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This is your chance to win a great, quilted jacket worth over £50 in our exciting new Buyer's Guide competition in association with GreenLink International & Green-Release

'THE TURFTIME TEASER'

DETAILS ON PAGE 48



Ripe for a change

Scanning the front cover of this particular issue you might be forgiven for thinking that you had been sent a cinema magazine, and not your regular issue of Greenkeeper International, by mistake.

However, on this occasion "Back to the Future..." does not refer to Michael J. Fox's travels through time in a DeLorean car, but to BIGGA Executive Director, Neil Thomas' article of the same name. Neil looks back at the growth and success of the Association over the last 15 years and then to the future, explaining some of the initiatives which are being put in place to ensure that such progress is not only maintained, but accelerates, over the next few years.

The motivation for the article is to highlight to you, the reader and BIGGA member, that despite the undoubted success of the Association since its formation in '87, there is no resting on laurels by the Board of Management or the staff in their efforts to improve.

Why now?

Well, following the Mike Williamson survey which many of you took part in last year, there emerged a feeling that now was the ideal time to take stock of what the Association does and how it goes about doing it. In other words the famous old adage "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" was measured against the not-quite-so-memorable adage "If you don't take time to examine things every so often they might just break".

Next, there followed the flood of letters inspired by Duncan McGilvray's original "Should we lead or be led?" article in the November magazine, which demonstrated that there were many greenkeepers keen to take more control of their own destiny.

It became clear to the Board of Management and the Headquarters staff, therefore, that the time was ripe for the next stage in the development of the Association and the profession. Neil has outlined what will be happening but we want to hear from you, whether it be through the magazine or through elected representatives of the Association. Don't worry if what you want to say is not complimentary. We are keen to hear criticism, particularly the constructive variety, because if members have taken the trouble to make their voice heard it proves they care about their Association. The one sort of criticism which is not so welcome is the sort which arrives "second hand" because it removes the opportunity for us to explain seemingly anomalous situations more fully.

I equate it to a piece of jigsaw. On its own it might look a little incongruous or even downright daft, and it is only when it clicks into place and you see where it sits in relation to everything else that it starts to make sense.

That is why if you have a concern or criticism make sure you go through the proper channels. If it is valid, great, your thoughts can be taken on board and if it isn't, the very least you will get is a better understanding of the bigger picture.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Plea to introduce Tournament Ball

Jaime Ortiz Patino has joined the ranks of those who believe limits should be placed on golf technology or the game we know will cease to exist.

The President of Valderamma Golf Club believes that the "specification of tournament golf balls is something that the USGA and the R&A could establish quite easily, and this specification should be adopted by all manufacturers of golf balls and played by professionals and scratch amateurs.

"By doing so, we would avoid losing a great many historic courses (in particular the traditional links courses) simply because they are no longer long enough for championship play.

"Thankfully," Patino wrote in his annual report on golf in Europe, "the USGA has announced plans to implement new test methods which will better determine whether golf balls conform to the Rules of Golf. It has held extensive discussions with the R&A, which I understand intends to follow the same methods. This is to be welcomed, as long as both organisations agree on a championship ball with reduced performance. Should this be the case, we might be able to dispense with regulations on the spring effect of metal woods."

"It is of considerable concern to many prominent figures in the world of golf that some of our

great courses are under threat, and that championship golf is becoming a drive and wedge game. It would indeed be a great pity if the game were reduced to simply breaking records, and if future generations were to be deprived of such magical moments as Gene Sarazen's remarkable shot at the Masters in 1935, when he made an albatross at the 15th his second shot being played with a 4-wood over the lake that borders the green. Tales of this marvelous shot reverberated around the world, and will be forever recorded in the annals of golfing history. By comparison, Tiger Woods generally plays a 7 or 8-iron for his second shot.

"Despite his undoubted genius, to me he is quite simply not playing the same game that Gene and his contemporaries played 50 or more years ago." Mr Patino points to statistics to substantiate his charges about the impact of technology.

From 1968 to 1995, the players' average drive on the USPGA Tour increased just one foot a year. From 1995 until 2001, the drives increased 7.2 feet each year.

"This is due to a combination of increased spring effect since 1995 and the introduction of new golf balls."

Mr Patino is quick to add that he does not advocate any changes for the vast majority of



Jaime Ortiz Patino: Limits needed to protect the game of golf

golfers, and that he believes that even the finest courses need to be "refashioned from time to time to keep up with the changing nature of the game. This can be accommodated within the parameters of the game as we know it. But continued increases in the distance a ball can be struck is something different. There has to be a limit.

"Tournament golf is the showcase of the game, and that should include strategy and finesse as well as just power. Golfers have the right to watch the great champions of today play the traditional and famous golf courses worldwide that will become obsolete unless we do something to control the distance that the leading players today can achieve with modern technology both in the dubs and balls they play."

Monty launches his Golf Schools

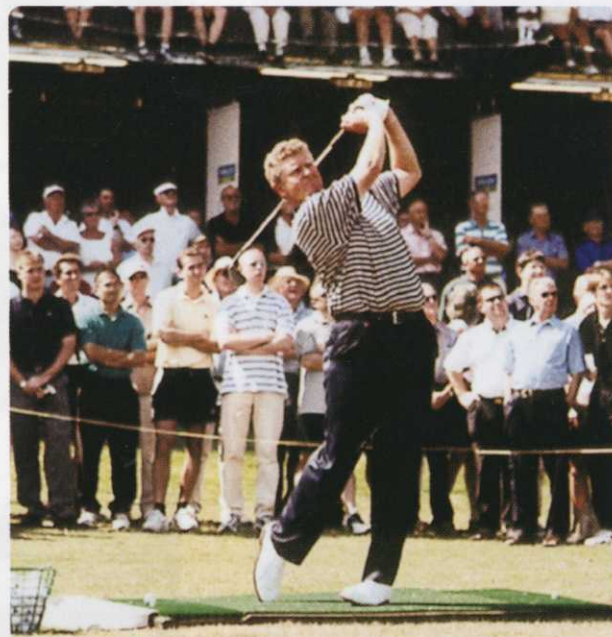
The prospect of affordable "golf for all" is being brought closer through a new venture from Open Golf Centres, which has chosen Toro turf equipment to maintain the 15 golf complexes it plans to build.

Open Golf Centres aim is to combine superb pay-and-play facilities and friendly service with top tuition at The Monty Golf School, which is supported by seven time European number one Colin Montgomerie.

The venture is the brainchild of Stephen Bridges and Martin Wright, who opened their first complex in Christchurch, Dorset, this year after extensive research they undertook showed an appalling lack of opportunities for UK pay-and-play golfers to enjoy high quality, affordable golf.

The result was Open Golf Centres, where golf is available to everyone with tuition being paramount.

As part of providing its customers with the best, the organisation entered into a five-year exclusive partnership with Toro. A wide range of the company's turf machinery is already



Seven time European number one Colin Montgomerie lends his support

used to maintain the two 18-hole courses at Christchurch, including the putting and chipping greens, bunkers and range. split-level, 60-bay driving range.

And the company expects to spend between £2.5 to £3 million over five-to-seven years putting Toro into all 15 of its complexes.

Steve appointed as new Textron MD

Steve Chicken has been appointed to the position of Managing Director of Textron Golf, Turf and Specialty Products International, with effect from 3rd April 2002.

Announcing the appointment, Dennis Schwiager, Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products said, "I am delighted that Steve will be leading the excellent team based in Ipswich. Together they are charged with developing our International business to be a significant player in the global golf and turf markets."

"In February 2001 Steve accepted an assignment, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, with a promotion to Vice President of Engineering for the Turf business. During his time in the USA he has gained a broad understanding of the Golf and Turf



Above: Steve Chicken

business, and has also earned the enormous respect of the Senior Management Team. He is, in our view, the obvious candidate to lead

the International business during a very challenging period"

Steve is a B.Sc graduate in Aeronautical Engineering from Salford University and a M.Sc. and Ph.D in Aerospace Vehicle Design from Cranfield University.

Following a successful career as a Professional Engineering Officer with the RAF, Steve joined the Ransomes organisation to head up the Engineering function in November 1997. Following the acquisition of Ransomes by Textron in early 1998, Steve was promoted to the position of Engineering Director for Golf, Turf & Specialty Products- International, prior to his assignment in the USA.

Steve will be relocating to Ipswich with immediate effect and will be followed home shortly by his wife Sally and daughters, Caroline and Elizabeth.

Announcement as Peter Bell leaves Textron

Textron has announced that Peter Bell has left the company.

Peter is moving to take up the position of General Manager of Ardex UK Ltd, a manufacturer of industrial adhesives and sealants based in Haverhill, Suffolk.



Steve Chicken, the new Managing Director of Textron, Ipswich on making the announcement commented,

"The business will miss Peter's leadership qualities and his drive. He has made a major contribution to the business over the years, firstly as Managing Director of the Jacobsen EZGO Textron company in Kettering and then latterly in Ipswich in both Sales Director and Marketing Director roles.

"He will also be missed within the golf and turf industry for his business acumen, commitment to new product development and his support for training and best practice initiatives.

"We wish Peter, his wife, June, and their family every success in the future and thank him sincerely for his contribution over the years."

Second Conference Due for Gleneagles

Jimmy Kidd, Golf Courses and Estate Director at The Gleneagles Hotel has announced that the second Gleneagles Turf Care Conference, sponsored by Textron Golf, Turf & Specialty Products, will take place from November 24-26.

This year's conference has the support of FEGGA, The Federation of Golf Greenkeepers Association and will focus on a range of operational issues surrounding the management of a successful golf course.

It is aimed at attracting an audience that includes Directors of Golf, Course Managers, Superintendents, Professionals, General Managers and Secretaries/Treasurers.

"The inaugural conference last November surpassed all my expectations. Our aim was to enlighten, entertain and educate and, without fear of contradiction, I can say that we achieved this...and more," said Jimmy.

"We had a diverse range of delegates from all parts of globe and it provided the ideal forum for them to expand their knowledge and understanding of the golf industry. The speakers, many of whom had travelled from across the world, were first rate and question time at the end of each session provided the opportuni-



ty for a lively debate on the various issues raised," he added.

Glynn Patrick, Sales Director at Textron added, "Through Jimmy's vision and the efforts of everyone involved, last year's inaugural conference was an tremendous success and achieved its goal of providing a forum where best practice could be explored to the benefit of all the participants. I'm sure that this year's event will be equally successful and we are delighted to continue our role as principal sponsors."

New Environment leaflet available

As part of the Briggs & Stratton UK Care programme, the company has launched a leaflet - "Caring for our Environment". This contains important information on the steps local authorities, contractors and other users of outdoor powered equipment need to take if the minimum amount of pollution is to be released into the atmosphere.

"As market leader, we take environmental issues very seriously. Exhaust emissions on our new engines are the lowest they have ever been and noise levels are down to a minimum. If the battle to protect our environment is going to be won, then once the engine has been purchased, it is up to the owner or user to make certain that it is maintained



correctly. Our leaflet explains the necessary procedures to follow and would be ideal for distributing to operators," said Bryan Peachey, UK General Manager of Briggs & Stratton UK.

For free copies of "Caring for our Environment" contact Briggs & Stratton on 01708 335616.

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

Martyn Jones leaves Myerscough College

After 20 years service, well known face in the fine turf world, Martyn Jones, has left Myerscough College to pursue other interests within the industry. During his years at the College, Martyn was instrumental in the setting up of the turf programmes at ND, HND and BSc levels; he designed and built the College golf course that demonstrates a wide variety of construction methods, initiated links and developed internships in America, and has gained an international reputation as a speaker and agronomist.

"Martyn has taken early retirement in order to pursue other areas of activity in developing links with the sports turf industry and increasing research opportunities. It is intended that Martyn will retain his links with Myerscough as a visiting lecturer and in other ways," said College Principal Professor Moverley.

"I am sure that I speak on behalf of all his colleagues in thanking Martyn for the contribution that he has made to Myerscough and in wishing him every success and good health in the future," he added.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

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



Promotions at Hayter

Hayter have announced a major restructuring of their commercial sales team to take place with immediate effect.

Robin Boyes becomes National Field Sales Manager-Commercial Products. His responsibilities will be to work closely with, and support the specialist dealers throughout the UK. Reporting to him will be Territory Managers, Mike Lincoln-Smith and Barry Halls. Hamish Macfie becomes National Accounts Manager-Commercial Products and will be responsible for developing national account business. Both Hamish and Robin will report to Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director.



Above: Robin Boyes (left) and Hamish Macfie

Commenting on the changes Kim Macfie said, "The industry in which we operate is changing dramatically, particularly in the way that local authorities operate. With the increasing use of contractors and the trend towards long term hire agreements, it is essential that we have somebody to work closely with companies providing those services. Hamish's responsibilities will also be to work with other companies operating on a national basis, particularly in golf, which is becoming an increasingly more important part of our business. The changes in respect of the way that we handle national accounts do not mean that our overall distribution policy is changing. We firmly believe that the only way to support our products, whichever type of customer we are dealing with, is through a network of independent dealers. The appointment of Robin will mean that our support for these dealers will be strengthened."

Kim Macfie went on to say, "We have thought very carefully before making these changes and have also used independent consultants in the selection process, to help with our deliberations."

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

Clarification

Some of the photographs featured in the "Blueprint for a Successful Club" article which appeared in last month's issue of Greenkeeper International covered the original construction methods from 12 years previously.

They were used in error and the Club would like to point out that all new greens were constructed to USGA standards using only approved methods and materials.



During the recent Scottish Education Conference the Chairman, Archie Dunn, 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.

Carden Park's Wendy makes her mark at the Masters

A greenkeeper from The Carden Park Resort was among the team of greenkeepers who assisted in the preparations for the recent Masters, won by Tiger Woods.

Wendy O'Brien, a greenkeeper from The Carden Park Resort, near Chester, is currently on placement at the famous Georgia course and is enjoying the experience without interrupting her greenkeeping education back home.

Wendy enrolled with Myerscough College's Mollnet online training programme which has meant she has been able to carry on her NVQ Level 3 education over the Net.

"I was encouraged by my tutor to continue my training while in the States with the newly established Internet course guide. After starting my Level 3 while still in England, I have been able to study using the internet and have found it easier since purchasing a laptop," said Wendy.

"I have met other greenkeepers from around the world and through shared experiences have made contacts that will last a lifetime," she added.

Paul McGrail, from Myerscough, said: "Wendy is one of several students currently abroad, submitting work and being assisted over the Internet. The system seems to work very well."

Northern Irish Conference a big success

Barenbrug UK's recent Turf Conference 2002 gave grounds care professionals throughout Northern Ireland the chance to hear industry experts report on the latest developments in turf care and grass breeding. Attended by an invited audience of soccer and rugby groundsmen, golf greenkeepers, landscaping contractors and local authority personnel, the event provided an update on research into seed production and quality control, turf diseases and grass nutrition, together with news of Barenbrug's new cultivars for 2002.

Highlights of the Conference included Jayne Leyland, Barenbrug UK'S Area manager (North), and herself a former greenkeeper, who gave an overview of the company's latest high-ranking varieties for different applications, which answered many questions that delegates raised during the Conference about cultivar selection.

She provided details of Barcampia tufted hairgrass, a shade and wear tolerant variety that combines well with fescues and perennial ryegrass to form a robust sward, and which is being used at increasing numbers of modern, high-sided stadiums.

Jayne also told delegates about Barkoel crested hairgrass, which shows outstanding tolerance of drought, salt and limestone soils, as well as Barbizon tall fescue that can help pitches prone to waterlogging



when sown as an 80% proportion of a mix with perennial ryegrass. New Barenbrug cultivars for 2002 that she described, included Barifera creeping bent for fine turf applications, bred for European conditions; Bargold, the perennial ryegrass whose exceptional fineness of leaf makes it possible to be used for golf greens; and Barlouise, a perennial ryegrass with disease resistance and slow re-growth characteristics suitable for use on low maintenance swards. Other presentations included papers from David Johnston, in charge of breeding new grass varieties at the Northern Ireland Horticulture and Plant Breeding Station at Loughgall, in which he out-

lined the desired characteristics and evaluation procedures for new introductions. Simon Barnaby, Technical Manager with The Scotts Company, spoke on the science of turf nutrition and how organic fertilisers can be included as part of an overall management programme, while Dr Kate Entwistle, founder of The Turf Disease Centre consultancy, warned of potential threats to turf that grounds managers should be aware of, and how they can be prevented.

"We covered some very technical issues and we tried to strike a balance between science and practical applications," commented Ben Petitjean, Barenbrug UK'S Sales Manager.

For Toro's Fairway Range nothing is out of bounds.



Reelmaster 5200-D Ideal for links or heathland courses with slower rates of growth, this lightweight, 25hp workhorse with small reels is competitively-priced and simply engineered for self-servicing.



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



Reelmaster 5500-D Fitted with a larger engine and bigger reel diameter for higher productivity, the 5500-D follows ground contours smoothly to give the finest of cuts. Options include 2 and 4 wheel drive, cab and grass boxes.



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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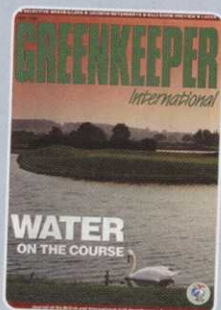
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A LOOK BACK TO A DECADE AGO

Back Lapping

FROM GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

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



MAY 1992

This month we look back on one of BIGGA's most successful conferences - the National Education Conference which in 1992 was held at Cirencester Agricultural College.

The ambitious programme covered seventeen presentations from no less than fourteen speakers and as the magazine reported, called for strict adherence to timing. Greenkeeper contributions were much in evidence. Royal Liverpool's Derek Green presented a paper on 'Dry Patch'. In his typical droll humourous style he told of the 180 hydrophobic acres on the links of Hoylake, with some 50-60% of Dry Patch on any one green which appeared in a mosaic pattern. The theory was suggested that Dry Patch might be exacerbated by sand top dressing applications necessary with increased play, though Derek was at pains to point out that his links greens were not pure sand, rather a 80-20 mix with dirty sand and crushed shell. Dry Patch at Hoylake was certainly no recent phenomenon either, for old records revealed that the problems were first noted back in 1920.

Laurence Pithie spiced an altogether fascinating talk with his own highly professional slide presentation in talking of 'Golf Course Development' from his own individualistic viewpoint, enlivening the proceedings with shots of course construction disasters that would have made Harry Colt turn in his grave.

It was Bernard Findlay, Course Manager at Portstewart Golf Club, who, in the final presentation, set the seal of excellence on the Conference. Bernard had actually built a seaside links course from scratch, had the scars to prove it and the pictures to back up his experiences. The magazine reported that Bernard had begun the day as a greenhorn presenter, modestly murmuring about his inexperience, and finished as the star of the Conference, a perfect role model for other greenkeepers - indeed all platform presenters - to follow in the future.

The report concluded that if BIGGA can produce such worthy speakers from within the ranks, it is a great credit to the profession and augurs well for the future of greenkeeping.

Kevin meets Portuguese Greenkeepers Association

Kevin Shaw (right), European Sales Manager for irrigation pump system manufacturer Flowtronex Europe, meets up with Simao da Cunha, President of the newly-formed Association of Portuguese Greenkeepers, pictured on the Old Course at Vilamoura, Algarve.

