simply obtaining the Material Safety Data Sheet. However the main point is that you are conducting an assessment i.e. that you must reach a conclusion as to whether the control measures you have in place are suitable to control the risk of exposure.

For more information on COSHH or assistance with COSHH Assessments or indeed any Health and Safety problem please contact:

Safety Measures Ltd, Innovation House, Daleside Road, Nottingham, NG2 4 DH  
Tel: 0115 911 0595 Fax: 0115 911 0590  
e-mail: [safetymeaa@aol.com](mailto:safetymeaa@aol.com)



**This month, Tracey Maddison from BIGGA's Membership Services Department, would like to welcome over 100 new members to the Association, and bids you all a fond farewell as she is venturing to pastures new.**

# Bidding a fond farewell ...

This has to be the hardest Membership Update column I've ever had to write, because I know that as you are reading this issue I will be but a distant memory in the BIGGA staff room! After a very enjoyable four years with BIGGA, fate has stepped in and indicated it is time to move on to something new. I have been appointed the Membership and Training Manager for the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, conveniently located in my home town of York, a short distance from my home. I commence employment with them on Monday 8th April.

I have many thank you's to say, so I hope that you will bear with me while I use this opportunity to say them. First, I would like to thank all the staff at BIGGA HQ, they are a great bunch of people to work with, I have made many friends I know I can count on after I leave. Not only are they great friends, but from a professional point of view I have learnt much from each of them, their skills, abilities, knowledge and enthusiasm for each of their

areas of expertise is to be admired. Your Association is in good hands.

I would also like to pass on my thanks to each of the Regional Administrators, Peter B, Doug, Peter L, Derek and Paula who work endlessly to administer each of the five regions. I have had the pleasure of accompanying each of them on regional and section seminars and conferences and experiencing their kind hospitality! Also, to each of the Section Secretaries, who, in their spare time administer each of their sections, which is important in the processing of membership recruitment and retention.

There have been many people throughout my four years at BIGGA who have given me valuable support and advice, they are all too numerous to mention by name but I would like to thank each of you. Finally, a big thank you to you, the members, because without you I wouldn't have had the opportunity, the fun and the valuable experience of working for BIGGA!

# ... and a warm welcome

Tracey's successor as Membership Services Officer is 25 year-old Rachael Palmer, who brings to the role extensive membership experience acquired at a prestigious club in another sporting arena altogether.

Brought up on the Isle of Wight, Rachael spent four years as Office Manager/Administrator for the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, at Cowes.

"I was involved in all aspects of administering the club for the 850 members," said Rachael, whose involvement during the famous Cowes Week will no doubt be good training for Harrogate!

"Because I have worked for a mem-



Rachael Palmer

bers' club hopefully I understand the issues that can arise from working with committees and I like to think that that experience will help me when it comes to dealing with BIGGA members who might be encountering similar situations," she explained.

There were three main reasons that persuaded Rachael and her husband, Stuart, to leave the Isle of Wight and move to Yorkshire - football, hills and beer!

They have a quite unfathomable love for Leeds United and moving to

## Don't Drift Away ...

If your membership expired on 31 December 2001, 31 January 2002 or 28 February 2002 and you haven't yet renewed, don't drift away from your Association, renew your membership this month. Providing you are working as a greenkeeper, we will still have your details on our database and can renew your membership with a new expiry date, you can even pay by direct debit if you wish. Don't leave it any longer, if you need a renewal form or further information contact the Membership Services Team, on 01347 833800.

## April's 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 Clock/calculator/calendar and alarm.

Our congratulations go to April's winner, Michael Ward, of Bawburgh Golf Club.

York enabled them to become season ticket holders and expand on the 10, mainly away games a season, they had managed previously - among them last season the Champions League semi final at Valencia.

They are also keen cyclists and can often be seen aboard their 1950s tandem which they restored themselves.

Finally they are both agreed that northern brews are far superior to their southern counterparts and a move north would make them much more accessible.

"We both love it in Yorkshire and are delighted that we made the move. I am looking forward to my work with BIGGA and meeting as many members as I can," she said.

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



## APRIL 1992

This month we take a look at 'Around the Green' ten years ago

### Prophetic?

The Devon and Cornwall Section notes reported that golf and an excellent lunch had been followed by Kerran Daly presenting a paper on 'Computers and Greenkeeping'. It was suggested that Kerran must have thought he was on the coach from Harrogate when water started to drip onto his overhead projector, but to his credit he waded on in fine style and brought home the point that greenkeepers do not need to be afraid of computers as those available are 'user friendly'. Kerran further suggested that all greenkeepers would be doing in the work place in the near future ...

### A Right Dressing Down

A scribe to one Section's notes advised that he was ending his report on a sour note. One thing that did not go unnoticed at the Section's seminar was the number of greenkeepers who arrived wearing jeans, sweat shirts, training shoes and, would you believe it, tracksuit bottoms! This surely cannot go on any longer. If golf club members are expected to dress correctly at their own club, surely we owe it to them (and to ourselves) to do likewise. It is pure luck that these individuals have not been refused entry into respectable clubs and it is surely only a matter of time before such a refusal will face the culprits. Worse still, as a section we may not be extended the courtesy of many clubs, simply because of the few without pride, who cannot dress themselves properly. If individuals cannot take responsibility for their dress at such events, then their head greenkeepers must take it on themselves, if only to safe guard our interests. So come on, all you head men; if you are sending staff to represent your club at any future section event - golfing or non-golfing - get them in order, or don't send them at all!

### Farmers do not make good Greenkeepers ...

This Section's notes make interesting reading. One of the many fields with 18 flagsticks that have been described as 'golf courses' has as an active farmer owner. He has a good Head Greenkeeper (for now) but over-rides everything the head man suggests. The greenkeeper, fed up with all the arguing, has decided to toe the line and do just what he is told - e.g. scarify and top dress in early February when there is a hard frost in the ground, never close the course, and if it snows the green staff will be laid off without pay! Not surprisingly, this course is going downhill even faster than Eddie the Eagle, and serves to highlight the enormous potential for 'quality' courses when one considers the vast numbers who play these 'mickey mouse' set-ups, simply because there is nowhere else to go.

## A BIGGA welcome...

### Scottish Region

Jonathan Campbell, East  
 Graeme Flett, East  
 Fraser Gellan, North  
 Edward Hay, East  
 Robert Laing, North  
 Kenneth MacKenzie, East  
 Brian McCann, East  
 Steven Ness, East  
 Richard Ralph, North

### Northern Region

Gordon Butcher, Sheffield  
 Craig Callwood, N Wales  
 Shaun Chadwick, Sheffield  
 Duncan Dooner, N West  
 Keith Dunderdale, Sheffield  
 Ian Dunnachie, Cleveland  
 David Follows, Northern  
 Thomas Fenwick, N East  
 Gary Garner, N West  
 Peter Griffith, N Wales  
 Andrew Grundey, N Wales  
 Peter Hacking, N West  
 Neville Hayden, Northern

### Midland Region

Daniel Adams, Midland  
 Barry Brown, Mid Anglia  
 Simon Caudwell, E of England  
 Ben Emerson, BB&O  
 Brian Hunt, Mid Anglia  
 Luke Hunt, E of England  
 Lee March, BB&O  
 Steve Phillips, Midland  
 James Plant, E of England  
 Craig Riches, BB&O  
 Matthew Townsend, BB&O  
 Alex Wright, Mid Anglia  
 Colin Yates, E Midland

### South East Region

Mo Bah, London  
 Michael Bassett, Essex  
 Keith Buckingham, London  
 Aaron Crittenden, Surrey  
 Cyril Ellis, Surrey  
 Cassian Freeman, Essex  
 Keith Graham, London  
 Andrew Hermmings, Surrey  
 Matthew Lowe, Essex  
 Malcolm McGeoch, Essex  
 Marc Richards, Surrey  
 Dominic Rodgers, E Anglia  
 John Springham, Kent  
 Martin Trower, Essex  
 Lloyd Wright, Kent

### S West & S Wales Region

Marc Batcup, S Wales  
 Jonathan Beynon, S Wales  
 Gareth Blake, S Coast  
 Antony Cailles, S Coast  
 Edward Cary, S West  
 Frederick Hartles, S West  
 Luke Haskell, S Coast  
 Mathew Leeson-Magry, S West  
 Tom Lowe, S Wales

### Northern Ireland

Robert Baile  
 Michael Leonard  
 Geoffrey Roulston

### International Members

Chris Biagi, Bahamas  
 Michael Carlson, USA  
 Erik Grippenberg, Sweden  
 Tobias Hartmann, Germany  
 Jay Nalls IV, USA  
 Edward Walsh, USA

### Associate Members

Matthew Bywater, Australia  
 Malcolm Colegate, Dev & C'Wall  
 Simon Doyle, Japan  
 David Eales, London

### Corporate Members

Scott Hoffmann, USA  
 Edward Powell, S Coast  
 Paul Walker, N Wales  
 Stephen Williams, N West

### Golden/Silver Key Members

Colin Hood, E Midland  
 Sarah Mason, Mid Anglia  
 Justin Smith, Mid Anglia  
 Adam Mills, S Coast

### Student Members

Jonathan Pendry, N West  
 Edward Short, BB&O  
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# THE

David Winterton MG reports back on the second Bernhard Scholarship Trip, this time to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando

# FLORIDA

Photography:  
Tony Dunstan

# EXPERIENCE

Ten very lucky guys met one rain filled day at Gatwick, bound for Florida. Like Knights of the Round Table we took our places on the plane. Landing nine hours later I realised what a diverse group of greenkeepers we were, coming from areas so completely different from each other. The world's greatest playground heaven welcomed us with its riches of con-

crete, tarmac and hotels, surrounded by amazing golf courses with wetlands galore.

Our first day was kissed by sunlight as we travelled out into the 'boonies', countryside to us, to visit Orange County National Golf Centre & Lodge. This proved to be awesome in comparison with the courses our group manages. There are 36 holes on 584 acres. The greens are an average size of 2000 square metres, set among bunkers with pampas grass or trees set inside and a backdrop of pine flatwoods, natural oak hammocks and wetlands. They have the largest driving range in the world at 42 acres; circular in design with eight driving ranges all firing into the centre. They average 85,000 rounds per annum at \$135 each. The Superintendent, Carl Benedict, has a staff of 35 in winter and 45 for summer. The course is managed by a budget of \$2 million but this does include leasehold machinery. Whenever a member of staff meets with a golfer they stop and switch the machine off. That relates to lots of downtime per day and a serious wear and tear factor for the machines.

What really struck the group was the use of labour to maintain these big courses. The normal set-up consists of the superintendent, two skilled assistants, two to three mechanics and one to two irrigation technicians. The rest of the staff consists of Hispanics, Latinos, Guatemalans and Mexicans. These live together in groups near the course and stay for two to three years before going back home to family. They are trained to do specific tasks only.

What a difference to us where we have a smaller team but want all team members fully trained to a high level.



Above: Photographer Tony Dunstan gets on the other side of the camera for a change

Below: Sam McLean and Ronnie Bunting in discussion

Right: Close examinations



Above: The Orlando Convention Centre

Over the next few days we visited several other courses on our turfgrass field seminar. The most outstanding feature of the courses we visited like Magnolia Creek and Champions Gate is how they manage water. Summer temps are high with incredible evapotranspiration rates so the superintendents use lots of water. Orange County often applies one million gallons per day through 40,000 sprinklers. This seems extreme but the way they manage this usage is the key. Effluent water is pumped from Orlando and surrounding places like Disney's Celebration Village to large rectangular percolation basins called RIBS (Rapid Infiltration Basins). These are created on the natural soil that is very sandy. This soil allows 2.5m of rain to drain through in one

This page: Some sights you don't often see at UK golf clubs including, centre, a Pro Shop the size of a small department store!

# A



## Tread Lightly On The Land

We all make impressions. The osprey leaves bones from its last meal. The robin makes a rounded print in the sand. A towhee cries "drink your tea." There's wind in the pines and a butterfly floats by.

Come walk the woods as generations have before you. Seek the impressions of the preserve's inhabitants and diminish your own. Explore. Take notes and pictures. Share your discoveries.

Said Alice when she found Wonderland, "Curiouser and curiouser... now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was."

If you open out like Alice, what will you find?



hour. The effluent water goes back into the artesian water basin for use again but the golf courses can draw off this water for irrigation.

Another new build site at Magnolia Creek will cover 2100 acres with three 18 holes designed by Watson, Nicklaus & Palmer respectively. The irrigation requirements are awesome and will be supplied by a horizontal

well that extracts water from the water table and stores the water in a holding

lake. When the course is irrigated the excess water will drain back into the water table to be reused, thereby creating a self-sufficient water supply.

Serious ecological mistakes were made years ago when the everglades were drained. Now in more enlightened times Florida is trying to do a U-turn and make sure the wetlands are protected from developers. We visited the Nature Conservancy Disney Wilderness Preserve. This is 12,000 acres of natural wetlands that have remained free of any development. It holds one of only two lakes in Florida that does not have any property built on the edge. When big companies like Disney build in Florida they have to agree to protect an area of land similar in size, to balance out the loss of land. This is how Disney Wilderness Preserve came into being. It was great for us to wander through such wilderness, spotting tortoise burrows and armadillos but luckily no snappers!

Florida is now in the process of opening up old watercourses to recreate the original wetlands and improve the bio-diversity in those areas.

Some of us were lucky enough to visit a course at Titusville, near Cape



Canaveral where a British greenkeeper, Geoff Coggan MG, CGCS resides. This course is set in the middle of wetlands with the 18-hole course weaving its way through several hundred road vehicle parks. It was great to get an escape from the surreal world of Orlando and visit authentic Florida. All in a day's work could be getting rid of nuisance alligators. These are ones that have become overly friendly due to people feeding them. Big holes need to be filled, made by Armadillos who can go some distance due to the sandy soil. The irrigation pumping system has to be checked regularly as this system is used by the fire department. It has a back up generator in case of powercuts. Many thanks to Geoff for his personal guide around the course.

Another seminar we attended covered professional presentations. My dialogue coming from Ronnie, at

Kilmacolm, Jim, at West Kilbride or Patrick, from Nefyn, was greeted with "Pardon?" or "Sorry?" as Mimi, our delectable instructor, deciphered the language. This is only Tuesday and already someone, no names mentioned, had the audacity to fall asleep! This caused ripples of comment for the ongoing activities. As this person, quite rightly, had to give a 10-minute presentation, the nine-crew members fell asleep in the back row. If any man can continue his presentation after this, he's a star.



# THE FLORIDA EXPERIENCE



Below, below middle and right. The GCSAA Exhibition in full swing

Bottom: The Bernhard's team. Sam Nurse, Technical and Development Manager; Ulrich Kayser, Director of European Sales; Stephen Bernhard, Managing Director, and Sam McLean, Director of Sales and Marketing



In discussion with many superintendents they were interested how we managed to get such great results on our courses with such small budgets. It goes

to show we have very skilled greenkeepers in the UK who can produce first rate surfaces and a great course to match.

Ronnie Bunting has recently seen his course achieve the Award of Recognition for Environmental Achievements through the Committed to Green programme.

Ronnie has a fascinating story to tell, backed up by a document on how his course went about improving their environmental standing. Should anyone be interested to know more I know that Ronnie would be most helpful in your requests.

Thursday and Friday were a mixture of visits to the show or short seminars. It made me proud to realise just how well BIGGA organises the Harrogate show. For the first time I

was able to compare it with a similar show and I feel we give our international visitors something worthwhile. The GCSAA were celebrating their 75 years in fine style with a special showcase of historical artefacts and articles that took me quite some time to get through. The GCSAA has come a long way from humble beginnings but today they have an Association that is very big business. Harrogate had 8000 attend this year while the Orlando show had 20,000. Our group made good use of the Internet Cybercafe. This consisted of 10 consoles, set up by the GCSAA for use by members or visitors, free of charge. It was a great service and could be used to find out details of the show or seminars or simply to hassle the wife!

I became aware just how much money the GCSAA puts towards further education of their members. They have several programs that greenkeepers can apply for such as the Watson fellowships, the GCSAA Scholars competition or the Legacy awards. They produce several documents, free to members, that help give detailed information on a particular subject. Two that I found interesting that perhaps reflect present times are Managing Unemployment and How To Help Your Course Weather An Economic Downturn. Another sign of the times was the fact that many superintendents are now employed through a contract of employment that terminates after three to five years. The views on this among superintendents varies but the main emphasis seemed to be that the contract does give good security in your position and if you are doing a good job then the contract will be renewed.

A highlight of the trip was our Friday evening's activities. The

President's Dinner started with a long list of thanks from the outgoing President, Tommy Witt, and the new President being introduced. Several speeches later it ended with an emotional Tommy gathering his family together on stage, a moving and fitting tribute to those who had supported this man through the year. It was good to see Tommy's employer get up to give support and high praise of the man in charge of his business even though he had been off-site for a great part of the year.

Naturally we were all moved when Walter was presented with his Old Tom Morris Award. His speech was impeccable and did not need translating! It showed high regard for Walter that so many Scottish greenkeepers had travelled out to be with him for his special moment in their tartan cloth of the clan with sporrans gleaming. You could visibly see the strain of receiving this award drain away as he enjoyed the company of fellow greenkeepers throughout the evening. He must now be the most photographed greenkeeper on this planet, excepting Richard Barker of course, but Walter stands tall and proud as one of our greatest ambassadors, living proof that hard work and a keen interest in golf and greenkeeping can give you a good life.

