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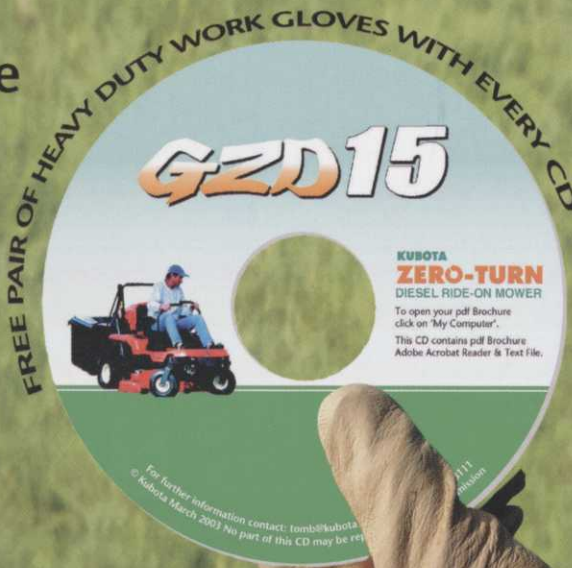
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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of the British & International
Golf Greenkeepers Association

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IT'S SPRING TIME!

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Time is the one thing we all have in equal amounts. How we use it is the key to success. Five Desk Clocks are being given away in this month's Buyer's Guide competition in association with GreenLink International & Blazon

Blazon

'THE TURFTIME TEASER'
DETAILS ON PAGE 46



April 2003

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International
will be with you by 9 May 2003

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Welcome

THE BEST WAY FORWARD

We're in difficult times at the moment. War is filling our television screens and at home the economy is being forecast as being just on the wrong side of a recession. The impact is being felt at golf clubs up and down the country and several of our finest Course Managers have been called into the office and been told they are to be made redundant with, in some cases, their role to be carried out by a combination of the Chair of Green and the remaining green staff.

The short, medium and long term implications on the condition of these golf courses will be open to debate, while hopefully those excellent Course Managers will not be out of work too long and will soon be back putting their vast experience, knowledge and expertise to good use at an appreciative golf club.

What it has done is produce calls among some quarters for a trade union to look after the best interests of those working in the greenkeeping profession and provide the muscle required to ensure greenkeepers don't lose jobs needlessly.

As you might expect, we at BIGGA, believe that the brand of support with which we provide our members, is the best way of maximising career development and protection.

In addition to the array of training and educational opportunities available, the Association's Legal Helpline and legal representation has kept many greenkeepers in jobs and secured thousands of pounds in damages for those who have been victims of golf clubs which have broken employment law.

As you will see elsewhere in this issue the Association is also currently setting up a Directory of experienced greenkeepers to offer support to colleagues who are coming under pressure at their clubs. Acting as mentors and possibly mediators on greenkeeping and agronomic matters these people will undoubtedly do a lot of behind-the-scenes work and many greenkeepers will remain in post who might otherwise have joined the ranks of the unemployed.

We at BIGGA feel that this is the best way to support our members, together with the close relationships the Association has developed with other golfing bodies including the R&A, the Golf Unions and the Secretaries' and Golf Club Owners' Associations.

One of the difficulties a Union would find in operating within the golf industry is that each golf club is an entity in its own right and negotiating employment rights and pay deals with approximately 2,700 different employers would be difficult. To make an impact, a Union's ultimate sanction of strike action would involve galvanising the support of many greenkeepers who are happy with their lot at golf clubs who look after their staff.

In difficult financial times clubs, like any other business, look to make cuts and the people with the higher salaries in an organisation are usually at greatest risk.

If this is done illegally BIGGA will provide the legal help necessary but if a club has gone through the correct procedures it may be unfair but not illegal and there is little the Association, or a Union, could do to change that.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

SETTING UP A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR MEMBERS

The Association is currently establishing a Directory of Members who are willing to support fellow greenkeepers when the need arises with advice and guidance from a greenkeeping perspective. This might be when a greenkeeper is experiencing employment difficulties with his club and such advice will be of assistance to back up support received from the Legal Helpline Service. Alternatively, it might be a specific problem on his golf course when a second opinion would be helpful. Members need support for many

reasons and the setting up of this Directory will further assist BIGGA in promoting the welfare of its members.

Those putting their names forward for the Directory can be assured that referral for assistance will be on a geographical basis thereby minimising the time and travel involved for those giving of their services.

If you feel that you can support your fellow greenkeepers in this way, please contact Neil Thomas at BIGGA HOUSE.

TREKKING UP KILIMANJARO

James McCormack, Head Greenkeeper at Kirriemuir GC, will be trekking up Kilimanjaro early next year to raise money for the Anthony Nolan Trust, a registered charity which helps provide bone marrow for patients suffering from leukaemia and other bone marrow diseases. The trust receives no help from the government and relies solely on fundraising.

The trek itself will last for six days, three and a half days to the top of Uhuru peak, a total of 5895m and two and half days of descent.

"This is the first time I have attempted anything like this. I'm not a hill walker but I do plenty of walking at work," he said.

"Climbing Kilimanjaro is described as the experience of a lifetime and it certainly will be that for me," added James.

James is trying to raise around £4,000 and

anyone who would like to sponsor or make a donation should send it to James at Kirriemuir GC, Northmuir, Kirriemuir, DD8 4LN and cheques should be made payable to The Anthony Nolan trust.



NEW FACE AT ROMILEY GOLF CLUB

Damon Beverley has been appointed as new Head Greenkeeper of Romiley Golf.

Damon (2nd from right) heads a young, highly qualified and enthusiastic greenkeeping team at Romiley.

He started his career at Holdsworth Golf Club followed by two years service at Stamford Golf Club. He joined the greenkeeping staff at Romiley in 1998 and is delighted to be currently involved in new tee construction at the 7th and 9th holes. The new drainage system, costing over £100,000, has provided Romiley members with excellent all year round golf conditions and is constantly being improved and upgraded.

Michael Moore [1st left] has been appointed as First Assistant and Chris Harrison, Chairman of Greens Committee,

commenting on the appointments of Damon and Michael said that they were well deserved and the Romiley greenkeeping team were fully committed to improving the quality and presentation of the course for members and visitors to the club.



BIGGA GOLF DAY

Anyone who wishes to enter a team in the annual BIGGA Golf Day, which this year is being held on Monday, June 23, should contact Sarah Sowerby at BIGGA HOUSE Tel: 01347 833800 by May 1. As ever the event is being held at Aldwark Manor and the cost of £200 + Vat includes pre golf bacon roll, ploughman's lunch, refreshments at the halfway house, a barbecue and prizes.

The picture on page 14 of last month's issue was actually of the 11th hole on Parasampia G&CC, Newbury, and not The Berkshire. The image had been included on the disc of what had been assumed to be all Berkshire Golf Club images. Apologies to both golf clubs and to any reader who may have been confused.

Email press releases and new product updates to; scott@bigga.co.uk

SCOTTISH EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The BIGGA Scottish Region Greenkeeping Conference was once again held at the Business Learning Centre, Lauder College, Dunfermline, at the beginning of March. This year we attracted over 160 delegates that included greens convenors, greenkeepers and representatives of the industry to the College for our Conference.

Scotland's Education Convenor, Robert Hogarth, Course Manager, Cardrona Hotel & Golf Course chaired the morning session and he opened the Conference by introducing Tim Earley, Managing Director, Waste2Water Europe Ltd. Tim led the way with an excellent talk on why we need a properly constructed wash-off area and gave us several examples of the benefit of such a system.

Next we had Mark Gordon, of Eamonn Wall & Co, on selecting the correct wood for your course. Mark delivered a most informative and interesting talk.

After the break we had the present Deputy Chairman of the Association and Golf Course & Estate Manager from De Vere Carden Park Hotel, Andy Campbell. Andy



The conference speakers

spoke at length about the managing of an estate that covers 750 acres, containing two golf courses, tennis courts, Off Road driving and a vineyard.

To round of the morning session we had Justin Smith, Managing Director of Turftrax Ground Management, who stood in at short notice for Richard Earl. Justin spoke about Turftrax's unique scanning technology, he spoke at length about the benefits of this system in relation to preparing and maintaining high quality surfaces.

After lunch, Ian Henderson, Managing Director of Golf Finance explained to us the various methods of funding available to golf clubs. This included the purchase of machinery and how to support this venture. With several of the clubs represented by committee members, including green convenors and I am sure that this talk would be of interest to them.

Representing the Home of Golf we had Gordon Moir, Links Superintendent, St Andrews Links Trust. Gordon gave us an insight into the structure and running of the St Andrews Links. From the office staff through to the greenkeeping staff they all have a role to play in ensuring the smooth running of the six courses. He provided us with details of the rounds played and the cost to the visitors and local club members. Definitely

the place to play your golf.

Finally we had Steve Isaac, Senior Turf Agronomist, STRI who spoke at length about his recent trip to New Zealand. The title of which was 'Turf Culture in New Zealand, Half A World Away, But So Close To Home'. This was a most interesting talk and with some interesting slides of the golf courses in New Zealand finished of the Conference in fine style.

The Scottish Region of BIGGA are once again indebted to the speakers for sparing the time and effort to attend our Conference and once again provide us with informative and topical talks relating to the Fine Turf Industry.

To the Patrons of the Region our thanks for your continued support. Your patronage enables us to provide a first class venue at the Business Learning Centre in Lauder College, which in turn helps us to attract speakers from throughout the country to Dunfermline every year.

Finally, this year's winner of the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich, which is presented to the Student of the Year, was Graham Winter of Kingsbarns Golf Links. Graham received his award from Archie Dunn, Chairman, BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter J.Boyd, Regional Administrator



Chairman Archie Dunn presents Graham Winter with the Harry Diamond Memorial Quaich

HUNTER GRINDERS

Two new members of the Hunter Grinders team joined Managing Director Keith Cann-Evans at an exhibition in Oslo to support the newly appointed Norwegian dealer; Reinhardt Maskin AS. Tony Snaith has joined the company as Sales Manager, with responsibility for UK and European Sales Development.

Tony is very well known in the turf care industry with a proven track record spanning over 30 years. Ian Robson is Sales and Service Engineer.

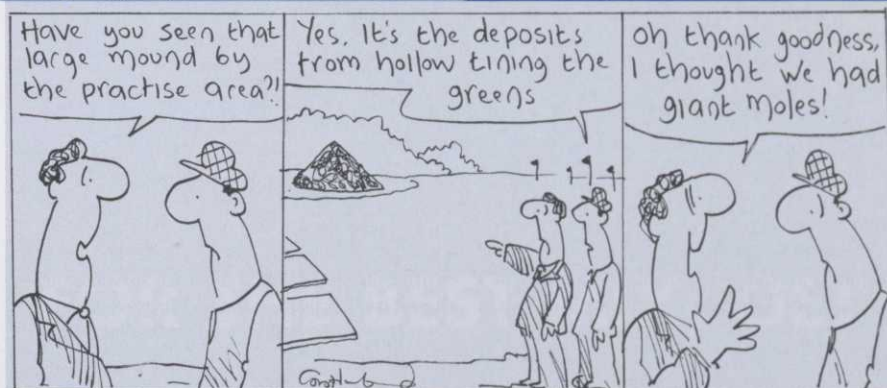
Ian has extensive experience in mechanical and electrical engineering and will be responsible for

demonstrations and installations as well as supporting Tony on sales.

"Both men will bring valuable experience and knowledge to an already successful team. The appointment of Reinhardt's as our dealer in Norway is the first in a planned campaign to distribute Hunter Grinders equipment throughout Europe and the USA. With the new office facilities and extended manufacturing space we intend to drive forward the expansion of Hunter Grinders Ltd by introducing new products to the UK and overseas markets in 2003," said Keith.

Royal Inverdivot GC...

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



ACTIVITY DAY WINNER



When your membership is due for renewal you receive a newsletter which contains details of how to win an activity day of your choice. Activities are held all over the country so there should be a centre near you. A winner is selected every three months so it does not matter what time of year you renew your membership.

The first activity day winner is Paul Terry of Sheerness Golf Club who has a choice of at least 20 activities to choose from ranging from Ferrari driving to powerboating. Congratulations Paul!

WALTON HEATH STILL WONDERFUL IN THE WET!

All but two fourballs teed off in the dry at the South East Regions Annual Gentlemen's Evening Golf Tournament. Some actually finished in the dry. But everyone got wet at some stage of the day!

Weather that had been so kind over recent years hit back a bit this year by giving superb spring days leading up to the Friday, started off the day in the same manner and then turned to a freezing wind and heavy rain.

Just over half of the 108 that teed off actually finished but those who did put themselves in with a chance to win some wonderful prizes. Exhibiting this year at Harrogate in the Clubhouse Show were Tutbury Crystal, from Burton-on-Trent. Their huge range of high quality crystal made the organiser's task of purchasing suitable prizes very easy this year.

Although the weather took its toll of the golfers it could not affect the wonderful hospitality of the Walton Heath Clubhouse. There followed a superb meal and a very entertaining after dinner speech from Dr. Jim Greig OBE.

After the speeches the prizes were presented by the Captain of Walton Heath in this their Centenary Year Patrick Frankin-Adams. South East Chairman George Barr then presented a clock set in crystal to Dennis Smith to mark his forthcoming retirement. Dennis has been 'Starter' at this event for almost 20 years and it won't seem the same without his cheerful face greeting golfers on the 1st tee.

The main prizewinners were: 0 - 9. Robert George, Coombe Hill; 10 - 17. George Brown, Deansgate Ridge; 18 - 24. Martin Smith, Regiment Way; Guests. Kevin Stillwell, Hankley Common.

The hardest people of the day who braved the elements had to be the Starters Dennis Smith, Rigby Taylor, and Joe Crawley, Vitax. Richard Haynes, Gem Professional, who got soaked and frozen to death keeping play moving on the blind drive on the 2nd and the Chefs from Sherriff, Johnny Beck and Neil Pullen.

The Region's thanks are due to the Sponsors of this day for their wonderful support: Avoncrop Amenity Services, Bioseed Ltd, BSP Landscapes, CMW Ltd, Complete Weed Control, Ernest Doe and Sons, GEM Professional Ltd, Grass Roots Trading Co, Kestrel Golf and Sports, Machines Direct Ltd, T. Parker and Sons (2003), Rigby Taylor Ltd, Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd, The Scotts Co, John Shaw Machinery Ltd, Sheerwater Leisure Ltd, Sherriff Amenity Services Ltd, Sisis Equipment Ltd, Tacit Golf Equipment Ltd, TurfCare Solutions Ltd and Vitax Ltd.

Derek Farrington
Regional Administrator



With his much reduced girth other people (including Chefs Johnny Beck and Neil Pullen from Sherriffs) can now find room to shelter with David Murdoch MG in the half

IS THIS THE SILLY SEASON?

Neil Thomas comments as the show goes on...

A question for greenkeepers and the trade. Was BTME/ClubHouse 2003 a good experience for you and of subsequent benefit to your club or company? Our experience at BIGGA



HOUSE clearly indicates that an overwhelming majority of those in Harrogate this January would reply (and indeed are replying) in the affirmative to that question. We've written to all companies, visited stands during the show, elicited views from the Steering Committee and carried out a comprehensive review. We can say, with conviction, that the vibes are very positive, perhaps more so than at any previous exhibition in Harrogate.

Every event of this size will present problems and where issues have been raised, these have been dealt with on an individual basis and points noted for improvement in 2004. Yes, there will be some adjustments next year which are currently under consideration by BIGGA's Board of Management and being discussed with the Steering Committee. These will be announced in the May issue of Greenkeeper International magazine.

So is that it? Well unfortunately no if you've been reading the industry press. 'Damn with faint praise' is the phrase which comes to mind. Coverage tends to start with dark suspicions of the visitor figures. Surely there is some conspiracy here they ask? Record figures again this year, how can it be? Let's answer that one. BIGGA engages an independent company for its registration procedures before and during the exhibitions. They're not BIGGA's figures as such and, believe it or not, there are ethics involved here as far as we are concerned even if that is not the norm elsewhere. BIGGA is not in the game of manipulating figures. Indeed one journal actually does suggest that more may have made their way in through a loophole which we will seek to close next year. So yes, we are proud of the attendances and surely that is exceedingly good news for the trade and the profession especially when we are being told that more 'buyers' were in evidence this year.

Reading through one trade publication left one quite perplexed. It questioned the point of shows in general and then having argued one way and the other appeared to conclude that anyway there are too many shows. This, of course, is a well worn argument and 'showitis' appears to be a recurring annual 'complaint' which merits discussion. Outbursts of this 'complaint' normally occur twice a year in late September and late January and coincide with the SALTEX and BTME/ClubHouse. While the vast majority see 'health' benefits for their companies and clubs in participating in these shows, those with 'showitis' are bent on eradication as the solution to their 'complaint'. Drastic perhaps and time for a shot of reality. This would suggest that there are two main aspects to any show, the company displaying its goods and the customer in attendance to consider his purchasing options or indeed to actually place his orders. Yes there will be others present with peripheral interests but the core of any show is the company/customer relationship. We read much with regard to company costs in relation to these shows and these we know are considerable. But

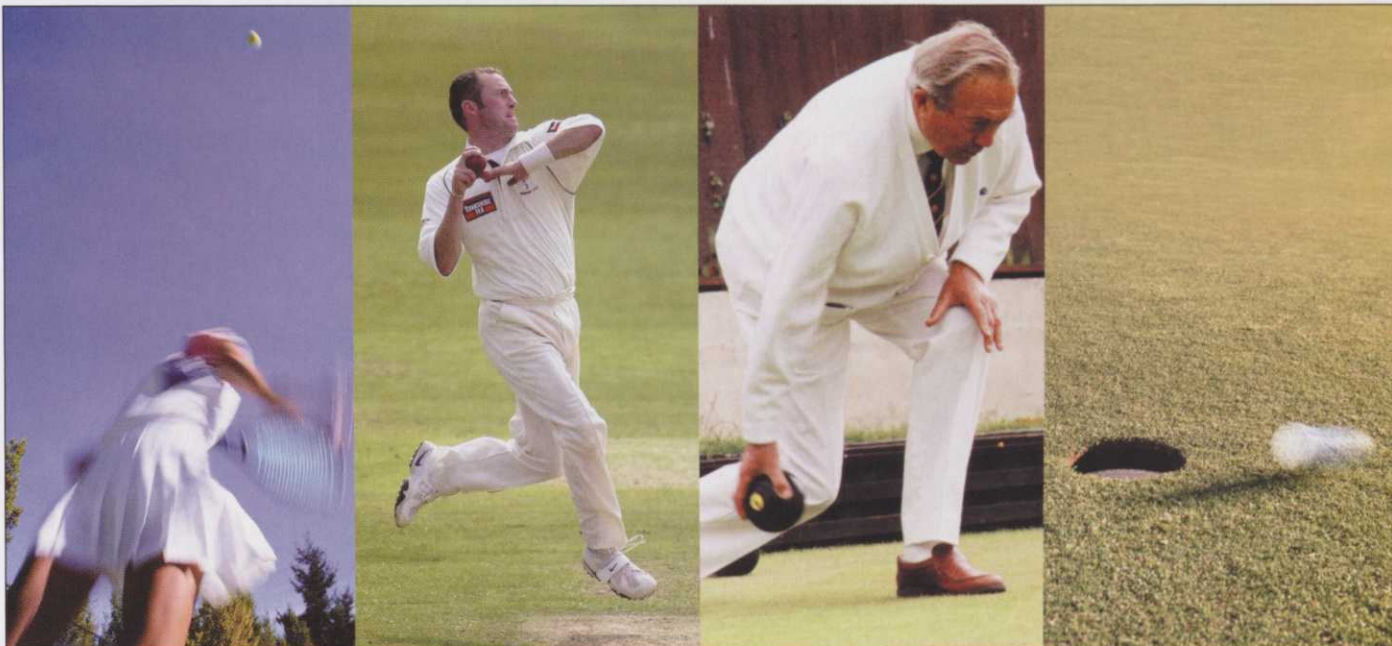
we hear little of the customer, in our case the greenkeeper. Whatever happened to 'the customer is king?'. He has decisions to make, a budget to spend and, at the end of the day, his decisions have a direct affect on the profitability of a company. Many of our members oversee large budgets for their clubs and it is in Harrogate that many of these budgets are allocated or actually spent. In essence both parties need each other and in the ability to bring them together through a vibrant and successful show lies our success.