Flowtronex pumping systems already form the backbone of irrigation systems for the growing number of golf and leisure complexes on the Algarve, one of Europe's favourite destinations for golfing holidays and tournaments.

Kevin, who took up full time residence in the Algarve last summer to head up the company's Sales and Service Centre, was on hand to hear about the new Association of Portuguese Greenkeepers.

"Many people have welcomed the idea. Its backbone is a website through which members can communicate and pick up information - most greenkeepers now have access to a PC and this avenue seemed an obvious choice," said Simao.



"Companies involved in the business will also be able to promote their services, giving greenkeepers

easy and fast access not only to the latest technical information but also a wide range of services," he added.

Martyn joins Lindum in South Wales

Lindum Turf has expanded its operation into South Wales, following the appointment of Martyn David as the company's new distributor.

Martyn, who was born in Llanharan and has 20 years experience working for the family landscaping company, will enjoy sole distribution rights for the full range of Lindum turf conventional, washed, large and small rolls and squares - from Chepstow to Carmarthen. He will also be offering the full Lindum Plant Nutrition service, following extensive training at Floratine Products Group's head office in Memphis, USA.

Having formed his new company, Premier Turf, to handle the Lindum distributorship, Martyn who approached Lindum's Managing Director, Stephen Fell, at last year's Saltex, says that he was ready to branch out on his own, and was



impressed by the quality of the Lindum range.

Stephen Fell said that it was vital to find someone who knew the territory.

"Martyn has lived here all his life. He is the ideal person to promote Lindum Turf in South Wales."

Stephen is lucky De Vere winner

Stephen Hartshorn, Course Manager at Heyrose Golf Club, is the lucky winner of the De Vere Hotel Weekend Break competition.

Steve, whose course coincidentally featured in last month's magazine, correctly answered the three golf posers. They were 1. Tom Watson was the man who defeated Jack Nicklaus

in the famous head-to-head Open at Turnberry in 1977; 2. Tony Jacklin won The Open in 1969 and 3. 1930 was the year in which Bobby Jones completed the Grand Slam of US

and British Amateurs and US and Open Championships. Steve, and his wife, have decided to use the prize to stay at The De Vere Belfry.



Erica joins Turfgrass Growers Association

The Turfgrass Growers Association has appointed Erica Nicholls to the position of Business Development Executive.

Working alongside the TGA's Chief Executive, David Clarke, Erica's principal remit is to help build and extend the association's income streams, enabling the TGA to sustain the continued growth in its activities, influence and profile across the United Kingdom, Ireland and further afield.

In addition to expanding the TGA's range of professional services and activities, Erica will be seeking to increase the number of turf producers and industry suppliers belonging to the association. She is aiming also to build on the valuable financial,

practical and educational input resulting from the TGA's training courses, turf shows, seminars, conferences and publications.

Among her first activities for the TGA are the organisation of a series of half-day training courses being held during April, May and June for suppliers, specifiers and installers of cultivated turf and the planning of the TGA's inaugural turf conference, scheduled to take place at the East of England Showground, Peterborough, on October 24 this year.

Erica brings to her new post a wide range of experience gained in conservation, marketing, IT and public relations. Living near Ipswich, Suffolk, she sings in a local rock band during her spare time.



Introduction of minimum qualification for full greenkeeper membership

The BIGGA Board of Management reaffirmed its intention to introduce a minimum qualification for Full Greenkeeper Membership of the Association at its meeting held on 26 March 2002, at BIGGA House. After considering feedback from members who attended the Annual General Meeting, held in Harrogate, on 23 January 2002, together with inputs from the BIGGA Regions and Sections, the Board of Management decided to circulate their recommendations to all BIGGA members, asking for any feedback, before the recommendations are put to the 2003 Annual General Meeting.

Why introduce a minimum qualification?

The reasons for introducing a qualification for full greenkeeper membership are as follows:

- It is Government policy that all adult workers, in all industries, should hold or be working towards, at least, an N/SVQ Level 2, or equivalent, qualification
- The GTC is encouraging employers of greenkeepers to train all new entrants to N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf
- BIGGA aims to improve the qualifications and status of greenkeepers
- Greenkeepers want greater recognition and better pay
- Anyone working as a greenkeeper at a golfing establishment should be competent i.e. should be able to do the job without supervision
- Assessment of competence leads to qualification

Feedback from the BIGGA Market Research Study 2001, indicated that members felt that strengthening the link between qualifications and BIGGA membership would help to differentiate between members and non members, thus strengthening BIGGA's general standing as a genuinely professional organisation.

N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf comprises 7 Units which include basic greenkeeping tasks such as mowing, raking, brushing, scarifying, applying top dressing, fertilising, repairing divots, irrigation, applying pesticides, rolling, course preparation, machinery, construction, estate maintenance and plant identification. Therefore N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf shows that the holder can perform all basic greenkeeping tasks, without supervi-



sion, at work, to National Standards.

The proposal to introduce a minimum qualification for BIGGA membership would not bar anyone from becoming a member of the Association.

Being able to join a professional organisation should increase membership applications not reduce them.

Background Information

All current greenkeeper members of BIGGA would be given full qualified greenkeeper membership.

All new recruits to the Industry, not currently members, applying for full greenkeeper membership, from the date of approval by the AGM, eg. 1 February 2003, would need a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 Sportsturf or other relevant qualification eg. HND plus experience.

Anyone who does not hold a minimum qualification of N/SVQ Level 2 or equivalent, who is not currently a member of BIGGA, who applies for membership after 1 February 2003, would be offered Greenkeeper Assistant membership.

As the salary of Greenkeeper Assistants would, probably be lower, they should pay a reduced membership subscription of £10 less than the prevailing rates for Green Staff.

Greenkeeper Members and Greenkeeper Assistant Members would receive the same membership benefits.

Greenkeeper Assistant members could request to be upgraded to full greenkeeper membership once they become qualified.

Any full greenkeeper member who is unqualified and leaves the Association for five years or more would be offered Greenkeeper Assistant Membership on reapplying.

All full greenkeeper members, whether qualified or not, would be enrolled onto the BIGGA CPD Scheme.

All Greenkeeper Assistant members would have their membership

category reviewed after 5 years.

All full greenkeeper members should be granted continued membership if they continue to pay a subscription and work as a greenkeeper, golf course manager, estate manager or other related job, at a golfing establishment.

Those greenkeepers who have held full greenkeeper membership but are not currently working as a greenkeeper at a golfing establishment but remain connected with the Association, greenkeeping or the fine turf industry, should be granted continued full membership at the Board of Management's discretion.

Any person employed in the keeping of the green at a golfing establishment, who has ten years experience or greater should, on application for membership, be granted full greenkeeper membership at the discretion of the Board of Management.

Conclusion

The introduction of a minimum qualification for greenkeeper membership of BIGGA would not affect current members, unless they left the Association for more than five years and they were not qualified.

Introduction of a minimum qualification for greenkeeper membership should improve the status of members within the Industry and enhance the reputation of BIGGA. For example, Golf Professionals who are members of the PGA are all qualified. Full Greenkeeper Membership would show employers that the greenkeeper is qualified.

The Standing Committee on Greenkeepers Pay and Conditions of Service already recommends that new recruits to the Industry should be paid a 'training salary' until such time as they become qualified. Therefore, unqualified Greenkeeper Assistants would receive lower rates of pay until such time as they could 'do the job'.

Recruitment of trainee greenkeepers should improve if they could see a defined career path in a professional industry.

The term 'greenkeeper' currently includes anyone maintaining a golf course whether they can actually do the job or not. Greenkeeping is a skilled occupation and the term 'greenkeeper' should indicate that the person is skilled, competent and qualified to work on a golf course.



BIGGA welcomes...

Scottish Region

Alan Black, North
Stephen Brogan, West
Benjamin Brookes, North
Craig Drummond, West
Scott Frame, West
Colin Kearney, West
David Lawrence, North
Paul Marshall, North
Kenneth Morgan, Ayrshire

Northern Region

James Bunting, N West
Jonathan Evans, N Wales
Paul Hardy, N West
Mark Hillaby, N West
Karl Peak, N West
James Povey, Sheffield

Midland Region

Jamie Barden, Mid Anglia
David Bignell, Mid Anglia
Ross Carter, Midland
Kenneth Fletcher, E of England
Christopher Gould, Midland
Neil Green, E of England
Stuart Hall, Midland
Lawrence Ryan, Mid Anglia

South East Region

Dane Sandford, E Anglia
Nathan Kidd, E Anglia
Derek Lane, London
John Mackey, Surrey
Mark Pisani, Surrey
Matthew Winter, E Anglia
Darren Woodward, Surrey

S West & S Wales Region

Robin Collins, S Coast
Martyn Heath, S West
Luke Hill, S West
Paul Jenkins, S West
James Jones, S West
James Mcentee, S Coast
Ronald Mitchell, S Coast
Douglas Pringle, S Coast
Anthony Riddle, S West
Darren Saunders, S Coast

International

Erik Sjostrom, Norway
Kurt Sams, USA
Marty Rowe, Canada

Associate Members

Stephen Toon, N Scotland
Christopher Hill, Northern
Simon Banks, E Midland
Terry Humphries, Surrey
David Mathews, S Wales
Michael Delany, S Ireland
Peter Dunning, Midland
Tony Kvedaras, E of England
Robert Page, Midland
Alestair Rathbone, BB&O
Julie Wall, Midland
Martin Pisani, Surrey
Philip Armitage, Northern
Paul Newton, N West
Jane Whiting, E of England
Kenneth Draper, Dev & C'Wales
Gareth Duncie, S Wales

May'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 May's winner, Brian Hillen, of Drumpellier Golf Club.

TIME TO TALK
www.bigga.org.uk

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

FOR GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS CHAT GREENKEEPERS

Contact Rachael Palmer, BIGGA's Membership Services Officer on 01347 833800 or via email: rachael_p@bigga.co.uk

Key Skills corner

"Wear your learning like your watch, in a private pocket; and do not merely pull it strike it; merely to show you have one."

Philip Dormer Stanhope,
 Earl of Chesterfield

A great theory, but I am beginning to feel that the greenkeeping industry should start to wave the tune-piece in its pocket around a little more.

I am referring to the new Key Skills Corner in Greenkeeper International.

I was so embarrassed to read Ken Richardson's article telling members where to place capital letters in a sentence, grammatical basics we were taught at the age of six.

It is time to stop dumbing down and rid ourselves of an unwanted stereotype. Greenkeeping is an industry rightly committed to education and training, however it is my opinion it should be setting its standards and pitching its levels higher than this. To explain to readers the function of a capital letter is little short of condescending and frankly insulting, and considering the Association is implementing a minimum NVQ entry for membership I find it somewhat bewildering.

Daniel Lightfoot, Deputy Course Manager
 Gatton Manor Hotel Golf and Country Club,
 Surrey

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quoting your name and Membership number, and we'll do the rest!

A big thank you

As a recipient of the Scottish Patrons' generosity, I spent a very interesting trip to BTME at Harrogate. To be able to attend so many seminars and listen to some of the most knowledgeable speakers in the world of golf was certainly a revelation. As usual on display were the best machinery and other course necessities which were of the highest order. The camaraderie among fellow greenkeepers was also very much appreciated. In closing I would like to thank the sponsors for their generosity and also my East Section for their kind nomination.

Ian Aitchison

Our members are leading the way!

To say I am proud to be a part of our profession at this moment in time is a considerable understatement.

As you will see from the publicity in this month's magazine, BIGGA, our professional Association has just approved a very exciting initiative, which will ensure that our profession, and with it our professional futures, are secured.

From a personal and professional low point, when I first penned the article "Should we lead or should we be led" some six months ago, I am now extremely excited for all of us now and in the future.

BIGGA officials and Board members had already been looking at areas of concern among the profession (not least apathy), and my article helped to galvanise members' concerns into well reasoned and thought out reaction - your response was admirable.

You will no doubt have read many of the replies and spin off subjects and debates published in the pages of our magazine over the past months - it is still going on!. But there have also been

many discussions behind the scenes, involving a broad spectrum of greenkeepers from within the profession, offering positive opinions and suggestions, which I have found extremely heartening.

Get-togethers were arranged during "Harrogate Week" to discuss various issues further, in a more structured way, and recommendations were discussed with BIGGA officials.

BIGGA's Board of Management has subsequently approved the setting up of a group to be named the "Futures" Sub Committee, which will be made up from a wide selection of differing denominations within greenkeeping and golf course management from our membership, who will sit and recommend action regarding the future of our profession.

The terms of reference for this group, which will be finalised at the inaugural meeting, are itemised within our Executive Director's article elsewhere in this issue.

Action on various issues will, I am sure, filter through fairly soon so watch

this space as they say - in fact the first meeting should have already taken place by the time you have read this letter.

I would also like to use this opportunity to impress on every member the importance of voicing your opinions and ideas for the future of our profession - don't sit on it or just talk amongst yourselves - get in touch - any problem or grievance can be solved by discussion and debate.

As a Course Manager I have received valuable comments, ideas and opinions from apprentices through all designations of greenkeepers and managers, to even Captains of golf clubs (honestly!).

Please talk to our professional Association and let them know your feelings - only then can they do something about it.

Through your response, over the past six months or so, I am now convinced there is a secure future for us all.

Duncan McGilvray, Course Manager
 Potters Bar Golf Club

Clearing the cloudy waters

For many years BIGGA has worked hard to implement a workable plan for the education and training of greenkeepers and to achieve this in conjunction with the GTC. It has all too often been hampered by a lack of adequate funding and a differing of views as to the respective responsibilities for such education and training.

I am pleased to report that in recent months much has changed for the better and there is now a much greater sense of cooperation and working together, brought about by the willingness of all involved to pull in the same direction. Gone forever, I hope, are the old suspicions of doubt, which clouded the waters of progress for education for all. The GTC and BIGGA education sit closely together, largely due to a good working relationship between David Golding and Ken

Richardson, and it's building on that cooperation that has made the present positive thinking possible.

At the last GTC Management meeting, it was agreed that Ken Richardson should be asked to attend the GTC Technical Panel meetings, and at the same time I agreed to ask the BIGGA Board if they would agree to David Golding being invited to attend the BIGGA Education Sub Committee meetings. I am pleased to say that our Board to a man agreed that it would be a big help for further relations and communication between both bodies. So, it's from a very positive and cooperative mood that I am able to inform members that we can go forward from here knowing that BIGGA, GTC, R&A, and all the Home Unions are pulling together, which must be good news for everyone.

Greenkeeper education is the one most important issue for us all, and we are now in a better position than ever before to make big strides forward. We need the input of all bodies within our industry, not just for funding, but also for new and better ideas. Each and every one of us wants the best that education and training can offer from colleges, BIGGA and GTC, and with the support of the R&A and Home Unions the future looks very healthy. Now it's time for cooperation and moving forward.

I for one feel very optimistic for the coming years. Good luck to you all and thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Gordon Child, BIGGA Past National
 Chairman and the Association's GTC
 Representative

Clarification

I am writing to clear up any confusion that may arise from your presentation of my article "Changing the Nature of your Greens" in the April edition of Greenkeeper International.

Firstly, the photographs were designed to illustrate the characteristics of each of the primary growth strategies should have been captioned as follows...

- Common mouse-ear (Ruderal). Rapid life cycle and seed production in anticipation of disturbance.
- Mono-stand of competitive species (Ragwort and Rosebay willowherb) in a



productive environment. The greater proportion of time here is devoted to producing biomass for resource capture. A picture which was not included would have illustrated the following:

- Heather carry, a good example of a stress tolerator. Trampling disturbance or competitive exclusion from invasive grasses will serve to eradicate this important species.

Also, the conclusion to the article ("Feeling the Pressure?") was for some reason placed in the middle of the article. I realise that the article was quite complicated in nature but feel that it was not presented as written. I hope you will print these comments to help clarify any confusion that may have arisen as a result.

Henry C Bechelet, Turfgrass Agronomist, STRI

Happy Greenkeeper responds

It's the 8th of April 2002, I arrive home from work at approximately 4pm. Yippee! The excitement of the new issue of Greenkeeper International sitting on the door mat, I can't control myself any longer and rip open the plastic envelope. First things first let's look at the jobs' page to see who has been moving around. Nobody I know has moved so on to the second part of the magazine that most people look at, the letters page. One heading caught my eye, "A Right to Replay from Denmark".

This could be interesting I thought. A quick skim through the letter and "Oh my God!" my name at the bottom of the second column. A more thorough read was required. It starts off well with a thank you from Mr Ian C Tomlinson for my letter in the February issue but it quickly took a downturn, and by the time I had read to the end of the third column I was the worst greenkeeper in the world. I should have been burnt at the stake like an old medieval witch, or put in the stocks at BIGGA HQ so all greenkeepers could throw bags of rotten seed or sponges soaked in Farmura at me. (Only joking I know they don't burn witches any more).

Once I stopped the tears after this violent attack of words I read through the letter again then I read my own letter again. I believe that Ian missed the whole point of my original letter. The whole point was that more communication is needed from Greenkeepers to members, committees and other members of the golf clubs management team and vice versa to ensure that the needs of the golfers are met without compromising the condition of, or the maintenance of the golf course. The education of greenkeepers is now so

much improved it could now be the time to start educating the golfers.

Ian may well be fluent in French and have a working knowledge of German but he can not copy a simple passage of English from another issue of this magazine as I was misquoted in Ian's letter. Ian's version of my letter changes the context in which it was written. But don't worry Ian I won't sue you for liable. (BIGGA legal help line advised against the long and expensive court case)

Having read Ian's article in the January issue, which was both interesting and well written, it became apparent that we have very similar problems to deal with at work, in both cases inherited, and both deal with them in a very similar ways. So why this clashing of the pens? Maybe the pen truly is mightier than the sword.

We are all fighting for the same cause but we have different ideas how to achieve the final goal, perhaps some of us should sit down with some of the National board and throw some ideas around for the way forward and stop all this internal arguing, among us, the greenkeepers.

If Ian or any other member of the association would like to discuss my first letter or any other matter with me in person I can always be contacted on 07702 435122 and would be more than happy to chat.

PS. As a final point we hollow or solid tine and top dress every month from April to October and Slit tine almost every week as the weather allows through the Winter months. So we do aerate at Cleethorpes.

Leslie Howkins, "STILL HAPPY" Head Greenkeeper, Cleethorpes Golf Club

Sharing the knowledge 2

Ian Chenery's comments ("Sharing the Knowledge," April, 2002) regarding informing golfers, whether members or fee paying guests, about maintenance operations are absolutely right. Explaining maintenance operations, why they have to be done, how they will be carried out, and when, further improves greenkeeper/golfer relations through improved communication. This also demonstrates to the golfer that the greenstaff are knowledgeable and fully conversant with all aspects of golf course maintenance.

A better educated golfer will be more understanding of the problems and difficulties that can arise at any given time. Those greenkeepers that feel golfers shouldn't know about the maintenance operations may only be masking their own lack of knowledge, or inability to explain or justify their maintenance regimes.

Like Ian I too believe that there are qualifications to suit the individuals career aspirations, and that BIGGA is putting too much emphasis on NVQ's. In the article Education and Training Update (February, 2002), Ken Richardson as the Education and Training Manager of BIGGA spoke

as briefly as possible about qualifications such as national certificates through to post-graduate degrees. He stated that "these qualifications show what the holder knows and not necessarily what they can do" which may or may not be true. But in the context of the article he implies that these qualifications are not as good as NVQ's. Ironically, these are the qualifications (NC, HNC, BSc (Hons) etc) all of which can be taken on a part-time basis, that BIGGA should be promoting if it wants the industry to be taken as a serious profession.