It gave me great pride to see the BIGGA delegation in their blazers standing out in the crowd.

Later on in the evening we had the honour of a special invite to a private party given by Tommy Witt in the Peabody Hotel, a rather luxurious building indeed. This was the time to undo the collars and his superintendent colleagues treated Tommy to great ridicule as they told embarrassing stories. Later a slide show of the great moments of Tommy's year showed just how much he cares for







Above: The Bernhard Scholarship winners



Above: Congratulating Walter Woods on his Old Tom Morris Award

his profession and the effort and support from other board members to make a difference.

Stephen Bernhard and Sam Mclean were wonderful hosts, making sure they spent some time with each of the group at the various functions we attended. Their enthusiasm for helping greenkeepers expand their horizons is a great example to all who meet them. Whatever steps Bernhard & Co make in the future to co-host visits abroad or introduce Internships for young greenkeepers, I would urge members of BIGGA to apply for these places. You have so much to gain from such experiences and along the way promote the advantages of working within this industry. My short presentation ended with me making the point that our group of greenkeepers deserved to be on this trip because we had goals and were willing to strive for them.

You only get out of life what you put into it, so let's see more BIGGA members apply for educational visits and courses.

They should have no qualms about what level of new contacts or friendships are formed between our visiting party and the superintendents we met. I have already had several contacts through email from some of those I have met. It is true what they

say about the UK having a special relationship with the Americans. They were openly friendly and one could strike up conversation at any moment and find a warmth of friendship evident.

During my precious social time I treated myself to a visit to Islands of Adventure on my last day that came highly recommended by Sami, our authentic American ambassador, and found myself at one point in a line to travel the Hulk rollercoaster. As I trembled with fear for 30 minutes I struck up conversation with a huge fella from New Orleans. We talked golf among other things but he helped me get on that ride and survive it. Afterwards we laughed at the photo showing sheer fear on my face as he had gladly waved his arms in the air. Outside he introduced me to his wife and children who had been patiently waiting for him. Such contacts confirm that life is for living and I know the group I travelled with heartily thank Bernhard & Co for their sponsorship and BIGGA for their support in making this happen.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our intrepid greenkeeper travellers for their part in making this a memorable trip and especially Tony Dunstan who very quickly became the honorary Lord Lichfield in the group. I learned a lot about greenkeeping in our part of the world that would have been difficult any other way; such was the fine meeting of minds.

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SHARPER SOLUTIONS with BERNHARD

Roland Taylor looks at the improvements made in the modern day machinery workshop and looks at the whole issue of machinery maintenance

# MAINTENANCE FACILITY

The workshop area turned out to be a corner of the machinery store. The floor was earth, which had dried out to a dust and the only light was from one florescent tube so a great deal of the area was in shadow. A small bench was set against the wall, so obviously, a lot of the work had to be carried out on the floor. There was a heater, but judging by its size, the heat it emitted would barely take the chill off on a cold winters day. Old half-dismantled machines, that had clearly seen better days, were littered around the perimeter. What little space there was, would be almost completely taken up if a machine were brought in for repair. Containers full of black sludge and fuel were

The modern day workshop is a highly technical place



heaped in one corner. The air was rancid with the smell of burnt oil and earthiness and the overall appearance was a place where you would not want to linger in, or worse carry out any service work.

No, this is not the first chapter of a Dickensian novel, it is a slightly over the top description of the type of machinery storage cum workshop, that could be found not so many years ago. Thank goodness those days have passed and today the picture is generally completely different, although having said that, there maybe some

elements of the scenario still about.

Over the last two decades considerable changes have taken place in both the golf course and outdoor power equipment industries. In the former, we have seen considerable growth and with it a higher profile that has placed greater demands on all those involved in course management. Part of this has been in the machinery sector, where their upkeep is critical to a smooth operation. This has led to more courses now carrying out all their service work with dedicated staff and workshops.

On the manufacturers' front some of the big names have been merged, while other companies are becoming well established. The dealerships have also changed with quite a number of previously well-known names falling by the wayside. Others have grown larger.

There are now fewer firms around specialising in the professional equipment sector. This has led to some suppliers having to sell direct and find service outlets to cover warranty, plus service work.

What is even more of a concern, is that fewer people are coming into the business to be trained as service technicians.

## What are the benefits of a good service programme?

Obviously, it is necessary to keep equipment running and producing an optimum performance with minimal downtime, but there are other reasons.

Safety is a very important one, especially as television advertising encourages the public to make claims for any injury. Badly maintained machinery is dangerous. The Health & Safety Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations under Section 6 maintenance states:-



1. Every employer shall ensure that work equipment is maintained in an efficient state of working order and good repair.
2. Every employer shall ensure that where any machine has a maintenance log it is kept up to date.

The regulations also cover routine and planned preventive maintenance.

Another Section, which applies to a workshop, is lighting. The guidance here is that any place where work equipment is issued should be suit-

# TIES

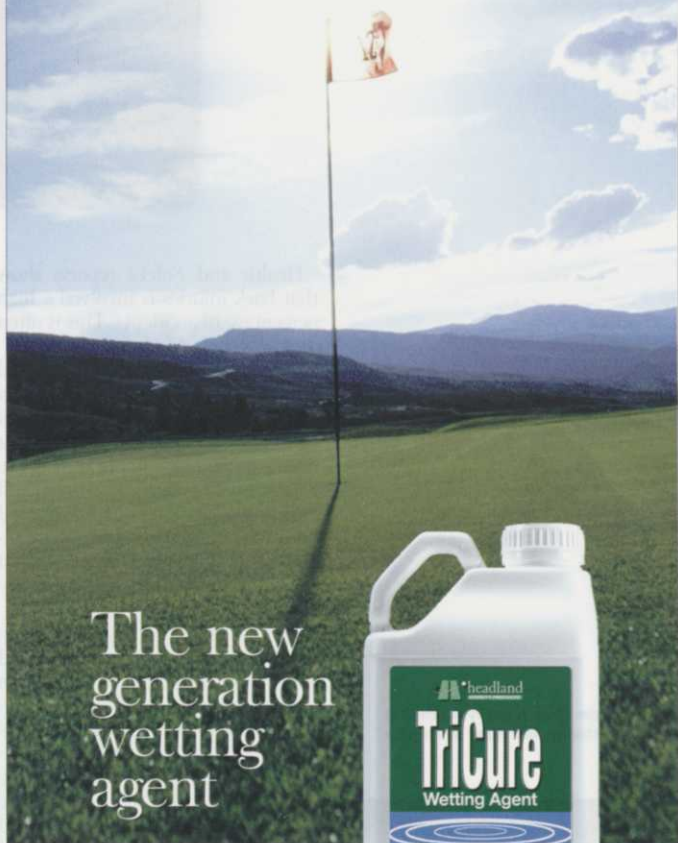


ably and sufficiently lit. Lighting should be adequate for the needs of the task.

Electrical safety also requires careful monitoring. Earth leakage circuit breakers (ELCB) or residual control devices (RCD) should be fitted to all hand-held electrical equipment. All portable electrical equipment must be PAT tested and carry a certificate. The equipment should also be marked stating the date and signature of the tester. A competent person who has been trained in this field

should test the equipment. Electricians should be members of the Electrical Contractor Association ECA and or NIC, EIC. These units require regular checks to ensure they are still operational. Charging batteries needs to be done in a well-ventilated area, away from any possible source ignition. Cleaning solvents and petrol should be stored in the correct containers and in a cool environment. Make sure any protective clothing, gloves and eye protectors are readily available.

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# MAINTENANCE FACILITIES



Health and Safety reports show that back injuries is involved a high percentage of accidents. This is often due to incorrect handling of loads.

In a workshop environment it could be due to lifting a heavy unit onto a workbench. The installation of hydraulic workbenches, suitable for lifting all the machines in the fleet to a comfortable working height, will reduce the possibilities of a strained back. This will also improve the working conditions considerably and speed up repair or servicing operations.

Another reason for regular maintenance is investment care - well looked after machinery can command a higher trade-in value. There is reputed to be a course, in the States, where

the workshop resembles an operating theatre and the equipment is looked after to the highest of level. As a result when they replace machines there is a waiting list for the old ones - the prices they command justify the care and attention the workshop and operators lavish on their fleet.

Exhaust pollution is very much under the spotlight and engine manufacturers have to comply with stringent legislation regarding the levels emitted by new power units leaving their factories. Once out in the field it is up to users to ensure that their equipment is correctly serviced if low levels are to be maintained.

Two other areas of benefit are better management of costings and greater control of day to day course management.

For those considering carrying out all their own servicing what is involved? A starting point is to carry out an analysis of the total maintenance costs the previous two years. It is also a good idea to try and identify the amount of down time and the reasons for it.

The big question is, would there be enough work to keep a dedicated service technician fully employed? This is an important factor, bearing in mind modern machines are becoming increasingly more sophisticated. The person will need an extensive knowledge and be able to work on a wide range of systems, including all types of engines, modern hydraulics and electronics. With his or her extensive knowledge and expertise they will not be happy if they are expected to carry out mundane work, outside their sphere, to fill in time.

Setting up a workshop will entail considerable investment, so every avenue needs exploring. The right

working conditions are critical for both efficiency and harmony. The building should have plenty of both natural and artificial light and enough space to comfortably work on the largest unit is a must. Restricted access makes for all kinds of problems. Cleanliness is paramount when dealing with modern engines and precision components, such as fuel injectors and hydraulic systems. To clean these items to the high standard necessary will require a special washing unit.

A hard surfaced area outside with adequate drainage is need. Here machines can be cleaned down using a pressure washer before going into the workshop. For those courses deciding to set up a full operation, there will be a large shopping list, including grinders, tools, drills welders and electrical/electronic testing equipment.

At this point the question arises, is it worth it. If the answer is no, what are the alternatives?

A regular daily and weekly maintenance programme is a must, so a special bay or area should be set aside

Below. Having easily accessible storage is a huge advantage





where this can be carried out. This will require facilities for making draining and replenishing oil fast and easy. An air compressor would be ideal for blowing dust and dirt from around cooling fins of engines and hydrostatic drives, or inflating tyres. Other items should include, a comprehensive set of tools, spanners, grease guns, fast moving replacement parts, instruction manuals and fuel storage facilities.

As far as breakdowns, major servicing, overhauling or regrinding are concerned, a local specialist can be sought, who has the qualified staff to carry out this type of work. This could work well if a service contract is drawn up between both parties, so everyone knows exactly what is expected of them. When deciding on a suitable partner, in this venture, an assessment should be made of their service facilities and staff, as to whether they are adequate for carrying out the work you are likely to require.

An important aspect in any arrangement is that both parties work well together, so that each understands the others requirements and needs. For instance, the climate has changed considerably over the last few years. As a result mowing is now carried out for virtually twelve months. This means that any time available for major overhauls is limited, so to avoid machinery being out

of commission for too long, some plan needs to be put into place. By forming an alliance an acceptable solution can be found that satisfies both parties.

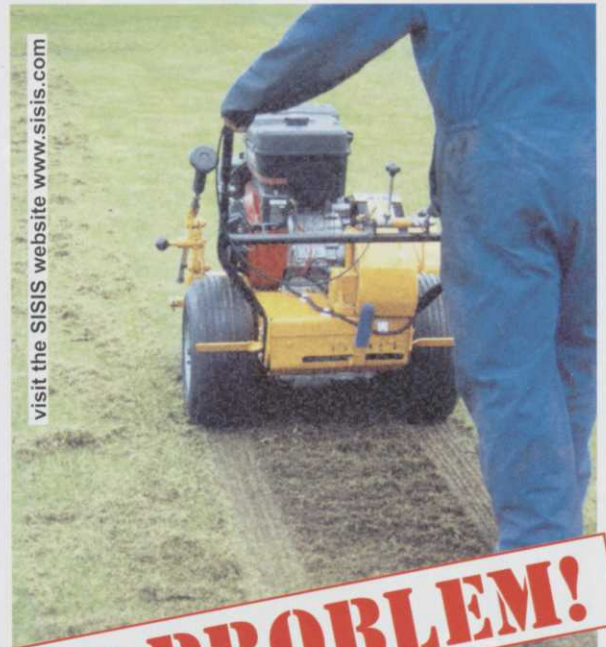
For clubs, service contracts can be a positive way forward. A major benefit is that they do not have to make a considerable investment in specialist workshop equipment and buildings. In addition, there is not the problem of having to find qualified staff from what amounts to a small pool of experts that is gradually disappearing.

Modern machinery requires less maintenance than in the past, but when things go wrong it is often far more complex to deal with. Keeping ahead of these developments is down to specialist technicians with the right testing equipment.

From the service outlet's point of view, by being tied into a contract they can ensure there are trained staff, tools and equipment to cover every eventuality.

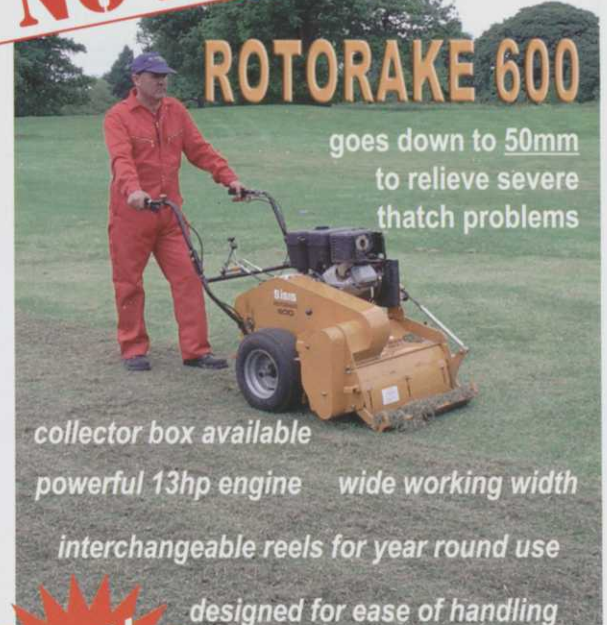
What worked a few years ago may not be ideal or adequate to meet today's demands. For those clubs large enough there are distinct benefits having their own service departments. Smaller clubs can, by forming a close liaison with a local service outlet, also enjoy certain advantages. It is to everyone's benefit to work together to keep machinery on the move.

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**Scott MacCallum travelled to Cheshire to meet Steve Hartshorn, Course Manager of Heyrose GC**

# BLUEPRINT

## FOR A SUCCESSFUL CLUB



The boom in golf course construction in the late 80s early 90s saw many developers finish up with charred digits and empty pockets. But it didn't have to be that way.

Some course developers actually, and you may find this hard to believe, used the same business acumen in building their golf course as they did in the walk of life in which they had originally become successful. Remarkable I know.

Listed among those would be Eric Bridge and his son, Christopher, who founded and built Heyrose Golf Club in Knutsford, Cheshire, 12 years ago.

Using the "Walk before you Run" philosophy the family started out with nine holes, began attracting members, then extended to 18 hole before building a clubhouse.

Having then got as far as they could using their limited knowledge and

skills to manage the course they appointed a Course Manager, who moved the course on to the next level. Now the club has just finished rebuilding the first nine greens to a much higher specification than the, sensibly pitched, original funding had allowed.

It all means that Heyrose Golf Club has grown at a sensible rate and injected the investment when the foundations for a successful club were in place thus protecting itself from the vagaries of a volatile leisure industry sector.

The man who the Bridges installed to provide the greenkeeping know how is 40 year-old Steven Hartshorn, who has shown the benefits of having a specialist in post.

The great thing was that it was the owners themselves who had recognised the need for specialist help.





"I think they knew they'd gone as far as they could with the knowledge that they had and that they needed to employ a greenkeeper."

The first thing Steve did when he arrived was put work schedules in place including aeration programmes and good greenkeeping practices; work on the presentation of the course - the infamous landing strip style fairways were a feature - and put a programme in place to enlarge the tees.

"Prior to that work had been very intermittent. If they thought the greens were a bit long they'd cut them rather than having daily maintenance schedules while the bunkers were not

really up to standard and the course furniture was a little careworn."

He was given every support when he joined and what he asked for was made available to him.

"Even before I'd taken up the position they'd gone out and bought a John Deere compact tractor so it was waiting for me in the sheds when I started."

The Bridge family - Christopher looks after the club finances while his wife, Elizabeth, is the Club's General Manager - are particularly go ahead, while it was father, Eric, whose concept Heyrose Golf Club was.

"He had played golf for about 35 years and been Chairman of Green at Knutsford Golf Club and was very much a supporter of the greens staff but then told them that he'd rather go off and build his own course. And that's exactly what he did," recalled Steve.

The limitations in the existing greens construction became apparent to Steve fairly early on.

"The fines within the rootzone had slowly been working their way down and as Heyrose, like many courses built in the 80s, didn't use an intermediate blinding layer but instead had a geotextile membrane and the fines had moved down and blocked it."

Having made the decision that the greens had to be reconstructed, what







would have been a medium term plan possibly involving one green a year became slightly more urgent with the recent wet winters.