A company may well consider it a more viable option to meet many of its customers over three days under one roof in Harrogate rather than have people on the road accomplishing this over a much longer period. That is not for BIGGA to decide. The important point is that companies exhibit at Harrogate, or at any other show, after a considered judgement that it is in their best interests. BIGGA has no inalienable right to believe that companies will continue exhibiting there year on year if that is not indeed the case. So we appreciate their custom, work through a Steering Committee and make every attempt to meet the particular needs of individual companies who are incurring substantial costs. Neither do we forget the customer in providing a show and educational programme which will make him want to return in future years. Finally we look ahead, witness the advent of the ClubHouse exhibition. We will aim for it to grow and prove a long term success. In turn this will benefit the whole event and those who partake in it, be it company or customer. BIGGA is under no illusion in that we must continue to produce each year successful exhibitions for both the companies and their customers. We stand or fall on that and if we fail BTME and ClubHouse will disappear, which in the current argument would indeed mean two less shows. 'Hallelujah' will be the reaction of a vocal minority. The evidence would suggest that this would not be in the best interests of the industry or the profession. Rest assured BIGGA has no intention of letting this happen. We have been in Harrogate since 1989 and intend for the exhibitions both to continue and grow in the future. In the great British tradition, we can assume that some will continue to try and knock us down. So be it.

The machinations of the industry press are, therefore, becoming somewhat tedious. The irony is, of course, that these same publications are beneficiaries of the BTME/ClubHouse. They are there in force, talking to their own customers, securing advertising for their publications and generally enjoying a successful week. Good for them and we are much pleased in that regard.

Jumping on bandwagons or being negative thereafter presumably makes for good copy, though one particular journal appears to have gone quite downmarket on this occasion. In an attempt to titillate its readers it shows far more interest in 'exhibitors' at an alternative venue in Harrogate as its photographs only too clearly demonstrate.

How the industry press choose to cover BTME/ClubHouse or the show scene in general is their own business but patrons of the BTME/ClubHouse will surely see such copy for what it is worth - the generation of publicity for the publications in question and with little other merit. It certainly won't distract BIGGA from staging a successful event in Harrogate next January and setting out to attract still more exhibitors and visitors. We believe that the demand for BTME/ClubHouse will continue and we will be here to meet it whilst fulfilling and hopefully exceeding expectations for both companies and their customers.



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Ken Richardson looks at methods of funding education and training courses when he writes about the BIGGA, Ransomes, Jacobsen Scholarships and Individual Learning Accounts. It is an unfortunate fact that some golf clubs refuse to train their staff and Ken shows how these clubs could be breaking Health and Safety Law

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS



A Textron Company

Thanks to continued support by Ransomes Jacobsen, we have been able to award 12 more Higher Education Scholarships to BIGGA members. They are:

NAME	COURSE	TRAINING PROVIDER
Mark Zealander	BSc Turf grass Science & Technology	Cannington College
Angus MacLeod	HNC Turf Grass Management	Pencoed College
Mark Wiltshire	HNC Turf Grass Management	Pencoed College
Peter Cross	Foundation Degree Turf Science	Myerscough College
Keith Scruton	HND Turf Science & Golf Course Man	Myerscough College
Nigel White	HNC Golf Course Management	Askham Bryan College
Judith Colley	Foundation Degree Turf Science	Myerscough College
Nic Davies	MSc Sports Surface Technology	Cranfield University
Cees Nieuwenhuizen	MSc Golf Course Architecture	Herriot Watt University
Adrian Panks	HNC Turf Grass Management	Pencoed College
Jonathan Hamlet	HNC in Golf Course Management	Elmwood College
Jeffrey Dickinson	HNC Golf Course Management	Reaseheath College

Scholarships are awarded on a first come first served basis and cover approximately half fees. And a total of more than £16500 has been awarded so far.

For your chance to be awarded a BIGGA Higher Education Scholarship, contact BIGGA House.

Health and Safety

Does your club have a greenkeeper training plan? Common Law places a duty on all employers to take necessary action to protect employees at work from harm including a requirement to ensure that those employees are competent to implement safe systems of work. Moreover, it is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure the provision of such information, instruction, training and

supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees. In this context, training is the process by which those staff are rendered competent to follow instructions.

There is no excuse, in Law, for failing to conduct appropriate training and assessment.

Funding

An excuse frequently put forward for failing to train greenkeeping staff is lack of money. However, help is available and a recent announcement from the Scottish Executive, will help clubs in Scotland. Individual Learning Accounts, axed in 2001, following allegations of fraud, are to be reintroduced over the next two years. The new scheme will differ substantially from its

predecessor and it would be geared towards basic skills. It will be monitored by the Student Awards Agency and leardirect Scotland. It will be aimed at those on low incomes.

An announcement about a replacement Individual Learning Account scheme for England is expected in June.



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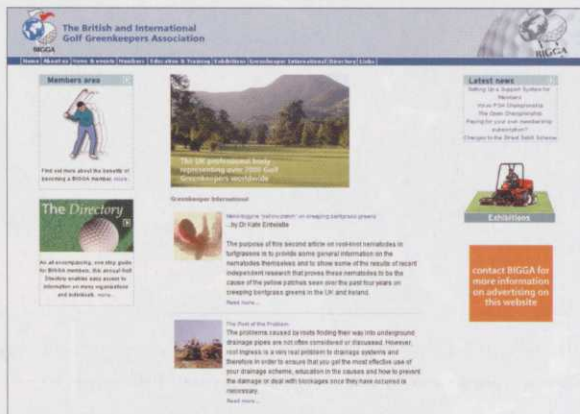
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Membership UPDATE

Rachael and Gemma from the Membership Services Department would like to welcome over 150 new members to the Association

Check out the website...

The new look BIGGA website was launched just before BTME this year and it's well worth a look. The members only area contains the bulletin board and is a great place to chat and gain advice from your fellow greenkeepers. You can also view the lending library listing on-line and request a publication. The website is updated on a regular basis to keep you up to date with all the news and events in your area, indeed there are no excuses to miss your section's events as all the details for forthcoming activities and golf days are listed. The education and training pages are comprehensive and contain details of courses in your area. It is also the page to visit if you would like further information on the environment competition and the Toro student of the year award. **The Bigga website can be found at www.bigga.org.uk**



People

How well do you know the people who work for the Association?

In this new series we give you a chance to learn a little more about a member of BIGGA's Headquarters staff



Marie Whyld

Position:
Design & Production Editor

What does your role involve?
Design and production of Greenkeeper International along with all other literature required by the Association

How long have you worked for the Association?
Nine months

Where were you born and brought up?
Born in Nottingham, brought up in Derbyshire

Where did you work before you joined BIGGA?
Pension Consultancy

What are your hobbies?
Swimming, gardening! (have to do it)

What is your favourite food?
Mexican

What is your favourite film?
Erm... not got one always fall asleep while watching them!

What was the last book you read?
Bridget Jones' Diary

Who is your all time hero?
My mum and dad

What was the best event you've ever attended?
Final day of the Ryder Cup 2002

What is your claim to fame?
(None not acceptable)
Launch of gift vouchers I designed by Frank Bruno and Patsy Palmer!

APRIL'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win a fantastic BIGGA Clock/calculator/calendar and alarm. Our congratulations go to April's winner, Stuart Boyce, of Mere Golf and Country Club.

Message of the Month Winner



Each month the person who has written the best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, which is found on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk, receives one of these FM desktop scan radios.

Our congratulations go to April's winner, Peter Wisbey from Woodhall Spa Golf Club who's message was posted on the 25th February under the 'Talking Shop' section.

BIGGA welcomes...

Scottish Region

Michael Anderson, North
Stephen Brodie, West
Robert Coutts, North
Craig Dawson, North
Christopher Elnick, North
Graeme Gordon, East
Simon Gray, East
Ross Macrae, East
Jamie Martin, East
Donald McDonald, Ayrshire
Douglas McFarlane, Central
Stewart McKenzie, North
Douglas McKinnie, Ayrshire
Gerald McMorrow, East
Steven Mullen, East
Murray Peat, North
Andrew Ross, Ayrshire

Northern Region

Philip Alvey, North West
Christopher Barker, Northern
Ryan Binns, Sheffield
Kieran Blacklock, North West
Mark Davis, Northern
Raymond Dickinson, North East
Andrew Doig, North East
Lee Farnhill, North West
Stephen Fraser, North East
Ben Hespian, Northern
Richard Jagger, Northern
Andy Kirk, Sheffield
Anthony Miller, North West
Adam Newell, Northern
Stephen Parr, Sheffield
Andrew Phillips, North West
Mark Pond, North West
Craig Sanderson, Northern
Robert Sayles, Sheffield
Richard Search, North West
Luen Smith, Sheffield
Steven Thornton, North West
Karl Walker, Northern
Michael Whitehead, Northern
Matthew Wildman, Northern
Paul Wilkinson, Sheffield

Midland Region

Peter Buckley, BB&O
Mark Cunningham, Midland
James Dawes, BB&O
James Dawes, BB&O
Shaun Dixon, BB&O
Shaun Dixon, BB&O
Robert Duff, Mid Anglia
Gary Goodchild, BB&O
Robin Graves, BB&O
Robin Graves, BB&O
Paul Heath, BB&O
David Holling, East Midland
Michael Ivory, Mid Anglia
Matthew Johnson, Mid Anglia
Stanley Lawson, BB&O
Nathaniel Smith, East of England

South East Region

Daniel Baillie, Sussex
Frank Booth, Surrey
Graham Booth, Kent
Drahm Brock, Essex
Julian Butler, Surrey
Charles Buzza, Essex
Jim Clarke, Sussex
Neil Crittenden, Kent
Robert Fenton, London
Tom Forester, London
Phillip Gibson, East Anglia
Ian Gordon, Essex
Colin Hamilton, London
Ray Hadler, London
Colin Hamilton, London
Jonathan Harris, Surrey
Peter Harsum, Surrey
David Hart, Surrey
Sharon Hewitt, London
Robin Holloway, Kent
Mark Hutchins, Surrey
Alex Lamond, Surrey
Jose Lema, Essex
Tony Lobacz, London
Terry Lord, Kent
Neil Macfarlane, Surrey
Paul Mannion, Surrey

Raymond McGlone, East Anglia
Mark Morley, London
Mark Phipps-Jones, Essex
Brian Plume, Essex
Rob Purl, Surrey
Anthony Stevens, Kent
Stephen Swanson, Surrey
Kevin Thorpe, East Anglia
David Tindale, Essex
Peter Tulk, Surrey
Benn Walker, East Anglia
David Watkins, Surrey
Edward Webster, Essex
David Welfare, Sussex
Mark Wilkinson, Surrey

South West/South Wales

Michael Bailey, South Coast
John Bailey, South Coast
Rhys Cleverly, South Wales
Sion Cocking, South Wales
Matthew Coles, South West
Roy Cooper, South Coast
Stephen Frankcom, South West
Martin Harmon, Devon & Cornwall
Effion Harries, South Wales
Robert Jones, South Wales
Wayne Leahy, South Coast
Ben McClarty, South Coast
Lloyd Overy, Devon & Cornwall
James Rees, South Wales
Gilbert Scott, South Coast
Tim Selby, South Coast
Melville Thomas, South Wales
Darren Thomas, South Wales
Chris Vivian, South Coast
Kevin Whatley, South Coast
Shaun Whittle, South Coast

International

Eoin Moroney, Norway
Tim Roethler, USA
William Warnick, France

Student Members

Alastair McLeod, West Scotland
Gary Monteitu, N Ireland

Corporate Members

Stuart Ashworth, Devon & Cornwall
Andy Cole, Midland
Carl Crome, BB&O
Jay Dobson, West Scotland
John Hood, Northern
Allan Laidler, Northern
Mark McCann, Surrey
Neil Mitchell, Central
Gary Owen, North West
Carl Pearce, Northern
Clive Stephens, Sussex
James Storey, Northern
Danny Tomkins, North West
Andrew Waitt, Surrey

Associate Members

Paul Foston, North East
Liam Galway, Northern
Kevin Green, East Midland
A Huggins, Mid Anglia
Mr Jordan, Surrey
David Lomax, North West
Ian Osborn, Surrey
Gerald Pearce, Mid Anglia
Richard Pull, Northern
James Tower, Midland
Simon Weightman, North East
Peter Whitworth, Midland

Golden Key Member

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Course Feature

A Break with Success

Scott MacCallum travelled to Robin Hood country to meet Ryun Holden, a Course Manager who has made the most of his opportunities.

If we are honest we all sometimes feel in a bit of a rut and hanker after taking the plunge and doing something completely different for a while. Thanks perhaps to the need to keep paying the mortgage most people resist the urge, soldier on and eventually work it out of their system. Others do make a life changing decision and head off in a completely new direction with varying degrees of success. Others treat it more as a sabbatical, a chance to spring clean the mind, and return to the profession they left with renewed vigour.



The current view from the 1st tee

About five years ago Ryun Holden, First Assistant at his local club near Blackburn, decided to take a break from greenkeeping and spend a year abroad. He gave up his job and spent six months in France and six months in Spain working in bars, learning to play the guitar and indulging in his love of art. He even managed to sell a few paintings.

You could say that it was a voyage of self discovery during which he discovered that he actually missed greenkeeping. So on his return he trawled the pages of Greenkeeper International for First Assistant and Deputy jobs. With his first interview he came up trumps and landed the position of Deputy Course Manager at Oakmere GC, near Nottingham, a significant set-up from the position he had left over a year before. There was more, however, as six months later the Course Manager, Andy Bowey, decided to return to his West Country roots and Ryun was promoted to Course Manager.

Since then, although it doesn't remove the possibility that without the break he may have achieved equal success, he has become a veritable walking advert for taking a year out as he has gone about his job with an energy, vigour and no little intelligence. He has designed and built three new holes; overseen the club's successful application of planning approval for the removal of around 2,000 trees; secured lottery funding for a heathland generation scheme; reduced the club's on-course disease by 100%; built a golf academy for the club's team of professionals; built or rebuilt 80 bunkers and much, much more.

Oakmere, in the Sherwood Forest area of Nottinghamshire, is an unusual club. It is owned by a lady descended from an Admiral who fought in the Battle of Waterloo. A hillside overlooking the club is bare but for groups of copses which are laid out

exactly how the battalions lined up during that famous battle. It was her husband's rank of Commander which provided the name for the 9 hole course.

Oakmere's Course Manager was lured into greenkeeping by the age old route of being a young golfer who worked on his own course Darwen GC in the summer and being bitten by the bug. He is a 10 handicap golfer.

"I supposed I may have regretted not continuing with my A Levels and going on to college or university but as it has turned out I became a Course Manager at 25 and I may not have achieved as much had I got a degree," said Ryun, whose father is a golf professional based in Switzerland.

He thoroughly enjoyed his time at his local club Darwen rising to the position of First Assistant, working under the late David Young, but had concluded that there was no real possibility at that time of promotion when the opportunity arose for him to spend the time abroad.

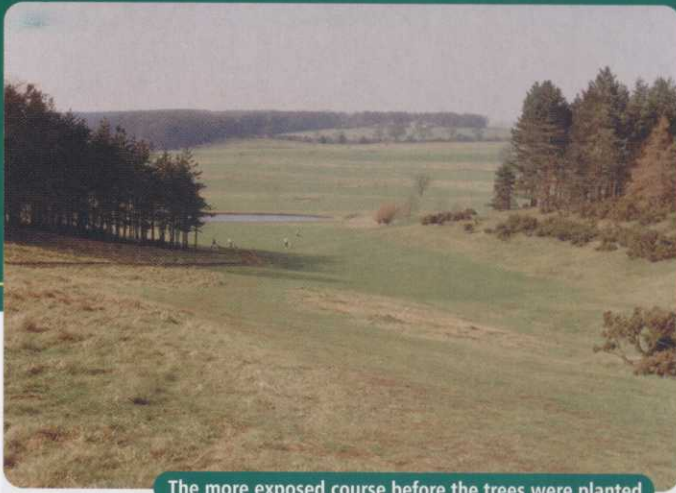
"I wasn't sure that I'd return to greenkeeping and with my love of art and golf was contemplating moving into golf course architecture and spoke with the Institute of Golf Course Architects about their diploma course."

However after a tremendously enjoyable 12 months he realised that he missed greenkeeping.

"I don't regret going for one minute and it got me out of the small town mentality I'd developed where you think you'll drop off the end of the world when you leave the outskirts of your home town."

Having secured the Deputyship at Oakmere Ryun found himself riding a very steep learning curve with Andy Bowey throwing him in at the deep end.

"Andy was a very good manager and had me involved in disciplinary matters and



The more exposed course before the trees were planted



The Oakmere Team

the budget from day one - all the business side of things which I'd never dealt with before. He got me up to speed very quickly."

Before he headed back to the West Country and a Course Manager's job in Taunton, where he would be closer to his family, Andy put Ryun forward as a potential successor and before he knew it, having been at the club for no more than six months, he was Course Manager.

Oakmere's Director of Golf, Daryl St John Jones, together with Andy, had made massive strides in improving both the course itself and the profitability of it as a business and when Ryun took over as Course Manager he had a superb platform from which to work.

"The membership has increased from around 300 to around 1000 and Andy had started an extensive tree planting programme under the guidance of Eamon Wall Associates. Over 20,000 broad leaved trees indigenous to the Sherwood Forest area have been planted and once they are established it will make for a superb treelined course," explained Ryun.

Ironically, it was that huge tree planting programme which caused a few problems for Ryun when it came to putting into practice the re-routing of the 18 hole Admiral's course.

"The course had the 9th green and 10th hole at the furthest point from the clubhouse and it was decided that the club would benefit from three loops of nine holes. That would involve rerouting the course and Daryl and I looked at the wood in the middle of the site and decided we could put three holes through the wood and achieve our aim of creating three loops of nine. By bringing mature trees into play we would also be producing an instant 'wow' factor.

Ryun applied to the Forestry Commission for a felling licence but was told that for every tree they took out they would have to replace it with another.

"I explained that we'd just planted 20,000 trees and that there was no room for any more but I was told that the replacement couldn't be retrospective and with three and a half hectares and around 2,000 trees to remove it just wasn't feasible."

Plan B involved acquiring planning permission from the Sherwood and Newark Council which would override the need for a felling licence and again Ryun was heavily involved in the planning process.

"It took a great deal of work and I was delighted to have Eamon Wall's help throughout. Meetings with the Council were held on site and Eamon's environmental surveys were instrumental in our success as we created the argument that because we would be cutting sections out of the wood to create the three holes we would

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Course Feature



The dense woodland before work began

be producing more woodland perimeter and as most wildlife lives on the woodland edge we would be increasing the amount of habitat. We were also to be thinning the woodland which would extend its life."

Approval was duly granted and Ryun produced another master stroke by making the extensive project self financing.

"I negotiated with the company who did the removal that they could sell the timber," said Ryun, who also acted as the Project Foreman.

For a man whose wish had been to become a golf course architect the opportunity to design three new holes for the course was a dream come true.

"It wasn't easy as, although we could look at the forest and agree what the best route for a hole was it wasn't until we got right in among it that we could actually appreciate the nature of the land."

However Ryun produced a beautifully drawn plan which is still on display in the clubhouse for the two new par-4s and one par-3 which as well as giving the "wow" factor achieve the aim of producing the three loops of nine which would be so useful to the club.

The arduous task of tree and stump removal began in September '01 and the holes are due to be opened officially on May 26.

The layout will therefore be the first six holes remaining the same, the 10th will become the 7th, the 11th will be the new 8th, the 9th is one of the new holes as is the 10th while existing holes take you to the 16th which is Ryun's new par-3 which he hopes will become the club's new signature hole with the existing 17th and 18th bringing the course home.

You can tell just by chatting to Ryun how delighted he is to have been given the chance to combine his golfing, artistic and greenkeeping skills to such good effect.

However it was his, previously underutilised administrative skills which were again put to good use when he won lottery funding for the club's heathland creation scheme.



The tree clearance provided some outstanding potential

"We previously had grant aid from DEFRA for a heathland stewardship scheme but this was subsequently withdrawn and, as I was keen to continue the work we had started in creating heathland, I approached the Sherwood Forest Trust, a wonderful body who run the Sherwood Initiative, which had secured lottery funding covering the whole Sherwood Forest area.

"As there is now only 10% of the heathland in Nottinghamshire as there was 100 years ago the funding was available for regeneration and as golf courses are a prime target as areas where heathland can be created."

There was a great deal of paperwork to produce in support of the club's bid for funding and Ryun spend a great deal of time reading up on the matter to make his case as strong as possible but he was rewarded with £70,000 over five years.

"There was more paper work involved than with the Stewardship scheme but with the Sherwood Forest Initiative lottery grant they were not looking for instant results."

The project which is on the 9 hole Commander Course involves the introduction of acid grasses - wavy hair grasses and fescues - while they are also scraping off top soil and putting down heather seed and brash.

