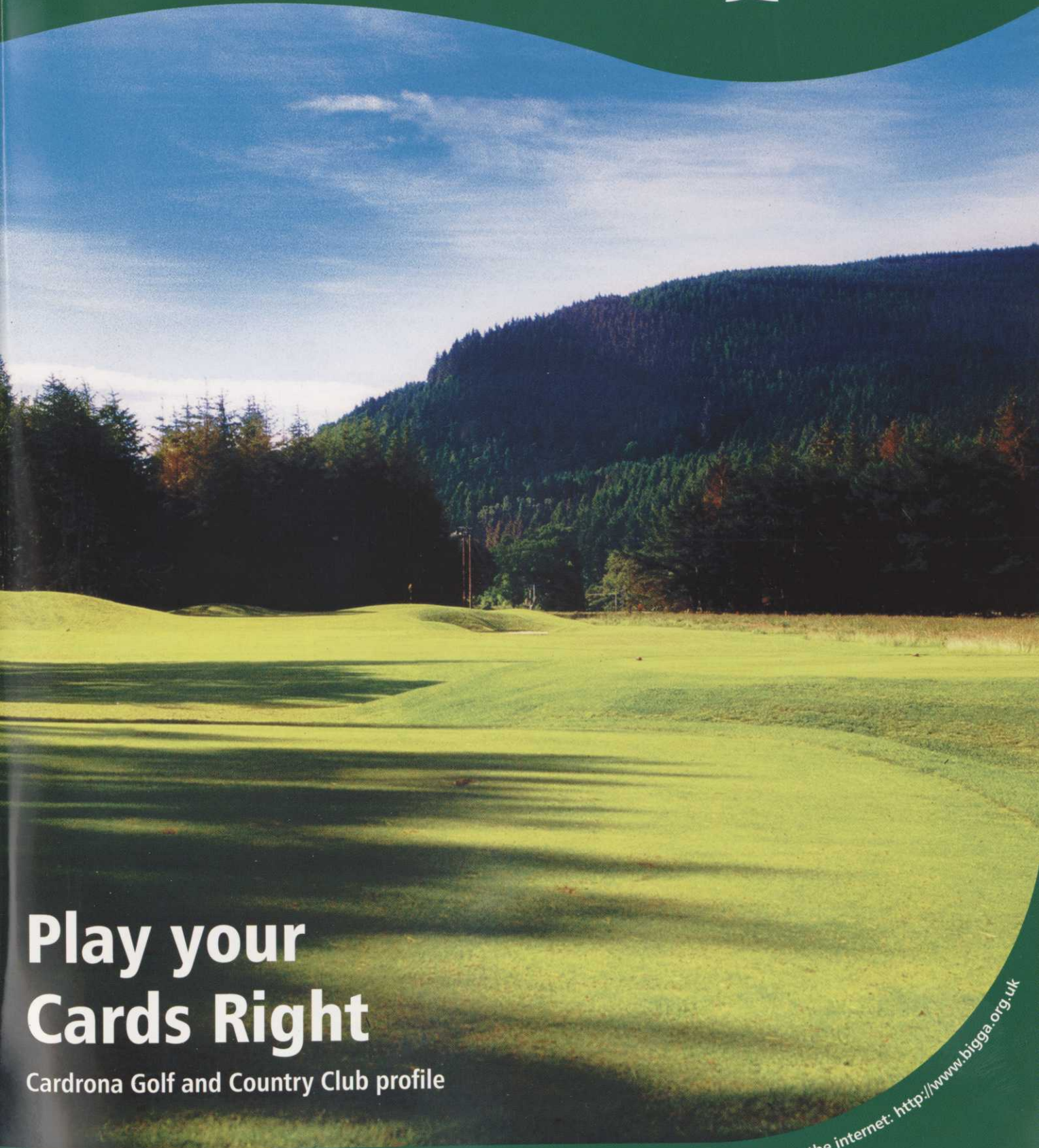




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# Greenkeeper

## INTERNATIONAL



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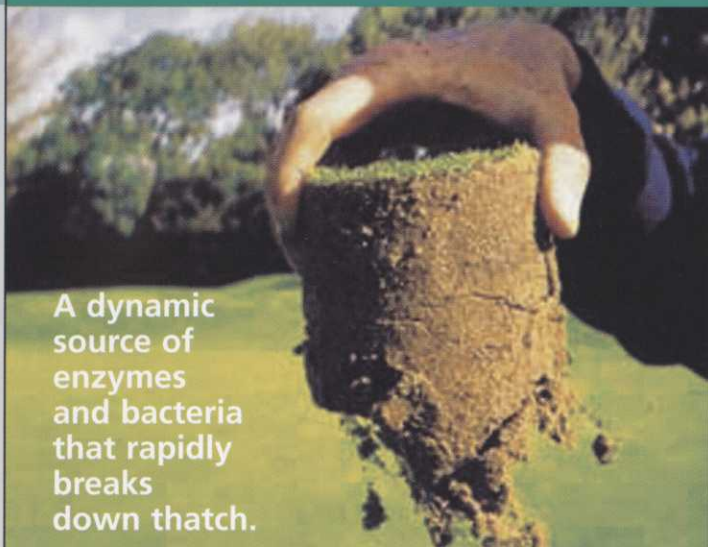
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

