

Why, oh why, oh why?

There are occasions in the middle of the night when questions pop into my head and refuse to budge until I've given them due consideration. Granted, not all of them have a definitive answer, and some of them don't deserve an answer at all, but they are there nonetheless, nagging away at me and preventing me from returning to the land of nod.

I've decided that the best thing to do is to open them up to you, the readership, so you can share my torment.

Unfortunately there is no prize, but if you do come up with an answer to any of them I'm sure you'll be viewed upon with increased respect by your friends and colleagues while you could set yourself up as an amateur physiologist.

Why does your putting always go when you're nailing your irons?

Why do all BIGGA members work at clubs where the club down the road has the better greens?

Why are there more Championship golf courses than there have been Championships?

Why do so many people assume that other people's job are much easier than they actual are?

Why does someone always call up to enquire if you'd every considered a new conservatory just as the What Happens Next? round in Question of Sport is about to start?

Why do supermarkets have these stupid revolving doors which never work?

Why do people who scream up the outside lane of dual carriageways before turning left at the roundabout, always get away with it?

Why is it only those people involved in football who ever say "To be fair..." and then proceed to slag someone off as in "To be fair, he's always been a bit of a donkey", or the variation, "He's always been a bit of a donkey, to be fair."?

Why did someone put Sod's Law on the statute book?

Why do so many people assume they can go first while the rest of us waste time complying by the conventional art of queuing?

Why are politicians the only people who ever use the phrase, "To be perfectly clear on the matter ..." and then proceed to throw a dark veil over whatever they're supposed to be talking about?

Why does time always go faster when you're running late?

As I said I don't expect a stream on answers landing on my desk just the knowledge that you might well be wrestling with the same thoughts as I am now make me feel a little bit better.

Why, in the Winter Olympics, do they give fancy names to things like Luge, Skeleton and Bob when we all know that they are just sledging?

If any of you have questions which cause you similar angst perhaps we should get together and start a Self Help Group.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Textron renew agreement with Gleneagles

Textron and their distributor, Scottish Grass Machinery, have signed a new four year agreement with The Gleneagles Hotel to provide a range of turf maintenance equipment to keep the internationally renowned courses in immaculate condition.

As a result of this new agreement Textron/SGM will provide a full range of turf maintenance equipment, light utility vehicles and E-Z-GO golf cars for use on the three championship courses – the King's, the Queen's and, the Jack Nicklaus-designed, PGA Centenary course.

Additional support for major tournaments also forms part of the package together with technical and operator training at Textron's Ipswich head office, SGM's Inverkeithing premises or on-site at Gleneagles. Reciprocal arrangements will see the green-keeping team at Gleneagles trialing and evaluating new products, including the Jacobsen E-Plex II, the all-electric ride-on greens mower.

"I am delighted with this new agreement between Textron, their distributor, Scottish Grass Machinery and ourselves. It provides our Golf Course Superintendent, Scott Fenwick and his team with a raft of top quality equipment to ensure that the golf courses will continue to remain in superb condition all year long," said Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estate Director at The Gleneagles Hotel.

"I am equally delighted that Textron and SGM will be actively supporting our greenkeeper training initiative, sponsoring a greenkeeper exchange with a golf club in the USA. Also they will



(l-r) David McInroy, Scottish Grass Machinery, Scott Fenwick, Jimmy Kidd, Graeme Marchbanks, Director of Golf, Gleneagles and Glynn Patrick, Sales Director, Textron at the handover of a fleet of E-Z-GO golf cars following the signing of the new agreement.

be initiating a 'Greenkeeper of the Year' award open to all greenkeepers that are employed at Textron's exclusive partnership golf clubs in Scotland and continuing their support for GEGAS, the Gleneagles Excellence in Golf Award Scheme, the international training scheme for young greenkeepers from around the globe."