"We are getting good results and a lot of germination which augers well for the project. It's hard work but we are getting there."

The team, there are six and a half staff members for the 27 holes on a huge site has also built around 30 new bunkers and renovated the remainder on the course as well as been involved in a drastic change to the day to day management programme of the course. In addition they have produced over a kilometer of buggy paths and some unobtrusive greenkeeper paths.

Despite all the design and building work carried out at the club Ryun still feels most proud of his course management success.

"I would say that the greatest achievement since I've been Course Manager has been to reduce disease by 100%. When I took over we were spraying fungicide once a month for Fusarium and Red Thread but after the first seven months we have only



Bunker before the improvements



Bunker after the improvements



Ryun stands on the tee of the par 3 he designed

sprayed once more.

"I changed the fertiliser programme from once in spring and again at the back end of the year to putting on a 13-0-46 mix once every five weeks, but at a very low rate - only about five bags for the 27 greens and putting green etc.

"I'm very much aware of the use of water and I've read a lot of Jim Arthur and agree with his thinking. We purchased a hollow corer and have increased the amount of aeration we do significantly. We hollow core twice a year, vertidrain once and needle tine through the summer and we've now got the greens in a healthy state."

The club has a refreshingly positive way of looking at the game and thanks to Daryl is attempting to secure the membership of the future.

"We built an Academy for the professional staff complete with a long bunker which can take up to 10 at any one time for group lessons; a small chipping green; a deep and a shallow bunker and, of course, the floodlit driving range but we have also built a Tri Golf course for the under 5s.

"They use plastic clubs and big holes and the pros teach them rules and etiquette. We painted blue areas for water and brown for bunkers so that they can learn the rule for whatever situation they are in - two club lengths, dropping a ball etc. They are the members of tomorrow."

The feeling at Oakmere is of a club on the move - there are tentative plans for another nine holes upon which Ryun hopes to extend his design portfolio further - and while it will take time for many of the trees to establish themselves members and visitors can expect to see continuous on-going development and improvement.

Ryun's artistic ability was put to good use



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SPRAYERS AND SPRAYING

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Continue to learn

Bill Taylor, Application Technology specialist for Hardi Limited provides some pointers on keeping up to date with spraying regulations

Do the following terms mean anything to you: LERAP; Groundwater Directive; or Voluntary Initiative? They should. Because they are just some of a whole raft of new regulations that have come into force in recent years governing sprayers and spraying. Mainly they have been driven by the need to reduce water contamination.



All sprayer operators are required to wear protective clothing, including lightweight overalls, rubber or Nitrile gloves.

Most sprayer operators are required to hold Certificates of Competence.

The bulk of these regulations have been drawn-up and targeted at agriculture. They do however cover spraying in general, so in most cases amenity sprayers are not exempt and the rules need to be adhered to if course managers and greenkeepers are to avoid falling foul of the law.

Amenity spraying differs considerably from agricultural spraying and latest figures for 2000 show that the industry spends around £13 million on pesticides, which is a mere four per cent of that used on arable land. However, amenity spraying is still subject to the same scrutiny, if not more so in view of the fact that the bulk of spraying work is conducted in the public eye, and is potentially more risky to subsequent drinking water quality than where applied to agricultural land.

For example, until a few years ago atrazine and simazine were extensively used because of their long-term effectiveness as weedkillers. However it was found that when used on hard surfaces such as pavements, or on materials such as railway ballast, they would move through drains or the soil into watercourses. Water authorities would then have to remove the chemicals before the water could be used for public consumption.

VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE

One of the latest and most important schemes to come into force is the Voluntary Initiative, and it is something that all managers need to be aware of.

In recent years, environmental and political groups have pushed for a considerable reduction in pesticide usage, achieved by the implementation of a pesticide tax, which would cost the amenity sector dear. The Voluntary Initiative is a half-way house agreed with the Government which provides all those involved in spraying the opportunity to put their own house in order and minimise the environmental impact of pesticides.

Introduced initially for a five-year period, the scheme as its name suggests is entirely voluntary and consists of seven key areas covering:

- The maintenance, checking and testing of sprayers
 - The review of handling and filling sites, and practices when filling
 - The training and continuing professional development of operators
 - That essential best practice is followed
 - That there is full compliance with LERAPS
 - That conservation areas are identified, protected and enhanced
 - That there is a complete pesticide management plan
- Information sheets on over 1000 products will be created by April 2006 as part of this.

SPRAYER TESTING

One of the main elements in helping show that pesticides are being applied correctly is being able to show that sprayers are accurate, safe and maintained correctly. Which obviously has management benefits as well.

The Sprayer Test introduced by the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) is again voluntary, but in the three years it has been operational has shown just how many badly-maintained sprayers there are and how much money is wasted as a result. The test covers all sprayer aspects – checking for worn or leaking hoses through to inaccurate pressure gauges and worn jets, which alone account for 36 per cent of failures and typically lead to over-application.

OPERATOR SAFETY AND TRAINING

Under the Control of Pesticides Regulations, 1997, Schedule 3, there is a requirement that anybody born after 31 December 1964 who uses pesticides should possess the appropriate Certificates of Competence issued by the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC). In addition, anybody applying pesticides on land that is not their own or that they occupy, or their employer's, such as a contractor, should also have a Certificate.

In the first instance, all those who are eligible require a PA1 certificate, which covers aspects such as safe handling of chemicals, safe storage, appropriate clothing and legislation, etc.

Having gained this, a second certificate dependent upon the type of sprayer being used is then required, which covers calibration and safe use of the sprayer. For greenkeepers this will either be a PA2, which covers tractor-mounted and pedestrian sprayers, or a PA6 for those using hand-held applicators, including knapsacks, compression sprayers and granular applicators.

Any sprayer operator is also required to wear appropriate safety clothing. This should include lightweight Tyvek disposable overalls, a face shield or goggles and ideally rubber footwear. In addition an operator should also use an apron when mixing chemical, because if any is spilled on the apron it can be quickly washed off, whereas if chemical is spilled on overalls they will have to be disposed of immediately. In addition rubber or Nitrile gloves must also be worn, not rigger-type gloves which are sometimes sold for chemical handling, as these contain absorbent cloth.

THE GREEN CODE AND LERAP

To protect aquatic life from pesticide contamination by keeping harmful pesticide sprays out of watercourses, under the Green Code certain pesticides can only be used near watercourses if a Buffer Zone of generally five metres is left unsprayed. This information, clearly marked on the product label, applies to both tractor and hand-held sprayers.

LERAPS or, to give it its proper name, Local Environmental Risk Assessment for Pesticides Scheme, came into effect in 1999 as a supplement to the Green Code.

For certain pesticides, this allows for the statutory Buffer Zone to be reduced so long as the spraying equipment used has been proven to reduce spray drift and given a 1, 2 or 3 Star rating.

This determines by how much the Buffer Zone can be reduced, with 3 Star being the highest which allows the Buffer Zone to be reduced to one metre.

Generally this applies to specific nozzles. The exception is the Hardi Defender shrouded boom, the only spray boom to have a 3 Star rating.

Under LERAP, any pesticide requiring a Buffer Zone will be divided into one of two categories that are clearly stated on the product label. Category A pesticides are those that contain organophosphates or synthetic pyrethroid insecticides for which no reduction is allowed. Category B are those that don't. Therefore they can be applied closer to watercourses so long as a LERAP is conducted.

It must be noted that, where a product carrying a Buffer Zone is used near a watercourse, it is a legal obligation to conduct a LERAP, even if it is a Category A product and no reduction is allowed. The LERAP has to be done before the area is sprayed and follows a set procedure taking into account information such as the site, flora and reason for treatment, plus the product used, sprayer, weather conditions and time of application. From this the Buffer Zone can be calculated.

SHROUDED BOOMS

The introduction of shrouded booms for amenity sprayers, such as the Hardi Defender, have LERAP benefits and provide numerous other management advantages too.

One of the biggest benefits for users from totally enclosing the spray boom in a protective shroud is the ability to spray in conditions that normally would not allow the use of an open boom. The ability to better plan spraying operations for first thing in the morning without being dependent upon still conditions ensures improved timeliness.

Also, because spray drift is virtually eliminated, spray rates can be reduced. In addition, containing spray in a protective shroud gives considerable Health and Safety benefits to the operator and also any bystanders or neighbouring properties.

GROUNDWATER REGULATIONS

Enforced by the Environment Agency, the Groundwater Regulations are designed to provide enhanced protection for groundwater. Basically they make it an offence to dispose of certain substances, including sprayer washings, in a way that may result in groundwater pollution, or to knowingly permit this to happen.

This means essentially that no longer can spray operators just flush spray washings down the drain or onto waste ground.

Under these regulations, unless a specific wash system is fitted to the sprayer, when rinsing out the sprayer the operator must fully-fill the tank with water and then dispose of these washings in a responsible manner – either into purpose-

All new sprayers are required to have a chemical induction hopper. Sprayers above 15-litres capacity must also have a clean water tank.



Shrouded boom sprayers allow spraying to be carried out in a controlled manner.

built holding tanks or sprayed back out over the area already sprayed.

To fully-fill the tank and respray an area such as a fairway is obviously time-consuming and inconvenient. However, using a purpose-built washing system, such as the tank flushing nozzle that Hardi fits to larger amenity sprayers, it is possible to use only 10 per cent of the tank capacity for flushing, so saving time, water and need of an area for spraying-out.

SPRAYER SAFETY

In addition to the introduction of environmental and operator safety regulations, tighter rules have also come into operation covering sprayers themselves.

Purchasers should be aware that any new sprayer sold in the UK now has to meet the requirements of BS EN907, which lays down what safety features should be fitted to new sprayers as standard and not as optional extras.

Among these is a requirement that all new sprayers must be fitted with a chemical induction hopper that avoids the need for the operator to have to stretch over the sprayer tank to pour chemical into the filling hole. Where this is not possible, for instance on smaller sprayers, the height from ground to filling hole should be no more than 150cm and horizontal reach no more than 30cm.

The standard also requires that any sprayer with a tank capacity of more than 15 litres must also be fitted with a clean water tank of at least 15 litres capacity.

Additionally, tests are currently being conducted with a view to introducing an international standard to improve knapsack-sprayer safety. This standard will cover aspects such as sprayer stability when filling; leakage both when upright or when the sprayer is on its side; avoiding spillage when filling; and reduction of internal residues and external surface deposits.

Clearly an article like this can only cover the various regulations in broad-brush terms. Course managers and greenkeepers wanting more details can contact the following organisations:

The Voluntary Initiative: www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk

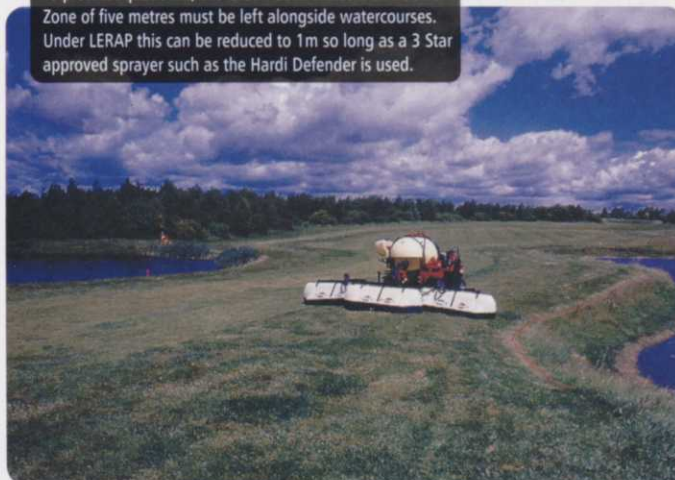
Sprayer Testing: www.aea.uk.com

National Proficiency Tests Council: www.nptc.org.uk

LERAP: www.defra.gov.uk

Groundwater Regulations: www.defra.gov.uk

To protect aquatic life, the Green Code states that a Buffer Zone of five metres must be left alongside watercourses. Under LERAP this can be reduced to 1m so long as a 3 Star approved sprayer such as the Hardi Defender is used.



Safe as Houses

Every year the theft of equipment costs hundreds of millions of pounds and there is no sign of these figures declining even with all the modern security technology that is now available. As a result insurance companies are now stipulating that owners take stringent measures to protect their machinery from being stolen. The most sophisticated security systems can be in place but if someone fails to set it correctly or to switch it on, it is useless. In addition, to having systems to protect against theft every member of staff needs to be made aware of the importance of security and being vigilant.



Seek professional advice
CCTV cameras are a deterrent

As far as golf courses are concerned, there are generally three types of crime committed involving machinery.

1. Stealing thousands of pounds worth of grass cutting equipment is very likely to be done by professional thieves and requires a number of individuals and some very careful planning. There is also the problem of disposing of their ill-gotten gains so in most cases the large thefts will be done to order.
2. Then there are the opportunists thieves. They see a chance and grab what is available. Smaller pieces of machinery tools and easily transported items are their targets. These can be disposed of easily through outlets like car boot sales.
3. Finally there is vandalism. Persons break into a building, especially if it is isolated, and destroy machines and other items just for the fun of it.

On top of losing valuable equipment there is the trauma of having been broken into and all the other inconveniences that go with the aftermath of a burglary.

Consider the following scenario. Imagine a local golf course is staging a major competition and during the week preceding this event a gang of thieves break into the main machinery store. The problems this nightmare would throw up can be devastating for all involved. First to go will be staff moral as they struggle to find equipment to maintain the high standards the players have come to expect. The insurance company, in most cases will cover the cost of new equipment but there still may be a shortfall in cash. The period taken to settle a claim could take weeks rather than days. Considerable time is taken up dealing with the necessary paperwork and helping the police. The repercussions are likely to continue for a long time. When the insurance premium next comes up for renewal the fact a robbery has taken place will reflect in the new figures.

While there is not the remotest possibility that any premises can be made a 100% secure or that someone will not take an opportunity to steal equipment, a great deal can be done to prevent and reduce the possibilities of a crime. To achieve this means working closely with the local police.

I recently put this into practise by visiting a golf course with a Crime Reduction Officer.

The officer started by saying that any crime prevention methods he made must be appropriate, realistic and most importantly cost effective. Prior to giving any advice he warns that a club may be under legal restrictions such as Building and/or Planning Regulations, Health & Safety and the Occupiers Liability Act 1984. This last act covers owners responsibilities, to any visitor to the property (including burglars) to ensure their safety.

Crime Reduction Officers use the 'Onion Peeling Principal' when conducting a security survey; they start at the outside and work in to the risk target.

BOUNDARIES

These will be extensive on most courses and are generally made up of a variety of barriers in the form of fences and hedges, which need to be maintained in good repair. Where applicable "Private Property" and "No Trespassing" signs should be erected. The positioning of these clearly informs the public where they cannot go and assist staff if there is a need to challenge a member of the public. Strangers loitering about could be harmless; on the other hand they may be up to no good. On courses where there are public rights of way, such as footpaths or bridle ways, these need to be clearly marked

Everyone should keep on the look out for any vehicle parked up in isolated areas. It might just be an amorous courting couple or a thief checking out the lie of the land and watching your working practices to determine when is the best time to strike. Even if this situation is not related to the course, by making a note of the vehicle's registration number might turn out to be valuable if a nearby house being broken into or a far worse crime is committed.

Roland Taylor gives some invaluable advice on making your maintenance facility as secure as possible

GATES AND ENTRANCES

Gates need to be locked, especially at night. Check the hinges. These should be capped to prevent the gate being lifted off using a car jack. For open entrances and driveways raised locking posts are the answer. Alarms and lighting are other deterrents (these are dealt with later).

OUTDOOR PARKING AREAS

It is best to keep as little as possible equipment in these areas, especially vehicles, ATVs, tractors and trailers. If this is not possible any machinery left on these sites needs securing using lock downs, ground anchors, wheel clamps or steering locks. Always remember to remove all keys and on some units it could be worth fitting immobilisers, alarms and trackers. Always use top quality chains and padlocks.

IDENTIFYING YOUR PROPERTY

It is good housekeeping to keep records, each piece of equipment should have a record card that includes a photograph together with details of when purchased, model, engine and machine serial numbers plus any chassis numbers.

There are now plenty of sophisticated systems, for identifying machinery and their components, now on the market. It is worth doing some research and chose a reputable security company to assist you.

Some new systems use designated numbers, which are placed, in recorded locations throughout the machine. Small quantities of warning stickers are displayed adjacent to various visible, designated number sites. This is designed to alert prospective thieves to the fact that the machine is marked and any attempt to eliminate the numbers is pointless, as finding all the locations is impossible. Electronic tagging and micro dots are also both placed on the machine and their locations are recorded. These require specialist equipment to read them so they act as an identification back up. Photographs are taken of the equipment and the owner receives a registration document that shows a small percentage of the sites where the numbers are placed. The remainder are kept on the systems supplier's secure database and qualifying parties and the police can receive full details any time it becomes necessary.

BUILDINGS

All buildings housing equipment need to be kept in good repair, especially the windows and doors. It is advisable that the windows are fitted with either bars or mesh on the inside and any that are not in use are boarded up. Secure doors with at least two shackled padlocks and use threaded coach bolts for the hinges. A lockable steel cage inside the building is ideal for storing small pieces of machinery, tools and chemicals. Spades make ideal crowbars. All workshop equipment and tools should be locked away in steel cabinets. It is important to mark all these items for identification with the local postcode. If they are stolen and turn up in another part of the country at least the police there will know the area they have come from and where to start looking for the owners.

During the day it is very easy to leave buildings open or unlocked while staff are working out on the course. An opportunist thief loves this as he can be in and out before anyone notices. Ensure that all buildings and compounds are locked even when empty and that the keys are removed.

OUTSIDE MAIN BUILDINGS

Wherever possibly all out building should be located as near as possible to the main complex. Because these are often not very attractive there is a tendency to screen them off. It is best if there is a clear line of sight from the complex to any outbuildings. High wire fencing or dense thorn hedging will restrict access but beware of the Occupiers Liability Act. If glass, barbed or razor wire has been installed and an intruder is injured they can sue for damages. There needs to be plenty of 'Private Property Keep Out' warning signs about.

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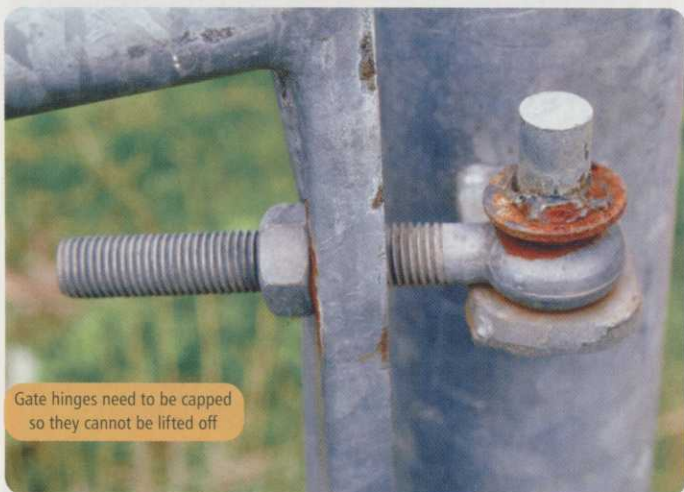
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Safe as Houses



Gate hinges need to be capped so they cannot be lifted off



Place small equipment and tools in padlocked, steel storage container

ALARMS

These are part of all security packages. Professionally installed systems should conform to BS44737/EN50131 and DIY ones to BS60707. If a building is located in an isolated spot a Police Call Alarm System which is monitored is the answer if possible. There are plenty of remote alarm systems now available that will transmit over a mile and these are ideal for buildings away from the main complex.

Depending on the type of alarm it is activated by either movement, pressure, line interruption or personnel attack. Some DIY models are connected to a telephone line and will ring a home telephone or mobile, if activated.

At this stage it should be pointed out that Non Police Call (Unmonitored) systems would not normally get a police response unless additional information is supplied.

A Police Response Alarm must have NACOSS/SSIAB approval and be able to send confirmed activation by visual, audio or sequential confirmation. In addition, two key holders who can arrive on site within 20 minutes are also required.

LIGHTS

This is one of the biggest deterrents it is therefore an important consideration especially around gates and buildings in general. Avoid using very bright lights, as they tend to throw deep shadows in areas they do not cover. The type that are timed or activated by dusk and sensors are a better choice. They need to be backed up by movement activated (PIR) lighting.

CLOSE CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV)

Professional advice should be sought before embarking down this route, as it can be a very expensive exercise. A major contributor to their success is quality of available light. The images recorded must be sharp if they are used for identification in court. Recording tapes deteriorate each time they are overwritten so it is important to ensure new tapes are installed regularly.