"Two years ago we decided to do the 11th, which was the worst green on the course. We had dug some holes out of the rootzone and poured 25 litre drums of water into the stone underneath and it was going so it was pretty obvious nothing was wrong with the drainage but that it was the rootzone that was the problem.

"It was indigenous soil mixed with sand and sand and clay makes bricks it doesn't make quality golf greens," said Steve.

He did receive a bit of a shock when the subject of who was going to design the new greens was talked about.

"They said 'You are.', So the many training courses he'd attended including Golf Course Design with Howard Swan and Simon Gidman at BTME became all the more valuable.

"I'd also picked up experience of building greens at Lingfield Golf Club and Chichester where I was involved in the growing in and where Pearson's were on site. I enjoy getting to know people and picking up tips and information."

The 11th was to be the only green to be done at that particular time so

Steve restrained from producing any outlandish design features.

"We didn't want to be too ambitious if it was going to be the only green we did so the design was relatively conservative," he explained.

The construction work was carried out to Steve's design specification by John Mallinson's, of Ormskirk, who were also involved in the construction work for Manchester's Commonwealth Games stadium.

"They were excellent, very professional, and the design specifications I laid down for them were followed exactly," said Steve.

It was decided that turfing would be the best option as it offered the opportunity to get the green back in play quicker and various samples were examined.

"We brought in a Rufford rootzone and chose Inturf for our turf, and they've been super. We did consider washed turf but opted instead for a quality turf in a sandy medium.

"We found the Edwards family to be brilliant. Whatever backup we've needed has been there and they are honest, in that they'd advise us to wait a couple of weeks if they felt the turf would be better then."

The new green was laid in January 2000 and opened for play at the beginning of June.

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"The root development was incredible. It was throwing roots down for fun and virtually overnight you could see a huge improvement in the quality of the green," he revealed.

Having seen this success, the decision was made to build four more in the autumn of the same year.

"But, as we know, that winter was awful and we couldn't get the machinery onto the course so we didn't start until February 2001 with the next four worst greens, the 10th, 12th, 13th and 17th earmarked."

And on this occasion Steve was able to give much fuller vent to his design flair.

"The greens were enlarged and two of them moved location with one of them, the 13th, pushed behind a pond which the owners had always wanted to bring into play but which had previously been 20 yards behind the green.

"I ensured that there was an alternative route to the green avoiding the pond and we had to clear the area of trees, scraggy alders and willows and clean out the pond but it turned a par-4 into a par-5, 87 yards longer than before."



"The 10th was also fundamentally changed, the 12th green was on the same site but the complex was completely changed while we introduced McKenzie swails into the 17th green.

The work was completed in early April and they opened for play at the end of June.

"It was very ambitious but because it was early spring we were again getting phenomenal root development - an inch per week, I've never seen turf throw down root like it - and the turf was coming in nice and thin with very little thatch in it."

The final four holes of the back nine - the first nine that was built - were started last October and finished in the final week of February.

"They are doing very well and it means that we have done the entire nine in two years which is great considering that we had envisaged doing one a year. The front nine greens are not as crucial as they do drain better. There are limitations and given the required finances they will be done but that doesn't need to be straight away.

Heyrose is a successful club - they have also just appointed former European Tour pro, Paul Affleck, to be their Club Professional -and a model for any new club wanting to develop from modest beginnings. In Steve Hartshorn and his five man team they have the expertise to continue that development.

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- Ford TN55
- Kubota B2150 Compact
- Multicore TM1000
- Proseed
- Sisis Multitine
- Sisis Multislit
- Sisis Topspread
- Hardi BL200 Sprayer
- Amazone Groundkeeper
- Progressive TD 65-2 Trideck
- 2 Jacobsen 810 Express
- Saxon PM100
- Ransomes Supercertes
- Brouwer EY15D
- Husqvarna 232 Strimmer
- McColloch 3000 Strimmer
- McColloch Promac Strimmer
- Stihl BR400 Blower
- 2 Allen 218si
- McColloch 10-10 Chainsaw
- Stihl 039 Chainsaw
- Robin HT231 Hedgetrimmer
- Marston 3 Tonne Trailer
- Sisis HDS 32 F/Slit
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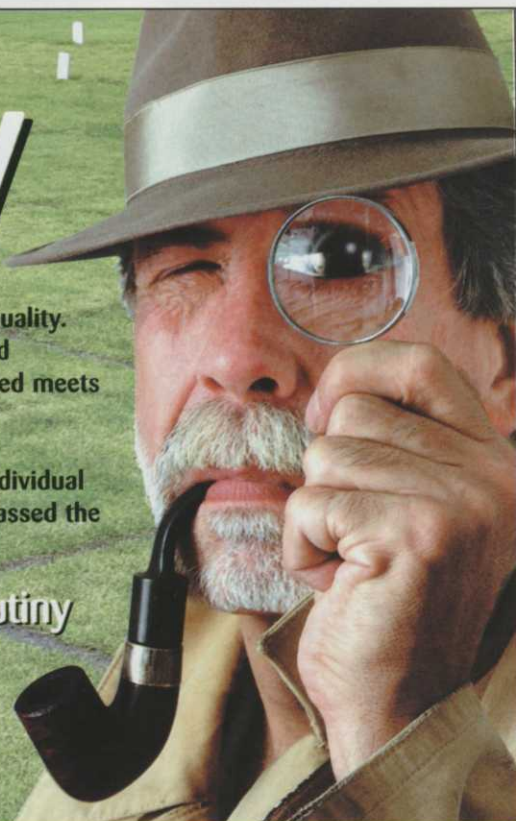
30% Chewings Fescue, 25% Slender Creeping Red Fescue, 35% Strong Creeping Red Fescue, 10% Browntop Bent



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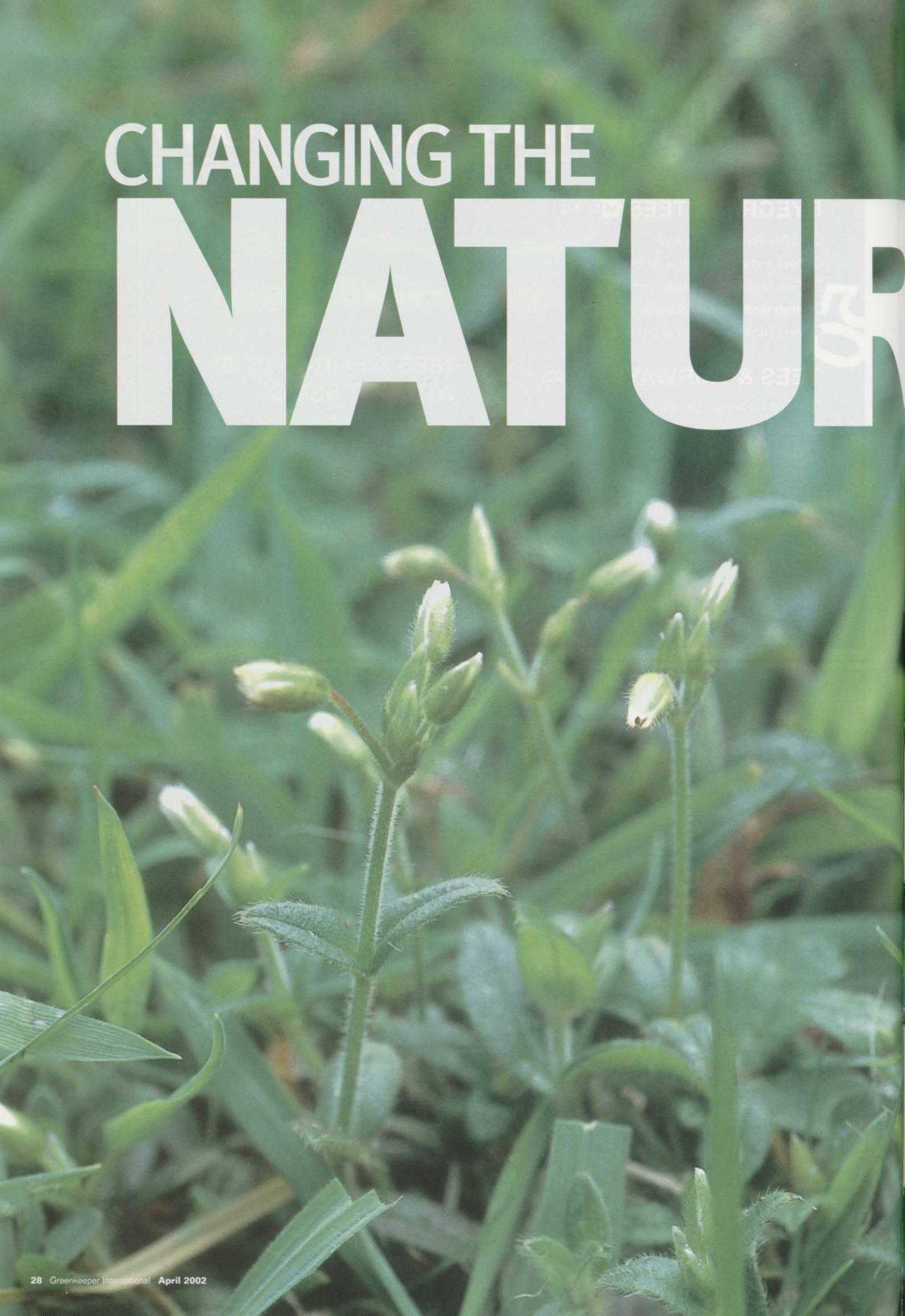
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# CHANGING THE NATUR





**Henry Bechelet, Turfgrass Agronomist, STRI North East Region discusses the issues raised when changing the type of grasses in your greens**

# RE OF YOUR GREENS

## THE GREATER GOOD

**Do you want to change the types of grasses contained within your greens? The objective of this article is to give a greater understanding of the survival strategies developed by the individual turfgrass species. By doing this, I hope to give you the ability to alter, improve or stabilise the quality of your golf greens. I mean to get you thinking about your greens differently.**

**This article is adapted from the work of Grime, Hodgson and Hunt in their study: "Comparative Plant Ecology - A functional approach to common British species" (1988). This work states that the vegetation that develops in a place at a particular time is governed by environmental pressures. These pressures may be categorised as stress, disturbance and competition and they can vary in their relative intensities. These pressure factors are described as the three main threats to existence. I make my own interpretations of this parallel work.**

## THREATS TO EXISTENCE

### Stress

Stress is described as the environmental phenomena that restrict photosynthetic production. These are the environmental constraints to growth and regeneration. Stress may take a number of different forms, for instance shortages of light, water, mineral nutrients or sub-optimal temperatures. Stress factors may be inherent to an impoverished environment (low fertility, soil acidity) or may be induced (shading or deliberate droughting). Here we are concerned with one or more stress factors that are operating throughout the year to constrain all species within the environment. Stress factors do not necessarily act in unison, different stresses exert different selection pressures. Greenkeepers have their hands on the reins of certain stress factors, such as fertiliser input, acidification or irrigation.

### Disturbance

Disturbance involves the partial or total destruction of the plant biomass, i.e. the physical damage or removal of living tissue. This may be caused by the activities of pests, pathogens, wind damage, frosting, etc. The primary factors of disturbance within the golf green situation

are mowing, scarification, verticutting, grooming, wear damage, disease outbreaks, pitch marks, divots and pests - not inconsiderable.

Disturbance places a high selection pressure upon the vegetation inhabiting an unsettled environment. Rapid recovery or regeneration is required to exploit regular disturbance.

### Competition

Competition is the tendency of plants to try to monopolise the resources of an environment at the expense of their neighbours. Competition describes the battle for the same quantum of light, ion of mineral element, molecule of water or volume of space. It refers to the ability of the plant to capture resources and, by doing so, suppress the fitness of a neighbour by modifying the environment. This can

occur above and below ground. Competition becomes characteristic of environments that contain an abundance of resources and experience a low intensity of disturbance (unsettled).

### Evolution

Each environment exerts confining pressures on its inhabitants. These may be external factors such as stress and disturbance or internal such as the competitive ability of the plant itself (given a chance). Plant growth strategies have evolved over time to exploit specific environmental conditions to forward the continuation of the species. Nature works in a direction.

The primary growth strategies may be categorised by relating the intensity of stress and intensity of disturbance (external factors) within the environment. See table below:-

Table 1. The basis for the evolution of three strategies in plants. Grime (1977).

Intensity of disturbance	Intensity of stress	
	Low	High
Low	Competitors	Stress-tolerators
High	Ruderals	(No viable strategy)

## THE GOLF GREEN ENVIRONMENT

The following table recounts the results of the STRI survey of golf greens carried out in 1995 by Baker, Binns et al. This clearly illustrates the kind of greens that are being produced by modern day greenkeepers in the UK.

Table 2. Species composition in relation to course type. Baker, Binns, Hind, Lodge & Hunt (1995) J. Sports Turf Res. Inst. Vol. 71.

Course type	No. of Cases	Ground Cover (%)		
		Agrostis	Festuca	Poa annua
<b>Parkland</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Links</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Meadowland</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Moorland</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Heathland</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Seaside</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>64</b>

Annual meadow-grass dominates in all the different types of golf course (even links). The predominance of Poa indicates that a highly disturbed low stress environment is being produced.

### Management pressures

The environmental pressures affecting the golf green may be listed as follows:-

- Disturbance (physical damage) - Mowing, grooming, verticutting, scarification, hollow coring, disease scars, pests, pitch marks, divots, WEAR.
- Stress (environmental limitations to growth) - Not a great deal, although soil acidification should not be forgotten. I also regard soil compaction as a stress factor. Irrigation practice and the regular application of healthy fertiliser programmes maintain a highly productive environment. More northerly courses suffer extended periods of low temperature.
- Competition does not exert itself in disturbed environments although thatch production may well mask the surface.

It is not surprising that Poa is dominating - disturbance abounds!

## PLANT GROWTH STRATEGIES

### Primary growth strategies

From the table above, depending on the intensities of the environmental pressures, we see that there are three main growth strategies for plants in their established phase - Competitors, Stress-tolerators and Ruderals.

(Note that there is no possible growth strategy for a highly stressed and highly disturbed environment - such an environment is untenable because the external pressures are too extreme to allow a plant time to survive.)

Stress-tolerators (**S-strategists**) have evolved to exploit high stress and low disturbance environments. They have the ability to retain resources in a continually hostile environment (deep roots or hardy vegetation for instance). S-strategists (heather in the wider world, due to soil acidity) are slow growing with the conservation of resources all important. The vegetation is hardened, tough and often difficult to break down. These plants are adapted to clinging on in the face of adversity. Soil acidity is a stress factor that selects, not kills.

Ruderals (**R-strategists**) inhabit low stress, high disturbance environments. Quick reproduction is all-important. Ruderals (weeds) are characterised by fast growth and rapid seed production. There is no point in these plants investing in deep roots because the environment is so unsettled. Preservation and development of the species is the singular imperative for such volunteers.

Competitors (**C-strategists**) develop within low stress, low disturbance, settled environments. Allowed to flourish, competitors endeavour to monopolise resource capture (a thick canopy or even a layer of thatch will limit the availability of resources to other species). They create an environment suitable for their own development at the expense of their neighbours.

Competitors delay seedhead production in favour of producing vegetation and this weakens their ability to withstand disturbed environments. These plants dominate if conditions are settled enough.

### Secondary strategies

Most environments are not so extreme to simply favour the development of **C**, **S** and **R** strategists.

The following diagram describes the secondary strategies that plants may develop to exploit the various intermediate environments. "Intermediate" environments are characterised by lesser intensities of stress, disturbance and competition.

Competitive ruderals (C-R) are adapted to moderate (or infrequent) disturbance (which limits the competition) and low levels of stress. This environment checks competitors but does not eliminate them. Stress-tolerant ruderals (S-R) occur in lightly disturbed, unproductive habitats. Here, the reproductive opportunities are restricted for relatively short periods. Stress-tolerant competitors (C-S) occur in undisturbed environments experiencing only moderate levels of stress to allow the development of some competitive advantage. C-S-R strategists evolve where competition is restricted by only moderate intensities of stress and disturbance. C-S-R strategists are varied in their relative attributes.

### Conclusion to growth strategies

- The environment is governed by the three types of pressure
- Plants have adapted to survive in specific environmental conditions
- The vegetation reflects the nature of the environment
- The grass species present within a green are a reflection of the environment you have helped create

So are we creating the correct environment? Does the greenkeeping favour the desired grass species? If not, can we change the environment to allow the finer grasses to predominate?

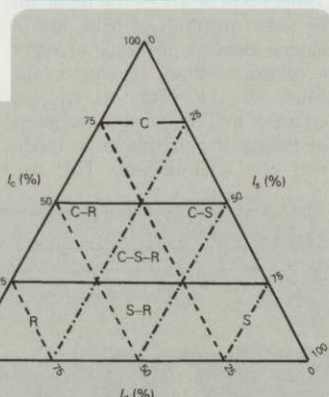


FIGURE 1. A Model describing the various equilibria between competition, stress and disturbance in vegetation and the location of primary and secondary strategies. C, competitor; S, stress-tolerator; R, ruderal; C-R, competitive-ruderal; S-R, stress-tolerant ruderal; C-S, stress-tolerant competitor; C-S-R, 'C-S-R strategist'. I<sub>c</sub>, relative importance of competition; I<sub>s</sub>, relative importance of stress; I<sub>d</sub>, relative importance of disturbance. (From Comparative Plant Ecology: A Functional Approach to Common British Species, Grime, Hodgson & Hunt, 1988.)