# Greenkeeper

The official monthly magazine  
of the British & International  
Golf Greenkeepers Association

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## WIN

### ONE OF TWO CUTTER & BUCK POLO SHIRTS!

Summer's on the way and you can really stand out from the crowd with a Cutter & Buck designer polo shirt.

See the 'Turftime Teaser' Competition on page 52



## May 2003

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

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Golf courses across the UK are preparing themselves for an explosion in the mole population by training staff in pest control techniques.

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### 38 A Golf Course Pilgrimage

Malcolm Peake goes on a golfing pilgrimage and comes back with concerns for the future of the game.





Welcome

## SO NEAR YET SO FAR

Did you watch The Masters? Silly question. If you have any interest in golf whatsoever, of course, you watched The Masters. Well, those of us connected with the greenkeeping profession in Britain nearly had a lot to celebrate, didn't we?

Rained out on the Thursday and it was looking good. News of muddy spectator walkways, people falling on Augusta's famous undulations and squelchy lies and it was looking even better. But, what do you know, the weather improved and before you knew it the awful conditions were no longer the story and the fact that a Canadian left hander won and not Tiger was taking all the headlines.

Yes the Augusta Syndrome nearly didn't happen in 2003. Augusta National and the Georgia weather almost did a passable impersonation of Sludgecombe Pay and Play during a wet weekend in November... but it didn't. The green staff did an outstanding job, no doubt putting in enough hours during the week to have a Working Hours Directive inspector foaming at the mouth, and pulled it off.

So while you nearly avoided the April and May headaches which go along with Augusta Syndrome, I'm afraid you didn't. Instead you may well get additional grief.

Greens were submerged under five inches of rain one minute and putting at the speed of light the next, so how many learned members might just pipe up,

"Look at the rainfall Augusta took and they still had their greens lightning fast the very next day."

The fact that Augusta can call upon a technologically advanced and highly expensive under green system to suck moisture away doesn't come into it.

Having said all that at least we haven't had to cope with the dreadful weather of the recent past. The prolonged dry spell has hopefully enabled you to get on with many of the jobs the soggy conditions of recent times have prevented you from doing and produce a level of spring course presentation of which you can be proud.

In addition to the weather The Masters didn't get an easy ride, with Martha Burk's sex discrimination protest against Augusta National Golf Club hitting the headlines. There is a better than even chance that the same type of protest will fill the British newspaper columns in the run up to The Open at Royal St George's with the R&A taking the flak.

I won't take sides on what is a complex argument but what I will say is that it will perhaps deflecting attention away from a potentially more damaging problem affecting the game. Golf is currently at a low ebb and the lack of money in the game is already taking its toll on many of the country's golf clubs, some of which have already gone into receivership or, at the very least, are looking to trim costs.

This has obvious and significant knock-ons for a great many people. Let's hope a successful conclusion to the war has a positive impact on the economy in general and the game of golf in particular.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

BIGGA TURF MANAGEMENT EXHIBITION  
**BTME**  
& EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR PROGRAMME

**2004**

&

**ClubHouse**

Each month we will bring you news of the industry's premier events.

ClubHouse will move from Hall D to Hall Q to run alongside BTME.

The Careers Fair will run alongside the BIGGA college stands within ClubHouse.

The Keynote Speaker and Seminar programme will move from the Royal Hall to Hall D.

Stand rebookings are well ahead of this time last year, with 139 companies booked at the time of going to press. Companies are urged to book early to obtain a preferred position.

### REVISED OPENING HOURS

Tuesday 20 January 9.00am - 5.00pm

Wednesday 21 January 9.00am - 5.00pm

Thursday 22 January 9.00am - 4.00pm

For details of exciting new sponsorship opportunities now available, contact Pauline Thompson 01347 833830 / pauline@bigga.co.uk

Watch out for more announcements in the June issue of Greenkeeper International.



## ROSIE JOINS THE ASSOCIATION

BIGGA has appointed a new Sales Manager to lead the Association's sales team and maximise money raising opportunities within the industry.