Finally, before everyone writes in to say that there is no substitute for experience, I completely agree, but only if this is experience of the correct management techniques. We don't have to look too far back in history to see the problems that resulted from the feed and water brigade, which thankfully is a dying breed.

Colin Mumford

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'THE TURFTIME TEASER'

DETAILS ON PAGE 48

REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW REVIEW

Books

Turf Management for Golf Courses

Second Edition by **Dr James B Beard**

This new edition of **Turf Management for Golf Courses** is now available from the **STRI** priced at **£90 plus £8 post and packing**. It represents a **major update on the First Edition** but retains a similar format and organisation.

Review: Turf Management for Golf Courses

Jim has drawn on a wide range of experts from across the US to help produce this updated version which covers: Golf and Turfgrass; Designing and Building a Golf Course; the Putting Green; The Tee; The Fairway; The Rough; The Bunker; Golf Course Equipment and Facilities; The Irrigation System; Pests and Stress; Golf Course Management and other Golf Course Operations.

Although aimed at the American market and written in American English, this book contains a vast amount of information useful to the British Greenkeeper. It includes a large number of colour plates, diagrams and flow charts to illustrate the well written text. Indeed, the Chapter on Pests and Stress introduces you to pests and

diseases that you may never encounter. However, if you do, then you will be able to identify and control them using the information in this book. A word of caution, however, not all chemicals approved for Golf Course use in the US are approved in the UK.

The Chapter on Management gives an insight into the way that golf courses are structured in the US, giving Job Descriptions for a range of staff. The specifications for Superintendent and Deputy closely resemble those of Course Managers and Deputies. However, not many British courses have a Fertiliser Technician and I think that we call a Landscape Horticulturist a Gardener. Joking apart, this Chapter contains useful information on Staff Training, and Appraisal, Communications, Grievance

and Discipline and Record Keeping.

The final chapter of the book looks at Championship and Tournament Preparation, Water Features and Landscaping, including a vast range of trees that can be used on golf courses.

The book closes with information on Grass Identification, Seeding and Planting, the Measurement of Areas, Conversion Tables and a Glossary of Terms.

Despite the cost, this book is a useful guide to greenkeeping and golf course management. Care must be taken to interpret its guidance into local language and apply it to the rules and conditions of your country. A useful addition to any bookshelf, it would sit well alongside Jim Arthur's 'Practical Greenkeeping'. **KR**

BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, gives some health and safety advice and highlights the 2002 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Education and Training Feedback

Advice and information on health and safety continues to arrive on my desk and two recent articles may well have relevance to greenkeepers and golf clubs.

Anyone using trichloroethylene as a cleaning/degreasing agent in their workshops should be aware that trichloroethylene has been reclassified. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published an Information Sheet following the announcement that trichloroethylene is to be reclassified as carcinogenic under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 1994. The Information Sheet gives advice on what the reclassification means for users of the solvent, and what action they should take to comply with the change.

Copies of 'Surface cleaning: Solvent update including the reclassification of trichloroethylene', Engineering Information Sheet No.34, are available free from HSE Books on Tel: 01787 881165.

Although not in greenkeeping, the

story, below illustrates the consequences of inadequate training and/or supervision. Are all of your staff trained to operate golf course machinery?

A warehouse worker has received almost £2.4 million in an out-of-court settlement following a lift truck accident. Greg Arde was working for stationery company Duel Limited in Cwmbran, South Wales, when the accident happened on 11 April 1995. Arde was driving a lift truck around a sharp corner when it overturned, crushing him underneath it. Arde's spine was broken in three places, and he is now paralysed from the waist down. Arde claimed that he had not received any training on how to drive lift trucks, and was left unsupervised at the time of the accident. Duel Limited accepted 90 per cent liability for the accident.

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Thanks to sponsorship from the R&A and the continued involvement

of STRI, the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition will run again in 2002. Invitations to enter have been sent to all golf clubs in Great Britain and we require entry forms to be returned by 21 June 2002.

All entries will be reviewed by STRI ecologists, who will select the clubs to progress to the next stage of judging. Selected clubs will receive a visit to assess their level of environmental management before the judges select a winner from each area ie. Scotland, the North, the South East, the South West and Wales. The judges will then select an overall winner. Each area winner will receive a cheque for £500 and a plaque to hang in their clubhouse and the National Winner will receive a cheque for £2000, the BIGGA Golf Environment Trophy and a plaque to hang in their clubhouse.



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

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Epani

EDUCATION KEY SKILLS CORNER

Having looked at Capital Letters and Full Stops, this month's Key Skills Corner looks at commas.

Commas:

indicate a natural pause; separate items in a list; 'bracket' information that could be omitted; are used before quotations.

For Example.

When you read a sentence aloud, a comma should be placed where you pause.

When he saw that the green was clear, he decided to cut the fairway.

Three greenkeepers attended the course, although John missed the first morning.

Separate items in a list

You will need a pen, paper and scale ruler.

The large, green, fairway mower is unserviceable.

'Bracket' information that could be omitted.

You will need to bring all of the equipment, including a turf iron, when you come.

Players must wear appropriate clothing, including golf shoes, on this course.

Before quotations.

The Chairman of Green said, "We must rebuild the ninth tee".

There is also a comma after quotations if the sentence carries on.

"Income from green fees has increased by 20%", said the Treasurer.

Beware, you can change the meaning of a sentence by using commas.

Jack cut the green. (Fact)

Jack, cut the green (Order)

Here is an example for you to try, which includes capital letters, full stops and commas.

btme is held in harrogate north yorkshire each january run by bigga the exhibition includes something for everyone exhibits include sand seed machinery and course furniture a spokesman for bigga said that 2003 was the best year yet

Last month's solution

Thank you for attending the recent Annual General Meeting of the 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?

The groundwork is crucial when you're claiming the earth

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Ideal for use prior to tournaments or for long-term greening. Contains a blue marker dye for easier application.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE



Above: Neil in the foyer of BIGGA HOUSE on a sunny spring day

Below: The BTME Steering Committee in session

Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new ...

So I left a green and pleasant land and I invite the reader to come with me to the first Monday in the month of August 1987. That very morning, a homespun Welshman arrived at a building set in woods in a place of wild delights called Bingley, somewhere in deepest Yorkshire. It had an imposing name, the Sports Turf Research Institute, not that it meant much to this writer. The STRI had been designated as BIGGA's first 'home' and my moment of destiny had arrived - to set up, organise and administer this new body, formed after two traumatic years which had finally seen the three previous greenkeeping Associations coming together under the BIGGA umbrella.

Little time to reflect on the hills and dales I had left behind, my induction to the world of greenkeeping was to be short, sharp and severe - here's what you have, now get on with it!

What did I have? Well I had a small empty office, save for a desk and

chair. I had been told to collect £15 per head in subscription from some 1200 greenkeepers, members of the previous Associations, who might or might not, choose to join BIGGA. I was advised that a computer system, an exhibition and a magazine were required - like now! So we were off down a long and winding road which brought us to Aldwark Manor, to a portacabin, then rented offices and finally in 1998 into BIGGA HOUSE. I am not intent on an historical account of BIGGA's journey down 15 years but we must reflect briefly on our beginnings to understand and appreciate how far the Association and thereby greenkeeping, for BIGGA has most certainly enhanced the profession, have come since our unheralded beginnings in the Bingley of long ago.

Today our members have a national headquarters, an Association increasingly recognised as one of golf's leading bodies and one which is organised through five Regions and 27 Sections incorporating some 7300

members. It is a go ahead, professional organisation which does not stand still and seeks to look to the future and particularly its members' futures. So in this article it is not the past or even the present upon which I shall dwell but rather I shall look a little further down the long and winding road as our journey continues.

Securing the future ...

Let me start with BTME and Greenkeeper International magazine. These have been major factors in our growth and development. It is all too easy to be sucked into their success and become complacent. This we will not do. We are governed by market forces, supply and demand and there will never be a time when this will be otherwise. So we are intent on developing the Golf Club Show to complement the BTME while continuing to grow the latter, ensuring that it remains in tune with the times and continues to consolidate its position as the leading turf exhibition in Europe. I do hope that the Association of Golf Club Secretaries, with whom we have an excellent relationship, will join with us in establishing and promoting the Golf Club Show for a 'one stop shop' encompassing all of a golf club's needs is surely both desirable and attainable with all interested parties pulling together.

Our magazine is strongly positioned in the market place after 12 years. Times are not easy with the magazine no exception to the downturn in advertising nationally. We will fight our corner knowing how valued a publication it is for both our members and the trade. It is a quality product in design and production and I have been encouraged in recent months by the increasing comments, suggestions and constructive criticism from members as to its future content and direction. These will be taken on board and the magazine must develop in line with the profession and the game. We are intent





Above: Early spring at BIGGA HOUSE (rear view) and below: BIGGA HOUSE - imposing main entrance

on providing ever stronger editorial.

The magazine must not stay rooted in the past and comparing early issues with those of the present day, it is clear that 'Greenkeeper International' has indeed come a long way. It needs to be a standard bearer in taking BIGGA and the profession forward and we will continue to strive to that end.

Dawn of a new day ...

Within BIGGA, the future education and training of greenkeepers will remain of prime importance. More than at any time in the past decade there are serious grounds for optimism. Often in the past we have seemed to be going down a dark tunnel but now there is certainly light at the end of it. A real sense of shared responsibilities is emerging - employer and employee. BIGGA now has a presence, through Gordon Child, and a full vote on the newly constituted 'GTC Limited' - a company limited by guarantee. We have a dual presence on the GTC Technical Committee through Kerran Daly and now with our Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, recently invited to attend meetings. David Golding, in turn, will attend meetings of our own Education Sub-Committee. Attitudes are changing within the Unions represented on the GTC - an acceptance that all interested parties must work together. Indeed our relationships with the other golfing organisations are more cooperative and progressive than at any time in BIGGA's past.

In the longer term there must be hope of increased funding for greenkeeper training. Much remains to be done particularly with regard to the inconsistent teaching and standards at the colleges. It is unacceptable that so many golf clubs still refuse to make provision in their budgets for the training of their greenkeeping staff. Then there are those clubs that insist on their staff taking annual leave to pursue their training needs. We will



continue in seeking to eradicate such outmoded and ill advised traits. There will still be frustrations and setbacks which in many ways mirror the national concerns in the education field. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that our profession is held in high regard for its progress in the training field - many other professions remain rooted in the past and light years behind. I am confident

that the future will bring many opportunities for the discerning and committed greenkeeper to attain first class qualifications leading onto a full and satisfying career.

A need to belong ...

BIGGA is a large member organisation, currently with some 7300 members, and the second largest worldwide. Our membership benefits

are comprehensive and excellent in terms of value for money. Often they are underestimated, but when the need arises and the case proven the support for the individual is first class. I was recently looking at a Claims Report under our legal support scheme and recent payouts have seen individuals receiving sums in excess of £19000, £15000 and £13000 as well as a large number of smaller amounts. These individuals did not join BIGGA for such reasons but in times of trouble I am sure that they would not question the benefits of BIGGA membership. There is strength in numbers and BIGGA needs more members. There are still far too many greenkeepers oblivious to the benefits of membership, in some cases discouraged by their clubs from joining or even by fellow greenkeepers. This needs to change as does the view at some golf clubs that BIGGA is a 'trade union'. What a ridiculous assertion. BIGGA is and will continue to be a professional body there to support its members both in their careers and times of need. The record proves this to be the case. The challenge for the future is to tackle pockets of resistance and opposition and the result will be an ever stronger, still more effective Association.

Change is in the air ...

In 2001 BIGGA commissioned a market research survey to help us in our future planning. A number of key issues arising from this survey are now under appraisal and consideration by the Association, not least a review of our current three tier structure. Any changes in our structure need to be most carefully considered as they will fundamentally affect the way in which BIGGA operates in the future. I would urge members to take an interest in and contribute to the current discussions. There needs to be clarity of both mind and purpose to ensure that correct and effective decisions are forthcoming for the future good of the Association.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Muddied waters ...

This article is looking ahead and where all is not well, we must be prepared to take action now.

BIGGA's members are bound by the Association's Code of Ethics. One of the tenets laid down in this code is that a member will 'refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, industry or profession'. I am sometimes asked how often cases are brought to my attention which violate this code and the answer is few and far between. When the waters are muddied, those prepared to put their heads above the parapet and come forward with evidence are generally noticeable only by their absence. Let me say at once that any members proven guilty of such conduct will have no place within BIGGA or, I would hope, within greenkeeping at large.

However, it takes two to tango. BIGGA would need to examine its relationship with any company proven guilty of offering such inducements. While proof is not

forthcoming, there are certainly stronger whispers than usual at present that some companies are indulging in such inducements. Where there are undesirable practices those working within the profession and the industry must come together to stamp them out. Again where golf clubs have proven cases they will benefit both the Association and the industry in making details available. Breaching our Code of Ethics is certainly not the way to move forward.

Sadly, I find it necessary to comment on an increasingly unethical practice being adopted by a number of companies within the industry. This relates to unauthorised use of BIGGA's membership data. Both 'Greenkeeper International' and the BIGGA Golf Directory are quite specific in this regard... 'Contents may not be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission'. BIGGA regards breaches of copyright as a serious issue but looking to the future essentially it wishes to work in partnership with companies rather than at arms length from those companies who choose to misuse our membership data.

In this age of computer technology, we now notice that BIGGA copyright is being 'lifted' onto websites without so much as a by your leave. I can only say that we are on the case.

All for one and one for all ...

BIGGA has always been an inclusive Association, incorporating members at all levels within the profession and appreciating that with its large membership, the needs and aspirations of its members will be diverse. There is, therefore, a place for all greenkeepers within BIGGA and this needs to be clearly stated as it is a premise that will continue in the years ahead. There are those who choose to talk of elitism within BIGGA. Nothing could be further from the truth. However, I will pass comment on this charge of elitism being applied to one category of members in particular, the Master Greenkeepers. It is both unjust and unwarranted. They are a group for whom I have much admiration. These members have earned their status through ability, experience and dedication. Significantly they put much back into both the Association and the profession and most surely will continue to do so in the future. As a group they are well respected and will have a significant role in an Association which welcomes greenkeepers of whatever designation into its ranks.

BIGGA at home ...

Since October 1998, BIGGA HOUSE has been the permanent

Right: The monthly staff meeting



headquarters base for the Association and the hub of the Association's activities. Staff are there to serve members' needs, to help realise their aspirations and to continue to strive for the green-keeping profession to be at the forefront of the game of golf. I believe staff have a close empathy with our members to whom their knowledge and experience is made freely available. In the future, I hope that many more members will take the opportunity to visit their headquarters. With such visits invariably comes the realisation of how far BIGGA has progressed since 1987.

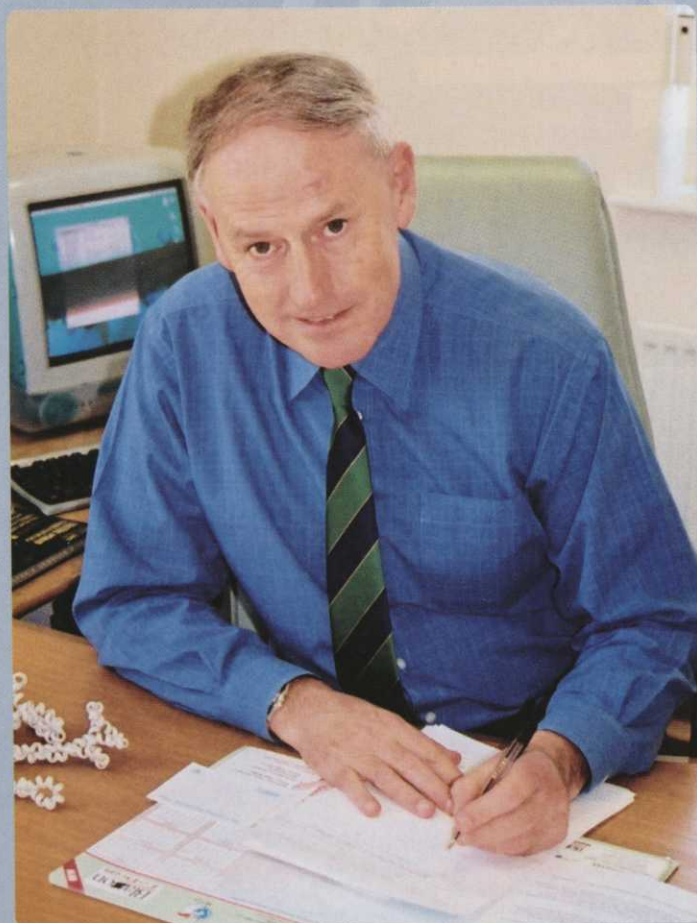
Safeguarding your future ...

Our Association does at times reflect the conservatism to be found in so many golf clubs. That is perhaps quite natural. However, as BIGGA moves ahead, it must embrace and keep pace with change.

At the end of last year, the Board of Management decided to establish the 'Futures' Sub-Committee and to invite a broad cross-section of the membership to serve on it. In early May, the first meeting of the Sub-Committee comprising 12 members including Chairman Elliott Small, will be held at BIGGA HOUSE. The Terms of Reference will include:-

- Education and Training requirements
- Employer/Manager responsibilities - education and training
- Job Analyses
- Liaison with Greenkeepers Training Committee Technical Committee
- Liaison with Standing Committee on Greenkeepers Salaries and Conditions of Employment
- Communication with the industry and the game
- Funding
- Review of BIGGA's three tier structure
- Code of Ethics/Professionalism/Status of Greenkeepers

Below: Neil - attending to business





Below: Regional Administrators' meeting



I am excited by this development and believe that the input from this Sub-Committee will considerably strengthen the Association. The Board of Management has acted with foresight in ensuring that the 'Futures' of greenkeepers and the profession are subject to the widest possible debate and consultation.

Time, like an ever rolling stream ...

Finally, I pose the question as to just why greenkeepers choose to join BIGGA. There will be a myriad of reasons. Many will say it is the wide ranging benefits of membership. The education and training available within

BIGGA will be another dominant reason. Others will say it is for the camaraderie and sense of belonging. During their time with BIGGA, there will be serious debate, key issues to be faced and vital decisions to be taken. There will be responsibilities. However, we must not take ourselves too seriously for BIGGA should also encompass fun and enjoyment, pleasure in the company of fellow greenkeepers, happy days and a sense of shared achievement and success.

Time spent with BIGGA will be transient and we must work together to ensure that the legacy for future generations of greenkeepers will be that of a strong, vibrant and progres-

sive Association fully established as one of the game's leading bodies. It will be widely respected both for its services to its members and also to the profession and game in general. We have come a considerable distance down the long and winding road but to pass on that legacy we need to continue the journey with vision, dedication and the vitality which has marked our first 15 years.

**Time present and time past,
Are both perhaps present
in time future,
And time future contained
in time past.**



Code of Ethics

This Code is established to promote and maintain the highest professional standards of service and conduct among the membership of BIGGA. Through adherence to this Code, members will gain for themselves recognition of individual integrity, responsibility and professionalism whilst enhancing generally the respect and good will for both their profession and Association.