Cameras tend to act more as a deterrent. Professionals will wear some form of face mask and cover up or fit false number plates to their vehicles. The chances are that all you will be left with is a video showing unidentifiable figures moving round a vehicle at a certain time during the night. Again, it is important to display signs around the site warning of the public that CCTV is operating in the area. It is very likely you will also have to have Data Protection Registration and fulfil the requirements of the Data Protection Act regarding CCTV.

BEING AWARE

It cannot be said too often that vigilance by staff is important and they should be encouraged to report anything suspicious such as tampered locks or strangers hanging around the course and buildings. They also need to be constantly made aware of the dangers of leaving any equipment and their personnel belongings unsecured or unattended.

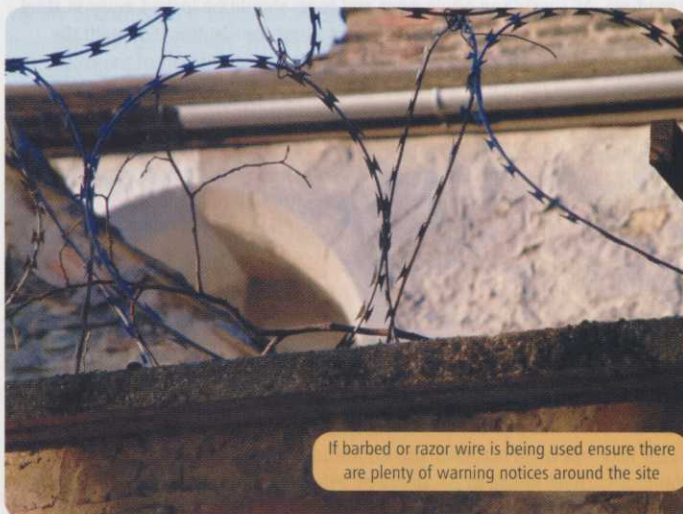
Immediately, inform your local police forces of any incidents. They really do want to catch those members of society who create mayhem and make lives a misery by stealing. To achieve this, the police need your help and evidence if they are to successfully prosecute these offenders. Prevention is far better than wasting considerable time and resources detecting a crime.

Readers who require further advice on security, or wish to arrange for Crime Reduction Officer to visit their course should contact their local Police Headquarters.

Finally, if someone sidles up to you in a pub or contacts you offering any equipment tell the police or ring CRIMESTOPPERS on 080055511. You could be doing one of your colleagues in the industry a tremendous favour.

The watchwords are "Be Vigilant".

My sincere thanks to John Middlemass, Crime Reduction Officer for Cambridgeshire Constabulary and a golf course that shall remain anonymous.



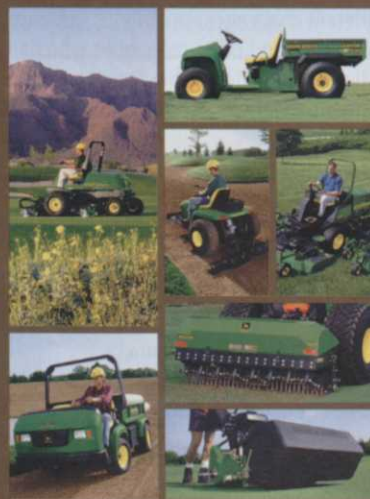
If barbed or razor wire is being used ensure there are plenty of warning notices around the site



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An American Internship

Wendy O'Brien worked at Augusta National during the Masters last year as part of her American Internship and she has been invited back to work again this year. She describes last year's experiences.



Wendy poses by a familiar Augusta scene

After working for three years on the Nicklaus Course at Carden Park, Chester, and completing my NVQ Level 2, I decided I wanted a change of pace and different challenges, so with the support from Course Manager Andy Campbell MG and other colleagues who had worked in America I contacted Michael O'Keeffe at Ohio State University and applied to take part in the international internship program which finds placements for experienced greenkeepers, in the USA.

In April 2001 I flew out, first to Columbus, Ohio, to the University for an orientation providing valuable information about what to expect eg tax returns, health insurance, driving issues etc. I was also able to go on a tour around the huge University Campus, which even has its own power station! I met others from around the world, which were travelling onto other parts of the country and going to a variety of agricultural internships from a stud farm to a winery.

After three days I flew onto my first placement in Virginia. Placed on the James River, an hour outside Richmond and three hours from Washington D.C. Kingsmill Resort, has three 18 hole courses and a par 3 links course, it also hosts the PGA Tour Michelob Championship every October. I worked on all the courses for six weeks at a time taking part in the renovations of tees and bunkers as well as the day-to-day set up, I experienced three different management styles with the different Superintendents. It was a nice place to start my internship in the USA. I was given the impression that they relied heavily on having interns to stay late and cover different projects.

In September I went back to work on the River Course for the Michelob Championship, in the mornings I would cut the collars and the greens clean-up lap, then help on the Woods Course which stayed open during the competition, in the afternoon following play I would cut the approaches.

After the tournament it was time for overseeding with the resort on the border for transitional courses with Bermuda grass during the summer and over seeding tees, fairway and rough with rye grass for the winter.

While there along with three American interns and the other two internationals one an Australian and the other a New Zealander we had couple turf talks and a opportunity to meet and discuss golf course management with members of the USGA agronomists.

Shortly before leaving a major experiment took place on the Par 3 Bray Links Course where the split green on the 3rd and 4th, was divided into two parts then edged around the collar with the turf being removed. Plastic pipes were laid metre lengths apart across the greens, then covered with plastic sheeting and sealed with the lifted turf and sand, the licensed contractors pumped Methyl Bromide gas into the pipes killing all the grass and sterilising the ground, the covers were left on for 72 hours to ensure all the gas had dissipated, a test area between the grass was left untouched. The greens were then scarified and aerified to remove as much organic matter as possible, the greens were heavily top-dressed to re-define the surfaces ready for seeding, divided into two halves one half was seeded with L93 and the other half with A4 creeping bent grass. After recently talking to members of the staff at Kingsmill the course has now cancelled the annual Michelob tournament after 25 years and is now going to be hosting a LPGA event, after this event is hosted for the first time this month the River Course is going to be closed for a complete redevelopment including the greens using this same sterilisation method.

In late October 2001 I attended a three day short course conference in Florida organised by Ohio State for golf course interns to attend, I met a lot of other greenkeepers from all over the world. On the first day we attended a tour of the TPC Sawgrass facility and the Stadium Course with the Course Manager, Fred Klauk, and the Superintendent, we also visited a course still under various stages of construction with the Superintendent, Site Manager and head of MacCurrach construction, both visits were extremely informative. The following day we had lectures from Joe DiPaolo from Syngenta, Dr Karl Danneberger from Ohio State University and Brad Kocher Vice President of Golf Course Maintenance at Pinehurst, finishing the day with a tour of a local course.

The last day was an excellent talk from Tommy Witt who was at the time President of GCSAA and Course Manager at Kiawah Island, South Carolina, advising us on utilising the internet, networking with others and keeping contacts open in the future, but most importantly advising us not to let our careers to rule our lives.

During my six months at Kingsmill I attended an interview at Augusta National Golf Club, with hope of continuing my internship at the course. The major renovations and construction work was well under way at the time I was able to see first hand the new tees and 18 green etc.

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One of Augusta's immaculate bunkers

When I returned to the course to begin my internship in November 2001, the course was once again open to members and looked in true Augusta fashion. Amazing! The main staff for the golf course was made up of a Course Manager, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and three Assistants In Training (A.I.T's), with supporting front office staff. My initial concerns about the course were the staff, I was a little apprehensive that there maybe an egotistical attitude in relation to the National. I am delighted to say that all my concerns were immediately found to be misguided, from the first time I walked in the door everyone was unbelievably friendly and throughout my first few days everyone made a point of introducing themselves to both myself and Sara, the Australian girl I was interning with through Ohio State. Everyone was really open wanting to talk about me and find out as much as possible from where I had come from in England and what I had done, this worked both ways, with my questions being answered when asked about the course, the tournament and the working practices, everyone there was very approachable and helpful. With around 40 to 50 staff on the golf course alone and around 20 people on the nursery crew looking after the landscape gardens, trees and shrubs including the famous Azaleas. The crew varies from interns both Americans and international, retired business men, ex-military, college graduates to people who had lived in Augusta all there lives, there was also an afternoon crew of eight, mainly made up of high school and college students.

The wide variety of ages and backgrounds was something I had not expected but really made the crew great, there were always different debates and conversations going on, different ideas and opinions on the jobs and projects it really made for a good workplace with a mind for practical jokes but always a professional thinking attitude. Most people had worked at least a couple of tournaments so I was well prepared knowing what to expect, whenever I thought of a question there was always someone close by with an answer. With such a large crew it may appear that the work must have been really easy going however, this was not the case, the majorities of tasks are able to be completed more quickly but they must also be carried out much more extensive with a huge amount of attention to detail.

From the start at Augusta I went through everything. Everyone was fully trained on all tasks with specific sheets provided, from flymoing pond banks to driving the skid loaders, this was to ensure that everyone knew what was expected and the jobs were carried out in the same methods for all the staff. The whole aim is to get everyone trained up on as many things as quickly as possible to enable the assistants more

flexibility on job assignments- the more people trained for a task the more choice you have.

Jobs were posted on a chalk board in the break room so you always knew where you were meant to be and what you were meant to be doing, sometimes it would be noted to check with someone but mostly you never had to waste time looking for someone to find out what to do next, and with a lot of staff having 'walkie-talkies' it was easy to contact someone. Everyone is assigned they're own cart which was great. There is a misconception that there is an unlimited budget but as with any golf course all expenses must be fully justified including staff numbers, tools and machinery.

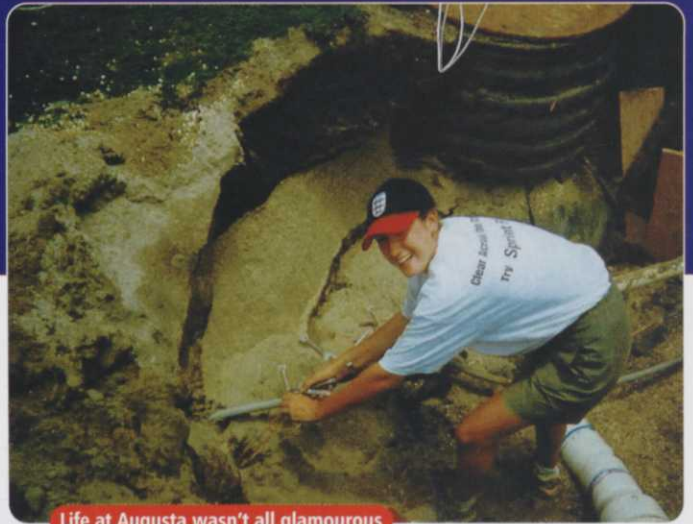
I was encouraged to jump into anything that was going on and to make the supervisors aware of my interest, ie irrigation projects, so that way when scheduling job tasks it was made so you could experience as much as possible by showing a willingness to learn, this happened a lot, anytime I went over to look at something chances are I was working on it the next day. I was started on a greens care run within two weeks, I had greens 2 and 7 which are close together, greens care responsibilities are to mow the green, repair ball marks, rake the greenside bunkers weeding when necessary, other jobs would also include edging sprinkler heads and looking for signs of pests or diseases.

Within a month I was also fully trained on tissue testing, using grass clippings taken from greens that morning, I had to wash the samples, dry them out in a microwave, grind them into a fine dust and prepare them in a sample dish. Then using a special light box and computer programme to analyse the samples showing amounts of nitrogen, potassium, etc. It was my sole responsibility during my time at Augusta, once every few weeks then every week for two months prior the tournament, I ended up training new people on the process before leaving. Another interesting tool used frequently was the GPS system to mark everything including fairway outlines (to ensure they are kept and do not slowly get wider or narrower), also new irrigation, drainage and Sub Air lines so the map of the course is constantly updated.

By Masters 2002 I felt truly at home at the course, with around 100 plus golf course staff that week there was plenty of new faces. Through pre-planned files provided for each volunteer and staff member everyone knew exactly what they're responsibilities were for the week. I cut my greens 2 and 7 first thing in the morning, the 'stimp' team would come after I had completed my specified number of cuts that day and tell me if they wanted it cut again. After we had finished all the green mowers would meet on the course, then leave it together when given the all



Preparation work goes on



Life at Augusta wasn't all glamorous

clear, then after a break I would go to the 2nd green on back pack duty, which meant clearing the green of debris, ie sand from bunker shots, pine cones, with either a switch or a blower which the officials would let you know. With the bad weather during this tournament contingency plans came into full force, I was part of the emergency 'squeegee' team, situated where needed, on greens or fairways to provide a sufficient drop zone if necessary and when directed by officials. After play had gone through I would return to the maintenance building and start mowing greens behind play. Response vehicles placed at different locations holding everything from eyewash to dog collars were a great idea, everything possible had been thought of for those 'just in-case moments'.

In late May the course closes to the members for the summer one week is reserved for sponsors and staff to play, my parents came over on holiday and my mum played that day it was great, but I won't talk about what I shot!

Once the course is closed the mood relaxes slightly. I went onto a shift rota, working on average 10 days for 10 hours with four days off, many of those days I volunteered to go in, so much was happening I didn't really want to miss any of it.

For seven of the ten days I would be on bent check which meant having allocated greens, the amount depending on how many were on bent check, they had to be carefully monitored throughout the day the main priorities were watching for signs of heat stress and wilt, however,



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it was also necessary to keep check for tell-tale signs of pests and diseases with a climate and environmental conditions ideal for Pythium. Fans and huge mesh tents are erected on a number of greens providing valuable shade and lowering the temperature by 10 degrees on most greens. Syringe fans, first thought of by the assistant superintendent are used on a couple of greens, which is a regular jet fan with rings of small jets around the edge of the fan when connected to a hose, it creates a fine mist above the green which briefly breaks the humidity.

All the bunkers are covered with plastic sheeting to protect them from the elements during the summer months, with an amount left to make improvements to the edges. Last year also saw renovations take place on some holes, which were very interesting to be involved in, including the opportunity to sod new greens with turf arriving in refrigerated trucks and laid within hours, suddenly a new green appears, with amazing bent grass sod of a great quality. Any work carried out must always be carefully and professionally finished taking into consideration the impact of scars and uneven surfaces.

I spent the majority of the summer working on the Sub Air systems, used for the circulation of air through the sub system of the greens, it may also be used to 'pull' water through the profile of the green. Renovating and extending the exhaust pipe work, also the moving and installation of a new Sub Air capsule. I also became involved in a vast amount of irrigation repairs and maintenance from repairing damaged heads to putting in new lines and rewiring cables.

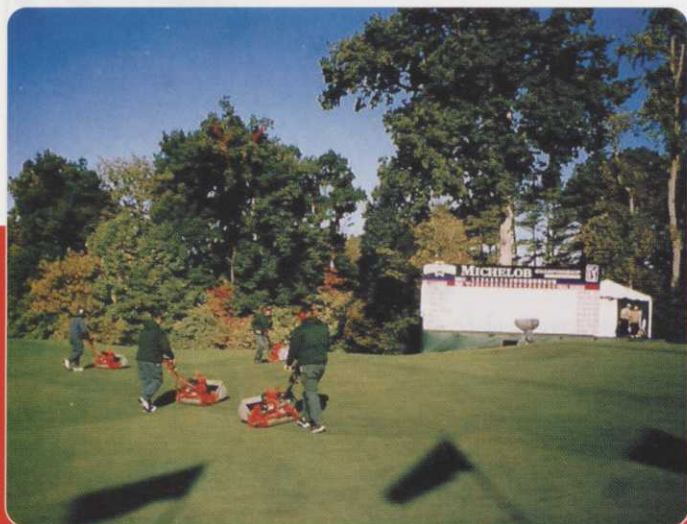
Education and self development was always encouraged with regular training sessions and turf talks, including measuring the square footage of greens which was very interesting and a new experiment where



shrubs and trees are recorded from a centre point on a green then plotted using a computer program to predict shade patterns, so before any pruning or removal occurs the impact to the green and surrounding scenery can be full anticipated. In September overseeding begins, just like any other the Bermuda grass is scalped down and collected before any seed is dropped, using tractor drop spreaders on fairways, walk drop spreaders and rotary spreaders on tees, around bunkers, pond banks and green surrounds. If we had any rainfall during overseeding, a team with hand rakes went to rake out any seed ripples to prevent the Rye grass from growing in unsightly clumps and lines.

I really enjoyed my time at Augusta, I was constantly challenged and always encouraged to share my ideas, opinions and views on ways of working, trust to carry out new jobs and to take on responsibilities was great. The general opinion was to think for yourself and not have to be hand-held and have someone constantly looking over your shoulder, they knew I was capable of the job and they let me do it, knowing if I needed help or advice I would ask for it. By the time I left in October the course was once again open to the members and looked great again. I have only been able to scratched the surface of my experiences in America and have lots of great memories, I am planning to return and visit next year.

Since returning to the UK in late October last year, I have returned to work at De Vere Carden Park. While in the States I was able to continue my NVQ Level 3 course work over the internet with Myerscough College, sending regular updates and background knowledge tests using email, I am now in the process of adapting my work diary, any certificates and a detailed photo album that I kept, which can all be used as evidence for my qualification.





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Hands Across the Water

Kerran Daly, MG reports on the latest Bernhard sponsored trip to the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta

Having spent a good hour in the queue at Gatwick and been personally selected for a full baggage search, I finally made it into the departure lounge and met up with the other nine intrepid travellers bound for Atlanta. The high level of airport security was comforting but as we stepped onto the plane there was still something in the back of my mind which gave the excitement of the week ahead an added edge.



Atlanta's dramatic skyline

We took off around midday for our 4000 mile journey which because of 120mph head winds was to last nine and a half hours. This was my first trip to the USA and the flight itself was for me a thought provoking experience. Cruising out over Killarney at 36,000 feet and 500mph was made all the more poignant by the sudden blasting from my headphones of The Proclaimers' powerfully nostalgic song 'Letter from America'. Images of the early Scottish and Irish settlers, 100 years before, ran like a pictorial in my mind and I reflected on how much had changed in such a relatively short time. I glanced to my left to see Alex McCombie busily tapping away on his laptop - how things have changed indeed.

I decided to try my crossword, and pulling the newspaper from my bag, I noted the headline 'Bush ready for War on Iraq'. Massive troop movements were going on right below me at that moment as we headed west to Atlanta, birthplace of Dr Martin Luther King Junior, probably the world's most famous proponent of non-violent action. The irony of the moment was not lost on this everyday greenkeeper. Martin Luther King would have been turning in his grave.

Having fought our way through heavy traffic we finally checked in at our hotel and immediately decided to recover from our journey with a reviving drink. Out we went to be confronted by police roadblocks and

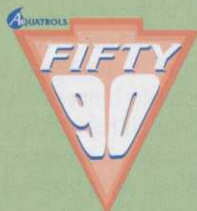
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The 2003 Bernhards Delegation

crowds of excited Americans filling the bars and streets. We had coincided with the NBA All Stars basketball final, Michael Jordan and all. The city was choked full of people from all over the USA and noisy parties were going on all night. It was a rude awakening for the quiet, homely boys from the old country.

On our first day out we visited East Lake GC and Atlanta National GC. East Lake was formed in 1904 but had been re-developed by Reece Jones in 1994 at a cost of \$25 million. It was now rated 3rd in Georgia, 60th in the USA and 90th in the world.

The whole enterprise was far removed from British greenkeeping. The warm season grasses, zoysia and bermudagrass were completely dormant which meant that the whole course, except for the greens, was straw-brown. The greens were Crenshaw creeping bentgrass, mown down to 4.5mm for winter. They are 3.5mm in summer, while some courses in the area cut at 2.5mm regularly. Poa annua was not considered to be a problem and they did a single hand pick each year. The greens were firm, dry and fast, 10' for regular play. This was in contrast to the rest of the course which, being based on heavy, red clay was very wet at this time of year.

The Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent looked after a staff of 12 in winter and 18 in summer plus

two mechanics and an irrigation technician. The greenkeepers were nearly all Hispanic in origin, some working 12 hours a day, seven days a week to make as much money as possible before returning to their families in Mexico and South America. We found this practice was pretty universal and the Superintendents admitted that the quality of their greens and the high presentation standards of their courses could not be maintained without these high staffing levels.

The availability of cheap labour was readily accepted as an essential element in course maintenance. This was our first striking example of the differences between the UK and American philosophies. The total annual budget was \$1.25 million. When asked about fungicides, the Senior Assistant Superintendent said, "We don't use a lot. We spend around \$30,000, that's all." It left us wondering what he would call a lot!