Rosie Hancher brings with her extensive experience in sales and arrives at BIGGA having most recently worked for Barker Brooks Media, in Harrogate, who specialise in publications in niche markets.

In her four years with Barker Brooks, where latterly she was Managing Director, the company worked for the DTI and the Foreign Office; published its own magazine and organised and ran conferences, shows and Award Ceremonies.

"I am delighted to have joined BIGGA and to become heavily involved in the sales side of the Association. It is what I love doing and what I'm good at," said Rosie, who is married with two young children.



Having started at the beginning of April, Rosie is already enjoying the benefits of working at BIGGA HOUSE.

"I love working in the countryside, rather than in a town, and it means I can be in the gym before work instead of being stuck in a traffic jam," said Rosie, who lives in Ripon, a few miles from Aldwark.

She will be in charge of galvanising the Sales team, whose tasks include selling stand space in the Harrogate Shows, advertising in the magazine, website and directory as well as identifying and creating sponsorship opportunities.

"We will be going all out to maximise turnover of the Association in order to increase the benefits we can pass on to BIGGA members. These aren't empty words. This department will make a real difference," said Rosie.

"I would also value comments from members on the magazine and any improvements which might be made or subjects you'd like covered. I'd then pass those ideas on to the Editor."

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



## SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE

On 3 April 2003 our annual match against the Secretaries Association took place at Prestwick St. Nicholas GC, Prestwick. We were defending the trophy we retained at Haddington last year.

Before play commenced the Secretaries decided that that it should be full handicap allowance. As it was the Secretaries turn to host the event we had no choice in the matter but to agree, however we still felt we had been conned.

As the results came in the Secretaries' tactics seemed to be paying off, as after seven matches we were trailing, but with strength in depth we went on to win

the last three matches and to clinch victory by 6 points to 4.

Our thanks to the Captain and Committee of Prestwick St. Nicholas for the courtesy and facilities and best wishes to the club's Secretary Tom Hepburn in his year of office as Captain of the Secretaries Association, Scotland.

Congratulations to Head Greenkeeper John MacLachlan and his staff for providing us with a course in such excellent condition.

Next year it is our choice of venue and hopefully we will be able to return to a links course in early April.

Peter J. Boyd, Regional Administrator

## STAR ENDORSEMENT

Top golfing star Laura Davies is following in the footsteps of Britain's best greenkeepers after becoming the proud owner of a Toro Greensmaster 1000 pedestrian greensmower.

The four-times world number one, with 64 title wins, including four majors, under her belt, purchased the mower to cut a small golf green she's constructed at her home near Woking, Surrey.

Laura is out on her green between tournaments, practising to keep her putting razor sharp.

It was David Whitaker, MG Course Manager at Wisley Golf Club, who recommended the Toro Greensmaster to Laura. He laid the turf for her green and regularly checks it over so it's in tip-top condition.

"Wisley recommended the mower to me because they have always achieved great results with Toro,

and the mower I used to have really wasn't giving me the finish I wanted. Good support and service was also very important to me, and Toro dealer John Shaw Machinery is giving me all the help I need. This is certainly one of the best greensmowers out there, so I'm delighted to own one," said Laura.



## ELECTRONIC ACCESS

The STRI and the Turfgrass Information Centre have combined in a joint effort that provides electronic access to back issues of the Journal of Turfgrass Science via the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF).

STRI produces the Journal of Turfgrass Science to facilitate dissemination of turf related research results, while the TIC serves to index the literature of turf, using TGIF to direct users to appropriate research in a vast array of publications, including the Journal of Turfgrass Science. This agreement will enable TGIF users to go directly from a citation/abstract to the full text of the article for all Journal of Turfgrass Science issues published prior to 1999. Electronic full-text availability will be for all years from 1929 up to the

last three. In addition, current subscribers to the STRI will also have access to the electronic back-file via the STRI website homepage.

The years 1989-1998 are currently online. Subscribers to the Turfgrass Information File can access these materials at <http://www.turf.lib.msu.edu/>. Subscribers to STRI can access these materials via the STRI homepage at <http://www.stri.co.uk/books/journal>. The process of adding earlier years is underway, and is anticipated that the entire run back to 1929 will be available within this calendar year. Subsequent years, such as 1999, will be added once three years have passed.

## NEW MAN AT LELY

Lely UK has appointed John Pike as Business Development Manager for turf maintenance machinery, for south and south-west England. John previously spent most of his career selling the Flymo range.

He lives in Wimborne, Dorset, and enjoys water skiing, power boating and clay pigeon shooting in his spare time.



## SALES BOOST

Sales to Norway have significantly increased for Hunter Grinders Ltd after participating in an Export Explorer mission to the country 12 months ago assisted by Trade Partners UK, the government body dedicated to providing UK companies with global expertise on international trade and investment.

