

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

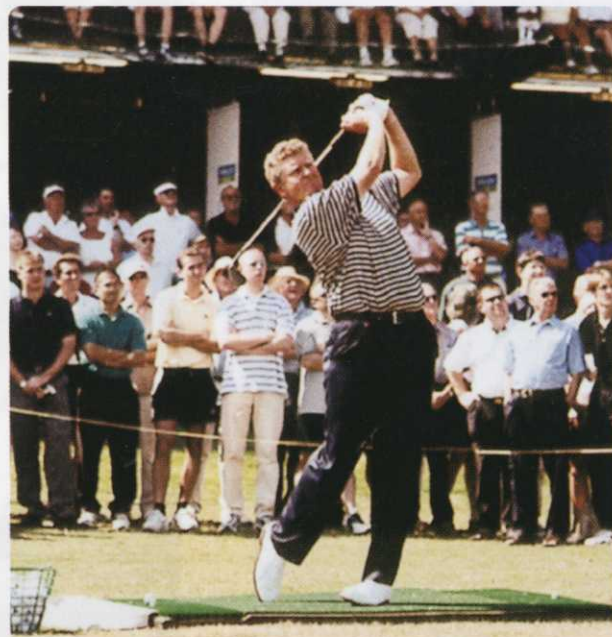
The prospect of affordable "golf for all" is being brought closer through a new venture from Open Golf Centres, which has chosen Toro turf equipment to maintain the 15 golf complexes it plans to build.

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.

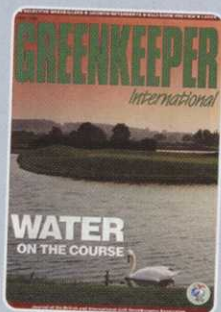
"We covered some very technical issues and we tried to strike a balance between science and practical applications," commented Ben Petitjean, Barenbrug UK'S Sales Manager.

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.