As a member of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, I accept this Code and pledge myself to:

1. Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management.
2. At all times carry out my duties and responsibilities in such a manner as to reflect favourably on the profession and Association.
3. Seek to use every opportunity to broaden my professional expertise for both self improvement and the good of the profession.
4. Follow, as a basic tenet, sound business and turf management principles in exercising the responsibilities of my post.
5. Observe the highest standards of personal integrity in my relationship with fellow greenkeepers as well as other associated individuals and at all times, as far as I am able, assist my fellow greenkeepers as required of me.
6. Pursue job advancement only where vacancies arise and not at the expense of a fellow greenkeeper and abstain from any action, comment or communication not founded on truth which is likely to harm the professional reputation or practice of another greenkeeper.
7. Give endorsements of any kind only upon satisfactory personal experiences of the item identified.
8. Refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or profession.
9. Support at every opportunity the Association, its Regions and Sections in seeking to improve the public understanding and recognition of the profession of golf course management.
10. Report to the Association any evidence likely to be in violation of this Code or Ethics.

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GRASPING THE NETTLE



Below: Ian Farrall and Tom Dickinson



Scott MacCallum visits Caldy Golf Club which has benefited from a decision to solve their course problems in a decisive manner

Faced with a chronic drainage problem, which had seen nine months lost to golf in the last two years, Caldy Golf Club grasped the nettle in a manner which could well provide a template for other clubs in the same position.

Under the stewardship of Chairman of Green, Tom Dickinson, and Head Greenkeeper, Ian Farrall, the Wirral-based club has rebuilt six greens to USGA specification, five tees and installed a completely new drainage system covering the entire course over the winter period and, weather permitting, the course should be ready to welcome in the new playing season in June.

It was the incredibly wet winters over the last two years, which had seen the course closed, and under as much as eight or nine feet of water, for five months last year and four

months the year before, which convinced Tom, Ian and the Green Committee that it was time for drastic action.

"The course is split by the Wirral Way, a nature trail developed from a former railway line, and one half is clay sitting on sand and the other is sand sitting on clay and try as we might we just couldn't find a way of getting rid of standing water," explained Ian.

As Tom explained, they discovered that the unfortunate soil profile was only part of the problem on the course which hosted The Caldy Classic on the European Ladies' Tour in the mid 80s.

"We had tried rodding out the drains but finally found that the old drainage, installed when the land was still agricultural, was broken in places and had totally silted up. In effect it

GRASPING THE NETTLE

Facing page: The R&A had early assisted with the funding for coastal defences and you can see how they have protected the golf course while the unprotected area further down has eroded considerably

"I see my job as giving the guys support, encouragement and the investment necessary to get Caldy Golf Club to the standard we aspire to and then to communicate with, and manage, the membership, rather than the other way round"

Caldy GC Chairman of Green, Tom Dickinson

Below: The newly designed 17 green makes it a real feature hole

Bottom: This duck will soon have to find a new home other than the 16th fairway!

Far right: How the course was for much of the year



had collapsed. We realised then that any attempted 'patch-up' just wasn't going to work," he said.

Having made that decision it became apparent that the financial implications were enormous.

"When we started to get quotes together I must admit that I thought we might be able to do it for about £150,000, but I was way off because to do the job properly to the proper spec was going to cost almost double that," revealed Tom.

Having already received substantial funding from the R&A for cliff protection work 10 years ago they realised that any other central funding would be limited so it was to its members that the club turned for the finance to complete the job.

Caldy's Past Captains then came up with a superb idea which benefited both the members, who wished to make a contribution to the project, and the club itself.

"We created a Members' Loan Note Scheme whereby members who loaned money to the club were able to benefit from a substantial reduction in their annual subscriptions

depending upon the amount of money they loaned. It was a win-win situation from the club's point of view and the members put their hands in their pockets and came up with the entire sum of money required to fund the project over one year," explained Tom.

Prior to that, Ian and Tom had hoped to do the job as quickly as possible to keep disruption to a minimum but it hadn't looked possible.

"Originally we had been told that we could do it over two years but when we decided that we wanted to rebuild six of the greens as well it looked as though it would be over four years which I didn't like one little bit," revealed Tom, explaining that he felt it would be unfair to Ian and his team to manage the disruption over such a period.

And it was not just on the issue of disruption that Ian felt a phased introduction of the work could cause problems.

"Doing six greens over four years would have meant that each green built would have had a different maturity but now, having done them all over the same period it means that they will be much easier to look after.

Having listened to both Ian and to Alistair Beggs, of the STRI, about the best approach Tom went back to the Board and talked about doing the work over two years as a possible compromise.

However, the key to the decision to bite the bullet and do the work over the course of one winter and spring was an EGM attended by the Course Architect, Cameron Sinclair, who designed the new greens, and Barry Cooper, of the Leicester Drainage Company, who was contracted to undertake the drainage work.

"I think once the programme had been explained to them the members were very much on our side," said Tom, whose own professional experience in Sales and Marketing did much to ensure that the project was "sold" in the most effective manner.

"Not only did we get the support to spend all the money, the body of opinion was that they'd rather not do it over two years but that they wanted to do it over one. This was music to our ears because it was where we'd started."

It was at this stage that the Members' Loan Note scheme was launched and the entire funding for the project was put in place.



While relishing the challenge it did mean a swift amending of the plans that had already been put tentatively in place.

Cameron Sinclair designed the six new greens and J&E Ely were contracted to construct them to USGA spec before Barry Cooper came in to lay the drainage having first come up with a plan which looked like a cross between a map of the London Underground and the face of a weather beaten octogenarian.

"By the time we are finished over 18 miles of drainage will have been installed - that's the distance from Hoylake to Chester," revealed Ian

"The greens were done first and we finished them, and five tees, by Christmas. Cameron, who also acted as supervising architect, said it was nice to leave a contractor knowing that when you came back everything had been done exactly to spec," said Ian, who added that one of the reasons Ely's had been chosen was the wonderful work they had done at nearby Hoylake.

Some of the tees were actually rebuilt in-house with Ian and Tom encouraging the team to study Ely's work on the greens before using the same techniques on the tees.

"It as a great training and development exercise and I learned a lot as well," said Ian.

They have managed to keep nine holes of the course playable at a time while the work has been done but as Ian points out the members had no golf during much of the two previous winters anyway.

"There has been quite a bit of disruption but the vast majority of the membership are right behind us



because they voted for it with their pockets and want the job done as per the plan," admitted Tom.

He has been Chairman of Green for three years having previously held a similar post at Burghley Park, in Stamford, Lincolnshire.

When he moved back home to the north west to settle he joined Caldys and before long he found himself doing the same job.

"When I took over I told Ian that I wanted to work together and saw myself and the green staff as part of the same team.

"I see my job as giving the guys support, encouragement and the investment necessary to get Caldys

Golf Club to the standard we aspire to and then to communicate with, and manage, the membership, rather than the other way round," explained Tom.

"If we can keep the membership informed and up to date with what we are trying to do, they respond, and the whole thing goes forward. That's what we have found with this massive project," said Tom, who could be used as an identikit Chairman of Green.

Tom is a huge fan of Alistair McKenzie and particularly his recently-discovered book *The Spirit of St Andrews*.

"Reading his thoughts on golf and



GRASPING THE NETTLE

This page: Barry Cooper had a considerable job on his hands and more than 18 miles of pipe have been used

its development going back to the 30s they are as relevant today as they were then and are the same guiding principles we have here at Cald.

"We want to do what's best for Cald, its members and visitors, but also for golf and the game. We've got a lot out of the game and we want to put something back for the future. That means doing the best quality job we can with the long term in mind and managing the

course ecologically and environmentally as well," said Tom, who has hopes that the course may be used as a final qualifying venue when The Open returns to Hoylake in the near future.

He has also ensured that the greens staff have the tools they require to do the job and a five year rolling programme with Toro dealer Cheshire Turf Machinery ensures that the club gets the best equipment at the most competitive price because the length of the agreement also allows the company to plan ahead. New maintenance and storage facilities have also been built to house staff and machinery.



Nearing the end of the drainage contract Ian and Tom are delighted with what has been achieved particularly given the constraints of working through a wet winter.

"With a free rein it would have been great to have done the work in the summer when the ground conditions were at their optimum rather than the winter as the disruption would have been much less but we know that members wouldn't have wanted to lose any more of their playing season, particularly when they'd been off the course so much in the last two years," said Ian.

"We currently have eight weeks to completion but, talking with the drainage team, we would have been

finished by now using the time spans summer would have involved," he added.

"We have told the members that the new system will start to work immediately but that it will take a couple of years for the ground to settle so it might not be perfect straight away."

As for the greens, which reused the existing turf, they are settling in very well and will be hand cut probably for the rest of this year.

Having bitten the bullet and taken advantage of the innovative fund raising scheme instigated by the club, Cald Golf Club members can now look forward to year round golf from now on.



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MULTI TASKING MACHINES

Roland Taylor looks at those machines that can be used for a variety of jobs

The last two decades have seen a spate of new courses spring up across the country, some having been established on land that originally grew crops whilst others were integrated into existing parkland.

Wherever they have been built the landscape has been altered, in some

cases considerably. Future generation will look on these as complementing, improving or desecrating the existing countryside. This has very much been the case with famous landscapers of yesteryear such as Lancelot Capability Brown. His work still raises the question today - vandal or



genius? Throughout the 1700's he travelled the length and breadth of England creating gardens for the aristocracy. His designs were on a large scale, lavish and certainly revolutionary. Artificial hillsides changed flat landscapes and extensive water features were created by damming streams. Groups of trees were planted to draw the eye to some distant focal point. The only things that were missing were tees, fairways and greens. As far as is known he had no connection with golf, but his work and vision included a lot of what could be considered to be close to golf course architecture. Some of Brown's original landscapes could well now form part of an existing course.

In constructing a new course the placement of the greens and their adjacent fairways, bunkers and tees is of prime object, but for the overall image to be right attention to visual effects and existing features should also play a significant part in the final design. Whilst visiting a course under construction a few years ago it was pointed out to me that the architect had incorporated a lake near a green not only as a hazard to the unwary golfer, but also to reflect the church in the background. Water features





Whilst visiting a course under construction a few years ago it was pointed out to me that the architect had incorporated a lake near a green not only as a hazard to the unwary golfer, but also to reflect the church in the background.

and banks of flowering shrubs such as rhododendrons for late spring colour and acers for autumn to set off the rich green of the playing surface are good indications that landscaping practices have at some stage been involved.

Naturally, as far as maintenance is concerned, the main focus must be on the playing areas. However, it is easy to forget how much of the actual landscape is also man made, especially after it has been established for a few years. Unless some degree of management is carried out nature will, at some stage, take over and the original concept can eventually be lost. Trees die, lakes silt up, rampant vegetation takes over and erosion

destroys dunes and hills. Steams and watercourses become choked with weeds and flooding creates unwanted water features. Land management by necessity is an integral part of any course programme.

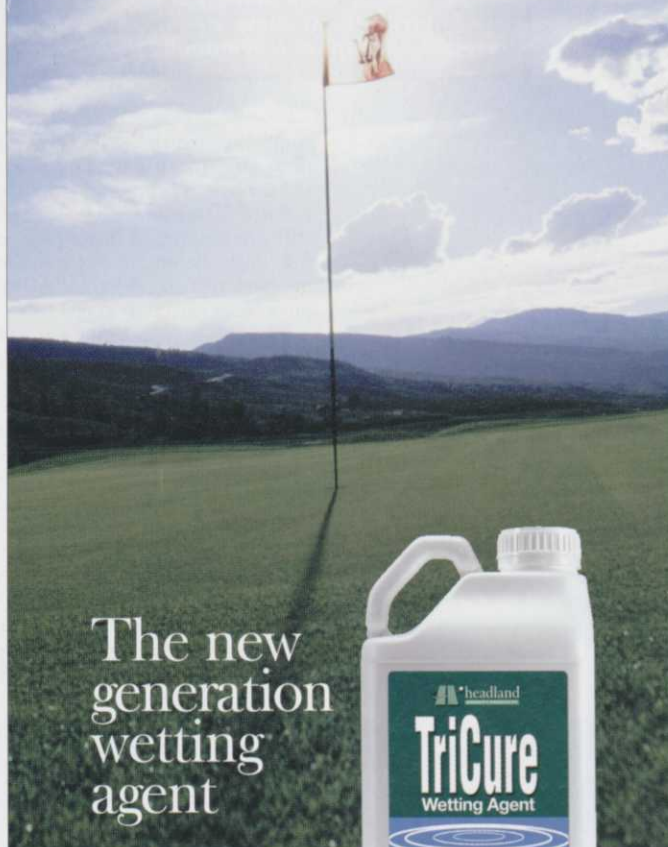
Fortunately, there are machines on the market that will make the operations easier and faster. Having this type of equipment readily available is the ideal situation, but unless there is sufficient all-year-round work for it the capital investment is not warranted. The alternative is hire and there are now specialist outlets offering this type of equipment for either long or short periods. This also enables a course to carry out a true evaluation of the machine's capabilities at only a minimal financial outlay.

Earth moving

At some stage there will be a need to carry out work on the underlying soil. This could involve building a new tee or bunker, replacing worn areas of turf or dealing with an erosion problem. Having removed the turf the soil may require attention as in some cases it is likely to be fairly compacted.

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MULTI TASKING MACHINES

Naturally, as far as maintenance is concerned, the main focus must be on the playing areas. However, it is easy to forget how much of the actual landscape is also man made, especially after it has been established for a few years. Unless some degree of management is carried out nature will, at some stage, take over and the original concept can eventually be lost.

springs to mind and whilst these will do an efficient job in breaking up the soil structure other operations will be required to prepare a suitable bed for either seed or turf. A better proposition might be one of the specialist machines that are now available that produce an ideal tilth in one pass.

Once the turf has been removed stones may litter the surface and need to be extracted. In the past women were employed in agriculture to collect stones which were then used to fill potholes in the lanes and roads. Enterprising manufacturers soon came up with a mechanical solution. Today's landscaping stone rakes or buriers are spin-offs from those agricultural machines and are a highly effective answer.

A stoneburier uses the reverse rotation of its blade system to throw the soil and stones into a grille; the soil

passes through while the stones drop down and are buried. With the rakes there is the additional operation of collecting and disposing of the stones. Tractor powered units or pedestrian versions are available.

Either a compact tractor or skidster is the ideal power source for a wide range of landscaping machinery. When it comes to moving large amounts of earth a front loader is needed. There are plenty of these around and very likely most readers will already have one. Buckets come in a variety of widths and carrying capacities. Other necessary attachments for preparing sites are scraper and levelling blades and again there is a wide choice.

Backhoes are fairly specialist pieces of equipment, so hiring a complete unit is often the best option in most cases because a tractor fitted out to



perform the same operation cannot usually be used for any other task. For confined areas or where access is restricted a skidster with a backhoe attachment is a solution. There are specially designed ditching buckets for clearing out silted-up ponds or watercourses.

If a deep, wide trench is needed then the backhoe is probably the best choice, but when it comes to laying cables, irrigation systems or drainage a specialist trenching machine is the answer. These will produce an adequate deep and wide trench with minimal disturbance to the surrounding area. They come either as self-powered units or as attachments for a tractor or skidster.

Erosion

Wind and water can play havoc on exposed sites and slopes, especially if these consist of light or sandy soil. The sediment washed from them gets into watercourses and drainage systems where it can silt up and cause a blockage. Sand is often blown onto the course and once it is ingrained in the turf can act as a highly effective, unwanted abrasive, especially on mower blades. Any ground cover that would help to stop erosion occurring will be difficult to establish under these conditions. The seeds are washed away long before they can put down a strong root system. Some assistance is needed to aid their development. This is available in the





form of three-dimensional matting, which traps the soil and gives the plants a better chance to colonise. These products which are said to be adapted for most types of slope are rot proof, lightweight and easy to install.

Over-seeding

For carrying out this operation there is a wide choice of purpose built tractor-mounted or pedestrian machines now on the market. Some form of slitter or spiker unit produces a concentrated pattern of openings in the soil. Either a brush or rake then ensures the seed is incorporated into the earth and finally a rear roller firms the ground and closes the holes. A wide range of both hopper capacities and working width is available. However, not all manufacturers recommend their machines for fine areas so do check the equipment's suitability for your purpose before buying or hiring.

Trees

These form an integral part of any landscape. Occasionally nature becomes highly destructive as was the case in the gales of the 1980's and with Dutch Elm Disease.

In both cases replanting had to be carried out on a fairly extensive scale. On most courses this operation will be necessary from time to time as trees die, become infected or are blown down. The fastest way

to carry out this task is to use an earth auger to make the holes. This can be either a hand-operated unit, or an attachment fitted on a compact tractor or skidster. When planting trees using this method it is important to ensure the soil on the sides and bottom of the hole is loose enough to allow the young roots to penetrate the surrounding area. Earth augers are an alternative way of digging holes for tree planting and have the added advantage of being ideal for fencing or putting in gateposts.

Other tree work may require the services of a tree specialist.

Where once a golf course was part of the surrounding landscape it is often now the only green oasis in a concrete jungle. They effectively preserve all that is left of the original landscape.

The same applies to coastlines, heath, moorland and parkland. In all these areas they form a buffer for flora and fauna to survive that would otherwise be lost. But some controlled management is needed if they are to flourish.

For some readers what effectively is estate management is down to someone else and their only concern is the playing surfaces.

For others their responsibilities cover all aspects related to the course and its surroundings. Fortunately, they are well catered for when it comes to landscaping machinery.

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NEMATODES

A detailed microscopic photograph of soil. The background is a complex network of brown soil particles and plant roots. Numerous small, white, thread-like nematodes are visible, some appearing to be feeding on or attached to the roots. Several larger, pale, spherical cysts are also present, some of which are attached to the roots. The overall scene illustrates the presence of nematodes and their cysts in a soil environment.

Fig 1: Cyst nematodes on roots (courtesy of CSL)

THE UNSEEN TERROR

Dr Ruth Mann and Sue Hockland look at nematodes and the damage they can cause

Nematodes (or eelworms) are non-segmented colourless microscopic worms, found in almost all environments worldwide. More than 18,000 species of nematode have been described. Every type of life form will have at least one nematode species that can feed on it. Most nematodes associated with soil are beneficial, feeding on fungi or microscopic life and thus helping to return nutrients to the soil. Others are predators or parasites of insects and their eggs. We may even use entomopathogenic species to try and control other pests in our turf, such as *Heterohabditis megidis*, which may control chafer grub infestations. However, there are 'terror' species that feed on our turf causing unseen problems until significant damage has been done.

Thousands of plant-parasitic nematode species exist but, fortunately, relatively few species parasitise turf grass. The species found on grass can have one of two appearances; long thin worms (such as stunt nematodes and root-lesion nematodes) or sac-like organisms (such as cyst nematodes (Fig 1) or root-knot nematodes). Plant-feeding nematodes feed with a stylet, which is a needle-like appendage used to pierce cells and inject enzymes that digest the cell contents. The resultant material is then sucked back into the nematode. They are obligate parasites, needing the host plant for multiplication but capable of limited movement away from the plant roots. They can either burrow into the plant (endoparasitic nematodes) or they may browse on roots and root hairs (ectoparasitic nematodes). Such feeding often results in lesions, nodules or galls being produced on the roots (Fig 2). Some species are also vectors of virus disease.