The increase in sales of grinding machines to the Scandinavian country marks the beginning of a greater understanding and participation in trade relations with the region. The Newcastle-based company is one of only three manufacturers worldwide of specialist grinding equipment for cylinder mowers used on fine turf in golf courses, parks and other landscaping schemes.

"The growth in the Norwegian and Scandinavian golf industry alone represents a potential market worthy of the interest and investment required to promote Hunter Grinder products," said Keith Cann-Evans, Managing Director.

"Although our equipment has been successfully sold around the world, we are only just beginning to establish a global network of distributors. Trade Partners UK programmes such as the Export Explorer allow us to establish links with new markets more cost effectively."

## THERE HE GOES!



BIGGA National Vice Chairman, Andy "Coulthard" Campbell, is the envy of many after winning a superb ride-on lawnmower Go-Kart at Harrogate recently.

Andy, Course Manager at the De Vere Carden Park Resort, won the grass cutting kart in a raffle on the Wolf Proline stand and the prize, which will make Andy even more of a hero in his son Cameron's eyes, was presented to him by Wolf Proline, Sales Manager, Clive Pearson.

## Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year [www.tonyhusband.co.uk](http://www.tonyhusband.co.uk)





## NEW ROLE FOR KIM

Kim Macfie has agreed to join David Jenkins Turfcare Equipment Ltd as a non-executive Director.

For nearly 20 years Kim was Sales & Marketing Director for Hayter Limited where he gained great respect for his knowledge of the industry and his ability to work with his Dealer distribution network.

David said that he was delighted that Kim had agreed to be part of the team and felt sure that Kim's enthusiasm, wide experience and knowledge of the market would be of immense value to the Company.

"It is always of benefit to any organisation to stand back from the day to day operations and have a dispassionate and detached examination of its direction. In a new Company this is doubly so but difficult to do. If I can help David by bringing some focus from the outsiders view, I will be happy, and look forward to witnessing the success he deserves," said Kim.



## SUPPORT FOR NTF

Toro has sponsored the first 'In Pursuit of Excellence' conference by the National Turfgrass Foundation - a new charity-based organisation that helps fund education and research into turfgrass science, sports and recreational grounds maintenance.

"Toro was delighted to support the conference. The foundation's activities complement our own commitment to support the advancement of turf professionals," said Toro distributor Lely's Jeff Anguige.

The event in Southport, Lancashire, was aimed at sharing knowledge gained by the Foundation from its workshops and study tours. Top international speakers gave lectures and ran seminars for over 300 greenkeepers, groundsmen and turf consultants from 17 countries who attended.

The foundation is run on a voluntary basis by Martyn Jones and Louise Clegg. Martyn is a turfgrass maintenance specialist who, until a year ago, was Head of Turf Science at Myerscough College, in Preston, Lancashire.

"We approached Toro because of its long-standing involvement in education and research," said Martyn.



## THANK YOU

BIGGA would like to thank the estate of the late Doug Bell, Northern Regional Administrator, for the donation of Doug's library of golf books to the BIGGA library.

## FERTILISER USAGE SURVEY

A survey of fertiliser usage conducted by Jim Arthur and sponsored by the R&A produced the following results together with comments supplied by Jim Arthur himself.

### 1. TYPE OF COURSE

Links 15%; Heathland 13%; Downland 10%; Parkland 50%; Others 5%.

### 2. TYPE OF FERTILISER USED

Nitrogen only (chiefly 8:0:0) 15%

\* Nitrogen and Potash (no phosphate) 50%

§ Complete (NPK) 35%

Note: \* This was mainly N2 only with one dressing of potash annually, though a few fed potash all year.

§ There were considerable variations with a very few feeding heavily all year (Feb-Nov) However, an estimated 50% used one only NPK dressing - the commonest formulations being 10:2:10, though some used more.

### 3. TONNAGE PURCHASED

All figures have been adjusted to total per 18 holes.

They relate to use for all areas, tees, fairways, approaches etc. and not just greens. Note also that many returns showed in the group between 1-3 tonnes as being much nearer 1 tonne than 3.

Under 1 tonne 21%

1-3 tonnes 70%

Up to 5 tonnes 7%

\* In excess of 5 tonnes 2%

\* One club admitted to using 24 tonnes per 18 holes, but few known recognised larger users replied to the survey.

### 4. AREAS FED

It was not possible because of incomplete returns to assess how many clubs fed fairways as a routine - but deduced from 91% using up to 3 tonnes, we can safely assume very few.

### 5. FIRST APPLICATION

No consistency but a few stated February/March most in (late) April.

Very few of the 91% using up to three tonnes used fertiliser in autumn, most stopped early August (sometimes sooner).