Glynn Patrick, Textron's Sales Director added, "This prestigious contract involves a whole host of equipment from our Cushman, Jacobsen, Ransomes,

and Ryan brands including greens mowers, fairway mowers, rotary mowers for semi-rough, aerators, top dresser and turf utility vehicles and the very latest Cushman Diabline, all electric, mid-range utility vehicle.

"It also reconfirms our long-held commitment to training and the subsequent raising of standards in this industry, not just here in the UK, but across the world. It's an ethos that Jimmy Kidd continues to espouse and one that we fully endorse," he added.



Annual Patrons' Lunch a huge success

The Scottish Region held its annual Patrons' Award Dinner in Stirling just before Christmas. A great day was had by all Patron Members and Award winners as well as Section representatives and guests.

The Scottish Region would like to thank all Patrons for everything they do for the Region because if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have our Scottish Conference, have superb prize tables at Section events or the

numerous other ways they assist the Region and the Sections in Scotland.

The Patrons' Scheme awards two winners from each Section with a trip to BTME for three days, including accommodation and travel, and a greenkeeping book.

The Patrons' Award winners from 2002 who have already benefited from their prize were Alan Campbell and Ian Aitchison, East; Martin Carey and Colin

Black, West; Wallace Mercer and Paul Tulloch, Ayrshire; Kenneth Kinnaird and Robert Hardie, North, and Gordon Mitchell and Stuart Cruickshank, Central.

The dinner was a huge success and the after dinner speaker, Ex-Scottish referee, Brian McGinlay, went down a storm. The speakers who Regional Administrator, Peter Boyd, tracks down just seem to get better and better each year.

Chris Yeaman

St Andrews Links sign up with Toro

St Andrews Links has chosen Toro greens and tees mowers to maintain its six historic courses at the world's most famous golf complex.

Toro irrigation products have been in use at St Andrews since 1998, with each course now using the fully automated Toro SitePro Central Control System.

Now St Andrews Links Trust has strengthened its relationship with Toro by entering into a five-year preferred supplier agreement for a range of greens and tees mowers.

Links Superintendent Gordon Moir heads a team of 51 staff who maintain Europe's largest golfing site and the home of golf.

"We put the Toro mowers through an exhaustive evaluation programme alongside other manufacturers during the spring and summer of 2001. The feedback from a large majority of the greens staff was that Toro tees and greens mowers were the best overall, for equality of cut and ease of operation."

During the early part of this year, St Andrews has taken delivery of 20



Greensmaster 1000 and 14 Greensmaster 1500 pedestrian mowers, 15 Greensmaster 3250-D ride-on machines and three Reelmaster 3100-D Sidewinders.

As part of the deal, St Andrews Links Trust will receive comprehensive back-up, service and parts

supplied by Toro local dealer George Henderson, plus full training for its operators and maintenance staff.

"The greens staff are really looking forward to the arrival of the new mowers and I am confident that working closely with Toro will bring success for both parties," added Gordon.

Breeding & Evaluation of Turf grasses Technical Conference, May 1-2, Craiglunds Hotel, Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

A two day conference providing an opportunity to review current research on amenity grasses and discuss related topics affecting the performance of grasses in the UK and Europe.

Organised by the STRI the conference programme includes a Conference Dinner on the first day with a visit on the second day to STRI in Bingley for a tour of the cultivar trials which are part of the Grass Testing Programme at STRI.

The conference will interest all Turfgrass Breeders and Evaluators, Turf Scientists and other Turf Professionals. A panel of eight speakers will present 10 conference sessions including contributions from Dr Daniel Thorogood and Sheena Hughes, Duller Turfgrass Breeders from IGER; Arthur Wolleswinkel, Principal Turfgrass Researcher from ISA Papendal in the Netherlands and Mogens Toft Jensen, Head of Marketing & Product Management for the DLF Trifolium Group.

The Full Package including accommodation is £205 per delegate. Further details can be obtained from Anne Wilson Tel: 01274 565131



The Canadian Golf Superintendents Association has appointed Ken Cousineau, CAE, to succeed the Vince Gillis CAE, who retired in January. Ken brings to the CGSA strong association management experience, both in managing internal administrative functions and external relationships with government and stakeholders.