Nematodes can multiply quickly under ideal conditions. The life cycle can be as short as 17 days or as long

as 2-3 years, with often hundreds of eggs being produced. Each species has its own peak of activity during the year, with some species active at temperatures as low as 1°C. They survive adverse periods as eggs, juveniles, or in a dormant state.

Large nematode populations are associated with easily-draining sandy soils at field capacity (the same irrigation point as that preferred by grass), but nematodes will exist in all soil types and parasitise all of our grass species. However, we believe that the numbers are usually in equilibrium, with healthy turf being able to withstand a certain amount of attack. Symptoms of nematode damage tend to occur during periods of active plant growth, when infested areas appear as irregular patches of stunted growth, usually showing signs of nutrient deficiency. This is an indirect result of the nematodes destroying the amount of roots available for water and nutrient uptake. The turf may appear yellow due to an apparent lack of nitrogen, but when fertiliser is applied no effect is seen. The turf may become thin with individual plants dying prematurely. In a few cases greenkeepers have reported that the grass takes on the appearance of anthracnose symptoms without the black stem bases, as the leaves turn yellow through to orange/red.

Plants under stress for other reasons are also more susceptible to nematode attack; a slight moisture deficit may cause drought symptoms as the infested roots cannot absorb enough water, and hot weather, low height of cut and low fertility all exacerbate the problem. Greens and tees are not usually uniformly affected and 'hot spots' of nematode activity occur as a result of the patchy nature of their distribution. The edge of the symptom patch is diffuse compared to the rather sharp lines associated with

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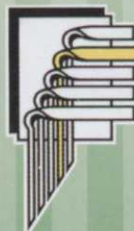


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NEMATODES

THE UNSEEN
TERROR



Fig 2: Galls at the root tips of smooth stalked meadow grass caused by grass root-gall nematode (*Ditylenchus radicum*) (courtesy of CSL)

some fungal diseases, or inappropriate application of fertilisers / herbicides. Nematode activity may also be revealed for other reasons, for example, where tractor wheelings have consolidated the soil, preventing nematode activity and thus allowing better growth of grass (Fig 3).

We are noticing an increase in nematode problems on golf courses and sports turf in the UK and Ireland. It is possible that these have been overlooked in the past, or perhaps we are becoming more adept at recognising them, but increasing emphasis on the production of quality turf for professional use has heightened the need to investigate problems. Environmental conditions over the past few years (above average rainfall, cool springs and mild winters) have allowed a slow increase in nematode populations to occur and we are now seeing the resultant symptoms expressed. Perhaps some of the new grass varieties are more susceptible to nematode damage than was previously the case.

Nematode activity can lead to other problems. Nematode-induced damage to the grass root system allows other pathogens easier access.

For example, *Colletotrichum graminicola*, the pathogen that causes anthracnose, needs a senescent area of roots of the annual meadow grass plant for infection. The damaged areas left by nematodes may provide entry points for *C. graminicola* and the resultant anthracnose symptoms are a secondary infection which we see and treat without realising we have not discovered the original culprit.

Identification of nematodes is important but difficult due to the numerous different species found in the soil, most of which do not have a detrimental effect on turf grass growth. In fact some species encourage growth by helping to break down organic matter found in the soil thus releasing nutrients back to the plants. In cases where high numbers of nematodes have been observed in samples sent to STRI we have recommended that a test for nematodes is carried out. This can be done at the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) near York by the Invertebrate Identification Service. CSL is one of the few institutions in the UK that can identify nematodes to species level as part of a commercial service. If nematodes are suspected, the method

of taking samples is important, as any isolations, counting and identifications can only be as good as the sample provided. Samples should consist of at least 200g of turf and soil from the top 6 inches or so of the area showing symptoms. If plants are dead, then a sample from the edge of the affected area is also recommended. A further identical sample should be taken from a healthy area so that the numbers of nematode species can be compared. Stem or leaf nematodes (*Ditylenchus* or *Aphelenchoides* spp.) and cyst or root-knot nematodes (*Heterodera* or *Meloidogyne* species) concentrate in the turf itself, whilst many other pathogenic species are found at varying depths in the soil. The samples should be wrapped in damp newspaper or placed in a polythene bag which is then sealed. Each bag should be placed in another bag, together with an appropriate label and sent by overnight delivery.

Research

Some research is being carried out on nematodes in the UK but not specifically on the problems of nematodes in turfgrass. We need more data on the species causing problems so that environmentally sound control

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NEMATODES THE UNSEEN TERROR

programmes can be devised and economic losses avoided. Thresholds for the number of nematodes that grass species can support before symptoms appear are available in the USA. However, it should be borne in mind that we need more evidence of the pathogenic importance of some nematode species in the UK. Thresholds for action have to be treated with caution; the effect of different species varies according to environmental conditions and on the tolerance or resistance of the host species. In addition, the total number and types of plant-parasitic nematodes present in turf may have more influence on growth and on the prevalence of disease than the presence of one particular pathogenic species. Associations between nematodes and other plant pathogens are also being investigated by CSL.

There are no chemical control measures available for turf in the UK, emphasising the need for management programmes. Frequent observations are important to introduce measures before the problem gets too serious. Infested turf should be treated as if it has a reduced root system, as the nematodes interfere with water and nutrient uptake due to their physical presence and the death of surrounding root tissue. Therefore, we need to reduce stress to the plants as much as possible. Ensure that the turf does not dry and the grass die from drought when, with a normal root system, it would not have

been affected. Fertilisers also need to be applied frequently and in smaller doses to allow the grass to take up available nutrients, but prevent the loss of excess nutrients that the grass plant cannot absorb. Mowing height should be increased to reduce the stress to the plants.

Various biological control agents, including plant extracts, are being investigated for the control of nematodes worldwide. Some work in the USA has shown that seaweed extract can significantly reduce the infection of roots of tomato plants by juvenile *Meloidogyne incognita* and *M. javanica*. This reduction was shown to be caused by certain chemicals in the extract called betaines. Although the effect of extract will vary with nematode species, it is possible that seaweed extract may help improve grass recovery by reducing further attack by the nematodes. There is also interest in nematode trapping fungi that 'catch' nematodes and eat them, other parasitic fungi and bacteria, and the use of predatory and parasitic nematodes, but research is required to establish whether these types of biological control could be adapted for easy application and effectively control nematodes that parasitise turf.

We also clearly need more research to determine the extent to which nematodes parasitise our turf. We must determine the efficacy of possible control measures on each nematode species individually to be able to devise effective control measures for mixed

populations. The interaction of other nematode species and external environmental conditions may affect control and so efficacy needs to be established in the field. It is possible that grass species vary in their susceptibility to the different nematode species. Therefore, we need to establish any grass species that can withstand higher populations of nematodes. These could then be oversown on areas with known nematode problems.

So! If your turf struggles to recover after winter or seems to always be 'off-colour' without any definite reason, or doesn't seem to respond to your loving care, it may be that parasitic nematodes are the problem and a more detailed look at the roots and soil may be required. However, until further research is done, new turf should always be tested routinely to ensure it is not infested with known pathogenic species and you should develop a management programme just in case.

Dr. Ruth Mann is the Turfgrass and Plant Pathologist at STRI. Ruth and the rest of the STRI team can be contacted on 01274 565131; e-mail info@stri.co.uk; or visit our website www.stri.co.uk

Sue Hockland is manager of the Invertebrate Identification Team at CSL, and specialises in nematology. For more details of their services and address details visit their web-site at www.csldiagnostics.gov.uk or contact the Customer Services Manager, Don Walker, at diagnosis@csl.gov.uk (tel: +44 (0) 1904 462324, fax: +44 (0) 1904 462147)

Fig 3: Patchy appearance of a ryegrass ley attacked by stubby-root nematodes (*Trichodorus* spp.). Better growth is visible in the consolidated tractor wheelings (courtesy of CSL)



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MM

Andy Law passes on some excellent advice on what to look for when choosing bunker sand

SHIFTING SANDS



Bunker sand selection, while not the most dynamic topic at most dinner parties in the suburbs, is quite often the main topic of conversation between golfers at the 19th!

This is the reason that if you have the much envied role of selecting the right sand, or even reducing the candidates down to the last three like the "Pop Idol" final, you must be equipped to make the right choice.

Like anything we undertake in life, replacing bunker sand should be 90% preparation followed by 10% perspiration. This approach should prevent the 100% aggravation should you make the wrong choice!

Starting at the very beginning and the initial question. What is a bunker and why do the architects, in their wisdom, draw them on their course designs?

A bunker, in terms of a golf course, is a man-made hazard which is normally strategically placed on a line between tee and green. The aim of the bunker is to make the golfer think about where they will place their shots to ascertain the shortest and safest route from tee to green.

Before we start to ring round the vast list of bunker sand suppliers some thought should first go to the positioning of the existing bunkers.

1. How long ago were the bunkers last refurbished?
2. Does the bunker still come into play on the hole?
3. Is the shape and size of the bunker still useable?
4. Can the surrounds be maintained easily and safely?
5. What was wrong with the last sand selected?

Questions two and three should maybe be approached with the assistance of the club professional or, better still, the clubs preferred golf course architect.

The modern game has added length to all of our games, well with the exception of my own that is, so quite often the bunker that came into play 20 years ago is driven over by even mid range handicap golfers.

Treat the project to replace the bunker sand as an opportunity to review the bunkers themselves and to ease any difficult or even dangerous bunker surround areas to make your greens staff safer.

Changing all the bunkers on a typical 18 hole course will probably involve around 75 to 90 of them and quite often this will amount to between 600 and 1000 tonne of

SHIFTING SANDS



The BRTMA is a collaboration of experience and expertise in the manufacture of Rootzone and Top Dressings. Member companies have committed themselves to supplying top quality materials only after they have been subjected to standardised, quality control tests. The appointment of STRI as the testing house for the Association in June last year underlines the desire of member companies to improve standards within the industry and differentiate between 'quality' products and others.

The same testing procedures will apply to all members and thus one firm's products will be directly comparable with another's. Top quality will mean the best for a given application. For far too long materials which are inappropriate for the purpose have been bought and used, the yardstick being one of price alone.

BRTMA members are also working towards the preparation of guidelines for the proper handling and installation of materials to achieve best performance. They hope to work with architects, agronomists and contractors to establish standards, which will benefit everyone in the industry. Founder members of the BRTMA are:

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For further information visit the Association website at www.brtma.com

sand. Of course this amount has to first of all be removed before being replaced and therefore you could be moving up to 2000 tonnes of material.

Do you have the staff to cover renovating the bunkers and continuing the day to day running of the course?

Perhaps you need to involve a contractor. The first call in this case should be to the British Association of Golf Course Constructors (BAGCC). All member companies have had their work and companies vetted to ensure they meet a very high standard.

Back to the definition of a bunker, a man-made hazard which lies between tee and green. A hazard yes but one which must be clearly visible from the tee to give the player an opportunity to play the hole and avoid the trap.

Clearly our first priority then in considering which sand goes forward to our grand final should be colour. A bunker sand should be light in colour although not to the extent that we need to wear sunglasses to play the hole.

Our next criteria should be shape, both of the bunker faces and of the sand we are going to select.

Most inland bunkers have shallow faces and gentle slopes on the face from the bunker. The sand is then normally placed in the base and also up the face to just short of the lip of the bunker.

Here is a trick you can try at home. Take a dozen marbles and try to stack them in columns and rows at the top of a 1 in 10 hill. The hill has of course to have a smoothed surface like the subsoil in a prepared bunker. Bet you your next year's subscription to BIG-GA you can't do it.

To be able to retain sand on any slope the sand shape must be at least sub-angular. This is one of the most



common faults in sand selection. We get the colour right and particle size perfectly aligned to that in our root zone, and forget to check the particle shape.

To summarise our selection categories so far:

1. Colour - Light clearly visible
2. Shape - Sub Angular to Angular

The final criteria should be particle size, however some thought should go into location of the sand and long term availability of the material.

So what is the ideal particle size for a bunker sand?

Naturally links course are different from inland courses and the particle size recommendations for

USGA recommendations

Fraction	Size (mm)	USGA root zone mixture	Bunker sand
Gravel	2 - 4	≤ 3%	≤ 3%
Very coarse sand	1 - 2	≤ 10%	≤ 7%
		<small>Total gravel plus very coarse sand</small>	
Coarse sand	0.5 - 1.0	≥ 60%	≥ 65%
Medium sand	0.25 - 0.5		
Fine sand	0.15 - 0.25	≤ 20%	≤ 25%
Very fine sand	0.05 - 0.15	≤ 5%	
Silt	0.002 - 0.05	≤ 5%	≤ 3%
Clay	<0.002	≤ 3%	
Total very fine sand, silt, clay	<0.10	≤ 10%	



the bunker sand is dramatically different. I am going to cover the USGA recommendations that cover inland golf courses, however I will briefly touch on sand selection for links bunkers also.

The particle sizes you will see are virtually the same as for a USGA root zone sand. The critical difference is in the shape of the sand and that the fine sand criterion works better when it is nearer to 20% in bunker sand and nearer to 15% in root zones.

This particle size will give very high hydraulic properties which if the bunkers are properly drained, should keep the sands moist and never waterlogged.

Ideally the sand should interlock and consolidate without becoming "solid" and compacted. This will prevent the "poached egg" effect when the ball plugs leaving barely a quarter of the ball above the surface of the sand.

Sands for links courses are quite often a rounded particle in the medium fine fraction, ie the majority of particles fall between 0.150 and 0.5mm.

Hydraulic properties are relatively low, however, when you consider that the bunkers are often over two feet deep. This ensures good

drainage from the surface of the bunker.

Links bunkers are normally Pot shaped where the sand is placed only in the bottom of the bunker and for this reason the round sand particles work well.

Links sands tend to compact rather than consolidate and it is this firming up which prevents the poached egg effect in these type of bunkers. To summarise:

Bunker Sand Selection Criteria for Inland Golf Courses

1. Colour Light, Clearly Visible
2. Shape Sub Angular to Angular
3. Particle Size 0.150mm to 1mm

Finally, when you are drawing up your shortlist of suppliers I would urge you to look up the member companies of the British Root Zone and Topdressing Manufacturers Association (BRTMA). These companies ensure you get a premium product which is guaranteed to meet your specification and which will be available for years to come.

Andy Law is Managing Director of Whitemoss Amenities Ltd. Tel 01270 886266




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Robert Reynolds Golf Course Superintendent of Denarau Golf Course on Fiji was on the island when a coup occurred two years ago. He talks about this and working life.

WHAT A COUP!



Above: Rob Reynolds (left) with two time Australian Open Champion, Aaron Baddeley who played a tournament at the course

It was a tough job but someone had to take it ... Tropical Island Paradise ... jewel of the South Pacific ... The beautiful Denarau Island course was beckoning. Little did I realise what was around the corner on May 19, 2000 and what impact the political upheaval would have and the challenges it would create.

First, let's set the picture ... the Denarau Island golf course is a 6570m-resort course. It was designed by Ichi Motohashi, who is the President of one of Japan's largest golf design and construction companies.

The development of the course took place on a low lying mangrove swamp in 1990. Over two million cubic metres of fill was used to elevate the site and 8500 fully grown trees and shrubs were transplanted. The course has T328 greens and T419 fairways and some pretty astounding bunkers designed in the shape of sea animals, so when viewed while flying into Fiji you see octopus, sea shells, sea weed, a giant foot and other greenkeeper's delights!

Denarau Island Resort is a fully integrated resort complex with three five star Sheraton resorts, an American resort Worldmark by Trendwest giving a total of over 900 rooms on the complex. In addition there is a marina complex, residential developments and future resort development sites. Two major resorts are also planned for Denarau island, a 300 room Novotel and a 454 room Hilton resort. With these additional resorts and other planned expansion, the total number of rooms should approach 2000 with-

in three years. To cope with this increase, an additional golf course is already being planned.

Our operation has a staff of 43. This is largely an unskilled workforce of labourers, with limited knowledge of English, complimented with plumbers, mechanics, operators and electricians. The equipment is Toro based and is a combination of both old and new machines, which is adequate to achieve good standards.

What follows is a brief synopsis of the trials and tribulations I've experienced as result of the upheaval on 19 May on management and practice issues.

During the political crisis, the whole of Fiji experienced power cuts for three months. Denarau negotiated a deal with the Fiji Electricity Authority offering to use the resort's generators regularly and in return the FEA would attempt to supply uninterrupted power to the island. Of course power is essential to greenkeeping operations. We irrigate our course with the assistance of a site pro 8000 Satellite system - a computerised system - No power ... No computers ... No pumps! Irrigation failures became the norm. My team had a full time job in this tropical climate keeping water on the course. Pumps constantly dropped out; there were communication breakdowns and mainline breaks due to water hammer. Power became so erratic one of our plumbers slept each evening in the pump house!

The trade sanctions from Australia and New Zealand also impacted on our operations. All spares and chemicals are purchased overseas. Telephone communications were difficult as international lines were not reliable. Internet services were slow and unreliable and you need power to run the computer and the fax!

During this period, overseas suppliers were wary of supplying products to Fiji. This resulted in difficulties in obtaining products which were supplied from overseas and when supplies were successfully ordered, invariably long delays occurred. We purchase products such as fertiliser by the container load. We normally ship 21 tonnes at a time from Australia. As a



result of supply difficulties and budget reviews, we were forced to overhaul our fertiliser and spray programmes in terms of quantity

At times, it is even difficult obtaining supplies from local suppliers in Fiji. This was exacerbated during the crisis when on occasion we even experienced difficulty getting products from the local hardware store.

This time of year with its mild tropical climate dry period, Fiji is normally at its peak tourist season where we can expect over 150 golfers a day on the course. With the down turn in business and favourable weather conditions, it provided the perfect opportunity to initiate maintenance that would never normally be considered at this time of year. I've created a focus on labour intensive jobs rather than money intensive work. This ensured full employment within our staff and allowed us to stay within budget restrictions. Impeccable hand grooming has become my middle name! We are hand weeding bunkers greens tees and profiles. Leaves and bunkers are hand raked and cart paths and roads are swept with large palm fronds. Diseases and pests are for the most part being tolerated. Swarms of minor birds feast regularly on lawn grubs.

We are finding the diseases and pests during this dry season are rarely severe enough to impact on course "playability". We are monitoring them and where appropriate letting them and run their course.

Staff moral has been a major issue throughout the crisis. We have a staff of both indigenous Fijians and Indo Fijians. Normally, there is minimum if any racial tensions in the work place but the political ramifications of the coup had the potential to cause tensions. This has to be constantly monitored. With large layoffs in other parts of the tourism industry, staff



Above: Climbing a palm tree the easy way

Below: The Demarau greenkeeping Team of 43





A jewel of the South Pacific

immediately became concerned about their jobs. We had to constantly re-assure staff that their jobs would be secure.

To this date with plenty of budget juggling all permanent staff are still employed.

As a result of the downturn, we were asked to reduce the maintenance costs for the golf course. There was a large number of meetings where our budgets were scrutinised on a regular basis. The challenge was to affect savings without impacting on the quality of the course. Much hype has been made about "smart sanctions", I refer to our cost cutting as "smart savings".