## FEELING THE PRESSURE?

The sward composition of a golf green reflects the pressures being placed upon it. The Head Greenkeeper is in charge of a number of important sources of pressure. Beneficial pressures can be used to manipulate the environment in favour of the more desirable turfgrass species. Poa is favoured by disturbance and, to a large degree, this stems from the pressures

of play, but do not underestimate the influence of your actions. The finer grasses need a more settled environment to take over.

Professor Grime's (and others) work is an educational tool and I hope it gives you a better starting point when formulating your maintenance strategy. Next stop regenerative strategies and successful overseeding.



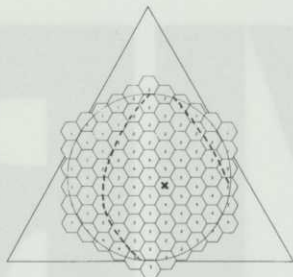
## THE FINE TURFGRASSES

The golf green is the most important surface on the golf course - the place where the game is won and lost - and must be perfect! The modern golf green is an intensively maintained environment subjected to intensive play throughout the year. Still, the surface must remain consistently fine and true for putting yet receptive enough to receive and release approach and chip shots. The greens must also be able to tolerate the traffic of the golfer who insists on year-round play.

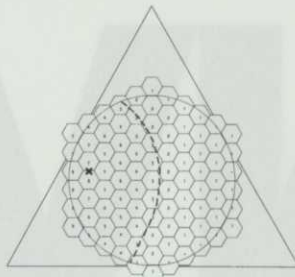
The sward species composition has a great bearing on both the playing quality and wear tolerance of any turf. With regard to golf greens: fescue (*Festuca*) produces hard and fast putting surfaces that bounce an approach shot forward - wear tolerance declines in the winter; bent (*Agrostis*) produces fairly fast and true putting surfaces that are also receptive to approach shots - the surface is fairly wear tolerant throughout the year; annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*) tends to produce softer surfaces that can be made into "good summer greens" but suffer from thatch build up and disease susceptibility. As we will see, each turfgrass species is adapted to survive in markedly different conditions.

### The growth strategies of the fine turfgrass species

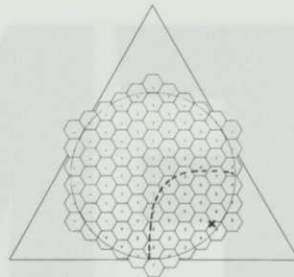
This section will illustrate the specific environmental conditions that the various turfgrass species have evolved to exploit. Remember that the greenkeeper is in charge of a number of the external pressure factors.



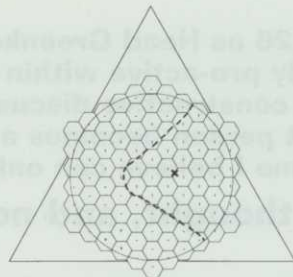
**Browntop bent - *Agrostis tenuis***  
C-S-R strategist adapted to compete in an environment characterised by moderate levels of stress and disturbance. Prefers acid soils.



**Creeping bent - *Agrostis stolonifera***  
CR strategist adapted to moderate or infrequent levels of disturbance and low levels of stress. Needs active growth to be able to recover from disturbance.

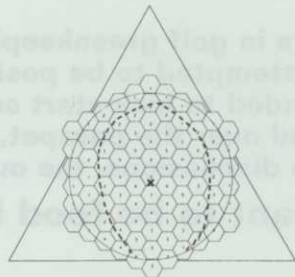


**Sheep's fescue - *Festuca ovina***  
Stress tolerator, exploits conditions of low disturbance and high stress. May be of use.

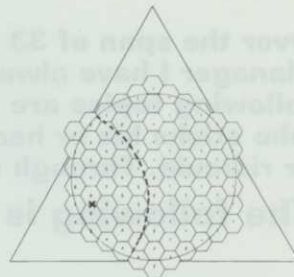


**Velvet bent - *Agrostis canina***  
C-S-R strategist competes with moderate levels of stress and low levels of disturbance. Does not take kindly to winter play.

(Note: The different bentgrass species are adapted to survive in quite different environments. They therefore require different maintenance strategies to enable them to survive and flourish.)



**Red fescue - *Festuca rubra* ssp. *rubra***  
C-S-R strategist adapted for moderate intensities of stress and disturbance. Red fescues flourish during the summer. Slow to recover from damage leaving gaps for invasion.



**Annual meadow-grass - *Poa annua***  
*Poa annua* is a ruderal favouring conditions of high disturbance and low stress. Disturbance is key but *Poa* does not welcome acid soil conditions

**In conclusion, each turfgrass species is adapted to survive in markedly different environments. To flourish and survive they therefore require specific management.**

## CHANGING THE NATURE OF YOUR GREENS

The sward species composition reflects the type of environment being produced. The relative intensities of the various environmental pressures determine the vegetation types present. The golf green environment is intensively disturbed by play, pathogens and pests, as well as by the action of refinement and it is kept stress-free to allow for the intensive maintenance. This situation has led to the predominance of *Poa*. If you wish to change the composition of a green, you must create the conditions that the finer grasses would prefer.

As we have already seen, green-keeping is in charge of a number of significant sources of environmental pressure:-

- Mowing - intensity and frequency
- Verticutting, etc - timing and severity
- Integrated pest and disease management
- Irrigation
- Fertiliser input
- Acidification
- Course/green closure

These actions should be undertaken considerably to manipulate the environmental pressures to suit the desired grass species.

### Changing the sward composition of existing greens

To increase the bentgrass component of predominantly *Poa* greens, for the sake of argument, the received method of attempting this would be to impose stress on the sward (by judicious feeding and watering) to pressurise the meadow-grass out. By this theory, such a method is misguided if you refer back to Table 1, which clearly states, "a highly stressed and disturbed environment is untenable".

To reduce the dominance of the meadow-grass and increase the bentgrass component we must firstly reduce the level of disturbance (limit the overall pressure). This may be achieved by reducing the intensity and frequency of mowing, toning down all forms of verticut-

ting (use a brush to groom), limiting play during the winter months, etc. Once the disturbance pressure has been softened, we can then lever some stress onto the sward by acidifying, or by limiting fertiliser applications and certainly regulating irrigation inputs. We must move the environment away from the area of *Poa* dominance, from total disturbance to settled stress. Thatch build up can be controlled with micro hollow tining and top dressing. Surface trueness can be retained using top dressings and low ground pressure rollers. Modern aeration equipment is quick, effective and non-disruptive.

When setting the environment, remember that the various bentgrass species prefer quite different conditions. Browntop bent requires only moderate levels of stress and disturbance, creeping bent can withstand greater disturbance without stress, while velvet bent can withstand moderate stress but little disturbance. Choose your species carefully.



### Maintaining the establishment of a new green

Here we are trying to minimise the ingress of *Poa annua* into a predominantly bent and fescue sward. Again, MINIMISE DISTURBANCE AND LEVER STRESS. Do not aggressively verticut or groom - the *Poa* will take advantage. Maintain sensible heights of cut. Use your irrigation system to your advantage. Prevent thatch accumulation with regular top dressing integration into the upper soil profile. Enforce pitch mark repair - the fescue component of new greens makes the surface hard and susceptible to pitch mark damage. Close new greens during their first winter. Annual meadow-grass will take advantage of any gaps in the sward. Acidify if necessary.

Henry Bechelet is an STRI Turfgrass Agronomist covering Eastern England. Henry and the rest of the team may be contacted on 01274 565131, email; [info@stri.co.uk](mailto:info@stri.co.uk) or visit our website <http://www.stri.co.uk>

Ronnie Bunting describes the work he has done at Kilmacolm Golf Club and gives some thoughts on environmental management

# ENVIRO

**Over the span of 33 years in golf greenkeeping, 26 as Head Greenkeeper and Course Manager I have always attempted to be positively pro-active within the industry. The following topics are intended to kick start some constructive discussions. Like anyone who sticks his or her head over the parapet, that person becomes a target for praise or ridicule. Through such discussions, the outcome I believe can only be constructive. The following is meant to be food for thought, and not, do as I do!**



Above: Ronnie Bunting

Below: The picture taken below in early August 2001 shows the degree of Fusarium that recovered without any chemical being applied.

Like most Greenkeepers I have an active interest in environmental matters. To this end I have here at Kilmacolm been very successful in bringing attention to members and the general public that the term golf course does not always refer to an area of barren grassland, with wall-to-wall cutting and grass that looks like a Celtic football strip. It can be an area of outstanding beauty not only for quality turf on which to play golf and the scenery but the wildlife that dwells in the out-of-play areas. These we can also manage for the social union of nature and mankind not only by protecting the existing habitat but also by creating new areas of mutual interest with great benefit for all.

There are some golfers who do not appreciate the wonders of nature, as they are blind to all but their game. Only once this loveliness is pointed out to them do they appreciate the importance of their surroundings. I

have found this among many of my members.

In my Environmental portfolio I have addressed a number of topics intended to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals I apply and would like to share some of my thoughts with you. Are we being fair to assume that applications of cure-all's are the correct way to go about our business? What will be the effect in the decades and centuries to come? Remember the after effects of the chemicals used to de-foliate the jungles in Vietnam. An extreme example but it did happen and the results we see today are the evidence to justify that we consider alternatives!

I ask the question. Do we need to use the amount of fertiliser and chemicals we budget for annually? Should we apply preventative sprayings? Do we need to apply nitrogen in such amounts that by doing so creates a flush of growth that disposing of the cuttings creates environmental problems, or applying copulas amounts of nitrate at a rate the plant cannot expect to use and in doing so we contaminate our waterways.

Then comes the after effects, Thatch, Fusarium, Poa Annuua, and the biggest threat of all peoples accep-

tance of the poorer playing standards we ourselves have created. I believe that by using top dressing as a source of nutrition coupled with a little nitrogen and plenty of aeration should be sufficient to retain a healthy and robust sward and produce a much easier kept playing surface.

## Fusarium

We have all experienced this turf disease at some time on our greens, and if you received the same training as I did - blanket treatment must be done as soon as humanly possible. Or spray every six to eight weeks as a preventative. Both veins of thought very much the norm at some golf courses and both very expensive not only in financial terms and man-hours but also in terms of lasting damage to the useful micro organisms and beneficial fungi in the soil. Is there an alternative? I believe there is. If the outbreak is only in certain areas of greens there may be good reasoning to spot treat. If the outbreak is serious during the end of the season going into autumn and justifies blanket treatment so be it. Or it may be that in leaving it alone it will recover without anything being done at all.

A strong healthy infertile bent dominated turf has great resolve. One other operation I feel helps when conditions are such that disease threatens is to scarify tees and greens aprons and verti-cutting greens, opening the base of the sward allowing air in and therefore keeping it drier I feel helps considerably. How often does it seem that attacks of Fusarium on the greens starts in the surrounds? I have never sprayed fungicide on tees or aprons.





# POLICIES

## Leather Jackets

My opinions on the damage done by these grubs may be probably singular but it is based on my observations over many years. Fact, I have never seen turf stress caused by this insect. The only damage I have seen is caused by birds in search of them. This I believe is a bit like the angler finding a beautiful loch



and knowing there should be fish in it but only after six or eight hours of fruitless fishing asks the question I wonder if there are any trout in here!

On the greens I don't see the bird damage as a major problem as greens are either cut or rolled or switched every day, dispersing any debris. A similar approach I adopt to tees and surrounds and fairways. The semi rough tends to show some lasting damage but it is caused again by the birds searching for the grubs and not by the larvae. Even this damage recovers very soon when the soil temperature allows some growth. To back up the above statements, during the spring of 1999 I noticed there was more bird activity than usual.

At the spring outing of the Scottish West Section I started a discussion based on the above scenario with some of my colleagues and was left in no doubt they felt I should have sprayed with insecticide on a preventative basis as they had done.

Please bare in mind at no time was the playing qualities of my course questioned. (Greenkeepers outings are one of the main sources of constructive education I know).

The following day I talked to my staff and told them of the conversa-

tions that took place. My assistant, John Hart, suggested we mark an area of one metre square on the 13th green surround (an area which usually gets some bird activity) and watch for turf stress during the season. Once the grubs were leaving the soil to metamorphose into Daddy Long Legs we would take a daily basis count of the vacated sheaths within this area. This

we did and over a two week period within the marked area 229 vacated sheaths were counted.

At no time during the spring or summer was there any sign of stress this included a very dry August. I feel this begs the question. Do we wage chemical warfare unjustly on, leather jackets, soil organisms, other innocent insects, birds and their young, golfers, the general public, course staff, etc?

Soaking this part of my 13th green and covering it overnight with hessian sacking has highlighted the infestation of leatherjackets during the last week in March 2000. The amount visible would generally demand an application of pesticide. Fact! No insecticide was used and at no time during the season were any of my greens to show any effects of turf stress.

## Weeds and worms

If you have cast forming worms you will almost inevitably have weeds; the worm cast is the ideal seedbed. Following the banning of chlordane it is my opinion that only cultural controls are left, because in the very near future even the remaining less effective but just as toxic worm killers have to be applied on a more regular basis will be banned. Therefore I think we had better prepare for the inevitable. Lowering the pH to a level creating a more acidic soil making it more uncomfortable for the poor worm, gently inviting them to go elsewhere. Anywhere other than turf earthworms are of a great benefit.

I now only spray rosette type weeds on fairways tees and semi rough, Daisy, Dandelion, Cats Ear, Hawk

bit, White Clover patches and these only in certain circumstances by spot treatments where possible. In doing allows Viola, Spotted Moorland Orchids, Lousewort etc to flourish. Other weeds in my turf are Heath Bedstraw, Pearlwort, Field Woodrush etc these are kept in check by scarifying they co-exist quite well in the heathland turf.

The biggest weed problem at Kilmaccolm was Bracken; we undertook to control this plant in the areas out-of-play to allow a greater diversity of plant species. The results have been quite spectacular not only did we increase the type of plants but also the variety of bird life to feed on them. In total we controlled 27 acres these areas we map and treat any regeneration systematically keeping detailed records of its regeneration and treatments. It is still allowed to be part of the collage of colour that exists in the mixed flora and is still an important and valued part of the landscape, but it has to be monitored to ensure it never again dominates to the extent of creating a mono-culture.

Molinia caerulea or Purple Moorgrass is a problem because it is slowly replacing the native Heather that has been weakened by heather beetle and the ageing process. Due to the shallow rock mechanical solutions are all but impossible. Following the visit of the judges for the BIGGA Environmental Competition we discussed introducing grazing of out-of-play areas to our management in doing so we would redress the conditions favouring the heather at the expense of the Molinia. The implications of such a move have still to be discussed at committee level. It seems a clear case of "do we want to keep our heather and if we do this is the only way we can do it".

Nettles There are a few different types, Whitehead Nettle, Reddead Nettle, Stinging Nettle etc. All of which has differing environmental, values dependent on the classification of being, Common, Frequent, Rare, and Very Rare. We have only one small patch of Stinging Nettle on the entire course therefore it is classed as Very Rare and as one would assume it is of high environmental value particularly to the Beautiful Peacock and Red Admiral species of butterfly both of which is on serious decline. The site of this patch is only

two meters off our 1st tee. The requests, even demands, to have it trimmed down or sprayed out, come on an annual basis. This is also the case of Spear and Marsh Thistles sited in various out of play areas. To see Gold Finches in healthy numbers feeding on the downy seed, picking off every individual piece of down before eating the seed is one of nature's wondrous sights.

My feelings towards the people who make the above request are two fold. Explaining the environmental benefits and my reasoning are accepted and they are impressed by my knowledge and caring attitude, or on the other hand some say we don't care just get rid of them. Such are the highs and lows of being a concerned individual. I must point out the latter being very much the minority.

If I were to estimate the savings on Chemicals, Time, Storage, Container disposal, etc I'm sure it would run into tens of thousands of pounds over the last five years. If it were possible to measure the feel good factor for achieving something which in the long run will benefit golfers and the general public's opinion of the Golf Industry, and also the earth born companions that we share our golf courses with. The rating would certainly be very high.

To conclude may I take this opportunity to promote the good intentions of the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group, and the "Committed to Green" Organisation, from whom we haven't heard much of lately.

The most imaginative of all the reasons behind the creation of BIGGA, was the in-house education delivered by people who have training down to an art form.

BIGGA administers ongoing self-development programmes to enable golf Greenkeepers to become more professional and get more respect, with the end result being better conditioned golf courses.

I personally have used the regional training courses to the full and I have reaped the benefit in many ways. I am astonished that over the past few years we have had these courses reduced and many cancelled not because of the lack of creativeness on the part of BIGGA or due to golf clubs not willing to pay, but due to lack of interest from Greenkeepers.

In the first of a two-part article, Peter Jefford and Mick Higgins of Rufford, talk about the benefits of top dressings and the importance of testing in order to establish compatibility with the existing rootzone

# TESTING TIMES



Above. Peter Jefford, a well known face in the industry

Below. Particle size is of key importance

A frustratingly unpredictable climate, economic pressures and increasing numbers of players all demanding perfect playing conditions seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year. It's all a far cry from the challenges faced by greenkeepers 30 years ago and leaves today's successors nursing some major headaches.