### 6. FUNGICIDES

There was a direct relationship between heavier fertiliser use and high fungicide bills. The average of all respondents was £2450 per annum. However, a few used over £10,000 p.a. and one £24,000. Eliminating these, the average fell to £180, but it is noteworthy that 22% used either nothing or under £250 p.a. on fungicides.

### 7. RELATIONSHIP OF BUDGET TO SIZE OF CLUB

There was no direct relationship. Many 36 hole complexes used less than 3 tonnes p.a. per 18 holes, while one 18 hole club admitted to using 24 tonnes p.a. of fertiliser.

### CONCLUSION

The majority (65%) of respondents use no phosphatic fertilisers. The link between poa annua invasion/dominance and phosphatic fertilisers has been known and accepted for 90 years, with too many lapses, encouraged by advisers and fertiliser companies using 'just a little phosphate - and regular use of potash - will bring in poa in weeks and reverse years of its discouragement by using N2 only. This particularly applies to the use of NPK autumn fertilisers.

The recession, increasingly making itself felt, means budgets must be pruned, which does not imply lowering standards. The one thing fine turf does not need is either water or feeding over very limited levels.

These figures confirm my personal observations over many years and, more to the point, are agreed by fertiliser distributing agents as being in line with their experience and records.

J. H. Arthur

## SECRETARY TO GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE NAMED

Steve Isaac has been appointed to the new position of Secretary to the R&A's Golf Course Committee.

"This appointment reflects our belief that golf courses throughout the world should be presenting themselves in the best possible condition and be working to the highest ecological and environmental standards," said Peter Dawson, Secretary of the R&A.

"We are therefore delighted that Steve Isaac, a highly experienced and widely travelled agronomist, will be joining our team in St Andrews."

The Secretary to the Golf Course Committee, reporting directly to Duncan Weir, will be responsible for developing management strategy guidance on all aspects of the golf course paying particular attention to the use of water and chemicals, climate change, planning of new courses and levels of play.

He will work with the Committee to offer best-practice professional advice and information to architects, golf associations and federations, planners, government agencies, golf clubs, greenkeepers and other relevant groups.

Steve Isaac, 41, gained a BSc (Hons) in Applied Biology from Liverpool Polytechnic in 1983. For many years he has worked for the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) and recently has been based in Blairgowrie in the position of Area Manager for Scotland and Ireland.