On a more personal note there was the safety of my wife, Erica, and our two young children (four and one) to consider. On May 19, after collecting my son from the International School which had just been closed, Erica and the kids were evacuated from our home which was approximately 20 minutes from Denarau Island called VotEAU Levu. In a time frame of approximately an hour and a half, Erica with our house-girl Neli and some members of my staff sent out in trucks to assist, packed the entire contents of our house into whatever they could lay our hands on and moved it to Denarau. Evening curfews became the norm, supermarket shelves were fast emptying, and airport closures were imminent, restricting our movement in and out of the country. We faced some hard decisions and on the evening military control of the country was announced my family left the country enabling me to focus on the job at hand without concern for their safety.



Above: The high profile airport security
Below: "Impeccable handgrooming has become my middle name"



Normal life in Fiji apart from political upheaval is full of challenges. Prior to May, we built a new house on Denarau Island to live in. If you have ever had any experience haggling over the price of a bula shirt in Suva or Nadi then you will know the wonderful challenge of having to haggle over the price of every nut, bolt and washer on the whole project. This is similar to the daily occurrence when purchasing locally for the golf course maintenance supplies.

One thing I've learnt through the past four months is the importance of working with a team I can trust. This position has presented some absolutely unique experiences. You could call this a bonding experience I'd go so far as to call it a hell of an experience.

And it's not over... The Fijian people together with the ex-patriot community are working hard to restore normality in this beautiful country and I'm proud to be a part of the team.

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ESSAY
COMPETITION

David Gillon, Assistant at Tulliallan GC,
won the Under 25 Category in the BIGGA
Essay Competition with this entry

POA ANNUA FRIEND OR FOE?

Every greenkeeper in the British Isles has come across poa annua at some stage of their career. They all have very different opinions about it and almost all have very different ways of dealing with it ... or maybe even eliminating or controlling it.

I was always led to believe that poa annua was the pest of all fine turf grasses. All through my college years the subject had always arisen in the classroom.

Sometimes it was the tutors revealing their opinions, or simply we greenkeepers expressing our own views between ourselves.

My own views on poa annua vary, as I know that it can be a pest to all we greenkeepers due to the rapid way in which it can take over from some fine turf grasses that don't have the same stubborn and substantial growing pattern that poa annua itself has. I also know that it can be controlled and managed well enough so that it

can perform closely with some species of fine turf grasses.

Due to the climatic conditions in this country poa annua can have a varied look throughout the season. In late springtime it has a lush green colour which can lead to it being mistaken for a species of bent grass. In summer time it will start to flower and seedheads will appear on the golf greens. The obvious effect this can have on the golf greens is made quite clear to we greenkeepers, by the every-day golfers who pay their annual fees and expect absolute perfection. The lovely lush green and smooth putting surfaces of the springtime are now, bumpy and inconsistent and fingers are pointed towards the greenkeepers. The paying customers ie members are wanting to know why in the summer the greens seem to be rolling worse than in the spring.

When autumn and winter approaches the effects of poa annua

change once again, towards the end of the autumn the last of the seedheads disappear and again the greens are smooth, but not for long as the leaves are now the problem. Golfers find leaves equally as difficult to putt over as they do the bumpy seedheads.

We begin to wonder if we can ever please these 365 day a year, SKY TV watching Masters Syndrome golfers, who expect us to deliver perfectly manicured smooth rolling putting surfaces all year round, just like the Augusta venue.

Due to all the global warming we now have longer cutting seasons. This doesn't stop what will happen every winter to the poa annua grass - discoloration.

Yellowing of the grass isn't aesthetically pleasing to the eye and it can lead to more pressure from the golfing members who probably don't know their Lolium Perenne from their Ralph Lauren, but still they decide to voice opinions as to what they would do with this problem grass species in the same situation.

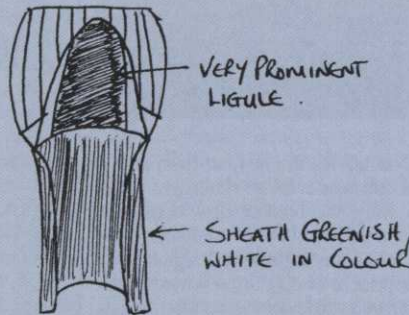
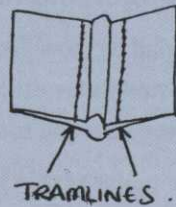
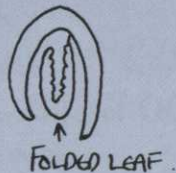
I realise that all of these problems with poa annua (the pest) are very annoying, but I also have some strong feelings towards accepting this type of grass as part of a greenkeeper's every day species that has to be worked with. If managed and worked in the correct way then most of these problems can be controlled.

A good management programme is essential on poa annua to help in keeping the putting surfaces pleasing to everyone.

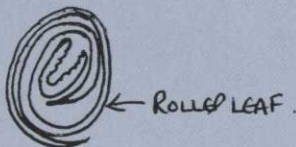
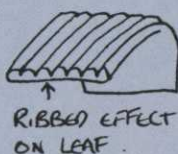
My own plans would consist of a regular aeration programme to relieve any compaction that might influence this type of grass, also a scarifying programme, along with controlled verti-cutting and grooming as this will help reduce the spread of the poa annua and also remove its seedheads along the way. A balanced feeding, top-dressing, brushing, rolling and watering programme is also essential as this helps the poa annua to keep its colour and appearance of fine turf grass species.

If, along with these specified programmes, you over-seed using a good blend of fescue and bent you would find that your amount of poa

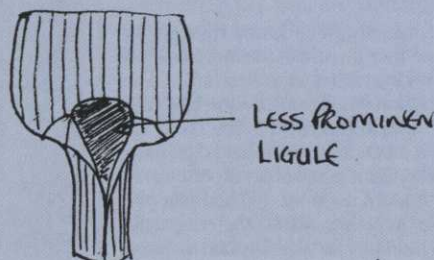
POA ANNUA



AGROSTIS CASTELLANA (HIGHLAND BENT)



LEAF IS DULL ON BOTH SIDES



New mini-loader is the Bobcat
look at the news and the very
the first industry

annua would drop considerably keeping it at a more desirable working rate and also leaving it easier to control. To me if you reduce your poa annua to around 20% of your green sward and remove most of its seedheads then there should no problem with it matching the quality of some bent grass putting surfaces.

While at Harrogate this year I had some interesting conversations with greenkeepers from Scotland, England and Ireland all of whom had very different views from myself about this supposed problem grass species.

One greenkeeper's view was to cut all of his greens at 2.5mm throughout the cutting season. This was an attempt to burn all of his poa annua out. Fairly straight forward, I thought. But I think that any greenkeepers attempting that idea would be handed their P45s and told where to go.

Another view was to stop artificially watering the putting surfaces. This also pretty straight forward, as you are letting mother nature take its own course.

But what would the paying members say? I personally don't think that they would be very happy, as not only would you have brown putting surfaces scorched by the sun, you would have an extremely expensive irrigation system doing nothing all year round.

One of the greenkeepers believed that he had never come across poa annua on his putting surfaces before, but admitted that he hadn't inspected them closely through a magnifying glass. I informed him that when I was at college I was taught that on some occasions the poa annua grass species can be mistaken for species of bent grass and that it could only be detected close up by the use of a magnifying glass.

I distinctly remembered the drawings that I was shown in college comparing the two grasses and was able to jot them down as best I could and give them to my greenkeeper friend hopefully enabling him to detect any poa annua that he might or might not have on his surfaces.

The drawings on the far left show the differences close up between the two types of grasses and referring to these hopefully will help anyone to determine whether or not poa annua exists on their golf putting surfaces.

The diagrams that I have drawn also show that when not at its flowering stage poa annua can only be identified close up through a magnifying glass, by looking for the forked tips and folded leaf. Poa annua also has a very prominent ligule and a tram lining effect on its leaf. All in all, when studied close enough this grass is actually very different from the agrostis castellana that it can sometimes be compared to.

Other greenkeepers I spoke to at Harrogate, said that poa annua is much too deep rooted and that it can have stoloning effects which can lead to a larger thatch layer.

This may be true but having an article with me explaining the real causes of thatch I was able to rubbish their claims with great backup. Coleman Ward, a professor and turf grass specialist, explained that horizontal stolon root growth will only create a greater sized thatch layer if not managed properly, ie. if you regularly groom, comb, scarify and aerate in a balanced programme this cannot cause thatch in any way. A bad management programme and also improper fertilising and watering on the poa annua grass will most definitely lead to the creating of a thatch layer. This happens due to the poa annua's thick root layer and stem which will trap cellulose and lignin between the grass blades and soil, not allowing the soil microbes any chance of breaking down the thatch layer. So once again everyone is deciding to jump on the bandwagon without having any real knowledge of the effects poa annua has to putting surfaces.

Most greenkeepers will know that poa annua is very susceptible to the turf grass disease anthracnose (*colletotrichum graminicola*), which can also be know basal rot of poa annua. This is often found on poorly managed surfaces in late summer and autumn, especially if the management is tilted towards starving out this grass species. Other influencing factors can be poor growing conditions and severe compaction which will restrict the air supply to the roots of the grass. Poor fertility is also likely to cause this disease that can easily be noticed due to the yellowing of the poa grass leaves. On the younger leaves a red tinge can be seen and if you look closely enough you will notice the black base of the plant, this means the disease is at an advanced stage. This black staining is known as acervulus and appears when the base has rotted and the grass can easily be pulled out of the surface, the acervuli involved in the reproduction of this grass plant.

All of these listed symptoms which lead to this disease can be controlled a variety of cultural control methods and also chemical control methods, so the poa annua will always fight on and on and on.

So should we all forget this aggressive attitude towards this, always under pressure, grass species and start treating it as a regular grass we are going to have to come to terms dealing with. If we manage it in a sensible and controllable manner maybe, just maybe, the stress will be reduced on all us greenkeepers and the poa annua grass might even become our future friend.

I will leave its fate for you to decide!

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Scotts take on Premiere distribution

Scotts has taken on the distribution of the DowAgroSciences product 'Premiere', a ready-to-use, pre-emergence herbicide for use around amenity tree and shrub plantings. The active ingredients, isoxaben and trifluralin, combine to provide long-term control of a wide range of germinating broad-leaved and grass weed seedlings including annual meadow-grass, fat-hen, groundsel and shepherd's-purse.

"Premiere is formulated as a free-flowing granular product," explains Dave Steward, Marketing Manager at Scotts.

"The yellow granules are easily visible when applied to the soil surface, which is a

useful benefit for operators during application. Once on the soil, the granules are disintegrated by rain/irrigation to form a herbicidal layer in the top 5 - 10 cm of soil which then acts on the germinating weed seeds, providing weed control for up to six months. With low solubility in water, Premiere does not leach and therefore offers a low risk to the environment and is safe to groundwater."

With very good plant safety, low risk of residual build-up and no hazard classification, new Premiere from Scotts is the safe herbicide option for operators, as well as the public, their pets and the environment.

For further information
Tel: 01473 830492

Flymo unveil new hover mower

Flymo has launched the new XL550 hover mower. Essentially targeted towards the contractor, professional and groundcare markets, the new XL550 will sit alongside the smaller Flymo models and features a 50.5cm (20") metal blade, 3 cutting heights (10 - 26mm) and is supplied with transport wheels for added convenience and manoeuvrability.

Furthermore, Flymo's new XL550 also features a Honda-powered GCV160 4-stroke engine to easily cope with the demands of continuous inclined use on slopes of up to 45 degrees. Pumped fuel ensures optimum fuel delivery on tough inclined slopes and starting is made easy by an automatic cylinder decompression starting mechanism.

The new Flymo XL550 is available from Nottingham-based Henton and Chattell, who were recently appointed national distributors for the full range of Flymo petrol hover mowers.

For further information
Tel: 0115 986 6646



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

Honda engine for Masport Olympic mowers

Masport Olympic cylinder mowers from Claymore Grass Machinery, are now available with Honda engines.

The Masport model 400H 40cm/16in., 500H 50cm/20in. and 660H 65cm/26in. models are all fitted with the 4hp Honda GC135 four stroke engine. All these units have six bladed cylinders.

The Masport 500 GolfH is a specialist fine turf 50cm/20in. mower with a 4hp Honda GX120 engine and features a ten blade cylinder, shaver blade c/w turf rake and steel front roller.

Claymore Managing Director, Keith Christian, said, "The Honda engines are being supplied due to customer demand and fitting these high specification units will enhance the Masport name for quality."

"The easy starting and reliability of the Honda engine is becoming more and more in demand in particular from the hire companies."

For further information
Tel/Fax 01865 820731



Sump pallets introduced by Course Care

The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations became law on March 1 this year and affect everyone storing oil (including diesel fuel).

Course Care has been aware of the introduction of this legislation and have solutions. To meet the requirements of the act, they have produced Sump Pallets on which to store drums and barrels, fast acting Spill Kits and a range of maintenance-free Balmoral Bunded Fuel Tanks.

"Many in the turf maintenance sector have not realised that the new regulations are, in fact, law and failure to comply can result in fines of up to a £5000 maximum. The days of the old rusty single skin diesel tanks mounted on top of pillars with a gravity feed are dead. They are an accident waiting to happen. This is one reason the new legislation has been introduced. People just haven't been taking notice of recommenda-

tions, so now it's law. Sump Pallets make the storage of oil in barrels and drums safe and tidy," said Course Care's David Mears.

Course Care will be pleased to discuss the regulations and advise on the best and most cost effective ways to comply. A free information pack is available.

For further information
Tel: 01535 611103

Air conditioned cabs for Kioti tractors

Kioti compact tractors with 45hp and 50hp engines are now available with high specification factory-fitted cabs with air-conditioning.

The cabs are fully sealed and have sound and vibration damping cab mounts. They also have tinted windows, an opening roof hatch, radio-cassette player, heater and four work lights - two front and two rear.

The tractors, which are distributed in the UK by Rustons Engineering, are also now available with three alternative types of tyre to suit agricultural, general amenity or fine turf usage.

For further information
Tel 01480 455151



New mini-loader is the Bobcat's whiskers

Bobcat Company, the inventor of the skid-steer loader, has announced the availability of the new A220 multi-steer loader. The Bobcat A220 is the first loader of its kind to offer the operator the possibility to select, via a rocker switch in the loader cab, the type of steering best suited for the operating conditions: all-wheel steering or skid-steering.

The A220 combines the features and benefits of two different types of steering in one machine: minimal ground disturbance of a wheel loader combined with the exceptional manoeuvrability of a skid-steer loader.

All-wheel steering is designed for minimising disturbance to soft surfaces such as grass turf as well as manoeuvring easily on dry paved surfaces such as asphalt or concrete. Skid-steering, on the other hand, allows the loader to manoeuvre efficiently in tight spaces with extra fast cycle times.

For further information
Tel: 020 8741 9828



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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!

Netpave builds on solid foundation

Netpave 25, the latest addition to Notion's portfolio of turf protection products, is a solution to the common problem of turf erosion and surface damage to grassed areas used as pathways, access routes and overspill car parks.

Golf course and ground management representatives were introduced to the many benefits of the unique Netpave 25 system - an easy-to-lay plastic paving system which requires no substructure preparation or surface evacuation. The flexibility of the spring joints of the pavers is another major benefit allowing for installation on undulating, sloping or curving ground. Netpave 25 is designed to withstand wear caused by light vehicles, so golf buggies or light grounds maintenance vehicles can access all areas without causing damage.



Stihl's ergonomically designed brushcutter

The new FR450 Backpack brushcutters from STIHL boasts a 44cc engine generating an impressive 2.1kW (2.9HP) of power, driving it straight to the top of Stihl's backpack range.

Brushcutters are one of the most useful tools invented for landscape and grounds maintenance, with their shaft-mounted cutting heads reaching around obstacles and under bushes, and tackling a range of materials where mowers can't mow or won't go. Joining the range of specialist power tools from STIHL, the FR450 brushcutter is ever more versatile, with its backpack mounting demonstrating true strength where others may struggle: on steep slopes, up overgrown

embankments and in narrow ditches.

A flexible drive shaft transmits the FR450's impressive power from its engine to the cutting head and a range of cutting tools is available, making the machine suitable for clearing anything from small weeds and grass to nettles and brambles, reeds and scrub. The specially developed, ergonomically designed carrying frame sits comfortably on the user's back, spreading the weight of the power unit across back and shoulders, with the additional support of a hip belt - just like a good rucksack.

For further information
Tel: Freephone 0800 137574



New Chipper/Shredder launched by Bearcat

Bearcat's two new 5" chipper, shredder demonstrated that they are capable of tackling the toughest chipping and shredding tasks with ease and with new technology combining high work rate with low power requirements the quiet operating machines proved very popular.

Available in pto and petrol engine versions the class-leading Bearcats are gravity fed and have the benefit of an integral blower so the whole unit is complete and versatile, providing excellent value for money.

For further information
Tel 01488 689400



Available as 500mm x 500mm plastic pavers, Netpave 25's rapid lay design can handle permanent use but can also be applied in temporary situations. At only 25mm deep, the clipped together paving systems is laid directly on top of the existing turfed area and virtually disappears into the grass within a two or three month period achieving aesthetic durability.

Ronnie Doctor, Business Manager of Netlon's Polymer Solutions Division said, "Netpave 25 was developed to be used on top of existing grassed surfaces to provide a lasting level of protection. Alongside our already comprehensive product range Netpave 25 completes our unique approach to providing a total solution in turf protection systems."

For further information
Tel: 01254 262431
Web: www.netlon.net

Please send your latest product release notes or press releases to: The Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Aine, York YO61 1UF
The right is reserved to edit submissions before publication. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association. No responsibility is accepted for such content, advertising or product information which may appear



Scottish Region
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax 0141 616 3440

Scotland

The Scottish National Tournament will be held on Thursday 27 June 2002 at West Linton Golf Club, West Linton by kind permission of the Captain and committee. The cost of the event will be £20 which includes coffee/tea, filled roll and evening meal, plus prizes.

Entry will be restricted depending on the number of entries received.

Entry forms will be available at all Section Spring outings and from the Regional Administrator.

All entries with remittance, must be sent to the Regional Administrator.

Peter J.Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TA by Tuesday, June 18. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter J.Boyd

East

Welcome to a busy column this month, which is what we want to see, so let's get started. The Section had a trip to Kingsbarns Golf Club, Fife, on March 7, in association with local Toro dealer, Henderson Grass Machinery.

There were 20+ members present on the visit, which was a very interesting and informative day. Everyone had a good look around the course, facilities etc. We would like to thank Course Manager, Stuart McColm for giving us his time throughout the day. We would also wish to thank Dougie Jeffrey, Area Sales Manager, and everyone else at Henderson Grass Machinery for all the organisation of the day and for providing the bus to transport everyone up to Fife and everything behind the scenes to provide a trouble free trip. So a big thanks to everyone involved.

We have another visit planned for May 29 to Muirfield to see the preparations for this summer's Open Championship, so we expect a big turnout for this one. This visit is in association with Stewarts & Company. The format of the day is as follows: Visit to Stewarts (Dalkieth) or the turf farm, then lunch and on to Muirfield to see what goes into preparing for an Open Championship. This is one not to miss!

I had a phone call a couple of weeks ago from Jimmy McLaughlin, Head Greenkeeper at the Merchants of Edinburgh Golf Club informing me that Alisdair Duff, Assistant Greenkeeper celebrated 25 years at the Merchants GC at the end of March.