The most impressive feature of East Lake GC was the clubhouse. It had a very definite UK feel to it and was full of memorabilia connected with Bobby Jones, the 1930 Grand Slam genius. This was his home club, where he had first started playing golf, there was an atmosphere of history which is probably unrivalled in any other US clubhouse. Just being there was worth the trip.

In contrast, Atlanta National was only 14 years old. It was a Pete Dye creation with feature bunkers which often ran the whole length of the



fairway. Indeed the bunkers were so large and intrusive that the cart paths ran through the middle of them. I don't think there are any courses in the UK where you can drive a buggy through the bunkers. Conditions were pretty similar to East Lake, with very wet fairways and tight greens. They did however have a problem with *Poa annua* which was invading all greens. Unfortunately the Superintendent and his Deputy were not available so we did not discover why there was such a difference between the two courses. Other differences were apparent. East Lake had been truly awesome in its facilities. The equipment stores, staff rooms and organisational policy were all first rate. In comparison, Atlanta National was some years behind. It was comforting to see that not all US courses are way ahead of us in this regard. Indeed it was quite apparent that in many ways, particularly health and safety, we are far in advance of our American counterparts.

We soon discovered a quaint American custom which we all agreed should be introduced back home immediately. The courses closed for one day a week so that essential maintenance could be done. That was a luxury we all wanted a part of. Quote of the day was from Tony Mears, who, while passing the 15th tee at East Lake, turned to me and in his bluff northern accent said, quite seriously, 'The trouble with these courses is that they are all American. You know what I mean?' Funny thing was, it sounded quite sensible at the time.

This interesting day was rounded off by a cracking night at Joe's Bar on Juniper. We entered the team pop quiz as 'Class on Grass' and with a little assistance from our waitress, managed to get second prize, \$25 between all of us, it was soon consumed. We would recommend Joe's, but don't go alone. There was strong evidence that some of the local guys were 'batting for the other side' so to speak.

Day 2 was taken up by a full day seminar on communication. Much of the time we worked in groups of 15 or so greenkeepers. We were expecting the Americans to be very extravert and open but were surprised to find that they were generally quite reticent, quiet and unassuming. We found that we had to break the ice but once we got going our

communication problems were remarkably similar. Course closure, trolley bans and aeration formed the major topics. During the session I had to do a very brief talk on the communication problems identified by my group, but Jeremy Hughes drew the short straw and had to do a full job interview while being quizzed by the audience. Jeremy performed admirably, doing an excellent job of flying the flag for BIGGA.

While the content of the seminar was excellent, we urge BIGGA not to implement the format of 8am to 5pm. This distressingly early start to such a long day would not go down too well with the Harrogate hangover. We thought it was very uncivilised.

The next day we joined fellow greenkeepers from across the world on a full-day field trip to investigate the use of recycled sewage water as an irrigation source for golf courses. We stopped at two golf courses and two sewage treatment plants. Being Southern states there is a big demand for water, every house seemed to have a sprinkler system in the lawn. Weather pattern predictions have shown that there is going to be a big water shortage so innovative solutions such as re-use of sewage water are given high priority. The systems were fairly simple in concept. Pipe the town's sewage to the treatment plant, use physical and chemical processes to purify the water content, pump it into storage lakes and then sell it by licence to the end users.

As you can imagine, this was a particularly pungent day. One of the highlights was our lunch break at a Hebron Baptist church. The size of the building was enormous, as was the size of the lunch. Half a chicken and half a leg of prime pig was piled on every plate. Sewage plant or no sewage plant the boys tore in.

The church had served to remind us that we were in Bible belt country and this was reinforced that evening when we all attended the GCSAA opening ceremony. The Keynote Speaker was a tub-thumping, Bible-pushing former Ohio Congressman, Mr John R. Kasich. In an extraordinary display of political haranguing he explained how Ronald Reagan had single-handedly torn down the Berlin Wall and how Mr Bush was an angel of mercy about to rid the world of all evil. The audience seemed to love it

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The scale of the GCSAA Show is quite breathtaking

and gave him a standing ovation.

We all found it rather worrying but in our usual reserved British way declared it slightly inappropriate. We could not have imagined Willie Whitelaw addressing BTME with an impassioned plea to support British policy in the Falklands or Northern Ireland. It's just not cricket.

In Atlanta, politics was never very far from the surface. Despite the outward signs of integration of the black and white communities, it was obvious to outsiders that some clear divisions still remain. This was perfectly illustrated by an incident on our journey back to our hotel on the MARTA underground system. We witnessed a very loud argument between two black youths about the status of negroes (that's not the word they used) in Atlanta society. This debate raged while the rest of the 'mixed' passengers giggled with embarrassment. There was a final cutting remark from the youth who felt disenfranchised. "What about the Hispanics?" he declared. "I suppose you gonna tell me they have equal rights too?" The silence that followed was crushing.

Next day saw the opening of the show. Having been warned how enormous the show was going to be we were slightly surprised that it did not appear to be much bigger than BTME. The fact that it was all in one hall and that there was lots of space between stands made it appear bigger than it actually was. We searched the stands for freebies and bumped into quite a few British greenkeepers. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to talk directly to Penn State and Michigan State Universities to discuss the latest developments in greenkeeper education.

In the evening we attended the Prestige Club Dinner at the invitation of our hosts, Bernhard & Co. Apologies to all dignitaries involved but the highlight of the evening had to be the lift ride in the Marriot Marquis Hotel. This is a truly stunning building and we all piled on to fly up to the 47th floor in the glass-panelled lift. Some of us could not resist a second and third trip. Others, with white knuckles and pale faces, looked on.

On return to our hotel we caught the news that a grenade had been found in a suitcase at Gatwick. Rumours also abounded that terrorists were trying to knock an aeroplane out of the sky with missiles and the army had been called in and sealed off the airport. With the usual British aplomb we decided to turn to the golf channel and have another beer.

Our last full day was a Show day. Right next door to the Show was the CNN news building. Having come all this way some of us decided we would like to see something a little different and so we did the 45 minute tour. It was very interesting to see the news desk which had brought us

the story on Gatwick the night before, live from Atlanta. At 3pm we sat down with representative greenkeepers from the GCSAA Georgia Chapter. The one hour exchange of views was one of the most interesting sessions of the week, we all wished it had gone on longer. The Americans seemed mystified by our greenkeeper training scheme. Their reliance on the unqualified, largely Hispanic labour force was total. We were equally non-plussed by their complete and unwavering obsession with green speed. Although admitting it gave them severe agronomic problems, they simply said that if someone down the road gets 11 feet then you have to get 11 feet or you are out of a job. Admittedly, their Georgia climate, their budgets and their staffing levels make it much easier to achieve than we could but the logic in producing greens which the average golfer would find a tad frustrating simply passed us by. Our thanks to the Georgia Chapter for a frank exchange of views.

Our last morning was a mixture of show, shop and sight-seeing. A group of us did a brief tour of the headquarters of Coca-Cola. It was good fun sampling other flavours from around the world but we don't recommend the Italian style. We had great difficulty in getting Kevin Hodges out of the souvenir shop. Getting Kevin out of shops was a recurring problem.

Finally it was time to make our way to the airport. We had all had a great time and enjoyed each other's company. Relationships were cemented which will no doubt be of value to us all in the future. Meeting greenkeepers from Miami to Canada had also been a unique opportunity and a great learning experience. I must take this opportunity to thank all at Bernhard's who organised and made our trip such a memorable one. Thanks especially to the upfront team of Kim, Janet, Maureen, Bob and Sam and to all of those who worked so hard behind the scenes.

As the oldest member of the team I was, paradoxically, probably the least streetwise. I would just like to thank the two Tonies, Gordon, Kevin, Jeremy, Alex, Mark, Colin and my roommate, Duncan, for chaperoning me in the big city. When I flew out I had a healthy scepticism about corporate America. For me, much was confirmed. As I touched down at Gatwick, I had to admit, however, that as a group we had benefited enormously from the experience. As an individual, my horizons had been broadened. I had gone forward and learned some things about greenkeeping and some things about myself. In anyone's terms that means that the trip was a success.

So it's 'So long Atlanta – thanks for the ride!'

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Looking After Your Sand

Alistair Beggs gives some outstanding advice on looking after your bunkers

Some of the most common complaints from golfers up and down the country relate to the condition and performance of sand bunkers on their course. Higher handicap players can't get out of them at all – better players can't get out of them consistently well enough to maintain their handicaps. Many complaints are justifiable and often relate to poor drainage of a bunker in wet weather and its effect on the sand or the poor floor/base angle of the hazard which can in some circumstances make a visually tame bunker very difficult.

However, what is often overlooked is the maintenance and condition of the sand in a hazard and it is this which, in my opinion, is responsible for the poor performance of many bunkers. This article is concerned with the maintenance of the sand, assuming that other factors are sound. If you do have problems with the construction and/or form of your hazards or they do not drain sufficiently then the first step must be to contact a golf course architect so that collectively your bunkers can be made fairer and more visually appealing.

The modern attitude to bunkers is very different from that of our forefathers who invented the game. In those days, hazards were hazards and with sand pits untended and trampled by sheep, you approached them with trepidation and often exited them with your reputation as a good bunker player in tatters. With the majority of golf being match play in those days, the penal effects were less dramatic than they are upon the modern game which is dominated, of course, by stroke play. The loss of a hole as a result of a debacle in a sand pit was eminently more digestible than a tattered scorecard. However, the move towards stroke play did not stop Henry Fownes, the autocratic benefactor and designer of Oakmont Country Club, from developing the furrowed rake. Each bunker, and in those days there were 220, was raked with it to create furrows two inches deep. This made the consistent extrication of golf balls very difficult and, according to Fownes, was part and parcel of the game of golf. Jimmy Demaret, who was one of the premier exponents of the time, was quoted as saying, "You could have combed North Africa with it and Rommel wouldn't have got past Casablanca".

The rakes were used for many years to maintain Oakmont's fearsome reputation and to perpetuate the myth that this was the toughest golf course in the world.

The development of stroke play signalled the end of the truly penal bunker and the widespread use of methods to make extrication more difficult. Over the last 30 years the effect of the bunker on the game of golf has been sequentially diluted. We are now in the ludicrous situation of having Tour pros preferring to miss greens in a hazard rather than missing greens in the rough. Discussing the pros and cons of this argument is not a subject for this article but surely, even when hazards are well maintained, they should retain some degree of penalty to the good player?

The modern perception is that sand hazards on the golf course should be consistent in terms of the sand they contain and the way it performs. It is the job of the greenkeeping staff to ensure this is so given the disruptive effects of climatic extremes and modern playing levels.

All bunkers, whether fairway or greenside, should offer a degree of risk and reward thereby allowing skill and expertise to be shown by those who judge and execute accordingly.

The floor of the bunker must be designed to collect the ball - it should be concave without excesses of sand build up at any point. This is dependent to some degree upon surround contouring but also the correct maintenance of the sand which should be moulded appropriately.

The upper surface must be firm with no more than the top 12-17 mm (1/2-3/4 in.) raked to allow passage of a sand wedge under the ball. Excesses of

loose sand, either applied or raked up, are unsatisfactory and lead to the development of plugged balls. This is the most common complaint and is more often due to the poor application/ maintenance of the sand than the physical characteristics of the sand itself.

As intimated earlier, the shape and depth of the bunker must be appropriate and the base must drain. This latter point is less to do with the sand and more to do with what it sits on top of. We must never lose sight of the fact that bunkers are seaside features that were transported inland with the development of the game. If acceptable conditions are to be consistently provided by inland bunkers, then regular thought needs to be given to their maintenance.

While there are many examples of bunkers around the country whose performance is flawed by poor drainage, poor shaping of the hazard floor or poor sand selection, I am convinced that there are equally as many whose performance could be positively influenced by adhering to the following points.

1. Maintaining bunkers and the sand within them features relatively low on the priority list of many course managers. It is my opinion that a greater time allocation must be given to the management of bunkers and particular the sand within them.
2. While ideally rakes shall be left for golfers to use, the assumption must be made that they alone cannot maintain good sand/floor characteristics. Over time, sand is inevitably dragged/pulled towards the rear lip leading to excessive amounts of material in this area and often a dearth of it in the hitting area. Consequently, the shape of the bunker floor is changed and extrication made much more difficult by trying to explode balls from what become downhill lies.
3. Rakes should be shallow toothed to a depth of no more than approximately one inch. Deep-toothed rakes disturb too much sand and can result in a very soft top surface which is prone to plugging. Furthermore, they increase the rate at which golfer-induced sand displacement occurs.
4. Topping up of bunkers should be carried out regularly to ensure there is sufficient sand over the whole base of the bunker. When new material is applied, it should, of course, be identical to that already in the hazard and furthermore it should be applied moist. Thereafter, the applied material should be thoroughly heeled and/or rolled to consolidate it prior to light shallow raking.

The above points are simple and, for the most part, relatively straightforward to execute. When implemented alongside sound fundamentals, e.g. adequate drainage, appropriate shaping and correct sand selection, there is no excuse for poor bunker performance.

Alistair Beggs is STRI Regional Agronomist for the North West and North Wales

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A Change for the Better

Scott MacCallum travelled to Ipswich to meet the team charged with taking Ransomes Jacobsen forward

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Contact any large company and be put on hold while you wait for someone to become available and the chances are you will be treated to a snatch of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" or "Green Sleeves", whose composition is amazingly attributed to King Henry VIII. You're left hanging on until the other person picks up the line, more often than not, embarrassingly, just when your whistling has reached a tuneless crescendo.

For much of the last five years at Ransomes Jacobsen it wouldn't have been too much of a surprise if the music they chose to keep callers entertained was a version of David Bowie's "Chi...Chi...Chi...Changes". In the last year, however, that might have been replaced by "Zip A Dee Doo Dah" or, in these difficult times, Billy Ocean's "When the Going Gets Tough the Tough Get Going".

An unusual way to start an article but in many ways it does encapsulate the recent history of Ransomes Jacobsen, previously known as various names under the Textron banner.

Since the giant multinational Textron purchased Ransomes in 1998 to bolster an already strong golf and turf stable, which included the Jacobsen and E-Z-GO brands, the company has been synonymous with change. It has only been in the recent past that all the complicated and sometimes difficult decision making has been completed and the Ipswich-based company has been in a position to make real progress once again.

The Managing Director of Ransomes Jacobsen is a man who is well placed to reflect on the roller coaster ride that the company has experienced over the last five years.

Steve Chicken, who spent 20 years as an engineer in the RAF, joined Ransomes as an Engineering Manager the day before it was purchased by Textron and enjoyed a steady climb up the promotion ladder before being appointed Managing Director 12 months ago.

"Many of the changes we've made over the last four years have been painful and some have been quite confusing to people in the market place but the end result leaves us well placed to cope in these times of economic uncertainty," said Steve, from an office which overlooks the vast manufacturing plant.

"Looking back I don't think anyone would have chosen to do what we've done in the way that we've done it, but with good core products, and underlying good management, I think we now have a very strong business under the two brands which are our focal point, Ransomes and Jacobsen."

In the last year the company has been making positive strides again and have taken confidence from statistics which show that they are gaining increased market share.

"We are a much simpler company today with far less complexity," explained Steve.

"This has been a deliberate decision to become more simple, both internally and externally. It touches just about everything. In the past we were doing things differently in the US to over here but now we have common processes and where we had two separate product lines we now have one, or are moving towards one.

"This all makes the company a lot more nimble so we can react to things a lot quicker but it also gives a much more robust front to the company as people can see a common purpose.

"We've gone from being a British company and an American company bolted together to being a truly global company and by maintaining locations here, in America and in the Pacific Rim we have retained our local knowledge which allows us to define our market place. By having European and American manufacturing plants and design houses we can ensure that we have suitable products for the



Steve Chicken



David Withers

different environments and customer needs," said Steve who, prior to returning to Ipswich was Vice President of Engineering for the whole group, based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Among the changes which were made along the way in addition to that of the man at the top, was the aforementioned name changes; a definitive reappraisal of the roles of both the Ransomes and Jacobsen products; a revamping of the entire dealer network, and a series of personnel changes.

Listening to both Steve and Sales and Marketing Director, David Withers, you can appreciate the thinking behind each of the changes and how they came to be made.

"At the time of the purchase there was a lot of puzzlement," said David, another man who has risen to his present position in the last 12 months.

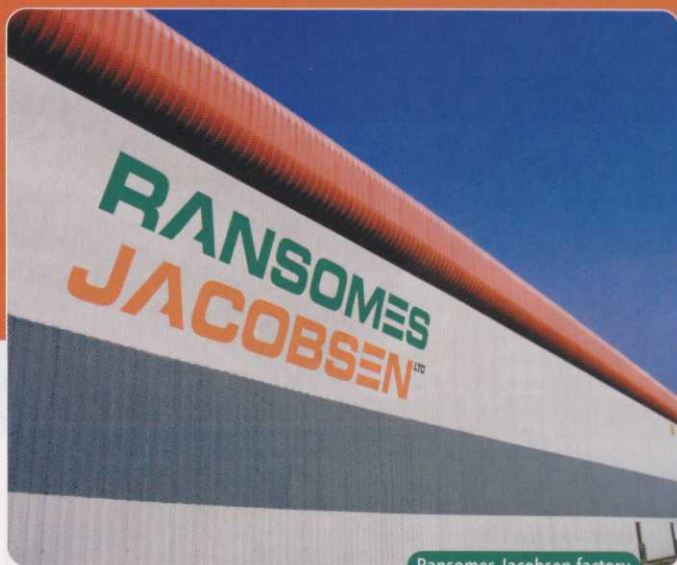
"In Ransomes and Jacobsen we'd brought together two previously competing brands and teams of people, both within the company and customers, with emotional ties to both Ransomes and Jacobsen. It was felt that we needed a name that we could all rally round and felt that should be Textron. We never envisaged changing the brand or having blue machines with a Textron logo but we felt we needed to get the Textron name known," said David, who also acknowledged the benefits of being seen to be owned by such a huge company.

"We wanted to focus on the fact that we were owned by a very very secure multi national and that the finance would be there for long term stability."

The downside was that the strong brand names of Ransomes and Jacobsen were diluted somewhat but the feeling within Ipswich was that it was the correct move to make at that time. The Textron name was replaced by the current Ransomes Jacobsen name at SALTEX last year.

Another major issue which had been tackled towards the beginning of the process was that of organising a dealer network to cope with such a wide product range. On the mainland 10 companies were handed the account, from Scottish Grass Machinery in the north to PJ Flegg in the south.

"We changed distribution throughout the world in a nine month time frame and that is a tough thing to do because if you ask customers when they buy machines it is 50% because of the machine and 50% because of the company selling to them and with a lot of dealership changes we did lose market share," admitted David.



Ransomes Jacobsen factory



Steve astride a Jacobsen triple mower

However, with that situation settling down and a further change involving the move to two Regional Sales Managers instead of four and three staff who look after the key accounts they are beginning to reap the rewards.

"We currently have a fantastic order book. The best in many years. We are focusing on customers and giving them what they want."

To that end a large party of customers and potential customers was taken to Atlanta so the Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers could assess the new products and give honest appraisals of what they saw.

"They are very open and frank and some of what they say is brutal but that is what we want as it allows us to produce what they want," said David.

Another of the major changes occurred in July 2000 when the announcement was made that from that point onward orange Jacobsen machinery would be earmarked for the golf market and the green Ransomes machinery would be aimed at the municipal market.

"Prior to this change in essence we still had Ransomes and Jacobsen product competing on the golf course market and it wasn't until we made the change that we could move away from being seen as two competitive companies to being one consolidated company with different products in the golf and municipal markets."

That process is now virtually complete with the more rounded in style Jacobsen products going into golf clubs and the squarer, robust looking, Ransomes products being sold to the local authority parks and gardens market.

"We still have one machine - a T Plex 185 - which has yet to be re-styled into the Jacobsen family, but all the others have been changed and there is a true family resemblance within the ranges," said Steve.

Looking back Steve is proud of the way the company has handled such a complex situation over the last five years.

"Bringing together two huge companies is not an easy task and in hindsight we probably wouldn't have supported every decision but the end product has been pretty good," said Steve, adding that other companies with whom they compete might one day have to go through similar processes.

"We've done ours," he smiled.

"I don't think any company ever stops changing but we are as near as damn it where we want to be."

So, looking ahead, what can we expect from Ransomes Jacobsen?

Well the company is, to Steve's knowledge, the only machinery manufacturer in the industry which has achieved ISO 14001, the environmental quality standard, and they are pushing the fact that they are the environmental friendly manufacturer.

"We've based our decision on the fact that more and more environmental issues will come to the forefront. At the moment people like the idea of being environmentally friendly but they wouldn't make it key or a defining reason for doing something. I think that will change," said David, who has spoken to both the Audebon Society and Committed to Green about the need to build into their scoring criteria the machinery which is being used on the golf course.