Establishing consistency and quality in such a fast changing industry is the key to creating successful greens - and that is all about testing.

## Definition

Before we go any further, let's stop and consider exactly what we mean by the term topdressings and why they play an essential role for greenkeepers today.

A farmer would interpret topdressing to mean the surface application of fertiliser (usually nitrogen) to a grow-

ing crop. However in the turfgrass industry the term topdressing is used almost exclusively to describe the surface application of sand, soil, organic material or any combination of these.

So why are topdressings necessary? We all know that long-term maintenance of high quality fine turf on golf and bowling greens is extremely difficult, especially given the factors mentioned in the opening paragraph. Greens only account for a very small percentage of the total surface area of a golf course - but every single player ultimately ends up there, resulting in a frightening rate of concentrated foot traffic.

However, frequent application of an appropriate topdressing will assist a greenkeeper greatly by providing the following benefits:

1. It helps maintain a smooth, true running surface which in turn improves mowing efficiency
2. In conjunction with scarification, it will avoid thatch build-up
3. Enables you to control organic matter content, water infiltration and aeration
4. It's essential in maintaining or increasing rootzone depth
5. Improves germination on over-seeded areas
6. Improves or sustains appropriate soil texture

But you must remember that topdressings add to and become part of the rootzone. Over a period of years topdressings will either alter or sustain the physical (and to some extent biological) properties of rootzones. That's why it's essential to test and establish a green's existing profile before you can select and apply an appropriate topdressing.

## Compatibility

You can't take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach when it comes to applying topdressings. Because they eventually become part of the rootzone they

logically need to have similar composition and properties. For the majority of golf greens this means a particle size composition dominant in medium sand. But this is only a general guide - it's still essential to use a topdressing that's compatible with your existing rootzone. If you don't then you could be in trouble.

There's no way that a topdressing supplier can claim that they have a good product for you without first of all testing your greens. That's because there's no such thing as a universally 'good' topdressing - what might be right for one course could be completely wrong for another because applying a mismatched topdressing can cause major layering problems to the rootzone profile. A major risk is the creation of layers of different pore size systems within shallow depths of the rootzone. If this happens then water retention and air/water balance will be affected and also rooting depth. The frightening fact is that this problem won't become apparent for several years, by which time it may be impossible to rectify through cultivation techniques.

## Guesswork

It's so frustrating when people cut corners through either cost constraints or lack of awareness, because they end up undoing the years of work that have gone before them to create a great green. It doesn't have to be guesswork when it comes to determining the compatibility of a topdressing and a rootzone - it's not a blind date! The only answer is to test. And that's what we've built the Rufford business on.

To illustrate this in practical terms we'll take a specific example of one of our customers. By testing we were able to establish that their greens contained a lot of fine material with around 40% or more in particles smaller than 250 µm.





At the time, the greenkeeper's topdressing was predominantly in the medium band but contained over 30% in the coarse band, three to six diameters greater than the dominant fine sand in the rootzone. Hence the fine sand in the soil was interpacking with the coarse sand in the top dressing, thereby reducing total porosity and thus the efficiency of its effect in improving the physical characteristics of the rootzone.

This information enabled us to recommend a topdressing through which to reinforce the dominant useful sand grades in the rootzone (ie fine and medium sand) thereby arriving at a solution with a medium particle diameter of around 280µm, of uniform particle size (D90/D10 less than 3) and with virtually all particles in the fine and medium sand ranges.

#### The Testing Process Explained

Our whole testing process starts with a visit to the club. We usually take samples from three greens (a good one, poor and average) using a

core sampler which takes a plug from the top 100mm of the profile. Other information is determined at the same time, for example the depth of the rootzone, any layering present and also the character of the soil or permeable material beneath the rootzone.

The samples are then sealed and sent over to our in-house Minerals Development Centre, at Oakamoor, in Staffordshire, for analysis. Tests are carried out here to determine particle size distribution, pH and organic matter content.

We then take these results and feed them into our computer software. This in turn produces a full analysis that includes, amongst other elements:

- Particle size distribution on full and half octave sieve sizes
- D values which can be used to calculate the gradation index (D90/D10) or used to ensure bridging characteristics with suitable gravels
- Effective particle size (D<sub>eff</sub>)

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# TESTING TIMES



Above. A scene witnessed regularly on golf courses everywhere

Below. Testing begins with a 100mm core from three greens.

We can then use this information to identify a top-dressing from our range that either matches a good rootzone or improves a poor one.

### The 70:30 myth

People who just ask for a 70:30 sand/soil mix in their topdressing (or

any other ratio for that matter) don't realise what lottery punters they are. This specification tells you nothing about the quality of the sand in terms of lime content, grading and conductivity, nor anything about the soil which could range from peat-based to a heavy clay content.

A purchaser should be able to request the precise analysis of the topdressing in terms of: particle size; amount of silt/clay; organic matter content and lime.

### Feeling the Heat

Another important point to mention is that any topdressing you buy should be heat-treated. If it's too wet or damp then it tends to clog together or simply lies on the surface making an even application impossible. Not to mention the fact that if your topdressing is wet then you're effectively paying your supplier for water!

In terms of applying topdressing, frequent light applications are always advisable wherever practical. This enables fast integration, prevents

layering and avoids smothering grass in spring or autumn when growth is slow. It's become common practice to apply four to six topdressings of 0.5 - 1 kilogram/m<sup>2</sup> (1 - 2 lb/sq yd) during the growing season. Such amounts can be applied quickly and brushed in - you can therefore avoid significant disruption to play!

### Confident

We can confidently say that our approach has produced positive results for golf and bowling clubs throughout the UK. In fact we're so confident in the benefits of testing that we frequently give talks and lectures about it at colleges, universities, golf clubs and branch meetings of professional bodies including BIGGA and the IOG.

After all, you don't get to establish long-term relationships with the likes of Wentworth, Sunningdale and Royal Birkdale on guesswork!

Peter Jefford is Rufford's General Manager, while Mick Higgins is QA and Technical Manager. Rufford has been supplying topdressings, rootzones and a full range of complementary products to the sports turf industry since 1987. You can find more information and technical advice at [www.rufford.com](http://www.rufford.com) telephoning 01477 572462.

**We will be featuring another article from Mick and Peter about rootzones later in the year.**



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BIGGA  
**ESSAY**  
COMPETITION

**Richard Clarke, of Royal Eastbourne Golf Club won the Assistants' Over 25 Category in the 2001 BIGGA Essay Competition with this fine composition.**

# POA ANNUA FRIEND OR FOE?

Recently, in a greenkeeping article on grasses for greens, a caption on poa annua started with 'poa annua is a serious problem for many greenkeepers; but is this really the case? There have, I'm sure, been many heated discussions throughout the greenkeeping profession surrounding the subject, from messrooms to green committees not only up and down the country but also across the world. What's more, the question has been asked for many years; are we any nearer to knowing the real answer, if indeed there is a definitive one? This article aims to put forward an answer even if it is only my own personal opinion!

It is essential firstly to explain a little about 'poa annua' or 'annual meadow grass' as it is more commonly known. A tufted grass, which thrives in all soil types, poa annua has the ability to set seed nearly all year round. It is the commonest unsown grass species found on British golf courses and is found in two forms; the more common annual plant subspecies 'erecta' which is upright growing and secondly the subspecies 'reptans' which is either an annual, biennial or short-lived perennial creeping plant. The leaves of the plant are soft, often crinkled when young with long, smooth leaf sheaths.

Generally, leaves tend to be of a light green appearance although the creeping perennials can be a much darker green. The leaves are short with visible tramlines and rather blunt at the boat shaped tips, soft and drooping. In mature plants the thin erect stem rises from six to ten inches with a triangular shaped panicle two or three inches long.

The spikelets are all stalked and loosely arranged on the spreading branches. The name is from the Greek 'poa', meaning fodder.

Let us consider now some of poa annua's advantages and disadvan-

tages, as far as today's greenkeeper is concerned.

I am constantly reminded when attending college classes that 'poa annua' is an undesirable weed grass, yet if we took away this grass overnight from our golf course, we would have significantly less coverage and I'm sure a lot more complaints from unimpressed golfers! In an ideal world we would, as professionals, like to work everyday with the very best; the finer bents and fescues. However, this is not always possible. I don't think that we should encourage the spread of poa but we as professional greenkeepers would not be competent at our jobs if we were not always striving for better playing conditions and surfaces.

So, when does "poa annua" become our 'friend'? As already mentioned, one of its main advantages is its ability to spread by seed nearly all year round thus thickening the sward density and aiding an all year round playing surface; this it does rapidly, another bonus to the greenkeeper. We can all relate to this year's late growth due to the heavy rainfall and cool ground conditions; poa annua gives a good early spring injection of growth and this was certainly required this year; the average golf club fixture list does not normally cater for climatic conditions!

Although textbooks show that poa annua is a shallow rooted grass, given the opportunity by using time honoured management practices it can generate a fairly deep root zone, unquestionably an essential requirement for a healthy sward. Wear and tear is an increasingly significant problem for today's greenkeeper and poa has this in its favour, with its ability to re-generate quickly throughout the year. It tolerates close mowing and again, if the correct management practices such as brushing and verticutting are carried out, can provide a

satisfactory putting surface. It may also be argued that the average golfer is only interested in a firm, true, consistent putting surface and not necessarily what type of grasses are present in the sward. Most would certainly not be concerned about the difference between poa annua and creeping bent grass. This required surface can be achieved with poa dominated greens if the correct practices are carried out, these being regular aeration to relieve compaction and aid drainage, brushing to improve sward density, switching to restrict disease and spongy surfaces, verticutting and scarifying to aid air flow and increase tillering.

I remember attending a college class in which the lecturer was astounded to hear that many of today's top golf courses have a heavy percentage of poa annua in their greens!! It has also been known for some courses to attempt to hand weed poa from their greens, but often it is a losing battle, so is this really a cost effective use of resources? The quality of playing surfaces expected at a pay as you play public course will of course differ from that of a championship golf course; this too must be taken into account.

Having looked at reasons why poa annua could be labelled a greenkeepers friend', let us look at the other side of the coin. The underlying factor is that poa hinders us as professional greenkeepers from developing and maintaining swards with the desired fescue and bent species, grasses which in an ideal environment do provide the golfer with the ultimate playing surface. These are the types of grasses which we must strive to encourage and develop.

Poa annua is highly susceptible to fusarium patch disease which is probably our most common and damaging disease, a problem which can be both time consuming, damaging and

# POA ANNUA

expensive; if untreated, the large areas of playing surfaces can be disrupted, weakened or even, at worst, lost. Annual meadow grass inevitably results in a weakened sward which will also be prone to thatch build-up and compaction; two major problem areas for greenkeepers. This results in spongy, soggy winter surfaces as both water and air fight to enter the sub-soil of the surface. These adverse conditions usually arise because of ongoing inattention to basics such as frequent appropriate aeration and soil amelioration. This can result in a disruption to play, a problem in today's environment as members expect to be able to play all year round.

Another disadvantage is that poa encourages a slower playing surface as well as an inconsistent one; poa peaks at certain times of the year. Because of its generally shallow-rooted structure drought resistance is low. This in turn results in more water having to be produced for the surface, which only encourages more poa; it can be a vicious cycle.

It is such an opportunist grass that even if approved management practices are regularly carried out poa still finds a way into the sward. Its ability to seed nearly all year round results in an on-going battle to eliminate its establishment; moreover, it has been suggested that poa seeds can remain in the sub-soil for up to ten years!

In my opinion much of the answer to the underlying question of "Poa annua - friend or foe?" lies in what type of golf club one works at. How a greenkeeper views poa annua will surely relate to the mechanical and manual resources available to him. Sadly, like many things in this life, money comes into the equation! A golf course with a limited budget will find it much harder to eliminate poa than a top class establishment which has more machinery and staff; for example, as mentioned previously, hand-weeding poa annua from greens is generally not a task most greenkeeping teams would have time to carry out.

Perhaps it is a question of working with what nature gives us and making the best out of what we have available. I am certainly not encouraging the development of poa annua, it is I feel more realistic to take a long-term approach. All efforts to encourage the finer grasses should be carried out by approved management practices, resulting in an environment where they can compete against poa annua. This would involve regular aeration, grooming, verti-cutting, scarification, careful use of water and fertilisers (especially phosphates which tend to encourage poa). In the meantime, if swards are poa dominated then a good playing surface can be achieved through regular brushing and light top dressings, together with the above practices.

Resources can be used much more efficiently getting the most out of what surfaces one already has in place rather than constantly fighting against nature.

Many greenkeepers have experienced how plant breeding has seen the emergence of dwarf rye grasses and how their qualities differ to that of the rye grasses available 30 years ago; could it be that in the future the results of genetic engineering will see greenkeepers using poa strains resistant to disease and low drought tolerance?

To summarise, it looks as if poa annua is very much here to stay, for the meantime anyway; so why not work with it rather than against it? Surely a grass that has as many attributes as discussed cannot be dismissed so harshly? Golf courses throughout the country would certainly suffer aesthetically and from a playability point of view without poa annua. It can be in many ways our friend. However, it must always be treated as an undesirable grass and we as professionals should only be interested in encouraging the finer fescue and bent grasses, after all, we would not be very competent at our jobs if we didn't!

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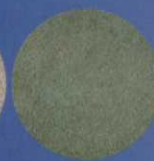
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# TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on feeding regimes

## Feeding Regimes

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: John Crawford  
Club: Stirling GC  
Region: Scotland  
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)  
Staff: Course Manager, plus four, one apprentice and two skill seekers



Name: Richard Gamble  
Club: Aldwark Manor Hotel Golf and Country Club  
Region: Northern  
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)  
Staff: Course Manager, plus four, plus gardener



Name: Ian Needham  
Club: Beedles Lakes, Leicester  
Region: Midland  
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)  
Staff: Course Manager, plus four



Name: Lee Strutt MG  
Club: Richmond GC, Surrey  
Region: South East  
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)  
Staff: Course Manager, plus five, plus two part-time



Name: Jeff Mills  
Club: Taunton and Pickeridge, Somerset  
Region: South West and South Wales  
Course Type: Hilltop (Limestone base)  
Staff: Course Manager, plus four



Name: Patrick Devine  
Club: Carrickfergus GC  
Region: Northern Ireland  
Course Type: Parkland (18 holes)  
Staff: Head Greenkeeper plus four

1. Do you plan your feeding programme well in advance or wait to assess weather and ground conditions?

1. I always plan a couple of months in advance and then, of course, have to see what the weather and ground conditions bring along

1. I plan a feeding programme two or three months before the growing season after consultation with our agronomist and then, of course, keep an eye on the weather and ground conditions.

1. I wait to assess weather and ground conditions before deciding on a feeding programme. We have very dry conditions and never come off the greens.

1. I plan three or four months ahead, but then it depends on the weather and time of the year. Last year's regime and soil analysis, which we do each year, is also taken into consideration.

1. I have a rough idea and then I always work according to the weather. Nothing is set in concrete.

1. I plan ahead and then take into account weather and ground conditions.



# HEADS

2. Can you explain your philosophy with regard to feeding?

3. Does your course lend itself to an across the board approach or do you require different policies for different areas?

4. Are you considering a more organic approach to your feeding programmes or if you have already done so what led you to doing so?

5. Can you foresee any major changes affecting your feeding policies over the next five years?

2. I am a big believer in the "little and often" theory. We get a lot of rain so fertilisers leech through quickly at times and so we have to put a bit more on.

3. We need a different policy programme as we have one pure sand green, two USGA greens and 15 of the traditional soil base which were constructed nearly 150 years ago.

4. A more organic approach may be on the way though it depends on environmental issues. We haven't gone down that road so far, but I have tried seaweed and had encouraging results with it.

5. Not really. Much will depend on government legislation. If they decide on a more organic approach then we will need to change. If they don't then things may continue much as they are today.

2. Peaks and troughs sum it up. I like a good kick start at the beginning of the growing season and then basically follow a "little and often" theory. I like to tickle things up every five to six weeks.

3. We have a different policy for two of our greens, the 13th and 18th with a little more fertiliser. I fertilise the other 16 greens four or five times a year and half the fairways once a year. The other half are near the river and they grown very well without fertilisers.

4. Yes. We are more aware these days of the need for a more organic programme, but I have to say we get good results with ordinary granular fertilisers and have done over the years.

5. I can't foresee any major changes. I always keep an eye on new products coming on the market and many clubs have changed to liquid organic fertilisers. I have tried them but haven't been impressed to be frank and so stick to tried and tested methods.

2. We feed as and when required. Our greens are very unusual in that they are built on probase (graded ash) which comes from power stations near Gainsborough. We cut at five mil throughout the year and the greens are never wet.

3. All the greens get the same treatment. We feed fairways once a year with 20-10-10 and tees and surrounds twice a year.

4. We are not considering a more organic approach. I have tried organic fertilisers but they don't seem to work, although I don't know why. We stick to the traditional fertilisers.

5. No. We get the best response from granular fertilisers. I have tried liquids, but they don't work very well.

2. In a nutshell we feed little and often. The regime is geared to plant recovery following competitions when there may be more wear and tear. If there is we obviously give it some feed.

3. Across the board, although soil analysis identifies weak areas and so we can re-adjust if needs be. We have a baseline and then touch up if necessary.