The club were commemorating this with a lunch in his honour and presented him with a watch for his outstanding service to the club. The Section would like to congratulate Alisdair, who is also a long time member of the Association as well as SIGGA. Well done for the last 25 years and we hope to see you at some Section events in the near future.

Jimmy also informs me that Alisdair's nickname at the Merchants is the pest. Why? Well we don't know. That's it for this month. Coming up in next month's edition is, news and views from Spring Tournament at Gullane; results from the annual tournament Scottish Greenkeepers v Club Secretaries Association, and any news I pick up on my travels this month. Well that's it, I'm looking forward to next month already!

PS. We hope that the spring weather is good and we are getting some good growth for the long season ahead. Hope you all received your entry forms for all competitions this year (Don't lose them because no form no entry) Also you all received your fixture cards to keep you all updated on all events over the next 12 months.

Chris Yeaman.

North

One new member to mention this month, and he is Allan Black from Inchmarlo Golf Centre. Welcome to the North Section. Allan.

Well, after probably one of the wettest winters for the past few years the recent dry spell has been very welcome and I am sure anyone who is behind with their winter work will be catching up rapidly. The weather for Easter was glorious and the golfers were out in droves, but with the usual comments that the course is a little bit behind last year in growth and quality of putting surfaces. But with Easter being earlier this year everyone seems to have short memories. But we cannot have it every way of course.

The entry forms for Elgin should all have been received and sent back by the time you will receive this report but just in case you receive the magazine early then you should get the entry form sent back quickly as I think the spaces will be at a premium.

Also a reminder for your 200 Club tickets which need to be back as soon possible for the first outing, as the first draws take place at this outing.

Our Section is hoping to run management courses this coming Autumn and also next Spring. The courses can cover any part of our profession from computers and the role they play in our jobs, to COSSH Assessments, Risk Assessments etc. For any further information or if you have any other ideas which you feel would be beneficial to run courses on then you can get in touch with Dougal Duguid on 01224 740329 or myself on 01997 420 155. If we can get about six to 12 people on the course then the Section can get them at a reduced rate and affordable.

An idea was put to me the other day about trying to set up a challenge match between the Greenkeepers in the Aberdeen area and Greenkeepers from the North. It could be set up as a once a year challenge match or a home and away match. It would be a purely social occasion of course, but the potential I feel is great, if only we could get it up and running. If anyone likes the sound of the idea then phone me or any other committee

member, or it could be discussed further at the outing at Elgin Golf Club on May 16.

Have a good Spring
Iain Gunn

Ayrshire

As I type these notes Easter has just passed and the weather is good with the course drying up, by the time you read them our spring outing will have passed and who knows what the weather will be doing.

I have pleasure in introducing my new Vice Chairman, Martin Lothian. Martin as many of you know is Head Greenkeeper on the Ailsa course at Turnberry. Like a good Vice Chairman, Martin was on the phone recently with some news to fill up this column. Did you know Martin found a Second World War Bomb in a bunker! Only joking, Martin called to say that two Turnberry members are on the move, Gareth Williams, assistant, to Wentworth and staying in the section William McMeikan, assistant, to Prestwick St. Cuthberts who will now be well prepared for the Spring outing. Congratulations and best wishes lads with your new positions.

News of the Spring outing next month, any other information call me on 01505 683278.

Iain Barr



Northern Region
Douglas Bell
Tel: 0151 431 0433

Cleveland

The annual quiz organised by Section Secretary, Barry Walker, took place at Darlington Golf Club last month with 30 greenkeepers turning out. The quiz was won quite convincingly by the Wear Greenies again (and me) a cracking night was had by everyone. Well done Barry, I'm looking forward to defending our title next year. Thanks to Darlington Golf Club for their facilities and the pie and pea supper.

The Section committee met last month, they discussed future events that would interest greenkeepers, many ideas were thrown forward and Ian Pemberton was put in charge of looking into organising events and trips. Anyone with any ideas should contact Ian Pemberton. Some events appeared in last month's newsletter the first of which has been, 14 greenkeepers took a mini bus trip to Rolawn and had a very interesting and informative day looking around their turf fields, turf cutting machinery and turf washing facilities. Well done Pembo on your first successful event and thanks to Rolawn for looking after us.

The spring tournament is at Darlington Golf Club on April 24 and a few places are still left, cost £10 so contact Barry Walker quickly if your interested.

Richmond Golf Club are back to full strength again after appointing Mark Wittary as Greenkeeper Mechanic and Roy Applegarth as Assistant Greenkeeper. Mark is a first

time greenkeeper, and Roy is a Darlington lad returning north from Headingley Golf Club having served his time at Stressholme Golf Club. Roy is the brother of Rigby Taylor sales rep Jamie Applegarth.

Stephen Taggart has left the Wynyard Club to start work at Groundcare Landscapes, a company started by Lewis Meek after he was made redundant as Head Greenkeeper at the Wynyard Club. Lewis is doing really well hence he's had to take on extra staff. Well done Lewis, I hope you have continued success, good luck to all the lads in your roles.

And finally a serious health and safety issue by the time this goes to print Middlesbrough will be out of the FA Cup so please tread carefully around the following people. Ian Pemberton, Bedale; Allan Reid, Saltburn, and Stephen Taggart, Groundcare. You've been warned. In the unlikely event of Middlesbrough making the final my apologies to the above people.

Any news contact me on 07719193381

Steven Jaques

North West

Beginning of April and the weather has been great this last few days with dry conditions and plenty of sunshine, but the ground temperature is still cold, with the finer grasses holding back for warmer weather. Most golfers of course do not realise this, and in the next couple of weeks will be watching the masters at Augusta, and wondering why their course is not the same. Now if they had attended the Mere seminar and listened to Alistair Beggs, from the STRI, who spoke of his visit to America. Including Augusta, they may understand a little better. The normal numbers of staff at Augusta are 35 but during the run up to the Masters this is increased to about 80. The budget for the course is approximately \$2.5 million, the workshops house vast amounts of machinery, which is maintained by their own highly trained mechanics. The beautiful display of magnolias, rhododendrons, and azaleas, are grown under glass to flower at the right time, and planted out to give this magnificent display in April.

Tony Mears, the greenkeepers representative on the GTC, followed Alistair, shedding some light on how the GTC work with BIGGA on the education side.

Stephen Bernhard gave an interesting talk on "Should the mower really murder grass" Stephen is the founder of Bernhard and company who manufacture and sell Anglemaster grinding machines throughout the world. He showed how important it is to get a good cut, the blades should be kept sharp, but the blades of the cutting cylinder and the bottom blade should not touch as this causes stress on your machine. It is interesting to note that at the 1997 Masters, the mowers used daily were sharpened with Anglemaster grinders to produce perfect playing surfaces.

The afternoon was taken up by four greenkeepers. Firstly Tony Smith Course Manager at Hurlston Hall GC who was one of the two winners from the Northern Region to win a trip to Orlando, sponsored by Bernhard & Company, told us about the trip, and showed slides of the various courses he visited.

Andy Campbell followed with a talk entitled "Changing times/Changing jobs."

Andy is a Master Greenkeeper, and he also became the first UK based Greenkeeper to achieve GCSAA certification. Obviously to gain both of these prestigious awards has meant many hours of study, but the knowledge gained must be so rewarding. He talked of his early days in green-keeping, and how health and safety has changed with proper washing facilities, keeping records, improved machinery, and working conditions. His job now entails looking after the De Vere Carden Park estate, which includes two 18 hole courses, a par 3 course, and if my memory serves me right, a herd of deer, all this run from a proper office.

The final speakers were Anthony Davies and Colin Denny. Anthony is Course Manager at Prestbury GC and is also a Master Greenkeeper. His talk was "Course Reconstruction & Renovation" One of the important things in winter work of course is renovation of bunkers and tees. Anthony has carried out a lot of this work and showed slides of before and after, amazing what a difference a reshaped bunker can make. Colin Denny followed talking about the reconstruction of the 17th hole at Prestbury. You may have seen in one of the magazines how the banks of the 17th green and the green itself had completely collapsed through the amount of rain we had during the year 2000. This meant bringing in heavy machinery to re-build the banks and green surrounds, plus 2000 tonnes of top soil, and having the job finished in time for the first competition the slides shown were impressive and showed the scale of the job, which was completed on time. I would like to thank all the speakers for giving us their time and Mere Golf & Country Club for the use of their wonderful facilities, and the delegates who attended the seminar.

The next event is the Spring Tournament at Hurlston Hall GC on Wednesday, May 15. Lunch 12.30 tee from 1.30pm. Applications to Bill Merritt. 225 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool. L4 9RB. TEL. 0151 284 4416 Please include a cheque for £20 made payable to BIG-GA n/west

The Summer Tournament is at Ulverston GC on Thursday, June 20. All applications as above. Any news or enquiries contact me on 0151 724 5412 or Mobile: 07761 583 387

Bert Cross

Northern

I must start my first around the greens notes by thanking Andy Smith on his tireless effort and dedication over the last few years in his role as

Section Secretary. As most of you will be aware Andy decided to step down from his role so he could pursue other interests.

So, Andy on behalf of everybody in the Northern Section, thank you and I hope you can now enjoy at your leisure all the Section's golf tournaments.

I was asked by the committee to step in to the role of Section Secretary and am slowly getting to grips with the ins and outs of the job. If I can be of any assistance regarding any Section matters please do not hesitate to get in touch through any of the mediums at the end of this report. I am writing these notes pre-spring tournament at Bedale golf club which is sponsored by Scotts UK. A full report and list of results will appear in the next magazine.

Our next Section event will be President's Day sponsored by Rufford Soil Technology. The event is taking place at Otley Golf Club on Wednesday, June 19. All players wishing to test out Steve Heaton's course must get their £15 to a member of the committee at least a week prior to the event. As this is my first stab at putting together these notes, I must urge anyone with any news, views or gossip from our Section, to relay them on to me so I can print them in the notes. We must all remember that the committee is working for all of the Northern Section members and if you would like to see other events let us know and we will try to arrange them.

Lastly, I hope you're not all under too much pressure and the grass is steadily coming out of the ground. Happy Greenkeeping.

I can be contacted at 16 Westwood Ave, Eccleshill, Bradford, West York's, BD2 2NJ Tel No - 01274 640 739 Mob No - 07976 876 264 E mail - Dthackray@aol.com

Dave Thackray

North Wales

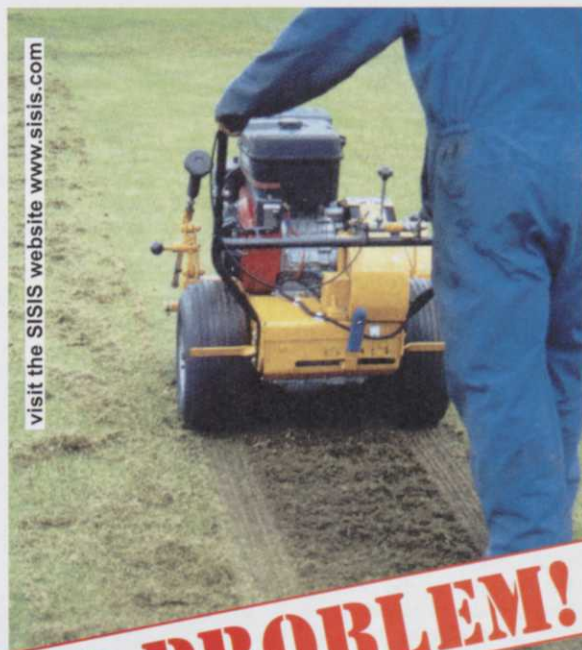
The spring tournament was held on April 10 at De Vere Carden Park Golf Complex, a strong field of 80 players set out on a sunshine blessed day to try and tame the Cheshire Course, which plays host to the Pre qualifiers for the European Tour. The course was presented in a prestigious manner by the green staff team fronted by Martin Thompson and Jamie Poole and headed by Andy Campbell. A big thank you to Carden Park for the organisation of the course for the food and drink served and their help in the smooth running of the day's event and a special thank you to Mal Edwards for the cards

The results are as follows. 1. John Astles, 24, Sutton Hall GC 36pts; 2. Phil Bowler, 12, Carden Park GC 35pts; 3. Darryl Davis 4 Northop GC 34pts. Trade. Terry Adamson (again) 36pts. Nearest the pin went to Danny O'Neil, of Northop CC.

Our thanks also to the Sponsors ALS, John Osman, Bathgate, Carden Park, Sportsworld and Acorn Golf and Walker Eng.

Carden Park also host the European Seniors Event this year July 31 to August 4 if there are any members

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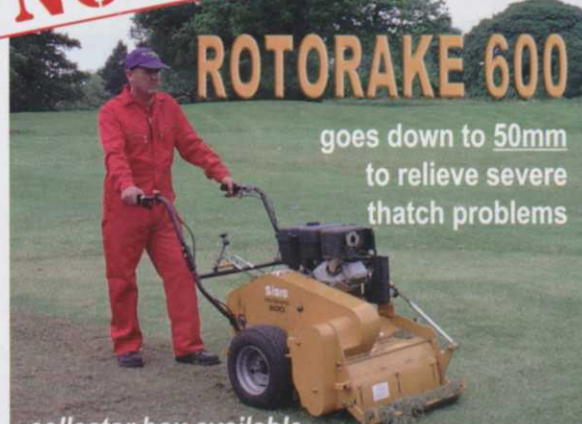


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wishing to volunteer their services for green keeping duties, raking bunkers and general help over these days please contact Andy Campbell on 01829 73100.

We are also on the lookout for anyone willing to offer up their course for tournaments in 2003 - please get in touch.

Our best wishes go to members going stateside this year on 12 month sabbaticals, Gary Martin of Alsager is going to University of Ohio State and based at West Chester GC New York, Russell Lewis of Eastham Lodge is based at Kiowa Island GC, Wendy O'Brien is working at the Masters in Augusta and Ray O'Neil returns to full time work back from New Jersey.

Dates for your diaries the Autumn tournament date is now fixed for September 4 at Pwllheli GC and the Sportsworld Triangular event is on August 16 at South Staffs GC please contact Terry Adamson if you can play.

On the darts front John Kerry, of Royal St Davids GC, has gone down 3-2 along with Dave Proctor, of Stowrs-wen GC, 3-0. Martin from Caernarfon GC talks a better game than he can play, and if he puts anymore gel in his hair he is in danger of looking like Gareth Gates of Pop Idol.

They all need more practice to beat the BIGGA Golden Key Tour player. Since I started writing the Section notes, Fred Grundey, of Measdu GC, goes a bit quiet now when I call round? I just thought I'd say there's nothing to be worried about Fred (unless you're hiding something? That is!).

A further thank you goes to John Osman for taking Section members on a John Deere Golf Day and night's stay in Nottingham. The day was a huge success but there was some confusion over room keys in the hotel. But Jeremy Hughes sorted it all out.

On a regional level we would like correspondence back from you, (our members) on what thoughts you may have of what you want from your section and indeed what you want from BIGGA as a body in general. Please contact any of the committee.

Any news, views or information you have, please contact me on:

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Andrew Acorn



Midland Region
Peter Larter
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East Midlands

Congratulations should be extended to Kristian Hibberd, Kirby Muxloe; Mark Huthwaite, Ramsdale Park; Andy Megreal and Danny Brown both Lingdale on successfully completing their Chainsaw Maintenance and cross-felling course, which was held at Beedles Lake Golf Centre on March 12 and 13. I would also, on behalf of the

Section, like to thank Beedles Lake GC for allowing us to use their clubhouse and Golf Course for training course. Special thanks should be extended to Ian Needham, Head Greenkeeper, and Les Emery, Manager, for their help over the two days and also to Ken Richardson and BIGGA for setting-up the course.

On March 26 also at Beedles Lake Golf Centre we held our Winter Lecture, this year we welcomed Richard Minton, of Complete Weed Control, who spoke to us on the benefits of a contractor and also Jody Hibbotson, of John Deere, who spoke to us about the history of John Deere. Unfortunately the turnout of 21 members was disappointing, but your committee will not be deterred, and we will try harder next time to increase the numbers.

Thanks once again should be extended to Les Emery, Richard Minton and Jody Hibbotson. Also thanks to Beedles Lake Golf Centre for hosting this evening and all you members who supported the lecture. Finally I would like to thank Complete Weed Control and John Deere for supplying the buffet meal.

This years East Midlands v East of England golf match will be hosted by Newark GC on August 22nd. Tee-Off 3.45pm.

Antony Bindley



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South West

So, spring has sprung, the grass is growing and all is well in the golf course world. It's the season of mass technical representative attack, Head Greenkeepers, be easy on them, they're only doing their job.

Our next event is the Greenkeeper Amateur, to be held at Yeovil Golf Club on May 15. There will be great prizes, don't forget to come along, invite a club member and enjoy a day away from your own course. MW Associates has done a report for the National Board, on the direction of BIGGA in General, and on specific areas of BIGGA activities. Some of this has been reported in the magazine, Paul Jenkins, our National Board member is keen to hear your thoughts and views. One area highlighted is the structure of BIGGA Sections, Regions and National. Also the geographical areas of the Sections and Regions if you have any thoughts, please contact Paul - he is your link to Aldwark and he needs to know your views. Following on from this, a new sub committee has been formed, called the Futures Sub Committee. James Braithwaite, from Long Ashton, is serving on this new body. Its job, is to look into a way of widening membership participation in all areas of BIGGA work. So again call James with your thoughts.

Remember to qualify for the National Tournament, you have to play in our section summer competition which is on July 3 at Bath Golf Club. Be there or be square!

Robin Greaves

Devon & Cornwall

For the Aveniris and Supaturf March section meeting over 50 members did a raid over the border into Somerset - without any resistant - for its last meeting of the winter programme which was held at Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club, on Wednesday, March 20.

Our golfing members competed for the Supaturf (Head Greenkeepers & Trade) Trophy and the Aveniris Trophy for assistants over 14 holes because of the weather conditions. As usual our non golfing members course walk left the club house at 10.30am and enjoyed a most enlightening guided tour of the course by Course Manager, Jeff Mills.

After a superb lunch Paul Clifton, Aveniris, and John Palfrey on behalf of Supaturf presented the golf prizes as follows.

Supaturf Trophy for Head Greenkeepers and Trade: 1. G. Ayliffe; 2. M. Samuel; 3. R. Parker Aveniris Trophy for Assistants: 1. Graham Fitzpatrick; 2. Neil Williams; 3. A. Gawman

Following an excellent lunch Kerran Daly, Course Manager, Gog Mag Gog Golf Club presented one of the best educational talks the Section has had for sometime,

Kerran's paper was called "Rough Cuttings" and covered some excellent management skills which both old and young could relate to and improve their own personal development. After Kerran's excellent talk the Section had an open forum covering Cannington College on greenkeeping training and the college's future development of greenkeeping courses.

The Section would like to thank the day's sponsors Supaturf & Aveniris for their continued support and Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club for allowing the section use of their excellent facilities, also our thanks to all of Taunton & Pickeridge's staff who made our day run so smoothly, with special thanks to Course Manager, Jeff Mills, and his crew.

Finally our thanks to Kerran for his excellent presentation and for travelling over 500 miles to be with us on the day.

Next meeting will be the Rigby Taylor summer event to be held at Trethorne Golf Club on June 18, 2002.