"Let's face it, there are now very good electric mowers and if there are 100 petrol golf cars on a golf course that's a 100 little polluting machines whereas an option would be electric or LPG, an E-Z-GO version of which was launched at Harrogate this year."

Although rightfully cagey about giving too much away they do hint at some new additions to the product range which will be revealed in due course.

The company has long been a staunch supporter of BIGGA and has recently launched the Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship Awards which give greenkeepers funding toward further educational courses thus giving them the opportunity to better themselves when a lack of finance might have otherwise prevented them.

"We feel the financial contributions we can make is going towards the future of the industry and as BIGGA is the main body within that industry we want to be seen to be helping the top Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers of the future," said Selina Flynn, Communications and Promotions Manager.

Having spent so much of the last five years in changeable mode the Ransomes Jacobsen team will be no doubt be pleased to have a period of normality over the next few years.

You never know that might stretch to making you listen to "Four Seasons" or "Green Sleeves" when you call them up.



NEW PRODUCTS



McCORMICK

Grounds care tractor drivers wanting more comfort and protection from the elements can now have a cab fitted to McCormick G30R and GX/GXH series models.

Providing spacious accommodation despite the compact size of the tractors, both cab designs feature large doors and plenty of headroom to make it easy for the tallest drivers to get on and off easily, and large windows for clear all-round visibility.

They also have top-specification work lights front and rear for early

starts and late finishes during the winter months, and are homologated to comply fully with noise level requirements for both private and municipal operations.

"The cabs make a stylish and highly practical addition to these performance tractors," says Ray Spinks, McCormick Sales Director.

"They create a more comfortable environment for drivers who spend long hours in the open, but without hindering the practicality of their machines."

The G30R's cab is designed to ensure that this feature can still be used: the pedals are folded back, then a lever pulled to release the turntable seat and steering wheel, which are then rotated through 180deg to face either forwards or backwards.

The cab is upholstered inside, heated and prepared for fitting a radio. It also has a pull-down sunblind for the windscreen, which can be opened for extra ventilation.

There are three models from 27-36kW / 37-49hp in McCormick's GX/GXH compact tractor range, and each comes with a choice of mechanical or hydrostatic drive, as well as two- or four-wheel drive.

The roomy cab for these tractors also has an opening windscreen, plus air vents in the roof, and the GX/GXH 45 and 50 models have the added attraction of optional air conditioning to keep the driver cool on hot days.

Windscreen wiper and light switches are located on the right-hand cab pillar, while curved rear three-quarter windows either side of an opening central rear window ensure drivers have a clear over-the-shoulder view of their implements.

For further information Tel: 01302 366631

TECHNI TURF

This year sees further advancements in mixture formulation for the Techni Turf seed range, together with the introduction of many new cultivars with improved turf characteristics.

True Green offers a new option for seeding or oversowing golf and bowling greens. This mixture features the creeping bluegrass True Putt and is ideal for problem areas including shady areas.

Green Carpet features cultivars selected for their dark green colour. This mixture provides a fine dense, hardwearing sward while improving low maintenance capabilities. It is ideal for tees, fairways and outfield use.

Supported by the largest grass seed breeding and production programme in the world, DLF Trifolium A/S, the Techni Turf range of Amenity Grass and Wild Flower Seed, offers a package of product, service and technical advice for Greenkeepers, Groundsmen and Landscapers.

For further information Tel: 01279 653251

NORDICK TYRES (UK) LTD

A simple, low-cost tyre pressure loss indicator has been introduced by Nordic Tyres (UK) Ltd, the distributor of Nokian agricultural, industrial and forestry tyres in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Able to provide an instant visual warning of a pressure loss as small as 0.138bar (2psi), the indicator is available in versions to suit most tyres running at any pressure between 1.4 bar and 4.8 bar (20psi - 70psi). It is now being fitted as standard to all Nokian trailer tyres supplied on wheels, both as original equipment and as replacements.

Following inflation of a cold tyre to its recommended pressure/the indicator is screwed fully onto the valve in place of the normal dust cap. Green and red bands within the indicator will then rise until they are exactly level. Any loss of pressure will cause the green band to drop below the red, giving operators a clear visual warning that the tyre needs to be inspected for possible damage, such as a puncture, before being re-inflated to the correct pressure.

Priced at £11 (plus VAT) for a set of four, the Nordic Tyres' pressure loss indicator is available direct from the company and its authorised dealers.

For further information Tel: 01228 792677



HAYTER

The Hayter Harrier 56 has a reputation for coping with long grass yet still leaving a finish as good as many a cylinder mower. Used mainly by commercial customers from grounds maintenance organisations, the Harrier is now used more and more for the maintenance of golf tees as well as other areas around the course.

With a 56 cm width of cut, the ability to cut as low as 13mm and height of cut adjustment without the need for tools, the Harrier can maintain a wide variety of areas around the course. The split rear roller allows the Harrier to be used easily in the most confined areas and will also stripe the turf if required. Being a rotary, divots present no problem to the machine. The deck has built in fins to improve grass flow and this feature, along with the design of the deck, ensures an extremely high standard of finish, not normally associated with a rotary. The large capacity grassbag means that time spent emptying it is reduced to a minimum.

The Hayter Harrier 56 is the ideal machine for any golf course requiring a machine that is capable of cutting a wide variety of areas yet still leaving the grass to the high standards demanded by golf club members.

For further information Tel: 01279 723444



C-DAX EUROPE

C-Dax Europe has developed new versions of its Sprayrider ATV mounted spraying system. Retaining the Sow centre of gravity anti-surge baffle and total tank evacuation features of the existing units, the second generation G2 Sprayrider will now fit a wider range of ATV models and also has a number of developments.

Offered in 50 and 80 litre capacities, the newly designed rear tank has attractive curved styling, with a higher proportion of its contents carried in the outer wing sections. This reduces a full tanks centre of gravity and can dramatically improve stability when working across steep terrain. Safety and stability is further enhanced by an internal baffle that prevents liquid within the tank suddenly moving from side to side on hilly ground.

Full tank evacuation on uneven terrain is an established C-Dax Sprayrider feature, and this is further enhanced on the G2 Sprayrider. Each of the tank's lower wing sections has its own patented valve fitted to ensure liquid will always flow to the spray pump. This ensures spraying is not interrupted across difficult terrain. The new valves also eliminate the need for an underbody balance hose. This makes fitting and removing the rear tank easier.

The Rate Rite digital spray rate controller system is also available.

This can automatically alter application rates according to forward speed for optimum accuracy and efficient use of chemical.

Retail prices for G2 Sprayrider systems start at £450 + VAT for a 50 litre tank, which may be front or rear mounted. Rear 80 litre units are priced from £485 + VAT.

For further information Tel: 01472 240869



HUNTER GRINDERS LTD

The new Amazon bottom blade grinder from Hunter Grinders Ltd is a first in the market place. The Amazon is a major development in bottom blade grinding, designed to save time without compromising performance. It is the only bottom blade grinder that will grind both edges of the bottom blade simultaneously. The automatic traverse and most importantly automatic in-feed on both grinding heads, allow the grinder to run independently.

Once set up, which takes as little as three minutes on the first blade and even less on subsequent blades, the machine can be left to complete the task with no further input required from the operator.

The Amazon is a rugged, machine engineered and designed to deliver fast, accurate sharpening finish. Fully enclosed and fitted with water coolant as standard there is no dust, no mess and no heat distortion. It is easy to operate and will accommodate 36" blade capacity when grinding both edges and up to 42" on individual heads. The Amazon retails at £8450 ex VAT including installation and training.

For further information Tel: 01207 270316

CLAYMORE GRASS MACHINERY

For the forthcoming 2003 mowing season, Claymore Grass Machinery has announced significant new features on their range of Simplicity lawn and garden tractors.

The Grand Baron model is now also available fitted with a 16hp Honda 530cc twin cylinder engine and has a new collection system with improved emptying lever. The collector also opens higher for more efficient emptying and has increased air flow for improved performance on heavy wet grass.

The new collector can also be removed without the need for tools.

The 40in Hydro drive Regent is also available with the same powerful 16hp Honda engine with super quiet muffler.

The outfront cut Lancer rider mower has a new 17hp Briggs and Stratton engine for increased power and performance and 18in (45cm) Multi Trac tyres for improved traction.

Wheel weights are now standard equipment giving extra traction on uneven terrain and redesigned transport brackets offers additional cutting positions with better traction.

All Baron, Regent, Lancer and Broadmoor models have new mower drive systems with a quieter pulley design on 40in (102cm) decks.

For further information Tel: 01865 820731

JOHN DEERE

John Deere's new 5020 Series tractors are the first of the company's lower horsepower machines to be based on the award winning full frame design.

Designed and built at John Deere's Mannheim tractor factory, the 72hp 5620, 80hp 5720 and 88hp 5820 fit into the range between the existing 5010 Series standard and narrow models from 53 to 80hp, and the 6020SE range from 75 to 110hp.

The new 5020 Series tractors incorporate John Deere PowerTech four cylinder constant power engines with maximum power ratings of 74, 83 and 91 hp respectively, and up to 34 per cent torque reserve. They also meet the requirements of the latest Tier 2 emission levels legislation.

The full-frame design on these tractors combines a low overall weight of 3.7 tonnes and compact dimensions with a high payload capacity. This allows larger, heavier implements to be carried without placing extra stress on the engine and drivetrain components, which can therefore concentrate on transmitting the power.

This approach has led to the development of lighter, stronger, more versatile tractors with better weight distribution; this is 40 per cent on the front axle and 60 per cent on the rear as standard, which is ideal for front loader work. The design also means there is no need to fit expensive sub-frames for the loader, which is bolted directly to the steel frame, and is fully compatible with the optional front hitch and pto.

John Deere's PowrQuad 40kph 16-speed transmission with Perma Clutch II is fitted as standard, and includes four powershiftable speed ranges and a left hand power reverser with neutral, for easy shifting under load without clutching.

Automatic speed matching on the optional PowrQuad Plus transmission, which features single lever shifting, allows the correct gear to be chosen when shifting through the fully synchronised ranges. An additional 16 speeds are optionally available for both transmissions, giving a minimum speed of 1.5kph (less than 1mph).

The flat floor 5020 Series cab is the most spacious in this class, and provides excellent all-round vision, especially for loader applications, with a glass roof hatch, curved rear corner window and rear implement window.



Additional advanced technology features on the new 5020 Series tractors include a high capacity pressure compensated hydraulic system with load sensing, and a 56 or optional 65 litre/min pump.

Standard specification also includes electro-hydraulic on the move engagement of four wheel drive, a 131 litre fuel tank and a 500 hour engine service interval for reduced maintenance costs.

For further information Tel: 01949 860491

Royal Portrush Golf Club

I would like to congratulate you on the March edition of Greenkeeper International. In particular the excellent articles by Chris Haspell and Henry Bechelet. In support of both these articles I have put together some notes on how we manage our greens at Royal Portrush GC in order to encourage the development of fescue, at the expense of undesirable grasses like poa annua. Granted, it may not be appropriate for all courses, but keeping Greenkeeping simple really does work.

As a Greenkeeper of over 30 years experience, on parkland, heathland, and links courses, I have lived through the time when high levels of nutrients and water, combined with preventative applications of fungicide, were advocated by "advisors". This resulted in poa dominated soggy bogs.

Alarm bells started ringing in my head when at a meeting with other Greenkeepers, myself, and Alan Strachan, Course Manager of Royal County Down, found ourselves defending our policy of trying to grow fescue and bent greens, as opposed to Poa greens.

Another alarm call was when one of my young trainees was told at college, that invasion by poa annua was inevitable, and to "just live with it!"

In general what follows has, and is working for us. Yes we do still have some poa in our greens, but it is our declared intention to rid ourselves of this pernicious weed, and not just "live with it". Our STRI agronomist visits in the autumn, and has seen a continuous improvement in the botanical composition, in favour of fescue and at the expense of poa annua. We play on our main greens all year round, (we don't have temporary greens, only frost holes on the fairway)

FERTILITY

We have a sandy mineral soil, with a p.h. of 7.4 which although free draining, has good nutrient retaining capacity.

This relatively high p.h. (as far as bent grass is concerned) is very conducive to micro-organism and bacterial activity. This helps to convert organic matter into nutrients, and helps to keep the dreaded thatch at bay.

In general I would regard 5 grams of N per sq metre per season as being fine for us. (Last year we only applied 4 grams of N per sq metre) This is normally applied at 2-3 grams per metre in the spring. The nutrient source is split between sulphate of ammonia, and an organic source. The remaining 2 grams of N is spread over the rest of the season, generally in half a gram per sq metre applications or less.

We also apply 5 grams of K per sq metre. This is divided between spring and autumn, prior to our overseeding operations.

In addition, we apply 10 lts of liquid seaweed per hectare mixed with 10 kg iron sulphate at about six week intervals winter and summer.

MOWING EQUIPMENT

We use both triplex and pedestrian mowers. For the most part the triplex mowers are used on our Valley Links, the pedestrian mowers on the Dunluce. The ideal would be to use pedestrian mowers on both courses, however our present staffing level prevents this. (15 men, including myself and a mechanic, for 45 holes plus putting green's and practice areas).

Our height of cut is 5-mm during summer and 6-mm during the winter. Frequency of cut is seven days a week during summer, and as required during the winter.

My feeling is that this 5-mm minimum height of cut is of paramount importance in the development of fescue. If fescue is cut below this height, it does not have sufficient leaf area to photosynthesise effectively and therefore dies. The resulting bare/thin areas are then colonised by poa annua, with all of its faults and failings.

Our green speed would normally be around 9 ft during the summer. Speeds of 10-12 ft are produced for competitions by double cutting and or light rolling.

We have changed our pedestrian mowers from units that had a clip rate of 120 clips per yard, to units that have a clip rate of 225 clips per yard. These units have increased our green speed without having to lower the height of cut.

AERATION AND OVERSEEDING

We use a variety of aeration methods, which include the VertiDrain, Toro ProCore, Toro Hydroject, sorrel rollers, and a ProSeed.

We hollow core at the beginning of September, using the ProCore fitted with 6-mm tines, to a depth of about 60-mm at 30-mm centres. This is combined with our autumn overseed operation, as follows: Hollow core, remove cores from putting surface, overseed and top-dress, using the ProSeed. (This machine has a spiked roller, followed by a seed hopper, followed by a top-dressing hopper, followed by a contra rotating brush.) The ProSeed machine is then used in two more directions without applying any seed or top-dressing. This makes thousands more holes, and brushes the seed and top-dressing well into the surface. We have found this method gives a great initial strike and long term establishment. The putting surface following this is quite good and has not as yet resulted in any complaints from our membership. The seed mixture we use is as follows: 50% Barcrown, 30% Bargreen, and either 20% Lance or Heriot, at 15 grams per sq metre.

Deep aeration of greens and aprons is carried out in December/January using the VertiDrain, to a depth of 250-mm at 55-mm centres with 12-mm tines.

The greens and aprons are then solid tined with our ProCore unit fitted with 6-mm tines, during January/February. The next aeration is again with the ProCore fitted with the 6-mm solid tines, prior to our spring over-seed. This is the same procedure as in the autumn but without the core collection.

The Hydroject is used about six times during the spring and summer. More if the weather is dry!

VERTICUTTING AND TOP-DRESSING

Verticutting takes place about every two weeks, depending on the weather conditions. Light grooming about once or twice a week, again depending on the weather. Caution is required with these operations, as over use can adversely affect the fescue. We have very little thatch anyway.

During this coming season I will do more brushing as opposed to grooming and Verticutting, as I think this is less damaging to the fescue.

Top-dressing is carried out about 5 or 6 times during the year, at about 750 grams per sq metre, slightly more when hollow-coring. We use a mixture of our own dune sand and an anaerobically digested compost at a ratio of 8 sand 1 compost, we also add 10-15 kg of composted seaweed meal per cubic metre of top-dressing.

IRRIGATION

My aim is to encourage deeper root development, in order to improve drought resistance. The Hydroject has been a great help in this.

Our low nitrogen inputs also reduces the grass plants requirement for water, and has the added benefit of producing a harder wearing turf.

I also feel that the use of liquid seaweed helps with this, by stimulating root development, and by toughening the grass plant.

During the last five years we have only watered our Dunluce greens on three occasions. Our Valley links has manual take off points behind the greens, and has not been watered.

This said I would not let the greens die through lack of water, as I have a wife, three children and a dog to support!

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

We have very little disease. However, any we do have is very minor and does not require any fungicide. We have not used any for at least the last five years.

We occasionally get the odd bit of corticum, this is because of the low nitrogen input. This generally occurs in late summer if the rainfall has been high (Nitrogen being leached). Increasing the aeration gets rid of this without recourse to fungicides.

Fusarium is not a problem as again this is due to the low nitrogen inputs, and the very low percentage of poa annua in the sward.

WEED MANAGEMENT

We don't use any weed-killer on our greens or aprons, as these chemicals will kill or at the very least stunt the developing seedling grasses. Weed control on greens is by hand weeding, apart from spot treatment of the odd bit of clover.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

We have the full support of our Links Committee and keep them informed about what we are doing, and rely on them to pass on the information to the membership. I also encourage my staff to talk to our Members and Visitors, informing them of our policy, and what they are doing.

Fight the good fight.

Sorry about this being so long winded but I felt the above mentioned contributors deserved some support for their opinions.

Joe Findlay, Head Greenkeeper, Royal Portrush GC

Thanks

May I take this opportunity to thank all the Bernhard representatives for the excellent organisation and friendly welcome to us all on this excellent trip to the GCSAA show in Atlanta. The week was very hard mentally and physically but it was well worth it for all the new friends and associates that we made individually and as a group.

I would like to thank BIGGA also who assisted Bernhards in the selection process and also the planning of the week's programme.

Ten greenkeepers from different courses, locations and different backgrounds all came together as one team and I thank you lads for making it a very enjoyable and successful week.

Jeremy Hughes, Course Manager, Vale of Llangollen GC

Thanks 2

I would like to thank all concerned with the recent trip to the GCSAA Show in Atlanta. A big thanks to Stephen Bernhard for his kind sponsorship of the trip which is very much appreciated, to all Bernhards staff Kim, Janet, Bob and Sam who were absolutely fantastic and your hospitality was second to none.

The trip was very well organised and very informative and which every greenkeeper should try and participate in at some time in their career, I would highly recommend any greenkeeper to attend GCSAA at sometime in the future.

A worthwhile experience!

Many, many thanks.

Gordon McKie, St Andrews

Thanks 3

I would like to thank Bernhard's for the great experience I had while representing BIGGA at the GCSAA show in Atlanta.

The Bernard's staff were very helpful and sociable even though they had an extremely busy week with other work commitments. I would also like to thank the other greenkeepers who were also chosen to go. The group got on well together and I think did our association proud.

I would finally like to thank those who chose me to be part of the delegation, allowing me to experience such a great event, I got much out of the experience and gained some friends along the way.

Colin Mackay, Head Greenkeeper, Vejle Golf Club, Denmark

Work Plea

I send this letter to you with the purpose of requesting you if you can to consider the possibility to accept me as internship or scholarship holder at the maintenance department in some golf course into your association. I suppose that you will know many golf course managers, all superintendents or some person and related company (desing, construction, services, etc) who can I contact.

I am an Argentinean technical professional and I went to Europe to specialize in management and maintenance of golf courses.

I have been carried out a master in Golf Courses Management and Maintenance, and I have just concluded also a salaried internship during two years in the Golf Club Valderrama, in Spain. I possess the certifications and respective written recommendations. I'm qualified, but I must learning more your language, so important in the world golf. To achieve this, I consider necessary to work in a golf course in your country.

I wait and I yearn an affirmative answer to my application, so if that is possible.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ VARELA, Pabitorv@hotmail.com



SCOTTISH REGION
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

East

Well, here we are the driest February for many a year so we are going into the season dry for a change. Hopefully we can get some warm weather to get the grass moving and get a good start to the season here's hoping.

The Section had a visit to the newly refurbished premises of Henderson Grass Machinery in February with 29 members in attendance on a very good day. It was also good to see a number of new faces along for the day and hopefully we will see you at our outings etc. throughout the season. The look around Hendersons was interesting and it shows the amount of money and commitment they are putting into this project to have the right facilities for their staff and customers. We wish them all the best for the future and thanks for the coffee and bacon rolls, They were superb. Stevie, your rolls were good. Pity you couldn't have one? A big thanks to Graham Miller, William Smith, Dougie Jeffrey and everyone at HGM for giving up their valuable time to show everyone around and giving us an insight into the running of their dealership, thanks once again.