4. Not bothered if it is organic or inorganic because it makes little difference. We have used a product for the last two years and achieved good results. I have used both and am not biased one way or the other.

5. Not really. In the last five years I have reduced the feeding programme for the first three years considerably and then had a minimum feed for the last two. I don't see any major changes, apart from seasonal differences.

2. As little as possible and just enough to keep a full cover. I use only 45 kilos of fertiliser for the 18 greens (approx one hectare).

3. Different policies for different areas. I feed greens and tees a little, but I want to keep natural bents so don't feed fairways at all.

4. I have been organically based since I started greenkeeping 28 years ago with seaweed and hoof and horn products for example. I have used some slow release fertilisers on tees.

5. No. It is not necessary to change, but I must add that I am always looking at new products and am not averse to change. I will always try something if it comes on the market.

2. As little as possible and just enough to keep the grass alive. It's a vast change compared with 30 years ago when we used to lash the fertiliser on!

3. I fertilise greens and tees perhaps three times in a growing season and once in winter. But I only fertilise the fairways once every three years. We have had four USGA sand based greens constructed and the other 14 will also be changed in due course so the regime will alter then.

4. Yes. I am concerned about artificial fertilisers and what they do to the environment. Products such as seaweed, hoof and horn and dried blood are very good in my view.

5. Yes. We will have extra staff in due course and that will give us the opportunity to use more organic materials as we will have more time to mix the materials by hand.

## Greenkeeper International takes a look at the news and the very latest products and services available from the fine turf industry

Email press releases about new products to:  
**scott@bigga.co.uk**

### New seed concept from Cebeco

An innovative new concept that combines top quality perennial rye grasses with a phased release fertiliser is poised to help golf course, amenity and sports turf managers who are under pressure to renovate turf. Nutriseed, developed by specialist seed breeder and leading amenity seed company Cebeco Seeds, has already been independently tested by both the STRI and Holland's national Institute of Sport in Papendal. They both recorded a faster emergence and a higher turf density.

The perennial rye grasses used in Nutriseed are Cebeco's best varieties, all of which are listed in the STRI Grass Seed Guide for use on winter sports pitches. The fertiliser is a phased combination of fast and slower working nitrogen, together with a specialist formulation of phosphate compounds giving higher absorption rates. A combination of nitrogen with phosphate, potassium, magnesium and iron provide an ideal relationship between growth and development. By offering fertiliser at this crucial early stage, exactly where it is needed, uptake of nutrients is optimised. The leaching out of Nitrogen can also be an issue, as the fertiliser is normally on top of the playing surface. The phosphate can also directly influence the growing process, since this is an essential element for the seedling phase and the development of the roots. So by overseeding, an existing sward that has insufficient phosphate can also be improved.

For further information  
 Tel: 01522 507300

### Nairn Brown appoints Robert as new MD

Robert McEwan has been appointed as Managing Director of Nairn Brown Ltd, John Deere's commercial & consumer equipment dealership for the west of Scotland, based at Busby near Glasgow.

Robert has been with the company since 1974, and has been closely involved with its transition over the past few years from retail and distribution, to professional and commercial machinery sales and service.

Nairn Brown, who started the business in 1965, is remaining as Chairman. "I am particularly pleased to hand over the day to day running of the company to Robert, who is a first-class organiser and knows the business inside out. In turn, he is very lucky to have a well focused and knowledgeable staff behind him. Our business has been transformed since we became John Deere grounds care dealers in 1996, and Robert has played a major part in this development."

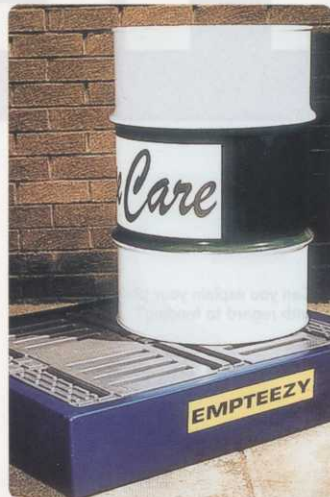
### Safe storage from Empteezy

A new range of polyethylene can trays, provide a compact, convenient and safe storage solution for 25 litre drums of liquids used in agricultural and horticultural environments, has been introduced by drum storage and waste handling specialist Empteezy Limited.

Made from tough, medium density polyethylene, the can trays have broad band chemical compatibility, and with three models in the range, providing a safe bunded storage area for either one, two or four 25 litre drums, they are ideal in areas where space is limited.

The smaller can trays CAN25 and CAN50 have a 27.5 litre sump capacity while the CAN 100 has a 100 litre capacity. All models have a plastic deck to ensure that the drum does not come into contact with any liquid. With delivered (mainland UK) prices from £57.50 these latest addition to Empteezy's range provides a simple, cost-effective way for you to comply with the new Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations, Duty of Care and environmental audit standards such as ISO 14001.

For further information  
 Tel: 01506430309



### Shibaura's new Greens mower

Shibaura's 560mm (22") greens mower closely follows ground contours. Designed to give a championship finish on courses, the mower has a 127mm (5") diameter, 11 blade cutting reel. To avoid compacting the grass, the front roller is grooved - giving a cleaner, sharper cut which helps to keep the sward healthy. The interlocking groomer, which rotates clockwise or anti-clockwise, can be disengaged completely if turf conditions require it.

The greens mower's fixed head design allows a true cutting height between 3.2mm and 25mm to be achieved. An angled bottom blade is offset to reduce turf stress - and a minimum cutting height of 2.8mm can be attained if the optional tournament blade is fitted.

Powered by a 4.0hp Robin single cylinder OHV, air cooled engine,



there is a 3.6 litres petrol fuel tank. Ideal for professional use, the strong mower has a frame manufactured from pressed steel and a polyethylene grass collector.

For further information  
 Tel: 01244 671166

### Feeling the pressure?

With the increasing demands put on farmers for cleanliness and better farm hygiene in mind Allman has added to its range of petrol driven high pressure washers.

The new range consists of five models ranging from a low cost budget 4HP 1750 PSI unit through to a heavy duty commercial 13HP 3500 PSI industrial class cold water washer, with three intermediate models in between. Each model is powered by proven Honda 4 stroke petrol engines mounted on rubber anti

vibration blocks and are direct coupled to a Comet high performance piston pumps. These units are in turn mounted on twin wheeled trolley units with tubed pneumatic tyres, thus making them very portable and easy to wheel about. Quick connect spray tips mounted onto the lances allow the operator to switch from one type of jet to another.

For further information  
 Tel: 01243 512511



### Low vibrations from Tanaka

Farm & Garden Machinery has introduced the NEW Tanaka TBC 4200DLV - with special Low-Vib handle system - which has been independently put through its paces under full operating conditions.

Local authorities and professionals will appreciate the significant reduction that has been made to Hand Arm Vibration (HAMS) levels on this 40cc brush cutter, allowing safe and comfortable use for extended periods. Tanaka builds quality into its range of power equipment from the inside out.

HSE Solutions applied the latest standards of ISO 5349 Part 2 when

independently testing the cutter - they used three different operators to test the machine under three different sets of working conditions.

Results proved highly favourable, achieving an average of 2.1m/s<sup>2</sup> when using the CH100 alloy head. An operator could use the machine for more than eleven hours without risk of exposure to HAMS.

Totally committed to supplying innovative products at very affordable prices, the NEW TBC 4200DLV costs just £489 incl VAT.

For further information  
 Tel: 0800 389 5057

# Kawasaki unveil latest ATV development

The latest development in ATV technology from Kawasaki has just arrived in the UK.

The KVF360-A has it all for the working market and sits right in the middle of of the Kawasaki model line-ups.

"This machine has everything the working market has been asking for and as far as we're concerned, it's another winner and a machine that's going to take some beating," enthused Jack Ford, European Sales and Marketing Manager for Kawasaki Commercial Products.

"Its all-round specification has been improved and with the performance and reliability just getting better and better, the working agricultural, local authority, utility and equestrian markets are in for a very pleasant surprise," he added.

The 362 cc (hp), four-stroke, single cylinder automatic comes with engine braking as well as an internal rear braking system. This development is designed to enhance the braking capabilities and handling



characteristics when riding on steep downhill gradients.

Following the arrival on the UK ATV scene of Kawasaki's, KVF650-A last summer, the launch of the KVF360-A is regarded as a natural

addition to the family with its bigger brother attracting the attention of the heavyweight ATV sectors.

**For further information  
Tel: 01285 654777**

# New rotary mower in line-up from Claymore

Included in the Claymore 2002 line up, is the Stella RD-56 Pro. This high performance and incredibly tough rotary mower sets new standards for the professional user where reliability and high productivity are paramount.

The RD-56 is a rear discharge 55cm (22in) cut machine powered by a Honda GXV270 5.5hp four stroke OHV industrial engine. Three forward and one reverse speeds are provided through a heavy gear shift transmission and differential axle.

A unique feature is the third speed being a transport gear, so when selected it automatically cuts out the blade drive and reduces the engine speed to tick over.

The high gearing still allows the machine to travel quickly yet quietly to the next cutting area. Selecting

a mowing gear reverts the unit back to normal use.

Height of cut is adjustable through four settings from 28-75mm. Big 7 litre fuel tank cuts refuelling time and adjustable ergonomic handlebars provide operator comfort.

Large diameter 270x75mm rear wheels make child's play of rougher areas and the belt drive system ensures crankshaft protection in the event of sudden obstacles being encountered. A high degree of manoeuvrability is achieved through the fitting of front swivelling 175 x 45mm castor wheels.

A large 95 litre capacity grass catcher is supplied as standard all for a RRP of £1695 plus VAT.

**For further information  
Tel: 01865 820731**



# Local solution for Ganton

Ganton GC has recently taken delivery of their new 400 litre demount unit, which has been specially designed for their Cushman Workman, by Vale Engineering (York) Limited.

Ganton was introduced to Vale Engineering by David Kerr, of Cropwise Limited, who manages the Amenity Division and provides technical information and supplies amenity products to the club.

"When Philip Baldock, Head Greenkeeper at Ganton Golf Club approached me regarding a new sprayer, I thought that Vale Engineering (York) Limited would be the better option for him, simply because you get a sprayer built to suit your requirements, rather than the

customer having to adapt to suit the manufacturer's specification."

Vale Engineering (York) Limited specialise in the building of bespoke spraying equipment in the Amenity Sector.

"Vale Engineering are in the fortunate position of not being tied into one single component manufacturer, this means that we can cherry pick the most suitable components to the customers requirements," said James Wilson, Design Engineer for Vale Engineering.

Ganton's new sprayer is a 400 litre demount with 4.5 metre shrouded booms it has a clean water wash tank system with twin wash heads, a bout marker, electric controls and stainless steel induction hopper.



"We selected Vale Engineering to supply our new sprayer as they were able to build to our specifications at a very competitive price. The fact that they are a local company was also important when placing our order. In effect, we bought a bespoke sprayer at an 'off the peg' price!" said Philip Baldock.

# New Selby-based Managers for Textron

Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products have strengthened their new Selby branch operation with the introduction of two new Area Sales Managers, Glen Sawyer and Theo Wilson, who will be responsible for territories that encompass South, West and North Yorkshire.



Above: Glen (left) and Theo (right)

Glen Sawyer has 15 years experience in the grounds care industry and joins the company from machinery specialists K & M Mowers of Hull, where he was Area Sales Manager with responsibility for South and West Yorkshire.

Theo Wilson joins the Textron team from Renault Agriculture where he worked in a similar area sales management role. He has been in the grounds care industry for many years, in fact, from the age of fifteen when he left school to join the family business. He then formed and ran his own company for eight years before joining Gibsons Machinery Sales, where he was a colleague of Glen Sawyer.

If you've got an email account, and want to keep up to date with the latest news and events from the turf care industry, drop us an email, and we'll add you to our ever increasing list of online subscribers. We'll then inform you of any forthcoming features and events via email.

Simply send an email to:

**updates@bigga.co.uk**

quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest - it's that easy!

# New dealer appointed

Bomford has appointed IAM Agricultural Machinery Ltd as its exclusive distributor for the whole of Ireland.

Bomford's, market-leading range of 3-point linkage/axle bracket mounted equipment and the products will compliment its new distributor's existing agriculture machinery business. Extensive product, parts and service training will be provided to the distributor and their dealer network at Bomford's training centre at Salford Priors.

# New base for Rickerby

Rickerby Limited, the Textron dealer for northern England, southwest Scotland and the Borders, has moved its grounds care service centre from Dumfries to Castle Douglas, as part of its West Coast improvement initiative. The new facility, which is 18 miles west of the previous service centre, is now located in a more central position within the southern Scotland territory. The new site offers a broader range of services including a full grinding workshop and larger workshop space, specifically for major repairs and winter overhauls.

The relocation means that Rickerby Limited now have Service Centres based in Castle Douglas, Carlisle, Hexham and Alnwick.



**Scottish Region**  
Peter Boyd  
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

**West**

Welcome to this month's newsletter. I am sure you will all have completed your Winter programmes and have your courses in pristine condition for the start of the season. What with all this fine weather we have been having since the middle of January? Hopefully we will all have a good season and be blessed with a fine Spring and Summer.

Football first. A second seven a side match was played between the greenkeepers and the Ibrox ground staff on February 18. The result was a 4-4 draw. Gerry tells me that the Ibrox boys were much fitter than they were in the first game and also had an extra team member which might explain the difference in the score line from the first game which ended 9-1 to the greenkeepers. Or could it have been that two of the greenkeepers key players were missing? The team on the night consisted of Chris Kerr, Gerry Bruen, Stuart Taylor, Alastair Taylor, Brian Hillen, Ian Smith & Stephen Brown. I am sure the tighter score line made for a much more competitive and enjoyable game.

On February 26 an educational visit was arranged at Stewart's turf farm at North Berwick. The greenkeepers who attended were given an insight into the running of a turf farm and some of the problems which can occur. One problem they do share in common with most golf courses in this area is a continual battle to control the spread of annual meadow grass in their turf. At present they are trying to suppress the seeding of annual meadow grass by treating the turf with Scoff's Shortcut. The Farm Manager informed us that they were testing different application rates and spray intervals and that they have already seen some positive benefits from using this product. After visiting the farm we were shown round the Stewart's depot at Dalkeith. Of particular interest were the composting process used in developing Kelpie and the amount of plant used in their top dressing facility. I, and the committee, would like to thank everyone at Stewarts who took the time to talk to us on the day and especially to Robert Bruce for being our host and chief organiser of the event. I am sure we will all see the photos in the near future!

On February 19 a small panel of committee members and Peter Boyd, our Regional Administrator, visited Langside College to discuss some of the benefits that joining the Association offered. The students presented us with some interesting questions on what the Association was trying to achieve especially with regards to the recommended wage scale and the cross matching of SVQ's and academically achieved qualifications such as the HNC. Hopefully we will have encouraged some of the young greenkeepers who weren't members to join the Association.

Some new members are to be welcomed to the Section these being David Eardley and Philip Barclay, Hilton Park GC; Nichol Barry, Whitecraigs GC; Mark Cummine, Buchanan Castle GC; John Thorburn, Windyhill GC; Graeme Latto and Wilson Wallace, Milnegavie GC, and Peter Robertson, Bothwell Castle GC. We hope to see you all at our up and coming social events.

Some dates for your calendar are April 4 when the Aitkens 1 SGM Greensomes match will be held at Lenzie GC. This tournament was originally set up to give greenkeepers and their new convenors a chance to get to know one another in a relaxed atmosphere and always proves to be a most enjoyable day. Once again the committee on behalf of the Section members would like to thank both sponsors for their continued support of this event.

On April 25 our Spring outing will be held at Millport GC. Please try and get all your entries to Sandy before the closing date as a charge will be made on all late entries.

All members who held a number in the 100 Club last year will have received a mail shot asking if you would like to retain the same number. If you do wish to retain your number please send your £5 onto Sandy as soon as possible or your number may be re-allocated.

Well that's all folks. Again, if you would like anything added to the column please do not hesitate to call me on 01355266862.

Brian Bolland

**Phone a friend?**

[www.bigga.org.uk/contact.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/contact.html)

**Central**

We seem to be slipping up as there are no new membership applications this month (perhaps there is a problem with this year's forms!) but I have it on good authority that George Paterson, from Scotsraig, and Neil Ballingall, from St Andrews Bay, will be joining the Section. So on behalf of everyone, we extend a warm welcome to you both and hopefully you will join us at Kingsbarns next month.

Congratulations go to Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, for organising yet another excellent Conference at the Dunfermline Business Centre last month. With top class speakers on various subjects the delegates were certainly given an opportunity to "further their education" and it was pleasing to see a good number of Central Section members giving their support and gaining point towards the annual Patron's Awards.

Winners of "Club 2000" in January were Phil Langdon, £30, with No. 185 and S. McKnight, £20, with No. 008, February winners were E. Small, £30, with No. 46 and B. Bone, £20, with No. 280 and finally, March winners were A. Dunn, £30, with No. 138 and S. McMillan, £20, with No.033. That's us up to date with the winners so far this year. But giv-

ing you an extra few weeks to send in the money for your tickets obviously didn't work as there are still 179 members who have still to do so. Guess what's going to take up most of next month's news? Answers on the back of a "Club 2000 ticket Please (paid for!)."