Richard Whyman



Northern Ireland

Our latest event at Lisburn Golf Club on March 14 went ahead as planned. Many thanks to Jo Gladwin, from Nickerson UK Ltd, and Elizabeth Wilson from JA Humphrey Agriculture for making the evening a success. Jo gave a talk on the Top Green Amenity and Grass Seed range and Fortiva applied Seed Technology. Jo concluded her talk by detailing the trials and research that is being carried out by Nickerson at the STRI Secretary, Allison Sloan then brought the evening to a close with a quiz, which was competitively contested among the teams. The team of Frank Ainsworth, Mark Cassidy and Kyle Irwin, narrowly took first place by one point. Thanks to Jo and Elizabeth for providing the quiz prizes. Elizabeth generously kept everyone happy with liquid refreshment throughout the evening which was very much appreciated. Thanks also to Allison Sloan and Andrew Kerr for organising the evening and also Lisburn Golf Club for allowing the Section use of their clubhouse. Praise must also go to the 25 members who came along to support the event.

Finally good luck to Mark Riddle who has moved to Spa Golf Club from Royal Co. Down, and a warm welcome to new members Frank Ainsworth, Course Manager at the Hilton Golf Club, Temple Patrick, and Greg Fearson, Course Manager at Lough Gall Golf Club. That's all for now. If anyone has any news please contact me on 02894 429001, During working hours.

Ken Henderson

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The solution to the March Turftime Teaser was Tom Clark, Mole Control. This was correctly answered by: Mr I George of Hawkstone Golf Club in Shrewsbury. Our congratulations and a superb quilted jacket are on their way to you!

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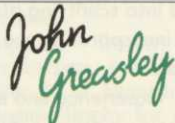




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PYECOMBE GOLF CLUB

Requires a

GREENKEEPER

Pyecombe Golf Club has a vacancy for an experienced greenkeeper, preferably with NVQ Level 2 and spraying qualifications.

Applications in writing with CV details please to:
Managing Secretary, Pyecombe Golf Club,
Clayton Hill, Pyecombe, Brighton BN45 7FF

PINE RIDGE GOLF CLUB

Requires a

DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

Must have the relevant qualifications for the post and practical experience.

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Applications in writing with C.V. to:

John Davidson, Course Manager, Gatton Manor Hotel, Golf and Country Club,
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SAFFRON WALDEN GOLF CLUB



APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE POSITION OF

COURSE MANAGER

Saffron Walden Golf Club is a private members club with an 18-hole golf course and a playing membership of 950.

The successful applicant, who will have the appropriate qualifications and preferably be a golfer, will have responsibility for course management, maintenance, staff and budgets.

The following skills will be required.

- Experience in all aspects of course management
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- Man management skills

Salary will be negotiable and accommodation may be provided if required.

Written applications with full CV should be sent to:

Gerald Pearce, General Manager, Saffron Walden Golf Club,
Windmill Hill, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1BX

The closing date for applications will be Friday 7 June 2002.



PART-TIME LIAISON OFFICERS

The GTC is responsible to ensure the Greenkeeping sector has a range of qualifications appropriate to the needs of the industry and maintain a partnership with a network of Approved Training Providers who offer training courses to complement the qualifications.

To improve its communication structure the GTC is now looking to appoint part time Liaison Officers in England, Ireland and Wales. NB Scotland already have Liaison Officers appointed.

The Liaison Officer positions with the GTC will have non-employed status however an hourly rate and expenses will be paid for work carried out on behalf of the GTC.

The successful applicants will be required to work regionally for the GTC on up to a maximum of 5 full days per annum and attend 2/3 update training days per annum at GTC Headquarters.



Applications in writing including Curriculum Vitae should be sent to:

Sue Gudgeon, GTC, Aldwark Manor,
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Invite applications for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Founded in 1914 the course is situated in North Cardiff and is one of Wales most prestigious Parkland Course.

We are a Private Members Club with over 900 members, and are currently looking to employ a replacement for the existing Head Greenkeeper who retires in July 2002.

Reporting to the Club Manager and Greens Committee the successful applicant must possess the appropriate qualifications, experience, and would also require the following skills.

- Wide experience in all aspects of course management.
- A track record in delivering a high quality 18 hole golf course.
- Experience in the construction of Tees, Greens and Bunkers.
- Team leader with the ability to motivate his staff.
- To be able to prepare and control a course budget.

Applications with a full CV should be submitted to :

**The Manger, Whitchurch Golf Club,
Pantmawr Road, Cardiff, CF14 7TD**

Closing date for applications: 26th May 2002

Golf Course Supervisor

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For both posts you must have demonstrable experience of golf course maintenance with due regard to the green keepers codes of practice and ethics as well as experience of maintenance and operation of irrigation systems. You must be able to work with, supervise and motivate a team of green keeper operatives. You will have demonstrable knowledge of pests and diseases and of their treatment and have PA1, PA2, PA6 pesticides spraying certificate. You must also have NVQ Sports Turf qualification or have equivalent experience.

We welcome applications from ethnic minority candidates who are currently under represented in these areas of work. Section 38 (1)(b) RRA 1976 applies.

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Salary will be negotiable.

Please apply in writing including full C. V. to: Mr D Kenchington, Hon Secretary, Glynhir Golf Club, Glynhir Road, Llandybie, Carmarthenshire, SA18 2TE

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If you have the experience and enthusiasm to fulfil this position write with details to: **S. Norton, General Manager, Glen Farrow UK Ltd, Spalding Road, Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire. PE11 3UE.**

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Greenkeeper

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Require an

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Applications in writing with full CV should be addressed to:

Mike Oram, Chipstead Golf Club,
How Lane, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3LN



HEAD GREENKEEPER

Opened in 1994, designed by Peter Allis, Aston Wood is a progressive private members club with a major redevelopment programme in place for its 18-hole golf course.

The candidate must have a proven track record in all aspects of green keeping, including planning and monitoring work programmes and budgets, be self motivated, hands on and have the ability to lead an enthusiastic team by example.

The applicant should be qualified to at least NVQ 3 or its equivalent. Spraying Certificates would be an advantage and possess a sound working knowledge of Health & Safety regulations.

Salary negotiable in accordance with experience.

No accommodation available.

Applications in writing, with full CV by 22nd May 2002 to:

**Mr K Heathcote, General Manager, Aston Wood Golf Club,
Blake Street, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 7EU.**

Tel 0121 580 7803 or Fax 0121 353 0354

Interviews will take place on Friday 31st May & Saturday 1st June.



Formby Golf Club

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

The Club has an immediate vacancy for this position.

Applicants should have the following qualifications and attributes.

- At least 5 years relevant greenkeeping experience.
- Appropriate qualifications to NVQ level 2 or equivalent.
- Holder of Spraying Certificates PA1, PA2 & PA6
- Practical knowledge of golf course equipment and machinery
- Good communication and team working skills

Apply in writing with full C.V.

The Secretary Manager, Formby Golf Club,
Golf Road, Formby L37 1LQ

Email: info@formbygolfclub.co.uk



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David Cook, General Manager, Burhill Golf Centres Ltd,
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david@burhillgolf-club.demon.co.uk

TRAMORE GOLF CLUB

Applications are invited for the position of

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Tramore Golf Club is an 18-hole championship course (host to the Irish Close Championship in 2003) situated in the South East of Ireland.

The successful applicant will be responsible for maintenance and continued development of the course to the highest standards.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Completed applications accompanied by a full C.V. should be forward to:

**The Secretary/Manager, Tramore Golf Club,
Tramore, County Waterford, Ireland**



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Learning Assistant - Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management

£15,035 - £18,027

Ref: S254/LA/GI

We require a resourceful individual with a minimum of two years' recent practical experience of working in the greenkeeping or sportsturf sector, and a relevant NVQ Level 3 qualification or equivalent, to join our specialist team to provide learning support and assessment to students on a wide range of programmes. You will be responsible for the maintenance of the college sportsgrounds including a small greenkeeping development presently consisting of three greens and tees.

Learning Assistant - Machinery Operation

£15,035 - £18,027

Ref: S892/LA/GI

We require a resourceful individual with a minimum of two years' recent practical experience of working in the agriculture and horticulture sector, and a relevant NVQ Level 3 qualification or equivalent, to join our specialist team to provide learning support and assessment to students on a wide range of programmes. You should have knowledge and recent experience of operating a wide range of tractors (less than 70 hp) and associated equipment.

For further information and an application form, please apply to: **The Personnel Unit, Oaklands College, Oaklands Campus, Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL4 0JA** or telephone **01727 737748** (24 hour answerphone).

Please quote the relevant reference.

Closing date: 22nd May 2002.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Nomenclature or the system of names or naming, can have a great deal of significance in our world. Sandy McDivot investigates...

THE NAME GAME

Everything must have a name, whether it be a person, an object, a machine or a golf club and choosing the name correctly can be of critical importance.

This is especially true with people. Sometimes their name rules them out of a particular vocation. Although having said that, I do recollect a group of undertakers that delight in the name of De-Ath and I believe there once was a butchers called Badham and Gristle. I am also aware, that

Maybe if I did possess an 80-acre pylon infested course, with a three in one slope adjacent to the M62, I would call the resultant assault to the optic nerve Royal Mountain Springs National Golf Links, or words to that effect

within the ecclesiastical profession, there exists an unfortunately named Cardinal Sin and I particularly like the estate agents, I think based in the North of England, that are aptly called Dolittle and Dally. I even note from our Association's directory that a few of us have joined in the fun by going under the name of Green, Parr or even the odd Mower.

Generally though, if your name is Payne for instance, a vocation in dentistry would be one to be avoided and I would suggest people with the name

of Crippen could do better than enter the medical profession. Some names have been absolutely fine up until a particular person has spoilt the fun and taken them well and truly out of vogue. For example, Adolf has taken a bit of a nosedive in the popularity stakes since the 40's and I believe Myra has been less than prevalent since the 60's. These days people should avoid calling their twins Benjamin and William, because of the obvious flower pot connection and I would advise you side step Fred and Rosemary, especially if the surname is West. Matching first names with surnames is important and always check what the initials could add up to. So Larry would be fine, unless the surname is something like Parry and one wonders about the thought processes of Val Doonican's parents. I remember the Walker Cup Captain Peter McEvoy, saying how he once played golf with an American who introduced himself as Quintin Cumber. No problem there, until they exchanged score cards and Peter noticed on the top it read, Q Cumber. However, the American people have never showed undue concern for nomenclature and I recall in the 70's and 80's, some players on their golf tour took great delight in the celebration of the absurd, with names such as Gibby Gilbert, Forest Fezzler and Kermit Zarley.

Choosing the correct name for a golf club can be of equal importance. Personally, I have a severe disliking for the pretentious. So golf clubs that start with the word "the" have, in my opinion, got a lot to live up to. So often they fail abysmally in their self

proclaimed inference, that they are the definitive golf course of the area, the one that is set apart from all others. This is especially true when they are preceded by the name of the county in which they are found. On more than one occasion I have played such courses only to find that in reality they could qualify as being "the" worst of the county, the ones that should be preceded by the definite article in the same way as the notorious such as "the" Geoffrey Archer or "the" Robert Maxwell. (The Berkshire Golf Club excluded, of course) Personally, I like a golf club to be simply and descriptively named after the town or area in which it is found. So Hunstanton or Hankley Common fit the bill perfectly. A visitor would not necessarily expect to find a course of distinction but is delightfully surprised when the experience far exceeds expectations.

I also dislike the practice of giving grandiose names to the separate courses within a golf club. So we get things like the Gainsborough or the Blenheim course. In reality this is just a blatant attempt to inject a feeling of class, when courses of true quality never have to resort to such desperate tactics. Give me a simple Old and New or East and West anytime. The same goes for giving individual holes those separate names that no one ever uses, such as "Long Thrash", or "Watery Grave". This practice always reminds me of those sad suburban houses whose owners have named them "Dunromin" or "Glendale" in an effort to set them apart from the thousands of other identikit houses

TAKE LIST

History Major Golf Club Member List

next door, when all they really do is create apoplexy in the postman.

But let me not be so harsh in my criticism of these places, after all, I am no businessman. Perhaps if I were in the unlikely position of finding myself in golf course ownership, I too would stoop to such cheap marketing tactics in an effort to at least get the punters to visit my course the once. Maybe if I did possess an 80-acre pylon infested course, with a three in one slope adjacent to the M62, I would call the resultant assault to the optic nerve Royal Mountain Springs National Golf Links, or words to that effect. Maybe I too would then go about naming the holes "Tiger's Torment" or "Nick's Nemesis" in a flagrant defilement of the names of the famous, so as to suggest that they had been within a hundred miles of the first tee mat.

Getting the name right can be of enormous importance, if you happen to be organising a golf society. For starters, the worst thing you can do is name it after the public house in which you regularly gather for comradeship and the unselfish exchange of intellectual supposition and debate. Likewise, if it is named after the golfing standards upheld by the majority of your patrons. No, no, this is just asking for trouble. What Course Manager is going to go out of his way to present his course in the best possible condition, if they see on the start sheet. White Horse GS or Harry's Hackers? No this is just the circumstance for name embellishment. So call the society The Institute of Directors, or The Society of Connoisseurs or such like. Better still why not engage in a bit of harmless deception and name your society after a division of a governing body, or indeed a fictitious tournament of apparent merit. The R&A Open Venue Inspection Golfing Society, or The County Greenkeepers Championship, for example. That way you should get some real quality course presentation on the day of your visit, which should as we all know be booked a) on a Friday afternoon and b) as near to the venue's club championship as is possible. That way, you should get Augusta National for your 30 quid.

But to exhaust totally the subject of naming within our

profession, may I make a tenuous link by mentioning the habits of one or two of those exclusive clubs in the stockbroker belt of London. Here they indulge in the delightfully eccentric custom of employing a calligrapher to hand write the names of the owners of a changing room locker in gold paint. But above the name of the existing owner are all the names of the previous owners and all with a broad stroke being written diagonally across their name, so as to signify they are no more. I can assume that they have expired, as generally this is the only method of terminating one's membership at such golf clubs. Even internment in an old people's home - which is pretty much the same thing anyway - allows them to keep paying the subs until judgement day. The accomplishment of receiving a locker, at these places, brings with it the full acknowledgement from the membership that the recipient has spent the obligatory 30 odd years on the locker waiting list and is now accepted as a senior member.

But looking at these lockers, it does conjure up thoughts of the fears that may be harboured within those that are at the higher reaches of that list.

Do they look at the lockers and take note of the number of crossed out names on each of them. Some may only have three or four, while others have so many that they are practically being written on the locker room floor. Do they look at them and fear the allocation of a jinxed locker, a locker that according to hushed whispers brings with it the curse of swift and hideous demise, by way of an out of control rotary rough mower, or agonising heart attack brought about by wit-

nessing the lady captain bereft of makeup. The changing room locker at such venerable institutions is like one of those absurdly expensive Aga cookers that affluent country folk possess to help keep them nice and hot in the summer months. They are for life. The question is, how long will that be?

Sandy McDivot, Head Greenkeeper,
Sludgecombe Pay & Play



Feature listing from May 2000

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; Scotsturf 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 Gailes 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

May 2002: Heyrose GC profile; Bernhards Scholarship; De-stress your greens; COSHH assessments; Rootzones and topdressing; Maintenance facilities; Essay competition



Richard Barker managed to secure a Masters ticket and made the most of his first trip to Augusta National

Ambition fulfilled



Two points to start this article. First of all, I don't know about you but if anybody invites me to listen to their holiday stories, or look at their photographs I cringe, make some suitable excuse and leave, but that's exactly what I am going to do because I believe I have a reasonably interesting story. But if you don't want to continue, close the magazine now.

Secondly, in my year as Chairman, I never dreamt that I would be putting pen to paper at 500mph and 35,000 feet.

So why should you be interested in my holiday story? Well to be honest at very short notice I obtained a ticket for the Masters and also the opportunity of a room in Augusta, which for 51 weeks are easily obtainable but are at a premium for one week in April.

Before I continue and you start putting pen to paper I would like to make it quite clear that this trip had nothing to do with Association business. It was organised and funded by myself.

So, problem number one was getting from England to Augusta - easy you may think, but not this week. So let's try England to Atlanta. Also not easy but I did manage, but it had to be via Chicago. Arriving pretty late meant staying in Atlanta on Sunday April 7. Not a problem.

Problem number two though was Atlanta to Augusta. Well, I did this via

a Greyhound bus which involved a one hour stop over in downtown Atlanta. If you ever get a chance to visit here, DON'T GO. Pulling into the bus station there was a sign saying "Beware of your Surroundings and Don't Follow Strangers". Believe me, I felt as though I was in very hostile surroundings, along with 30 Mike Tyson lookalikes. I spent most of my time staring at the floor.

The same could also be said for the arrival in Augusta. In fact, I was wondering if I had come to the right place! Certain areas of the town were very downbeat and reminded me of the ghettos and slave trade that can be seen in old films. But my arrival at my accommodation soon made me feel better.

Well, Tuesday morning soon arrived and I was making my way to fulfilling a life long ambition. I still couldn't believe I was there but still hoping there wouldn't be a last minute hitch.

Before long the cab driver said "You're here" I couldn't believe it. On my left was a Freemasons' Centre, a garage, a jewellers and numerous fast food chains, not to mention a shopping centre while on my right was a big open space later to be occupied by numerous TV company vehicles and press cars, not where you would expect to find one of the most famous places in golf. But on presenting my ticket and walking through the trees I was faced with the most magnificent view of Augusta National Golf Club.

Before watching golf, I decided to familiarise myself with the layout. I had seen the back nine many times on TV before, but nevertheless decided to walk the whole course. The first thing that became apparent apart from the immaculate condition was the change in elevation from tee to green. In two or three cases there was a change of nearly 100 feet from tee to green.

Wednesday saw the famous par-3 competition won by Nick Price after a play-off on five under par. This short but challenging course was truly magnificent, just like the main course and saw Tori Izawa record successive holes-in-one. Quite a feat, although he didn't go on to beat Nick Price.

As for the tournament days, you possibly watched more action that I did as

I spent some of my time sheltering from the torrential downpours.

Typically, Augusta style, it was extremely difficult to glean any information on course matters but talking to a member of staff operating the Sub Air System (drawing water from the drainage system) led to a visit to the compound. To me this was beyond belief and, comparing it to what we have back home, really quite depressing.

Both the Superintendent and Assistant had substantial offices, as did the guy responsible for hole moving, not to mention two receptionists. Within the compound there was a trial green for testing products and also a soil testing laboratory complete with microscopes for soil and grass analysis.

The well equipped workshops were manned by three mechanics although this was increased to six for the week of the Masters. The hand tool implement building was equivalent to most facilities in the UK and as far as the main implement building it was massive, but it had to be for all the mowers. I for one, witnessed nine rough mowers on one hole, not to mention 11 fairway mowers cutting one fairway. Quite a sight!

As for staff facilities, they were most impressive, with an adjoining training centre. But then I suppose with 40 regular greenstaff and 30 nursery staff you need plenty of room. Not to mention the additional 50 staff drafted in for the Masters.

Just remember, despite us not having the climate, the next time your members drop subtle remarks about your course compared to Augusta just ask them for an additional 35 staff and an increased budget. Oh, and by the way, close the course for five months. I am sure they will oblige without any complaints and your course will look better too.

Truly a memorable week and one I won't forget for a long time.

Richard Barker

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