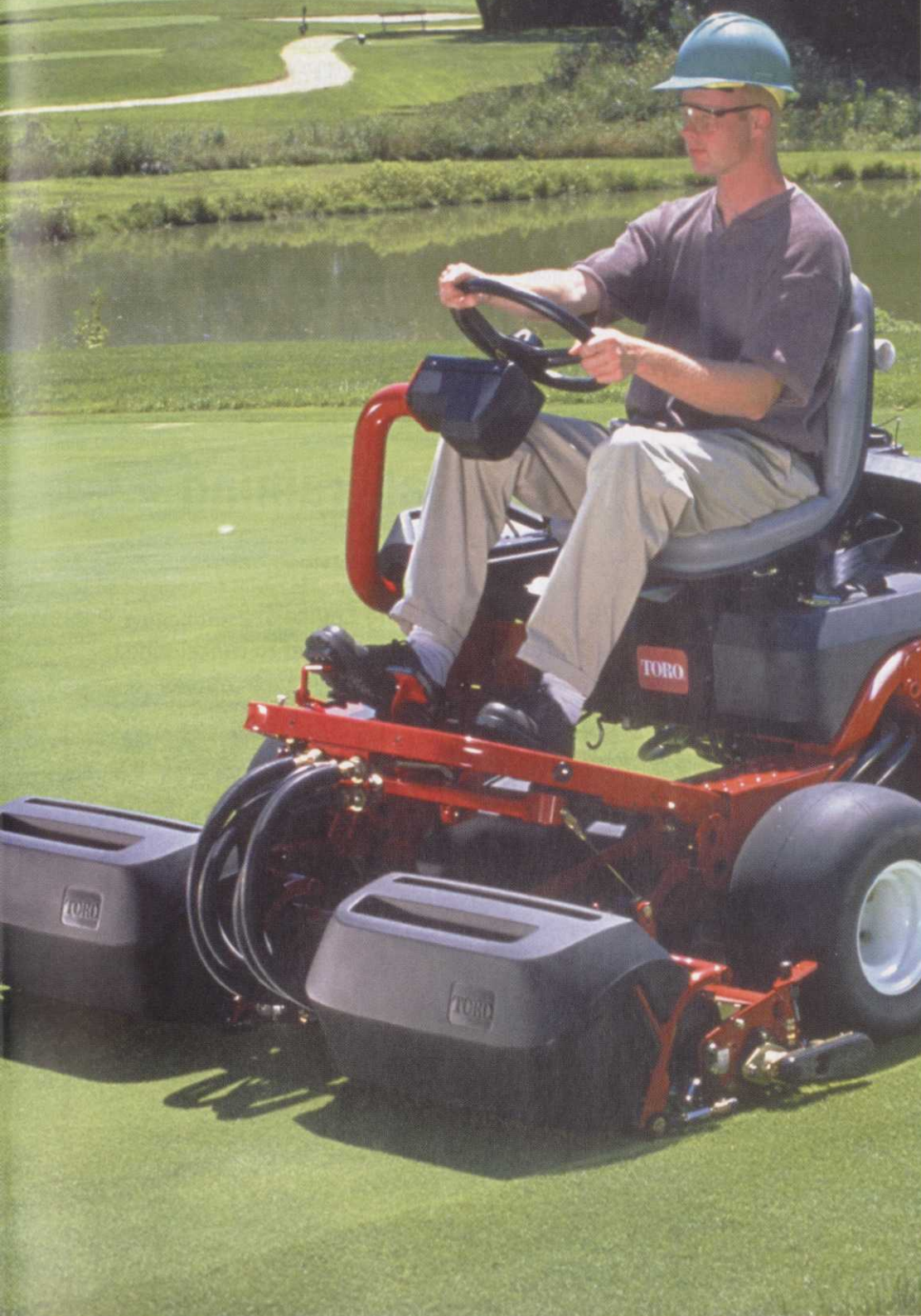
## DOUBLE DEALING

SISIS have appointed two new regional dealers to promote and sell their range of mowing equipment, and to offer a first-class after sales service.

Mitchells are appointed to cover the Midlands and have branches throughout the area and C & O Tractors Ltd at Blandford in Dorset are appointed to offer sales and service in Dorset, Wiltshire and South West Hampshire.



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**Flex 21**

The top of the range Toro Flex 21 walk-behind greens mower flexes with ground contours to virtually eliminate scalping and give a perfect cut.



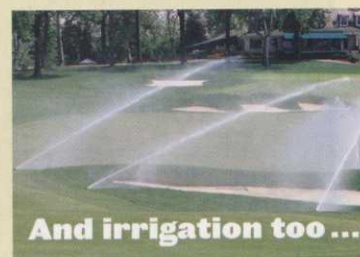
**Greensmaster 1000**

With a 21in cutting width, this popular walk-behind greens mower follows ground contours to achieve a close, consistent cut.



**ProCore Aerator**

This highly-productive aerator gives the best performance on greens – plus tees and fairways too.



**And irrigation too ...**

Toro offers a complete range of innovative, high quality irrigation products and systems, including upgrade controllers, to help grow and maintain the best turf.

If you're one of those who thinks that the price tag of a quality Toro product is beyond your pocket – think again. The Toro Greensmaster 3250-D will not only give big savings in running costs, less down time and labour charges, but match-perfect play too. Toro machines are the cost-effective choice, being less expensive in the long run. So for best value, it really pays to take a closer look at Toro. Just call 01480 226800 today.

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Unlock the doors to progress through BIGGA's Education and Development Fund - the key to a great future for greenkeepers, golf clubs and the game of golf.

Golden and Silver Key Membership is available to both companies and individuals.

For details, please contact Neil Thomas on 01347 833800 or via [neil@bigga.co.uk](mailto:neil@bigga.co.uk)

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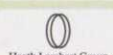
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Clive A Archer; John Crawford; Douglas G Duguid; Alan Holmes; Robert Maibusch MG; Richard S Mullen; Elliott R Small; Steven Tierney; CJ Yeaman; Richard Lawrence; Clive Osgood; David Robinson; Richard Stillwell; Stephen Dixon; Ian Semple; Paul Jenkins; Robert Hogarth; R Steele

# A Huge Investment by BIGGA

Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, trumpets the amount the Association does for greenkeeper education and outlines some of the projects that are currently underway.

BIGGA has continued to invest, heavily, in greenkeeper education and training over the past year. The total spend is over £150 000, which means that we are spending an average of £25 per greenkeeper member on education, training and development.

This year has seen the largest, ever, subsidy to Regional Training, thanks to contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund. Continue to Learn, at Harrogate, in January 2003, featured speakers from around the world and delegate fees started at £0, as some of the Seminar sessions were free of charge.

Working alongside the GTC and the GCSAI has enabled us to produce and distribute a careers CD ROM, which describes careers in greenkeeping and golf course management to those thinking about their future.

Thanks to a number of sponsors, we have been able to run the Golf Environment Competition, the Student of the Year Competition and the BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships Scheme, plus issue Machinery and Work Equipment Training Guides to all Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers.