Russell Mellor joins the Swan team

Russell Mellor (centre) has moved to Swan, after 25 years with Kubota. "After 25 years seeing the Kubota business grow and prosper I am now looking forward to a new challenge at Swan," said Russell. "Ted Mitchell has given me the opportunity to join the Swan team and I am delighted that I will be working with a company that has shown continued growth and service to the market they serve."

Training aids supplied

BIGGA and the STRI have joined forces to further the cause of greenkeeper training.

Nigel Weller, winner of the Vitax prize draw conducted at BTME, dearly wanted to spend his BIGGA voucher on the NVQ level 2 theory notes, which are available on CD at £90. As Head Greenkeeper of North Downs Golf Club in Surrey, and a D.32-33 assessor, he has already taken one member of his staff, Paul Varley through the course, and has two more assistant greenkeepers ready to start.

"A new lad joined us last week, which gives us a staff of six, who are all relatively young," he says. "Our policy is to wait a year, see how they do, and then start training them. I've got one lad, Ian Cardy who was due to begin last September but has been in hospital. He will start the course this year. My other lad, Stuart White will start in 2003."

Unfortunately, BIGGA do not produce the disc, but Ken Richardson, the Association's Education and Training Manager has agreed to buy it from the STRI and give it to Nigel as part of his winnings.

"Anything to encourage Greenkeeper Education and Training", he says. "We've got to make it as easy for people as we can."

As Nigel and his deputy, Phillip Waterman hold NVQ 3, success for Ian and Stuart will be a further step in the club's progress towards a fully qualified staff.

The Scottish National Tournament will be held at West Linton Golf Club on June 27. If you wish to find out more about the club, check out the club's website at www.wlgc.co.uk where you will find various photographs and a number of other articles for you to browse through.

Awards success for Irrigation Control Ltd

If awards give an indication of a company's success then Irrigation Control Limited of Winsford must be the most successful irrigation contracting company in the world just now. Not only did they receive the British Turf and Landscape Irrigation Associations Certificate of Merit award (formally The Contractor of the Year Award) at this year's BTME at Harrogate, but they went on to be awarded the Rain Bird International Contractor of the year award at the GCSAA Orlando USA earlier this month.

"Obviously this is a great start to the year for us but it hasn't been an instant success. We've won several awards over the last few years including a specialist sub contractor award from BALI for work we undertook for J Mallinson (Ormskirk) Limited, a Government backed award for an innovative customer care program that we developed and previous BTLIA Certificate of Merit success," said Phil Breakey, Managing Director of Irrigation Control.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



Communications Director for Wardle

Wardle Consultant Engineers Ltd has expanded its management team with the appointment of Stephen Baker as a director of the company.

Steve, 42, joins the team as Communications Director and brings with him over 20 years of marketing experience.

"As we continue to expand I knew there would come a point when we would need to really address some of the fundamentals in this industry and that requires a fresh marketing approach," said Giles Wardle, Managing Director.

"Our client list has tended to reflect the premium end of the market in the UK and abroad, with clients such as The Gleneagles Hotel, Carnoustie Links, The Turnberry Hotel, Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club and Cherokee Plantation Links, South Carolina.

"This has always given the industry two major misconceptions about Wardle; firstly, that only the top clubs can 'afford' to work with consultants and secondly that irrigation consultancy represents an additional cost. We aim to inform the industry at large that most clients of ours actually save money by using us because we ensure true competition between bidding contractors who are all tendering for the same design and specification, drafted by us to meet the unique needs of the site and the client consulting Engineers Ltd," said Giles.

Phone a friend?

www.bigga.org.uk/contact.html

Ocmis joins the Mansell team

Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club, the 27 hole golfing complex owned by former Formula 1 World Champion, Nigel Mansell, is to undergo a complete irrigation refit during the first half of 2002.