Congratulations go to Alistair Philp, who is leaving St. Fillans Golf Club, to take up the appointment of Head Greenkeeper at Comrie Golf Club. Alistair won't have to move house to take up his new appointment as he already lives in Comrie, that's what you call forward planning. Every success for the future, Alistair.

Remember, please return your forms for the Spring Tournament at Kingsbarns and your entry for the Interclub Tournament as time and spaces are running out fast!

John Crawford.

**Latest news?**

[www.bigga.org.uk/news.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/news.html)

**North**

Hello Section. Four new members to report to the Section, they are, Richard Ralph, from Newtonmore Golf Club; Robert Laing, from Camperdown Golf Club; David Lawrance, from Kinloss Country Golf Club, and lastly Paul Marshall, from Newburgh on Ythan Golf Club. Welcome to the Section and we will hopefully maybe see you at the golf outings.

The Scottish Conference went ahead on March 5 and was well attended. The members from the North Section who attended hopefully enjoyed their day out. The speakers were of their usual high standard and covered a variety of topics. Peter Boyd set up the day and once again our thanks go to Peter.

The 200 club is now up and running and you should have your renewals through the post by now. The fee has gone up to £7 from £6, this is due to administration costs and cannot be avoided. If you decide not to renew your membership then could you please send your ticket back and Robert Hardie can then maybe sell the tickets on before the outing in May. Hopefully the club will continue to do well and give our section the funds it needs to continue. The first draw is on May 16 at Elgin Golf Club.

For anyone interested the Scottish Regional Golf Championships will be held at West Linton GC on June 27. It is a very busy time for most greenkeepers and it is difficult to get time off but if anyone can make it down from our Section to play then I am sure you will enjoy it, and Good Luck.

Good to hear from Stuart Hogg from Fortrose GC who seems to be on the way to recovery from his recent illness, we wish you all the best.

Iain Macleod, of Tain GC, recently was 25 years working at the club, our congratulations go to Iain and keep up the good work. I am sure there are other Greenkeepers in our Section who been 25 years or more with the

same club, and if you are one of them, then congratulations also.

The forms for the golf outing should be arriving shortly, and it should a busy day as Elgin is a top class course so hopefully see you there

Once again if you have any concerns you like to have aired in the magazine then I can be contacted on 01997 420155.

Iain Gunn



**Northern Region**  
Douglas Bell  
Tel: 0151 431 0433

**Northern**

We had a good turn out of 37 turn out for the Section seminar. The speakers that entertained so well were, Henry Bechelet, STRI, Changing the Nature of Greens; Simon Barnaby, Scotts UK, Fertilisers & Organics; Peter Jefford, Rufford - Top Dressings; Martyn Jones, Myerscough College, Seeding, Timing, Preparation.

We could not put on this event without the sponsorship of Scotts UK. Many thanks to Howley Hall GC for their assistance and co-operation on the day. Also thanks to the speakers who give us their valuable time.

It was noted that a few members turned up in jeans, trainers and collarless shirts. This was embarrassing to those involved in the event and put the Section and Association in a very bad light. All future events will be Jacket and Tie affairs from now on. We are trying to move forwards not backwards.

There are only a couple of weeks to for the annual dusting of the clubs for the Spring Tournament at Bedale GC on April 16. All applications with full payment to the address below by April 9.

By the time you read this your new Section Secretary, Dave Thackray, will be starting to get his feet under the table. I have very much enjoyed my time on the committee and would like to thank you the members and the rest of the committee for the support you have given me for the events that have been put on. I have a couple of another projects to work on over the next year or so which will be taking up my time, but no doubt I'll be back. I have every confidence in Dave and the rest of the committee to carry on in going forward.

The all important information to get in touch with Dave Thackray is: address: 16 Westwood Avenue, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD2 1NJ; Tel: 01274 640739; mobile 07976 876264

That's all for now  
Andy Smith.

**North West**

Saturday night, and I have just checked the lottery. One number on five lines no good, so I think go for a pint. Look out, still hammering down with rain. Sod it, better do some notes for the magazine, so here

we go. Reading the local evening newspaper I came across an article you may find interesting, and I quote,

"A new technology could mean an end to waterlogged cricket pitches, tennis courts and golf courses. Researchers at Newcastle University are developing an element system called EKG that uses electricity to draw water out of soil."

Now this sounds interesting, and I am sure that if the University required some golf courses to practise on they would be inundated with volunteers. I personally feel this would be a damp squid, but I have heard greenkeepers suggesting the use of electricity on the course like wiring the flag poles, and buggies.

Back to reality, the Spring tournament will be held at Hurlston Hall Golf Club on Wednesday, May 15, and lunch served at 12.30pm, tee available from 1.30pm. Applications to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool. L4 9RB, Tel 0151 284 4416 no later than May 10 including a cheque for £20. The spring tournament is also a qualifier for the Regional final, which will be played at Whitefield Golf Club on Friday, August 9. The final will once again be sponsored by Richard Campey, and lunch and evening meal will be paid for by the sponsor. The match between the N/West and N/Wales will shortly be arranged, and I will keep you informed on the date. That's it for now, but any news will be welcome, and if you have any queries please contact me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583387

Bert Cross

#### North Wales

Spring is her and lots of sunshine and flowers, lots of club members dusting off the cobwebs and turning out for the first monthly medals. Hang on, why is the rough so deep? Why hasn't this fairway been cut? Why are the greens not running at

12 on the stimpmeter like at Augusta? We haven't had any rain here, have we?

Well like they say in Florida, tell em to 'Have a nice day' as they are the green fee payers (not Florida green fees that is?) but the sun does shine over there and burn - just ask Gareth (Bronco) Williams, of Porthmadog GC!

On to business the N. Wales vs. N. West match has now been arranged and the venue is Pryors Hayes GC In Chester on April 30 at 1.30pm tee time. We require a team of 12, so anyone who is able to play please contact Jez Hughes on 01978 860109. Many thanks to Martin Redrup, of Pryors Hayes, for the organisation of the course also to Gem Professional for the sponsorship.

The Maintenance Department at Royal Liverpool GC is now near to completion as Derek Green and his team look forward to the hosting of the Open Championship back at Hoylake in a few years time. Can anyone tell me who won The Open when it was last played at Hoylake in 1967? Answers on a postcard please.

The Spring Tournament is taking place on the 10th. Good luck to all taking part and full results will appear in next month's issue along with an insight from Richard Littler, of Bromborough GC, into his 18 greens, which have all been lifted and re-laid for the start of this season.

On a final note Phil Gates of the Midland Section is organising a golf trip to Ireland - a two night stop over to play the Irish Greenkeepers. Anyone interested in Golf or Guinness or both contact Phil.

Any news, views or information you have, please contact me on Home - 01925 263394, Fax - 01925 269622, Mobile - 07778 182162, e-mail - acomgolf@supanet.com

Job's a good 'n'.

Andrew Acorn



Midland Region  
Peter Larter  
Tel: 01476 550115

#### East Midlands

This years Go-Karting evening was held on February 20, at The Wymeswold Ind. Est Race Track. Again the evening was booked to capacity, which shows that if you wish to attend any Section event, please book you place early. The evening started well until half way through the races there was a power failure, and all the results were lost. So the racing had to start once more from scratch. After some hard fought qualifying races we were ready for the grand final, which was extended by more laps. The eventual winner was Steve Levers, of Ramsdale Park, with Lingdale's, Gavin Robson, in second place.

There was unfortunately a nasty accident on the night, but the good news is that there was no serious injury to Nigel White and I'm sure he will be fit and ready for the Spring Tournament on May 2. I would like to thank our very generous sponsors Toro/Lely UK and ps Marsdens who subsidised the evening and brought along the prizes. Remember if you wish to race next year return your entry slip early.

The Spring Tournament this year will be held at the Leicestershire GC, on Thursday, May 2. Tee-Off Times 1pm-3pm. If you wish to attend please return your entry slip and payment before the closing date.

Antony Bindley

#### Midland

Firstly, I would like to extend a big thank you to Bernhard & Co, for their considerable commitment to sponsoring ten fortunate members to visit the GCSAA in Orlando, of whom I was lucky enough to be one. The quality of the week was sec-

ond to none with every day jam-packed full of events. Being part of the delegation also ensured more doors were opened that normal on a trip of this nature. My thanks also go to the nine other delegates and GCSAA who all contributed so much to make such a memorable week. Having been privileged enough to have experienced this opportunity first hand, I would encourage anybody who is contemplating entering for a place on a future tour to do so and support strongly such an excellent commitment executed so well by Bernhard & Co.

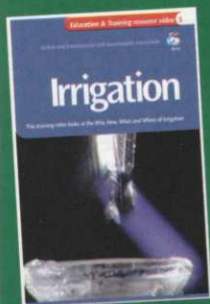
Back home now, and I have been asked to explain the £5 rise in golf day entrance fees. This has come about firstly to ensure the Section covers all costs of the day and, secondly, some clubs now are asking for a donation per head to the green fees. I trust you will still support what is still an excellent day's golf and socialising in the future. The next tournament is May 22 at Gay Hill. Entrance fees as usual to Kim Blake please.

Interest has also been expressed as to organising a trip to Ireland or Scotland, which will be towards the end of the year. This may be in conjunction with the North Wales Section, playing golf against Greenkeepers of the opposing nation over a two-day period. Initially, numbers need to be gathered of those interested before cost and possible sponsorship is sought, if you have an interest please contact myself on 97876-546638.

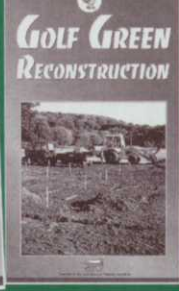
Also you may have seen Andy Smith, of Shirley Golf Club, on Zoe Ball's class of 1979 in March. Well done, Andy.

Phil Gates

**Section Event?**  
[www.bigga.org.uk/events.html](http://www.bigga.org.uk/events.html)



# On course with BIGGA education



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£14.95 to BIGGA members  
£29.95 to non-members



**South East**  
Derek Farrington  
Tel: 01903 260956

### East Anglia

Two Seminars this month given by Prime Irrigation went off very well. Eastern College near Norwich was the first held on February 6 and Otley held the second on February 13. I missed the first as I was with the delegation with Bernhards in Orlando, more about that later. The Otley seminar certainly gave those attending a lot to think about. Robin and Rupert dealt with the practical side: pop-ups, pipework, installation and repairs and Graham and John dealt with design and the electronics. I understand that 20 greenkeepers attended Eastern and 50 came to Otley, this did include 10 students, but still we must be proud of ourselves for such a large turnout. Our thanks go to Prime Irrigation for a great presentation.

On February 3 I flew out to Orlando with the delegation from Bernhards and BIGGA heading for the GCSAA Conference and Trade Show. While we were there we visited four courses and the Disney Wilderness Centre, 37,000 acres of habitat recreation area.

(Here's a tip if you visit Florida and there's a lake near by Do Not go for a paddle, you may end up an Alligators breakfast) One of the first courses we visited was Orange County National, a 45 hole complex, two 18 hole championship courses, a 9 hole executive course and a 45 acre practice area, a staff of 39 during the Winter and 48 in Summer, enough Toro equipment to run six courses in the UK and a budget of \$2,000,000 a year. The greens are a mix of bent grass which they use for the winter months and Bermuda grass which takes over during the Summer Season. 85,000 rounds a year at \$125 per round totals \$10,600,000 in green fees. Big course!

We attended two one day seminars and many presentations. It was an experience that I will long remember. It was a brilliant trip and I would like to express my thanks to Bernhard & Co and BIGGA for giving me the opportunity of being on the team.

Ian Willett

### Surrey

All members by now should have received the Surrey programme for this year together with the application forms for the first golfing venue at Foxhills and the Bioseed Bowl knockout competition. Please add the following dates, the McMillan Tankard at Sunningdale will be on August 8 and the England vs Scotland match at Hankley Common is on August 30.

This is all there is to report apart from a happy event that occurred on February 18. Lorna Tedder the wife of Peter, Head Greenkeeper at Sunningdale Ladies Golf Club, gave birth to a son, Daniel Alfie, 8lb, 6oz. We wish them both our warmest congratulations.

Please let me have your news so that next month's Surrey Around The Green is not read so quickly.

Brian Willmott

### Essex

This, as you may know is the first report since God knows how long. That's not because the author has not written anything but more to do with a mix up with names. The reports I write for this magazine as you know go to a Mr. S. MacCallum, whereas the reports I write for my local newspapers go to a Mr. S. MacEnnis, you can guess the rest I am sure. By the time I had found out it was too late to even get it in the February magazine.

New members this month are: - Malcolm McGeoch, Ash Valley Golf Club; Michael Bassett, of Great Hadham Golf & Country Club; Martin Trower, of Burnham on Crouch GC; Paul Enfield, of Thorpe Hall GC, and Nigel Barnes, The Grove. Welcome to our Section.

Thanks must go to The Burstead Golf Club for staging two educational days, the first a First Aid and the second a COSHH and Risk Assessment day. Both days were well attended by members of our Section and we hope to have more in the future.

Our first golf day of the year is our Spring Trophy, which is to be held at the Essex Golf & Country Club on April 17. (Not April 15 as advertised on your fixture list). Which reminds me if you have not had a fixture list yet please contact Martin Forrester.

Congratulations are due to three greenkeepers who all had babies recently, Dominic Rodgers now has a son, Ciaran; Derek Blake also had a son, Joshua, and Daniel Walker completing a hat trick of boys with, Ben. Let's hope they all grow up to be golfers as good as their respective fathers. Well done.

The Section needs support for this years Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth. Anybody who would like to help should contact Derek Farrington ASAP.

That just leaves me to wish you all a successful and enjoyable year's golf with our Section and hope to see you all at each of them in turn.

Steve Crosdale

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### Kent

Congratulations to Gary Debenham this month on the announcement of the fact he will be becoming a father in August. Coincidentally Gary has announced his engagement as well and I'm sure everyone will wish them all the best for the future.

News of any interest from the Gentleman's Dinner and what prize I won will be in next month's issue along with any funny stories of the day.

As you may know here at Kings Hill we don't like to blow our own trumpets but we have recently received an award from the Country Land and Business

Association in recognition for our conservation and wildlife management work carried out on our course. With works ranging from heather management and establishment to bird boxes. We have been quite busy during the Autumn/Winter months with our self funded projects with the advice of the Kent Wildlife Trust. If any other clubs have done such work or would like any information on it, drop me a line and let me know what you have been up to.

Sorry I have not got any other news but I guess my new e-mail address has not got through to you yet. [JRBATKHGOLF@AOL.COM](mailto:JRBATKHGOLF@AOL.COM) or call me on 01732 875020 with any news, however small.

Jason Bean.



**South West and South Wales**  
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### South West

Here are the result of our winter competition held at West Wills Golf Club in the snow and wind. 1. P. Jenkins, 30pts; 2. J. Keenachn, 28pts. (Countback on the last 4); 3. S. Capern, 28pts. Nearest the pin, D. Smith. It was also his birthday, so well done to him and everybody. The prizes were fantastic, yes, outstanding. First was a Television, second was a Microwaves and third, a Stereo. Our next event is at Burnham & Berrow Tuesday, April 16.

You will very soon receive a form with all of our events listed, please read and return to Kevin telling him which events you would like to attend and play in remember events a interesting and informative also there are great prizes.

Robin Greaves

### South Coast

Spring edges its way ever closer and most of us are finishing off our winter programmes. The Section has been quiet again apart from our seminar, which was held at Salisbury & South Wilts Golf Club on February 13. The day started with an interesting talk from Rex Kimberley on soil nutrition. This was followed by an excellent presentation from Adi Archer and Terry Elbourne from Broadstone Golf Club. We were given an excellent insight into the Ecological work that earned them first prize in the BIGGA Environmental Award.

After an excellent lunch Kath Moore, from the BBC, gave us a brief insight into the work that went into a new television programme and in particular the one, which focuses on turf management. Part of the programme was filmed at Fred Deamen's Alton Golf Club. Head Groundsman Dave Roberts from Southampton Football Club finished the day off with an excellent presentation giving us an enlightening insight into the maintenance of a Premiership pitch. He also spoke about the construction of the stadium and new pitch at the St Mary's stadium. The whole day

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It was good to see Simon Banks present particularly after his beloved Ipswich had been thrashed the previous weekend. There were a number of Liverpool fans present that I understand forgot to mention this to Simon. Once again many thanks to Banks for their valued sponsorship, to Salisbury & South Wilts Golf Club for their superb hospitality, to all the speakers who made it such an enjoyable day and a huge vote of thanks to Fred Deamen for organising the day.

As our golf meetings begin, we must give a vote of thanks to tournament organiser, Chris Sturgess, for arranging such a good year for us. We are to be treated with some excellent courses to play this year and we start at Blackmoor Golf Club on Wednesday, May 1. The spring tournament will be a 27 hole event and is sponsored by Avoncrop and Vitax. The cost for the day will be £18 and please forward your entries to Chris Sturgess. We have arranged a course walk for those non golfers who wish to come along. Again the price is £18 to cover the cost of the food. We hope this will encourage our non playing members along to our events.

One last piece of news. We must pass on our congratulations to Chris Sturgess, and his bride Maggie, who got married on March 23. We wish them a long and happy life together! If anyone has any news that they wish to include in the section notes then please contact me on 07813841714 or email me at amccombie@hotmail.com.