## Regional Training

The Autumn 2002 and Spring 2003 Regional Training Course Season is now over. Our initial plan was to run 28 courses but we have had to cancel nine. However, we were asked to run an extra 12 courses, making 31 courses altogether, which attracted 256 delegates.

Regional Courses at Manchester and Luton, again, attracted delegates from around the UK and Europe. Courses have included Basic Computer Skills, Soil Science, Abrasive Wheels, Chain Saw, Manual Handling, Health and Safety Awareness, Budgets and Finance, Presentations, First Aid, Essential Management Skills, Coaching Skills, Project Management, Reel Sharpening, Presenting a Professional Image and Further Management Skills.

The Education and Development Fund also supported the Scottish Education Conference, the Midlands Region Conference and the South West Region Conference.

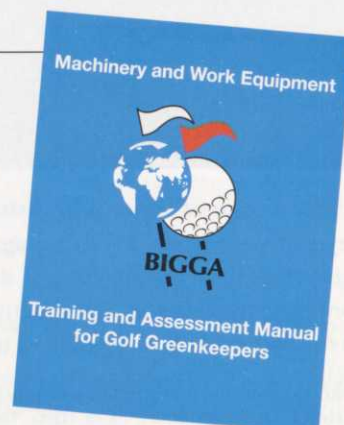
It is now time to begin planning Regional Courses for Autumn 2003 and Spring 2004 and Regional Administrators and Section Secretaries have been asked to bid for training in their Regions and Sections. However, we can arrange training on most subjects in

all areas for members of BIGGA. All we need is the type of training required, a location where the training can take place and a minimum number of delegates e.g. four delegates for a Chain Saw Course, six delegates for a management skills course. The cost of courses will be held at the incredibly low rate of £30 (+VAT) for a one-day course and £60 (+VAT) for a two-day course. Moreover, as each day of training costs £800, the cost for ten delegates is £80 each. This means that each day of training is subsidised by at least £50. Therefore, you need to attend only two days of training per year to recover more than the cost of membership.

Make sure that you get the training that you need, at a location that is convenient to you, at a price that is way below the commercial rate, by contacting your Regional Administrator, your Section Secretary or by contacting Ken or Sami at BIGGA HOUSE.

## Machinery and Work Equipment Training Manual

Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers in the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe should be receiving their copy of the Machinery and Work Equipment Training Manual sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen by the end of this month. The printing has been delayed due to a number of factors beyond our control but printing is now complete. If your copy does not arrive by the end of May then please contact BIGGA House.







## Golf Environment Competition

Thanks to continued support from the R&A, plus sponsorship from Scotts UK Professional and Syngenta Professional Products we have, again, been able to run the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. Application forms have been sent to more than 100 golf clubs but there is still chance for you to enter. Simply contact BIGGA House and ask for an application form or download a form from our website.

Increased sponsorship has led to a greater number of prizes, with the winner receiving a Scotts Weather Master weather station and a cheque for £2,000. At the other extreme, the Best Newcomer will receive a cheque for £500.

## Environmental Awards for Golf Operators

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, which seems to be the case with an award from the Friends of Conservation called the Environmental Awards for Golf Operators. Supported by the UK Travel and Tourism Industry, Friends of Conservation have launched a competition to encourage wildlife friendly practices on golf courses. The first prize will be a cheque for £2,500. All submissions need to be supported by a recognised local wildlife/environmental/conservation body. Further details can be obtained from Friends of Conservation, 16-18 Denbigh Street, London, SW1V 2ER, 020 7828 4856, e-mail: [info@foc-uk.com](mailto:info@foc-uk.com). Their website is: [www.foc-uk.com](http://www.foc-uk.com)



## Toro Student of the Year Competition

The entry deadline for entries to this year's Toro Student of the Year Competition is fast approaching. Entries should be returned to BIGGA House by 9 May. Judging will commence, in Edinburgh, on Monday 30 June. If you wish to nominate a student greenkeeper and have not received an entry form, contact BIGGA HOUSE as soon as possible. Entry forms can also be downloaded from our website: [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

## Higher Education Scholarships supported by

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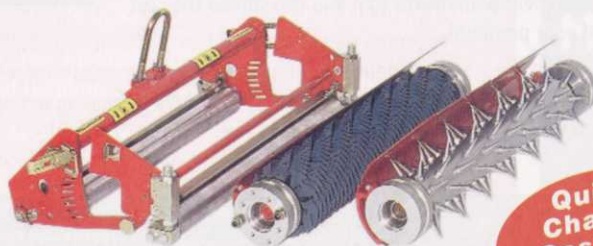
More than 20 greenkeepers are seeing the benefit from BIGGA Higher Education Scholarships which are supported by Ransomes Jacobsen.