Ocmis Irrigation (UK) Ltd have designed and will install the new greens and twin row fairway irrigation system for the 18 hole championship course and 9 hole access course.

Using Rain Bird Eagle Series electric valve in head sprinklers on the green and fairway areas and the Rain Bird Nimbus II map based PC control system with both Freedom radio remote control and Freedom-pad remote control (based on a handheld Compag ipaq).

The heart of the system comprises a variable speed pumping station, which will deliver over 22000 gallons of water per hour through 25 kilometres of medium density polyethylene pipeline, which ranges from 315mm to 50mm in size. A majority of the pipe installation will be undertaken by one of a number of large vibratory moleplough machines owned and operated by Ocmis, minimising disruption and scarring.

Expansion set to continue for ETC

ETC has recently moved its location to Tilstone Fearnall in Cheshire to facilitate a further expansion programme. The new location includes a modern workshop and extensive storage facilities for the wide variety of reconditioned and new grass maintenance machines supplied by ETC.

"The improved facilities will mean better levels of stocking of a wide range of second hand equipment," said Managing Director, Andy Smith.

He added that ETC is now in its seventh year and has grown steadily year on year.



Wonderful things, handbrakes ... if you use them. Paul Copsey, Head Greenkeeper, Burnham-on-Crouch GC in Essex sent in this reminder of what can happen if you neglect the simple 'rules of the road'.

Matt swaps pucks and whistles for balls and pins

Matt Folka, a golf enthusiast with an added passion for ice hockey, has become Mere Golf & Country Club's newest greenkeeper.

Canadian, Matt was a professional International Ice Hockey referee and has continued his passion for the sport in this country where he is a professional referee for the Ice Hockey Superleague.

Matt will use his 12 years experience in greenkeeping to help maintain Mere Golf & Country Club and will report to Mere's Course Manager, Paul Hyde, and Course Superintendent, Stuart Boyce.

Previously, Matt spent seven years as a fire fighter with Maple Ridge fire department before taking up a greenkeeping position at the prestigious Swan-e-set Bay Golf Club in Vancouver.

He then moved to England 1996 and worked at Huyton and Prescott Golf Course in Merseyside until he was appointed by Mere Golf & Country Club in Cheshire. Continuing his career development, Matt is currently studying for a NVQ Level II qualification in amenities sports turf.



R&A look for equipment restrictions

The R&A has written to golf equipment manufacturers seeking their comments on proposed changes to golf ball testing procedures, and possible rules on clubhead size and club length for clubs other than putters.

The R&A is proposing to update the current golf ball test for overall distance by combining the use of an indoor test range and computer technology.

"The underlying principle of the proposal is to test balls efficiently, with modern equipment and in a way which accurately reflects how Tour professionals are hitting the ball today," said David Rickman, Rules Secretary of the R&A.

"As for clubhead size, we are concerned that recent submissions of driver heads for conformance rulings show a significant increase in clubhead size. While these large headed clubs may be 'substantially different from the traditional and customary form and make', there is also the possibility that such clubs may offer undesirable performance benefits," said David.

The R&A is also concerned that increases in club lengths might lead to increases in driving distances. It therefore feels it may be appropriate to introduce a maximum length for clubs other than putters.

At present the R&A is not proposing numerical limits on clubhead size or club length. Instead, it is conducting independent research in these areas and seeking the views of manufacturers on the introduction of finite limits.

Elland Road visit for D&C members



A group of Devon and Cornwall Section members took the opportunity of visiting Elland Road, home of Leeds United on the eve of BTME. They took in the Leeds-Arsenal match on the Sunday and followed it up with a tour round the stadium.

The young ones ...

Last month we said that Richard Barker was the youngest ever National Chairman at 37.

Unfortunately we were mistaken. That honour is still held by Roy Kates, the 1992 National Chairman, who was elected to the office at the tender age of 34.