We left HGM and travelled to Cardrona Hotel Golf & Country Club, in conjunction with Henderson Grass Machinery (suppliers of specialist grass machinery to Cardrona) for a visit to the new course. The second part of the day was very good with Course Manager, Robert Hogarth, giving us a talk on the construction grow in and all other ups and downs of construction of a new course. After the talk we ventured out onto the course on utility vehicle that sit for this month coming up next month Annual dance details and anything else I can come across on my travels. So remember if you have anything of interest to the section members drop me a line, call, e-mail, or fax. The numbers etc are, home 01968 661313, work/fax 01968 661721 or e-mail CHRISCIY26@AOL.COM I look forward to you reading this column next month.

Chris Yeaman

West

Welcome to this month's Section news. The committee would like to wish Bob Scott, from Elderslie Golf Club, well in his retirement. Bob had over 40 years of experience under his belt. What's the secret Bob? No more moans and groans eh! Bob leaves Elderslie in safe hands with new boy, Andy McGarry, at the helm. Good luck in the future to you both from all the Section and committee.

A seven-a-side football match was organised by our very own player/manager, Gerry Bruen. Ibrox training ground was the venue. Opponents – Ibrox ground staff. A damp, cold and bleak night were the conditions but certainly did not dampen spirits. Our team consisted of experience and youth and are as follows, spot the experience! S. Taylor, Eddie Wood and Colin Scott, all from Glasgow Golf Club; Chris Kerr, from Cowglen Golf Club; Gerry Bruen, from Williamwood Golf Club; Brian Bolland, from East Kilbride Golf Club. Also two additional players were drafted in from Showland Amateurs for extra fire power! And I made up the select. For first 15-20 minutes we held Ibrox until they stepped up a gear and rattled a few in. Two nil down we fought back

hard and made it 2-1. Ibrox then produced some slick, organised moves which outclassed the greenkeepers. Another four shots at the goal found our net, left us 6-1 down. Last 15 minutes we found the Ibrox net. Final score - 6-2. Come on guys, if you can do better, call Gerry Bruen on 07813 331532.

As I write the Scottish Educational Conference at Lauder College, Dunfermline, will be in full flow. A report will follow next month, although if the previous seminars are to go by, I'm sure this one will be no exception.

Spring outing just around the corner held this year at Hilton Park Golf Club. An extremely popular venue, so please get your entries to Gavin Jarvis as quickly as you can. This year you have the opportunity to pay a deposit or to pay in full for your ticket to this year's annual dinner at Victoria's Nightclub. Please include your deposit or full payment when sending your entry forms for the Spring outing, by doing so, this will make the event much easier to organise. So help us to help you! Try and get your entries and deposits in early. See you at Hilton Park Golf Club!

Finally in next months issue:- 4/3/03 – Scottish Educational Conference, 25/3/03 – Education outing to Southern Gailes in conjunction with SGM. 26/3/03 – Selected members of the Section committee will talk to students at Gosta Training Centre. 10/4/03 – Convenors match at Renfrew Golf Club sponsored by Aitkens and SGM.

The committee would like to thank Aitkens for sponsoring the fixture list for 2003 season.

If anybody got news for me to report or if I have not mentioned which I should have please remind me, contact me: 07774 420427 or 01416 445783 - Tel/Fax.

Douglas McIntosh

Ayrshire

Well it's just typical isn't it? No sooner do I make a cynical comment about our lack of new members when I find out we've actually signed up four in the past two months. Ian Templeton, Western Gailes, and Gary Ross, Royal Troon, are the two most recent, but I'm afraid I don't have the other names at present, welcome to you all anyway.

Contingency plans are being drawn up for the Autumn outing in case the new owners at Southern Gailes are unable to accommodate our original agreement.

Congratulations to Paul Tulloch and his wife on the arrival of their new baby girl, a playmate for her sister.

Give me a ring on 01292 478606 if you feel like it, if not, no hard feelings.

That's it for now and notice not one mention of the wee fella's triumphant return – Doh!

Dennis Tweddell

North

No news to report this month, but there were quite a few last month, so it will even itself out.

The Scottish conference was a success and there were over 160 people attending. There was a decent turnout from the North Section also. Peter Boyd is to be thanked for the organisation of the event, which goes from strength to strength.

The Section outing which was originally scheduled for Panmure has had to be changed, and we are still awaiting confirmation of where we will be playing this spring. You will receive notification soon through the post where this will be and when.

It is with sadness to report on the death of Robert Koniecka, formerly of Forres Golf Club, and was Course

Manager at Shrewsbury Golf Club at the time of his death. Robert was only 46, and on behalf of the Section, I would like to give our best wishes to his family.

Not much else to report this month except to remind you of the 200 Club tickets, and also if you are interested in playing on May 3 in a social match give me a phone on 01997 420155.

Iain Gunn

NORTHERN REGION

Northern

We had two brilliant events for you through late February and early March. These were the trip to Ransomes Jacobsen and the dinner dance. A group of 12 travelled to Ipswich where we were received by representatives of the company. We received a buffet lunch and then travelled to Portman Road, home of Ipswich Town FC. We were met by Alan Ferguson, Head Groundsman, who gave us a tour of both the pitches and the training facilities. This gave us all an insight into the problems faced by football groundsman. After the evening meal we shared a beer or two, and looked forward to the Ransomes Jacobsen factory tour the next morning. Following a large breakfast we travelled to the factory where we were given a full guided tour of the manufacturing process, which included the raw materials entering the factory, the actual manufacturing process and assembly of the machinery that we all use on our golf courses today. After a light lunch we were given a tour of the spare parts and distribution facilities, and then departed on the long journey home. Many thanks to everyone who helped to organise the site visit, and a special thank you to everyone at Ransomes Jacobsen for their hospitality.

On the Saturday after the trip our annual dinner dance took place at Otley Golf Club. The night started off with all attendees meeting for a drink before being seated for dinner. The three course meal was of very high quality and a choice of meal for each course could be had. After the consumption of food and drink, the traditional raffle, which, as usual was well supported, took place. After a demonstration by tutors in Salsa dancing it was then our turn to take to the floor. A great night with great food and good company was had by all.

Thank you to those of you who have helped to support these events, however, in order that we may continue to run events like these in the future we need to increase the number of participants, as both the events featured were under subscribed. We look forward to your support in the future.

I have been informed that Graham Blackburn, who was Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Outlane Golf Club, has moved on to a new position of Head Greenkeeper at Ryburn Golf Club. Congratulations to him!

I would like to welcome Paul Wilton, of Outlane Golf Club; Gary Hudson and Andrew Ivel of Moor Allerton Golf Club and Leigh Watson, of Filey Golf Club, who have all joined the Association this month.

See you all at Kirby Moorside for the Spring tournament.

16 Westwood Ave, Eccleshill, Bradford, West Yorks, BD2 2NJ. Tel: 01274 640739 Mobile: 07976876264 E mail: Dthackray@aol.com

Dave Thackray

North Wales

Geriant, from Llangefni GC, went on the 'Weakest Link' with Anne Robinson. I do know how he got on, but I will let you watch it for yourself to see the result. Should be on this first or second week of April.

A good time was had by all at the GCSAA show in Atlanta. The Welsh contingent made it known they were there after the President's Dinner VIP reception on the 47th floor of the Marriott Marquis hotel, by singing around the grand piano, "She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes". Not a popular Welsh song but it got close with the "Aye, aye yippy, yippy aye" bit, much to the delight of George Brown, Steve Mona, Neil Thomas and Dean Cleaver who tried to distance themselves from us somewhat.

The venue for the show was the World Congress Centre and to get back downtown you walked through the CNN central news building. While we were there the build up to war was headline news, Heathrow had been closed and Gatwick was on red alert and we were all wondering if Richard Hillman had told Gail about his dark deeds in Coronation Street, but that didn't seem to make the news over there.

Back to Section news. Dave Parry has taken a busman's holiday to the Home of Golf and tried to pick up a few tips. So, if we see a Swilken Burn pop

up at Prestatyn you know the reason why.

Talking of golf our Spring Tournament is next month, May 22 at the Mile End GC, Oswestry. Your entry forms will be out any time now so please get them returned asap to Jeremy Hughes. We are told Ian Beckett will have the greens running at about 10 on the stimpmeter as he is ironing them at the moment.

We also would like a team to represent North Wales at the planned triangular golf day at South Staffordshire GC in the Midlands. This will be in late June/July and if you are available please contact either myself or Jeremy as we require a team of nine players.

Our Committee Chairman represented the Section at a memorial service to Robbie, of Shrewsbury GC, and our thoughts go out to his family at their difficult time.

The Spring Seminar was well attended at Carden Park. The day ran very smoothly thanks to all involved in the organisation to Carden for the venue and, to all the sponsors and guest speakers. Special thanks to our own presentations from Wendy O'Brien on her Augusta experience and Jeremy Hughes on playing in the Masters in Atlanta and his Bernhards/BIGGA learning experience.

Congratulations to Darren Anderson for attaining

his phase one part of his Master Greenkeepership. And commiserations to Andy Peel, of Bull Bay GC, for losing the darts. We wish him more luck next time.

Any views, news or information, please contact me on: Home: 01925 263394

Fax: 01925 269622 Mobile: 07778 162162

e-mail: acorn@golf@supanet.com

Mesen Cymru, Andrew Acorn

Cleveland

In last month's news I mentioned that the Section had entered an 8-a-side football competition kindly organised by Jamie Applegarth, of Rigby Taylor. It was held at the magnificent indoor facilities of Middlesbrough Football Club's training ground at Hurworth. It gives me great pleasure to inform Cleveland members that our team won a very competitive final beating a fine Rigby Taylor side by one goal to nil in an extra time thriller. The winner was scored by Marc Kerr, of Middlesbrough Golf Club. Marc was also awarded the 'Man of the Tournament' trophy. The team was captained by Ian Pemberton, our version of Peter Kay, the rotund gentleman, who is regularly featured in the John Smiths adverts. Well done lads! Many thanks to Rigby Taylor and Middlesbrough F.C. Further matches are planned so can members who are interested in playing please



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inform 'Pembo' on 07989508878.

On golf course matters, George Malcolm, of Middlesbrough Golf Club, has just overseen the construction of a new putting green and a new chipping and pitching facility. A new Academy area is also planned. This work has been carried out due to an extension to the clubhouse. George has also signed up with Toro to supply five new ride-on machines.

Congratulations to John Devlin on his move to Head Greenkeeper at Boldon GC from Consett GC.

On the social side, our Spring Tournament will take place at the beautiful Brancepeth Castle Golf Club on Wednesday, April 30. Tee-off time is from 10.00am and places are limited to 26. Please contact Barry Walker on 07968 308892 to reserve a slot.

Congratulations are also due to Martin Woods, Bedlington GC; Tony Cheeseborough, Wearside GC; Mark Brown, Brancepeth Castle GC, and Jamie Applegarth, Rigby Taylor, who won the Section quiz last month. A big 'thank you' to Barry and Ally for an excellent night. Thanks are also due to Darlington Golf Club for the courtesy of the clubhouse.

Please send any news to Terry Charlton on 07831 214879.

Terry "L. Prez" Charlton

North West

You should all have your list of Section events for the year by now, but if you have not received yours please contact me, and I will send you one poste haste. I would like to thank Rufford Technology for once again sponsoring the fixture list, and continuing to sponsor the longest drive and nearest the pin prizes during 2003.

I am writing these notes on March 3 and by the time you read them we will have had the Mere Seminar over and done with. The reason I mention this is that I am a little anxious because with 15 days to go, I have only had 10 delegates applied for the seminar, even though all 540 Section members received an application form. I am hoping that within the next few days I will be swamped with applications. I will wait and see. Seriously there is a lot of planning that goes into these things for your benefit, so please try to support the events in your Section.

The first golf event of the year is the annual match against the North Wales section at Ringway Golf Club on Thursday, April 10. We will require a team of 12 to retain the G.E.M. Trophy, so if you are available give me a call. The Spring Tournament will be played at Wigan Golf Club on Thursday, May 22. All applications to Bill Merritt, 225 Utting Avenue, Clubmore, Liverpool, L4 9RB, including a cheque for £20 made payable to

BIGGA, North West Bills. Tel: 0151 2844416.

Any news please ring me on 01517 245412 or 077615 83387.

Bert Cross



MIDLAND REGION
Peter Larter
Tel: 01476 550115

East Midlands

Not a great deal to report this month, other than to remind all members to return your entry form and payment for this year's Spring Tournament before the end of the month. If you have not received a form please let me know. Next year's Spring Tournament will be held at Kirby Muxloe Golf Club on 15 May 2004.

Unfortunately again we had to cancel one of our training courses due to lack of support. This time it was the grinding course as we could only muster two delegates from over 200 members.

Antony Bindley



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Please accept my apologies for the non-appearance of Section news in March. No items of interest had been forwarded to me so I thought best to bail out quietly and let no news be good news.

Now spring is sprung we can move forward to conquer all the ailments that drive our golfing fraternity to despair and become incredibly popular for another season. It is great to acknowledge we now have a better professional edge as an Association with the agreed minimum qualification passed. This is a great benchmark and shows how well we are progressing in terms of raising our profile as greenkeepers in the business world.

Looking ahead already to next winter may I draw your attention to the fact that BIGGA will subsidise any training you may wish to hold at your golf club for your staff and others. Contact Ken Richardson and he will give you the specifics. It will save you lots of money and ensures the funds BIGGA receives gets to be used in the best possible way. Clubs can join together to benefit from this funding so give this some thought over the summer and talk to your colleagues to see if you can take advantage of this great opportunity.

By now you have had a good chance to absorb the golf fixtures for 2003. We have managed to secure a good range of venues for your delectation so we hope to see members taking advantage of a great social way of meeting other greenkeepers. It is with great pleasure that we get underway with our first competition of the year. This is the Spring Tournament sponsored by Tacit, on May 28 and the venue is Magnolia Park Golf and Country Club. We hope to entice 48 of our members to play so let's be hearing from you. This is a great venue, kicking off with registration at 10.00am for coffee and bacon rolls. The tee times start at 11am with 48 golfers set into teams of three for an 18-hole Stableford. Following the match we sit for a three-course meal and rounding up with a makeshift cameo from the Matrix film. If I told you there is an Aston Martin Vantage up for grabs, courtesy of Tacit you might think I am pulling your leg. Best be there to find out! This course has a soft spike only policy to ensure you get at least three birdies in the match. Dress is respectful as always in the clubhouse. The cost is £25 per person with payment made to 'the BB&O Section'. These should be sent to me at the usual address of Holly Lodge, Pond Lane, Hermitage, Thatcham, Berks, RG18 9RN. If you wish to contact me for any more details please do so on 07778 765021.

Our membership is slightly down on last year with the BB&O sitting at 280 members plus 35 trade members. Please try to encourage other greenkeepers to join as the more people we have, the stronger the Association. All I hope is by the time you read this we are not having to plough up our golf courses to plant root crops as this plays havoc with finer grasses, especially the heavy doses of lime!

David Haskell-Craig



**SOUTH WEST &
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Paula Humphries
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Devon & Cornwall

Our February meeting was held at Mullion Golf Club, Britain's most southerly Golf Course. Despite the freezing conditions and gale force winds a most enjoyable day was had by all 43 members present. The day started with John Palfrey of Avoncrop Amenity Products starting the competition for the Avoncrop Trophy. Twenty one members braved the icy conditions while the rest of us were taken on a course walk by Head Greenkeeper, Gordon Tamblin.

After an excellent lunch our sponsor, John Palfrey, presented the prizes for the Bogey Competition to:

1. Wyndham Potter from Sidmouth (-1);
2. Tony James from Killiow (-2);
3. Peter Rendell from West Cornwall (-4)

The Section would like to thank Avoncrop for their continued support of our Section and Mullion Golf Club for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities. The Golf Course was in superb condition and a big thank you to Head Greenkeeper, Gordon Tamblin and his team.

We welcome two new members this month from Exeter Golf Club. We look forward to seeing them at our section meetings in the future.

Congratulations to Gary Foster on his promotion to Head Greenkeeper at Tavistock Golf Club. The Section wishes him every success and I know that he will do an excellent job. Our summer meeting will be held at Trethorne Golf Club on Tuesday, June 17 and details will be sent out in due course. If any members have any information for this column, please contact Steve Evans on 01822 617671.

Steve Evans.

South Wales

Another month, another lot of Section notes! Our Section seminar will take place at Royal Porthcawl GC on Thursday, April 10. Anybody who has not received details of the day should contact Peter Lacey as soon as possible.

You should also have your fixture cards by now, again Peter's the man to contact if you haven't got yours. Our first comp is on Wednesday, April 30 at Langland Bay GC, tee off from 1.30pm. We will be playing for the Amtec Shield. Congratulations to Richard Hammet, who was recently promoted to Deputy Course Manager at Llanwern GC.

Also back in South Wales, Kerry Richards. A lot of you will know Kerry from Vitax and Rigby Taylor. Kerry is the new area rep for Celtic Mowers, and I'm sure we will all look forward to seeing him when he does his rounds.

Don't forget to contact me if you have any news for next month's edition. You can e mail me at ada.panks@tiscali.co.uk or ring me on 02920 884172.

Adrian Panks

South Coast

First of all can I apologise for the lack of Section notes last month. I missed the deadline because of my trip to America so I have plenty to report on this month.

It's difficult to know where to start after what has been such a hectic time for me. I flew out to the GCSAA conference and show on the Sunday full of expectations and not quite knowing what to expect. BIGGA and Bernhard & Co had assembled an excellent group of greenkeepers to represent the Association and we all met at Gatwick airport for the 10 hour flight to Atlanta. After some very stringent vetting at immigration we travelled to our hotel where we settled in for the night.

Bright and early the next morning we were picked up and headed to two golf courses for visits. East Lake Golf Club, venue for the USPGA Tour Championship, was our first stop and we had to acclimatise our eyes to the straw coloured dormant Bermuda grass that dominated the golf course. The greens and tees could be easily spotted, as they were the only green parts of the course. After a tour around the course and very impressive maintenance compound we were treated to a tour of the clubhouse, which is a shrine to Bobby Jones who grew up playing golf at East Lake. We could have spent hours reading all the archival newspaper clippings and looking at pictures but time was short and we were whisked off to Atlanta National Golf Club, another very nice golf club nearby. Like East Lake, the course apart from the greens and tees was in dormancy so again a little different to look at. After the course visit we travelled back to our hotel and rested, as Tuesday was to be another early start.

Tuesday was a seminar day and 'Presentation Skills' was the title. There were about 100 delegates at the all day seminar, which focused on effective communication skills. We were made to feel very welcome and the entire group participated well in what was an excellent day.

On the Wednesday we were out and about on a Turf grass field trip, visiting golf courses that are using recycled water for irrigation. Water is a precious commodity in Georgia and to sustain a golf course under intense heat and humidity an adequate supply is essential, so there are a number of courses using the recycled water now.

After returning, it was a dash across town to take in the opening ceremony for the trade show. The next three days were spent exploring the enormous show and attending seminars with our own Eddie Adams giving an excellent presentation on bunker construction on the Old Course. We had a great week in Atlanta making many new friends and I'm sure those friendships will last a very long time. I would personally like to thank Bernhard & Co for their sponsorship of the trip and would thoroughly recommend the week to all greenkeepers. Next year's show is in San Diego and if you wish to be part of the delegation then look out for the application form in the magazine later in the year.

After returning back I put the finishing touches to our own Section Seminar. Your committee had put a great deal of time and effort into organising the event and the day ran under the banner 'In pursuit of excellence'. Canford Magna was the new venue and the day was sponsored again by Banks Amenity Products, along with BIGGA. There is no doubt this valuable sponsorship enabled us to provide quality training at a very affordable price. The turnout was

excellent with around 70 delegates, which I think is a great credit to the quality of our speakers. The first three speakers linked together very well in revealing the new challenges that are facing us. Our Section's own Ed McCabe was our first speaker. Ed relayed to us his experiences over the last couple of years as he battles against the weather and how effective communication has helped him through these very difficult times. Effective communication with your membership is an essential part of any manager's job and Ed has had great success in this area for a number of years now. Ed passed on his own recipe for success to us in what was an excellent presentation.

Dr Kate Entwistle followed giving us an excellent insight to what constitutes a disease as well as new diseases that are rearing their heads as weather patterns change. Simon Barnaby then gave us his ideas on how to formulate an IPM plan and what should be included. With legislation constantly changing, formulating and adhering to an IPM plan could be essential in the very near future, so Simon's excellent presentation gave us some valuable pointers. The morning was rounded off by Tom Mackenzie's excellent and entertaining presentation on how the game of golf is being affected by the huge leap in club and ball technology. Tom relayed how strategic architecture can help to redress the balance in the courses favour. Lunch followed and we were treated to a superb buffet.

