

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