Textron host Dealer Awards at Harrogate

Svenningsens Turfcare-Scandinavia, of Kastrup, Denmark and Lindkoping, Sweden, has won the Textron Distributor of the Year Award for 2001.

Managing Director Niels Svenningsen and Golf Sales Manager, Niels Brems, accepted the silver trophy and commemorative plaque from Glynn Patrick, Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products' Sales Director, and former Olympic silver medalist, Roger Black, at an evening awards ceremony held at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate at BTME.

Textron dealers from the UK, Eire and Europe attended the ceremony, which recognised business excellence in all areas. Scottish Grass Machinery of Inverkeithing, scooped three awards for UK Service Dealer, UK Parts Dealer and UK Sweeper Dealer, while Araz Ltd, of Israel, won two categories, those of Specialty Products Sales and International Industrial Vehicle Distributor.

"This prestigious award recognises outstanding performance in all sectors of the business, including service, parts, sales and marketing. In a year when we have seen major business development across all our UK and



Svenningsens Turfcare pick up the top award

continental European distributors, Svenningsens have demonstrated exceptional performance across all areas of their business and tremendous commitment to the Textron franchise. They thoroughly deserve the title of Textron Distributor of the Year," said Peter Bell, Marketing Director.

Niels Svenningsen returned to the

podium to receive a special award for Outstanding Service to the Grounds Maintenance Industry recognising his company's 140 years of service in the industry sector, followed soon after by Keith Sutton, from Burrows (GM) Ltd of Preston, Lancs, who collected a similar award as his company celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2001.

Fishwick Hall Golf Club lives up to its name

Fishwick Hall Golf Club, on the River Ribble lived up to its name recently when the greens were more likely to see fish than birdies. Course Manager of the Preston club Paul Eddlestone, had no complaints when he put up the Course Closed signs as the course disappeared under feet of water bringing back nasty memories for many who had suffered in a similar fashion last year.



A student's perspective of Harrogate

Phil Sharples, of Cannington College, took 12 students to Harrogate and reports back on what they found.

A visit to Harrogate proves to be a very important part of any students' education while at Cannington College whether they be studying at NVQ level or Higher National Diploma. For many this trip proves to be a valuable and worthwhile insight into our industry that, of course, cannot be simulated in the college environment.

With the depth and breadth of equipment, manufacturers, seminars and ancillary products available for viewing and discussion the experience cannot be beaten, and it's all under one roof!

After a six hour journey a group of 12 students from Cannington College in Somerset arrived at the Imperial Hotel, Harrogate. Travelling up in a coach sponsored by Amenity Technology along with members of BIGGA's South West Region.

With the depth and breadth of equipment, manufacturers, seminars and ancillary products available for viewing and discussion the experience cannot be beaten, and it's all under one roof!

For many students this is the first real chance they have to meet and chat with industry professionals, whether they be greenkeepers, Course Managers, agronomists or sales representatives. It also proves to be an ideal and neutral ground for meeting Course Managers wishing to interview or chat to students about their particular golf course, the possibility of work placements with them and allows all to gain a deeper insight before taking the, what seems at the time, big step.

Students are also encouraged to pick up literature, brochures and flyers that can be used to reinforce future assignments and projects.

This year the hospitality of the

South West Region, the size and scope of the exhibition, in fact the whole experience, generated some excellent comments from students such as:

"Thoroughly enjoyable and a great atmosphere," Martin Slater, First Year

HND student, while Alan Pyne, a HNC student, said "I am amazed at how large the industry actually is."

From further afield Jose Manuel Barbancho Ruiz, a HNC student from Madrid, said, "I found Harrogate 2002 was a very good opportunity for me to understand the trends of the turf industry and I had the chance to meet very experienced professionals," while James Hallett, a HNC student from South Africa said, "Overall, a great experience and very educational. It was a good trip."

Of course, comments about the night life around Harrogate remain a memory that is best left unprinted, although amazingly, all managed to make breakfast every morning!