After the break Stella Rixon relayed some of the excellent trial work that is being carried out at STRI headquarters. We have many new problems facing us in the future and much of the work currently being carried out in Bingley will help us to tackle these problems.

Our final speaker was Ken Richardson from BIGGA who passed on the number of different training routes that greenkeepers can now take. Training and education is so important to us now, as we continue to try and gain the recognition we truly deserve.

I would like to thank all of the speakers for their excellent presentations and helping make the day such a great success. To our sponsors, Banks Amenity Products and BIGGA a huge vote of thanks! Without you this would not have been possible! Many thanks to Canford Magna Golf Club and in particular to Trevor, Andy and Jackie who helped organise the day and ensured it ran smoothly.

Last, but no means least, many thanks to all of the delegates! Thanks for coming and I'm sure you went away with some new ideas and are already looking forward to next year's! For those of you who chose not to come, well you certainly missed an excellent day. Don't miss next year's! We can all make excuses and not bother but at the end of the day you are only missing out yourself. We are already planning next year's seminar so if you would like to hear a particular speaker then please contact me on the number below.

Our next meeting is the Spring Tournament at Ashley Wood Golf Club on May 1st sponsored by Avoncrop and Vitax. I haven't played Ashley Wood for a number of years now and am looking forward to it already. Can you send cheques for £18 please made payable to BIGGA South Coast Section to Chris Sturgess @ 40 Kinsbourne Way, Thornhill, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 6HB.

Please contact me if you have any news or something you wish to include in next month's Section notes on my new phone number 07966386232

Until next time
Alex McCombie

South West

I hope by the time you read this spring has sprung (some hope!). What a great day at Mendip Golf Club. Cracking course prepared by Richard and his crew. Some tight lies out there, results as follows and this was one of the closest competitions we have had for years. Three people finished on 39 points so, 1. L. Bergin, 39 pts; 2. B. Davies, 39 pts (Back 6); 3. S. Kew, 39 pts (Back 9). Nearest the Pin on 17th. P. Hamilton. Nearest the Pin in two on the 18th, B. Davies.

Thanks once again to Nobby for another well organised day. The course was reasonably well attended but we could still do with a few more. Thanks to (Deputy) Richard for the guided tour of his wealth and knowledge, some really interesting projects carried out on very tight budgets that have proved to be very successful. The integration of new and old greens was some of the best I have certainly seen. The only disappointment was that we didn't see the Beast of Mendip, a Puma (no not D. Bougen), whom I am told won the 'Care Of A Golf Course' a prize offered for attending the course walk.

It was noticed that some members skipped the pud in preference for brandies and liqueurs at the bar. They shall remain nameless you know who you are.

I am struggling for news and gossip this month so I won't bore you with anymore tittle-tattle and just finish by saying see you at Thornbury.
greenkeepers@bathgolfclub.fsworld.co.uk
Guy Woods



SOUTH EAST
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260 956

Essex

Well, now April is upon us and the daylight hours are getting longer. Hopefully the spring season will be kind to us, especially for those who have or are about to hollow tine their greens.

By now you probably have heard that our Chairman Carl Croucher is leaving Orsett Golf Club for pastures new and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of members to wish him and his family all the best for the future.

With Carl's departure and other vacant positions still left on the committee, we have had a reshuffle. Steve Crosdale and myself are staying in our elected roles with Arnold Phipps-Jones as acting Chairman, Domic Rodgers as acting Treasurer, and Dave Beale as acting Golf and Handicap Secretary. These proposals will be discussed at our first golf meeting on April 15 at Benton Hall Golf Club. Anyone else who would like to be considered or has any comments please contact me on 01245 603131 or 07964867939.

The fixture list should be with you soon but for those who want to make a note in their diary the following are:-

Spring Tournament, Benton Hall, April 15; Summer Tournament, Bishop Stortford, June 19; Autumn Tournament, Brockton Hall, August 6; Winter Tournament, TBC; AGM and Texas Scramble, Forrester Park, November 27.

Finally, thank you to Carl for his time and hard work he gave to the committee and for keeping me company on our trips to the South East Regional Board Meetings.

Martin Forrester

Surrey

February was an excellent month because for the first two weeks I was on holiday in the Portuguese Algarve where the sun shone and the temperature reached 25 degrees on most days. My recommendation to all greenkeepers is to work in Spain or Portugal leaving this cold and wet wintry land to golf club members and committees and see how they cope without you.

For those who are staying in England please amend your events programme. The venue on June 17th should read the Drift Golf Club and not Liphook as stated.

Yesterday, Friday March 7th, was the gentleman's dinner at Walton Heath Golf Club, as always the course and the meal and the speakers were all excellent. The weather was not and, unfortunately, only a handful of the field were brave enough to finish. A full report will no doubt be forthcoming from Derek Farrington in the near future.

Congratulation paragraph centres on Mrs. Mo Davidson and the birth of her daughter Libby 7lb 7ozs and also to her husband John who had a little part in the proceedings.

Brian Willmott

NORTHERN IRELAND

I knew if we complained long enough the weather would improve, I did a bit of rough digging the other day, the frost has worked wonders, something we haven't had much of for some years.

It was good to see some of you over at Harrogate. I had one pint on Tuesday night and two pints on Wednesday night in Weatherspoons and had change from a fiver. Mind you I did spend about £40 in other bars. I missed seeing a lot of you. Perhaps next year?

Michael, Damien and Paul (he is one of the best one liners around) from Malone were there, and Paul Lappin drinks Vodka. Isn't that terrible. Alan Strachan had an early night, jet-lag I believe. So we had to show Eamon the sights. The Coburns boys were there; they can't work very hard because they don't need much sleep. Cahill Gates, from Ultra, was there, I wish he would come out of his shell he is so shy. I hope I haven't missed anyone, let me know! No doubt some will go to Wexford and keep up the good work.

I dare say a few of you went to the show in America, two of my colleagues went, their hotel room was on the 63rd floor and he said on a clear day you could see Donegal and when he went to bed, he said he took the bed nearest the door and hung onto the door handle all night - I've done that myself a few times.

Well there hasn't been much to report, however there will be an education day at Portstewart Golf Club on March 25, 11.30am on Links Golf Management, Pests and Diseases. Ruth Mann, from STRI, will be speaking.

The first golf day will be at Kirkston Castle (nice start) on April 24. See you there.

Happy Days.

Graham Prosser

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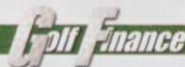
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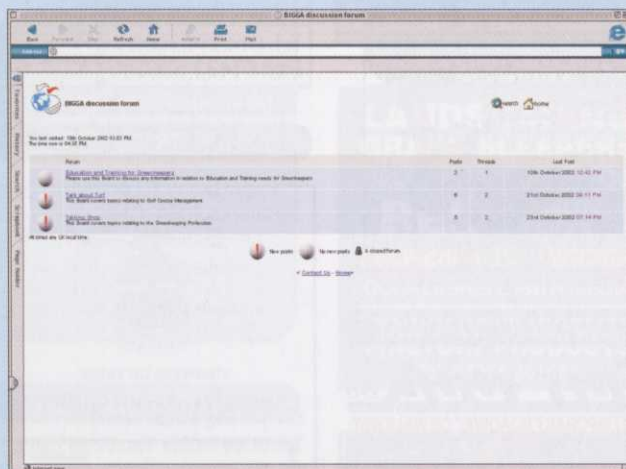
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Closing date 25th April 2003.

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Mr. R.D.J. Wilmott, Secretary/Manager,
Chipping Sodbury Golf Club, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol BS37 6PU

GRIFFIN GOLF CLUB

Invites applications for the post of

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

to start in early May.

This is a rare opportunity to join a young, enthusiastic, yet experienced team on a rapidly maturing 18 hole golf course.

Appropriate qualifications to NVQ level 2 and PA1/2 spraying certificates desirable.

Fringe benefits include:

- a company pension scheme available
- Vauxhall Recreation Club facilities
- Uniform provided - Overtime available

Apply in writing with a full CV to:

Dave Sweetnam, Managing Secretary, Griffin Golf Club, Chaul End Road, Caddington, near Luton, BEDS LU1 4AX 01582 415573 or e-mail griffingolfclub.@fsbusiness.co.uk

SILKSTONE GOLF CLUB

Require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

to start early May.

Applicants should have the following qualifications and attributes:

- At least 3 years relevant greenkeeping experience.
- Appropriate qualifications - NVQ Level 2
- Holder of spraying certificates PA1/PA2
- Practical knowledge of golf course equipment and machinery
- Good communication and team working skills

Please apply in writing with full CV to:

Greens Chairman, Silkstone Golf Club, Elmhirst Lane, Silkstone, Barnsley, S75 4LD

PARASAMPIA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Requires an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants should have the following qualifications and attributes:

- At least 3 years relevant greenkeeping experience
- Appropriate qualifications
- Practical knowledge of golf course equipment and machinery
- Good communication and team working skills.

The successful applicant will join a motivated team in the maintenance of a Dave Thomas designed championship golf course.

Applications in writing with full C.V.

Ross Wilson, Course Manager, Parasampia Golf & Country Club,
Grove Road, Donnington, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2LA



THE KNARESBOROUGH GOLF CLUB

Requires an

EXPERIENCED ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Qualified NVQ2 or equivalent. PA1/2 an advantage.

Ideally with minimum 3 years experience.

Excellent wage and benefits to suit the right candidate.

Although a long established private members' club, Knaresborough still retains a spirit of ambition and desire to continually improve. We now seek an experienced and qualified greenkeeper to join our excellent, young greens team.

Applications in writing with CV to: The Manager, The Knaresborough Golf Club,
Butterhills, Boroughbridge Road, Knaresborough, HG5 0QQ



DESIGN / SALES PERSON REQUIRED

Ocmis are the leading sports turf irrigation company in the UK.

Due to our continued success, we are seeking an additional person to join our existing design and sales team. Good communication skills are essential together with a general knowledge of golf course and sports turf irrigation systems. Duties will involve internal design and estimating with telephone support to our existing and potential customers.

Training will be given to the right candidate together with an excellent remuneration package including private healthcare, company contributory pension scheme and an attractive salary.

Applications should be submitted in writing with a current C.V. to the address below:
Personnel Dept, Ocmis (UK) Limited, Higher Burrow, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BU

Feature listing from April 2001

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 Gailles 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

April 2002; Heyrose GC profile; Bernhard's Scholarship; De-stress your greens; COSHH assessments; Rootzones and topdressing; Maintenance facilities; Essay competition

May 2002; BIGGA Report; Nematodes; Caldy GC profile; Multi-tasking machinery; Bunker Sand; Essay competition; Fijian GC profile; BIGGA Minimum qualification

June 2002; Finding Fungi; Greatham Valley GC profile; Tyres; Calabria GC profile; Lakes and Ponds; Poa Annua - Jim Arthur

July 2002; Open preview; Turf; Steve Isaccs; Emissions; Grinding; Rotary Mowers; BTME preview; Sandy McDivot

August 2002; BIGGA Golf Day; Open review; Talking Heads - Education & training; Trees; Dr Kate Entwistle; Pwllheli GC; Weather; Compact Tractors; Saltex preview

September 2002; National Championship Preview; Irrigation; Non Grass Cutters; Hawkstone Park; Careers in Greenkeeping

October 2002; Saltex Review; Golden and Silver Key Supporters; Environment Awards; Health & Safety; Sustainable Use of Pesticides

November 2002; Toro Student of the Year; National Championship; Drainage; St Andrew's Bay; Autumn Problems

December 2002; BTME & ClubHouse Preview; R&A Golf Course committee; Dr Kate Entwistle; Pennard GC

January 2003; Beedles Lake Profile; Talking Heads - Chemical Application; Rebuilding Golf Greens; Constructive Advice

February 2003; BTME/ClubHouse Review; Royal Liverpool Profile; Irrigation; Nematodes

March 2003; The Berkshire Profile; Meloidogyne; Overseeding Golf Greens; Talking Heads - Health & Safety



From the cold of Canada to the warmth of... Scotland!



I've faced some real extremes of weather over the past month. I began the month in Calgary, at the Canadian Superintendents Conference and Show. It was cold, extremely cold, with more snow than we would see in many winters combined which made the magnificent scenery even more dramatic. Calgary was host to a recent winter Olympics and it was great to be able to see the ski jumps and all the other venues for that great event.

We also visited Banff, home to one of the country's, indeed the world's, top golf courses and although it was covered in snow you could tell how it had earned its reputation.

But if the weather was cold, the warmth of the welcome from our Canadian hosts was exceptional. They looked after us royally and it made the visit one of the most enjoyable I've had the privilege of making.

I'd like to thank Bill Fach, who has now completed his year as President of the CGCSA and all his team for their hospitality.

I did mention the snow and the cold temperatures but do you know, I didn't spot one broken down vehicle in all the time we were there. There must be lessons there somewhere. A couple of snow flakes and our country comes to a shuddering halt.

One of the things that has surprised me since becoming Chairman is the sheer number of invitations the Chairman of BIGGA receives. It is a real tribute to the Association that this should be the case but, given that I have an extremely busy job at Turnberry and a limited number of days in which to attend events, I am disappointed that I'm not able to accept more of these invites than I do. Having said that, I hope that by the end of my year in office I shall have met up with many of you at one function or another.

I'd also like to thank the many hundreds of people who wrote to congratulate me on becoming Chairman. The support was simply overwhelming and although I have written personally to some of them the sheer weight of numbers has prevented me from putting pen to paper to thank everyone so please accept my thanks to you through my column.

Having mentioned the cold of Calgary, the weather at Turnberry has been extraordinary. With global warming we were supposed to be getting wetter

weather but we have just experienced the mildest February in the 17 years I've been in Scotland. And no rain! The first three weeks of March have been just the same and the forecast is the same for the next week as well.

I was playing golf in shirt sleeves yesterday, in the middle of March!

The great thing is that it has meant that both courses at Turnberry have been very busy and from a revenue point of view that can only be good. I hope that is the same at your clubs.

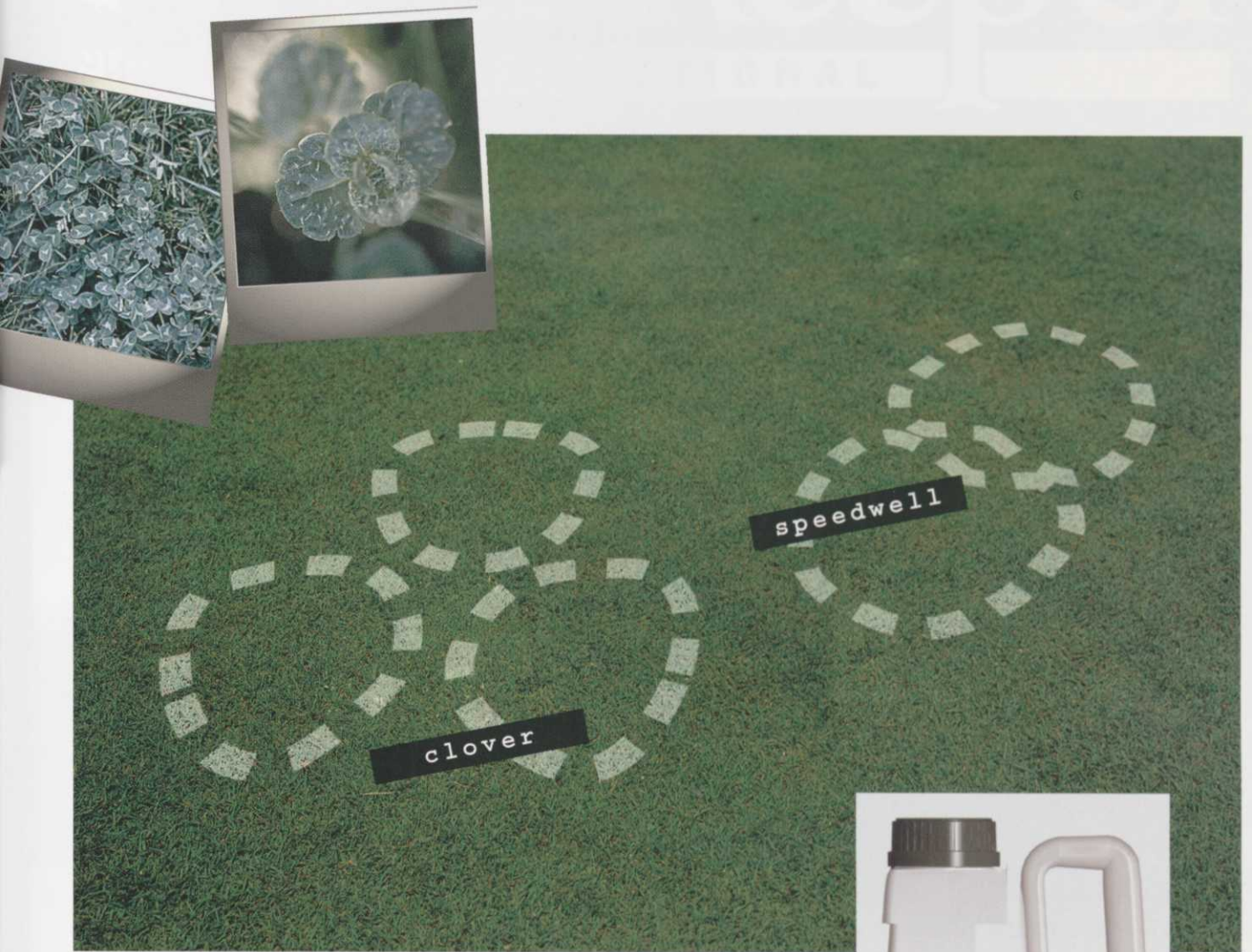
Having said that, with 3000 rounds a month in the early spring it means a lot of divots. If this is going to be the pattern from now on we may have to look towards taking fairways out of play with compulsory dropping in the semi rough or mats which are being used at more and more courses now including St Andrews and Carnoustie.

Another benefit of the dry weather has been the opportunity it has given us to complete our top dressing programmes successfully and many other jobs that we can carry out if we are fairly sure the weather is going to remain good. The downside has been that turf we have laid is curling up at the edges like toast and we are having to think about irrigation already.

No matter the conditions you can be sure that there is always something to keep us on our toes.

George Brown
Chairman

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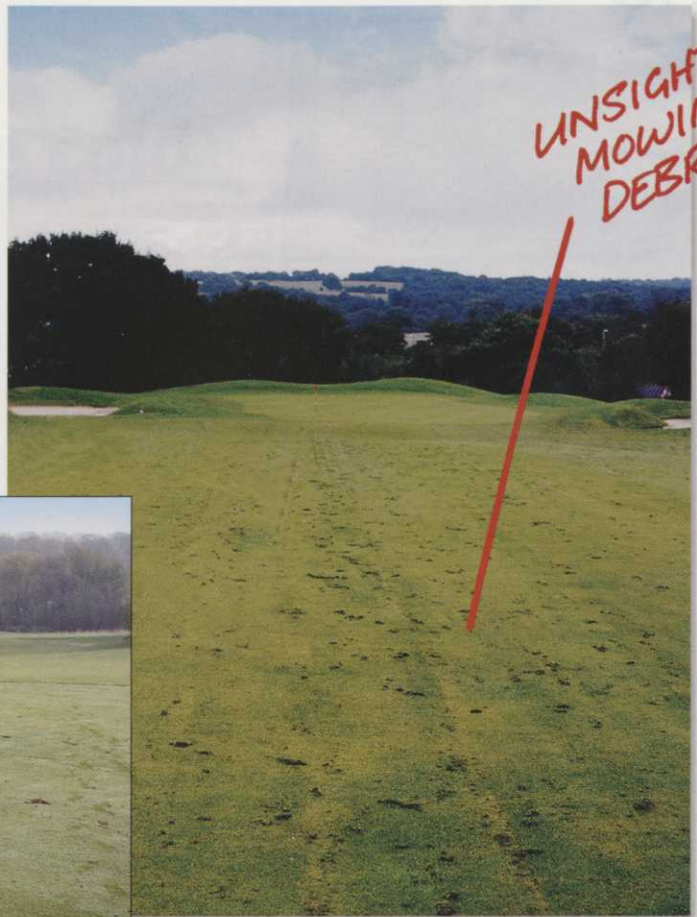
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The hydraulic folding Multi-Brush's 18' width can cover all the fairways and rough on an 18 hole golf course in less than 2 hours. Then when you mow you will leave a beautiful debris free finish behind. Folded in to it's 6' working mode with 20 separate brushes in zig-zag formation, it is ideal for rubbing in topdressing.

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