Until next month,  
Alex McCombie

#### Devon & Cornwall

After last year's Avoncrop-sponsored February Section meeting being cancelled due to the Foot & Mouth crisis it was nice to be able to hold the event at last year's scheduled venue of Thurlstone Golf Club, which saw an attendance of 56 members. Once again the strong winds and rain, which had been the norm for February, gave way to very calm and sunny conditions. Thirty-three golfing members played a bogey competition for the Avoncrop Trophy and Head Greenkeeper, Stuart Freeman, treated

our non-golfing members to a tour of the excellently presented course.

After lunch John Palfrey presented the golfing prizes for the Avoncrop trophy to:- 1. John Gawman, St Mellion G&CC, +6; 2. Kevin Yeoman, Dartmouth G&CC, +3; 3. Simon Coombes, Dainton Park GC, +1.

Robert Brewer, of American Golf, presented our afternoon talk on moving from greenkeeper to management. Robert's talk was most informative, hopefully we will see more greenkeepers go into club management. The Section would like to thank the members and committee of Thurlstone GC for allowing the Section use of their facilities for the day and to Robert Brewer for making the long journey southwest to present his excellent talk.

Our congratulations go to Stuart Freeman and his crew who had the course in superb condition.

The Section, in association with Ocmis Irrigation, presented a workshop on Irrigation at Fingle Glen GC on Tuesday 5th March. The day saw 46 members and guests attend a superbly run workshop covering Irrigation design, sprinkler and solenoid servicing, control systems & pumping equipment. The Section would like to thank Roger, Vic and Ray for presenting the workshop and to Ocmis for sponsoring the day which was of great educational value.

Richard Whyman

#### Northern Ireland

Well, I am going to begin this month's notes by having a good moan about the weather. As I write this in early March, February 2002 is a month that we will be glad to see the back of. The majority of our inland golf courses have had prolonged amounts of closure, some have closed for three to four weeks causing frustration among the golfing members and greenstaff alike, we seem to have our entire Autumn and Winter rainfall in the space of a couple of weeks. We can only look forward and hope for some nice warm and sunny days ahead.

Our latest Section event will be held at Lisburn Golf Club on March 14. A talk on grass seed and fortiva will be presented by Jo Gladwin, from Nickerson UK. We are hoping to hold our first golf day in early April, the date and venue are to be confirmed.

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Best wishes to Broderick Grass Machinery Ltd, who have taken over the Textron Dealership in Northern Ireland at the beginning of the year. Brodericks commitment to the Textron brand has won them the award as European distributor of the year by Textron Golf Turf and Speciality Products at the BIGGA show in Harrogate.

I would like to welcome the following new members to the section this month, Alistair McEwen, Head Greenkeeper at Spa Golf Club, Robert Patterson, Rockmount Golf Club, Brian McConway and Chris M'Ilro, The Hilton Temple Patrick, and Steven Henry, Royal Portrush Golf Club.

Ken Henderson

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Last month, John Gubb from Bedfordshire Golf Club, correctly answered the Turftime Teaser. Our congratulations and a fantastic squall jacket from Allen Power are on their way to you!

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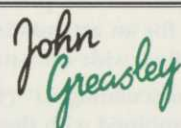


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## Recruitment

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We are looking for an enthusiastic and hard working greenkeeper to join our existing team. NVQ 2 qualification required. Preference will be given to those who have a working knowledge of German.

Applications with full C.V. to:-

Mr Jurgen Blickle (Course Manager),  
Golf Club Hechingen-Hohenzollern, Hagelwasen,  
72379 Hechingen, Germany

Email: [info@golfclub-hechingen.de](mailto:info@golfclub-hechingen.de)

## DORE & TOTLEY CLUB

### DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

The Club are currently installing a new computerised irrigation system on the existing 18 hole course and are due to commence in July 2002 an additional five holes on newly acquired land whilst remodelling the existing course.

Applications are invited for a Deputy Head Greenkeeper with a sound knowledge of course management, irrigation systems and modern greenkeeping techniques together with relevant experience of Health and Safety at Work procedures. Possession of NVQ Levels 1, 2 and 3 and PA1,2 and 6 is an advantage. Salary subject to negotiation.

**ALSO TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT ASSISTANT GREENKEEPERS REQUIRED**

Applications complete with C.V. to:  
J.R. Johnson, Secretary, Dore and Totley Golf Club,  
Bradway Rd, Sheffield S17 4QR

### Recruitment - Job Shop

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JS/133/02

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DETAILS ON PAGE 48

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Salary and conditions negotiable, but above Standing Committee recommendations. No accommodation available.

Applications in writing with full C.V. to:  
Mr A Watson, Course Manager, Tyrrells Wood Golf Club,  
The Drive, Tyrrells Wood Estate, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8QP

## **LITTLE ASTON GOLF CLUB**

### Invites applications for the position of **ASSISTANT HEAD GREENKEEPER**

Candidates should be qualified to NVQ Level 3 and hold spraying certificates PA1, PA2 and PA6. They should be fit and enthusiastic and able to integrate into a small friendly team.

Please apply in writing with full CV to:  
**The Manager, Little Aston Golf Club,  
Roman Road, Streetly, Sutton Coldfield. B74 3AN**

## **GREETHAM VALLEY GOLF CLUB**

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### **DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER**

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Require

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**David Gower, Course Manager, The Oxfordshire Golf Club,  
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Salary will be by negotiation. No accommodation available.

Applicants should send their CV's to:

Mr Clive Lansdell, Secretary, Hendon Golf Club,  
Ashley Walk, Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, London NW7 1DG

Tel: 0208-346-6023 Email: [gm.hendongolf@talk21.com](mailto:gm.hendongolf@talk21.com)  
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## GUILDFORD GOLF CLUB

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Please apply in writing with full CV to:

Mr B J Green, Secretary, Guildford Golf Club,  
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## ALRESFORD GOLF CLUB

Invites applications for the position of

### FIRST ASSISTANT

Candidates should have a minimum of 3 years experience, be qualified to NVQ Level 2 and hold spraying certificates PA1, PA2 and PA6. Knowledge of irrigation and machinery maintenance will be an advantage.

Applications in writing together with full CV to:-  
Darren Hatcher, Head Greenkeeper, Alresford Golf Club,  
Cheriton Road, Tichborne Down, Alresford, Hants SO24 0PN.



## FOREST OF GALTRES GOLF CLUB

Has a vacancy for an

### ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are looking for an enthusiastic and hard working greenkeeper to join our existing team. NVQ Level 2 along with PA1 AND PA2 qualifications preferred. Salary negotiable according to experience.

Apply in writing with full C.V. to:

The Secretary, Forest of Galtres Golf Club,  
Skelton Lane, Wigginton, York YO32 2RF

## ROYAL EASTBOURNE GOLF CLUB

Applications are invited for the position of

### COURSE MANAGER

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Applications, in writing only please, together with full CV to :-

Peter White, Secretary, Royal Eastbourne Golf Club,  
Paradise Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 8BP

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**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; Aventis 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; Clandeboye 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

**March 2001;** York GC; Greens Maintenance; Meland GC, Norway; Greens Mowers; BIGGA Essay Winner; Grass Science profile

**April 2001;** Lightning detection; Brockett Hall GC; CGSA report; Fairway Mowers; Irrigation; Sward renovation; BIGGA Essay winner; Turf Disease

**May 2001;** Foot and Mouth Disease Special Report; Maintenance Facility report; Bunker Sand; ATVs; RainBird Profile; Fineturf Genetics; BTME2002 countdown; Electric-powered machines

**June 2001;** Stoke Park Club profile; Stuart Cagle MG; Tractors; Leaf Spot Disease; Take All Patch; Construction

**July 2001;** Royal Lytham profile; Tees Mowers; Fertilisers; Green Grasses; John Deere profile; Sandy McDivot; College Listings

**August 2001;** Aeration Survey; Machrie GC profile; Rough Mowers; Saltex Preview; Dr Alan Gange - environmental research; Hayter Profile; Ponds; Open Championship review; Toro Student of the Year profile;

**September 2001;** Ryder Cup preview; Chafer Grubs; Drainage; BIGGA National Championship preview; Sandy McDivot; Machinery Maintenance; Soil Analysis; Wild Flowers

**October 2001;** Major Award for Walter Woods; Royal Portrush GC; Portstewart GC; Irrigation; Soil biodiversity; Leaf collection systems; Scotssturf preview/ Saltex review

**November 2001;** BIGGA National Championship review; Environment Competition winner; Spraying; Toro Awards Preview; Cutting regimes; Dyke GC

**December 2001;** Toro Award Winners; Southern Galles GC; BTME preview; Specialty equipment; Thatch removal

**January 2002;** Walton Heath profile; Greenkeeping in Denmark; Moving materials; A first for Andy Campbell; New products

**February 2002;** Harrogate 2002 Review; Drainage; Castlerock GC; Trees; Recycling; TurfTrax profile; Barn Owl special report

**March 2002;** Donnington Valley profile; Utility vehicles; Essay competition winner; Irrigation; Seeds; Sandy McDivot



**Richard Barker returns from the freezing cold of Canada where he saw the success of a Silent Auction. He is also ready for the new golf season over here**

# Masters time again



Having not long unpacked my short sleeve shirts from my trip to the States it was now time to pack my roll necks and winter woollies and head off to Quebec in Canada following an invitation to the Canadian Show.

Last year I received the invitation with just one downside – could I make a presentation to the Canadian delegates on some Greenkeeping topic, well after some thought on various topics and also learning that the Canadian Show ties in each year with a Provincial Show which would obviously be well supported by those in that Province, I decided on a general topic – Greenkeeping in the UK, bearing in mind that golf in this area of Canada would be non-existent at this time of year.

How right I was, as temperatures plummeted and the wind chill made it –25 to –30 degrees with a covering of snow all over. Golf was far from anyone's mind. Incidentally, I spoke to several Superintendents who were greenkeeping for eight months and ski instructors for the other four months – quite a nice balance really!

Having made my presentation, I was pleasantly surprised at the feedback I received with regard to the Canadians suffering from the same frustrations that we do back home certainly from members and committees. Like the Americans, however, they seem to have

the budgets and staffing levels – 14-22 people for 18 holes to put things right, when they can play.

Although the show was not on the same scale as BTME there was still plenty of interest and business being done – none more so at the Silent Auction where anything from a travel bag to a piece of machinery was being bid for. One item that caught my attention was an autographed Ice Hockey Shirt which fetched 1250 Canadian Dollars – about £500.

The Canadians certainly excelled with their social programme. I was made to feel most welcome at all their functions which included a night at the 'Sugar Shack' where we sampled maple syrup and also the closing Banquet which featured a 16 piece Brass Band to finish the week off nicely.

For those of you that have met the Canadians at Harrogate you will know they are good company and if you get the chance to visit them next year in Calgary I would thoroughly recommend it. I would just like to thank Jay Leach, their retiring President, and Vince Gillis, their Executive Director, who has retired after 12 years service. I was pleased to meet up with his successor, Ken Cousineau, who stood up well to the stresses of his first major event.

On both my recent visits the Americans and Canadians were talking about the success of the John Deere Team Classic and what a great event it was, certainly if you got to the final in Arizona. For those of you who don't know Great Britain has been included this year (launched at BTME) and I urge as many clubs as possible to enter a team not just for the fun that you might have but also because John Deere will donate £25 to the Education and Development Fund for each team entered. Speak to your local dealer for more details and see if you can make it to Arizona.

Talking of Education and Development you should have all received the Regional Training flyer

for Spring 2002 with a selection of one and two day courses in your February magazine. I hope many of you have taken up these courses but do remember if you require any other kind of course Ken and Sami will be only too pleased to help and tailor one to your own specific needs. Remember it is your Association and the staff are here to help.

Now by the time you are reading this article one major event will have taken place and another will be about to start. First and foremost is the new Board of Management's March meeting, and if you have any queries pass them through your Section and Regional committees and the Board Member will bring them to the National Board. For those that don't know I will introduce the Board for this year:- George Brown – Vice Chairman; Clive Osgood – Immediate Past Chairman; David Walden – Midlands; Ian Holoran – Northern; Ian Semple – South East; Paul Jenkins – South West & South Wales, and Iain MacLeod – Scotland.

These guys are your representatives and will report back, keeping you fully informed of the Association's progress.

Secondly, I was referring to a small Golf Competition held in August! Yes it's that time of year again when all the azalea's and rhododendrons are in flower while we are struggling to see the first signs of spring, with members dropping subtle hints as they pass us by. But if it's any consolation spare a thought for those Canadians that are trying to rid that last bit of snow!

On a final note if any Section, Region or individual would like me to attend a function, please don't hesitate to get in touch, I will only be pleased to attend.

**Richard Barker**



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Textron's commitment towards providing a world-class service is unquestionable. Over the past 18 months significant investment has been made in the following areas:

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- **Training**
- **Business Systems**

This investment has resulted in major improvements right across our Service Parts Organisation resulting in measurable benefits for our customers. With a greater range of stock items, competitive pricing, interactive CD ROM parts manuals and an improved Parts Xpress delivery service, we have achieved significant progress in this important area.

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Enquiries are dealt with faster, parts located quickly and dispatched to wherever they are needed with the minimum of delay.

The majority of customers have their enquiry fully satisfied during their first call. If immediate customer satisfaction cannot be achieved then we'll get back to you within an hour by phone, fax or e-mail. Even with a continuous stream of calls, virtually all enquiries are solved within 24 hours.

The Service Parts Organisation management team explains how significant improvement in customer service has been achieved.

**Phil Naunton, International Service Parts Manager**, has 29 years of after sales experience with Ransomes and Textron and heads up the Service Parts Organisation. He has recently returned from a 2-year secondment to Textron in the USA where he worked on the



Phil Naunton

introduction of a new Oracle business management system, which included the development of a specialist order entry system.

Phil says, "We have just introduced a new Internet-based parts ordering system called EMPART, which is accessed via our website [www.textronsolutions.com](http://www.textronsolutions.com). Our customers can access diagrams of all our equipment for easy identification of the relevant part number. Currently Textron Dealers can place orders via this system. Going forward we hope it will be rolled out to allow customers to place orders with their local dealer. Oracle has been a US\$24 million investment and it also allows us to have a real-time view of stock availability across all our manufacturing plants, both in the USA and here in the UK. We now have the capability, in exceptional circumstances, to have urgent parts shipped directly from the USA to the end-user. That's better communication, more up-to-date information and a better service for our customers."

"We are also empowering our dealers with even more responsibility for their parts stock holdings. With higher levels held locally, they can react quicker to fulfil customer requirements. And, quite simply, that's our goal – an unequivocal commitment to outstanding customer service."

**Wendy Forsdyke, Customer Services Manager** comments,

"One of the recent innovations that has contributed to the improvement in customer service has been the introduction of our new telephone system. We now have a large visual display board in the call centre that provides



Wendy Forsdyke

members of the team with an instant view of the number of incoming calls, the length of time they have been waiting and the nature of the call.

"Every call is logged with key performance indicators annotated to ensure that we meet the strict parameters with regard to timings and action ensuring that the customer is kept fully informed with the progress of their enquiry. If we can't resolve the call immediately, then we aim to provide up-to-date information within an hour. We can get an immediate delivery date from the new Oracle system, but we go one step further and will make calls to see if there is any way that we can improve on that date. We have also employed additional staff in the customer services department, who are totally committed to customer service. They all appreciate the need for exemplary levels of customer support and I am delighted that their efforts are reaping benefits for our end users."

**Mark Poppleton, Inventory and Warehouse Manager**, looks at the improvements under his remit, "From my point of view the major benefit to customers has been our multi-million pound investment in stock holding. We have increased the level of parts stock, focusing on our fast moving lines with the aim of providing 100% availability. We are consistently achieving 98% for our top 1000 parts and we have reviewed our shipping requirements, especially with regard to products manufactured in the USA.

"We have also improved our forecasting, using computer-generated 'demand solutions' that use a combination of 20 different formulae to obtain the best fit in order to predict future parts demand. I also monitor our supplier performance and am

constantly working with them to reduce their lead times.

"In the warehouse operation we have improved some of the working practices to ensure a better workflow. Urgent orders that are received by 3.30pm are despatched the same day for delivery by 7am the following morning. However, beginning 1st April we are extending the cut-off deadline to 4.30pm with orders taken in that extra hour being delivered by noon the following day.

"The introduction of a new bar coding system using radio frequency technology for parts enables our goods inwards to quickly replenish stock, allowing parts to be available for picking and despatch the same day. These improvements, together with a significant investment in new, computer-controlled storage and retrieval systems are a positive step in our commitment towards 100% customer satisfaction.

"We appreciate the importance of an efficient and effective after sales service and to this end we are constantly striving for continuous improvement."

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Mark Poppleton

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**Reelmaster 6500-D** A 38hp engine and larger reel diameter make this a highly productive and easy-to-operate fairway mower. Options include 2 and 4 wheel drive, cab and grass boxes.



**Reelmaster 6700-D** Up to 11 feet of exceptional productivity is promised from the 6700-D's efficient 42hp engine, which comes with 4 wheel drive and is capable of cutting with 5, 6 or 7 units. Options include cab and grass boxes.

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