Courses being studied cover the full range of higher education from N/SVQ Level 4 to MSC. Funding is available for those starting courses in 2004 so why not take the plunge by asking for an application form to plan the next move in your career development.

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Rachael and Gemma from the Membership Department would like to welcome 107 new members to the Association and introduce a wider range of benefits to members.

## IMPROVED INSURANCE QUOTATION SERVICE

For the past few years BIGGA has made an insurance quotation service available to its members. This service, in conjunction with Heath Lambert Affinity Partnerships, is now expanding and offers a wide range of products. For an immediate quotation of any of the following please call **01603 828255**

The range of products available to members consists of:



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BIGGA members can now call just one number to plan their insurance needs. Contact us today for a no obligation chat. Our rates, service and advice are just a small part of a much bigger package.

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- Pet – protection against the costs of veterinary care
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### HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE

Insurance cover is available for buildings and contents, with a discount on the overall premium for insuring both the buildings and contents in a combined policy. Cover automatically includes new for old replacement of items, and the optional instalment plan means that you can spread the cost of your premium.



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William Butler, East  
John Crawford, East  
Paul Dumma, East  
Raymond Hunter, East  
Gary Jensen, East  
Jamie Kaszuba, East  
Alexander Latto, Central  
David March, West  
Wayne Meikle, Central  
Greg Paterson, Central  
Ian Templeton, Ayrshire

#### Northern Region

James Bentley, Northern  
David Crampton, Northern  
Ben Crowther, North West  
Chris Fraser, North West  
Raymond Griffiths, North Wales  
Stephen Harmston, North East  
Matthew Holden, Sheffield  
Gary Hudson, Northern  
Stephen Jenkins, North Wales

Steven Malone, North West  
Stanley Massarelli, North Wales  
Daniel Ovington, Cleveland  
Adam Pallas, North East  
Dewi Roberts, North Wales  
James Senior, Northern  
Tony Simpson, Sheffield  
Jack Strong, Cleveland  
Stuart Taylor, Sheffield

Peter Vinton, North East  
Leigh Watson, Northern  
Andrew Weatheritt, North East  
John Williams, North Wales  
Paul Wilton, Northern  
Carl Wood, Cleveland  
Christopher Wright, North West

#### Midland Region

Gary Bateman, BB&O  
Gary Cousins, BB&O  
Benjamin Cumberland, East Midland  
Simon Graham, BB&O

David Grant, BB&O  
Robert Hindhaugh, Midland  
Daniel Lenton, East Midland  
Craig Marsh, BB&O  
Robert Palmer, BB&O  
Gerald Pead, BB&O  
David Peters, BB&O  
Justin Randall, BB&O  
Keir Threlkeld, Midland  
Robert Writtle, Midland  
James Yates, Midland

#### South East Region

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Matthew Ash, Sussex  
Christopher Cameron, Sussex  
Craig Campbell, Essex  
John Cole, Sussex  
Craig Davies, Surrey  
Wayne Dudley, Surrey  
Russell Eales, Sussex  
Dan Harding, Surrey  
Andrew Hill, Sussex  
Tim Hogg, Surrey  
Dean Jones, Sussex

Gary Kennington, Kent  
Adam Lunoe, Surrey  
Jonathan Marchant, Sussex  
Iain Mccann, Surrey  
Christopher Sinclair, Kent  
Paul Standen, Surrey  
Joel Williams, Surrey  
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Karl Bonner, South Coast  
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David King, South Coast  
Richard Kingscott, South West  
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## PET

Keeping a Pet is a big commitment. It can also be expensive. Recent advances in treatments have meant that over the past few years there has been a steady and fairly steep increase in veterinary fees. Should a pet suffer an accident or become ill, the cost of providing veterinary care can reach hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

We have arranged a scheme for BIGGA which will provide protection against the cost of veterinary treatment and a range of other benefits dependant on the type of cover which includes:

- Complementary treatment fees
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- Accidental Death
- Theft or Straying
- Advertising & Reward
- Emergency Boarding Fees
- Holiday Cancellation Costs

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance has traditionally been bought through travel agents or tour operators when booking a holiday or making travel arrangement. Heath Lambert Affinity Partnerships offer both single trip and annual policies to BIGGA members and their families. You will find that the rates compare very favourably with what is available elsewhere in the market and that cover limits are very generous. Naturally golf clubs are covered under the products



*Insurance products and Financial Services are provided by Heath Lambert Consulting Limited, which is regulated by the Financial Services Authority and is a member of the General Insurance Standards Council.*



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



## John Pemberton

### Position:

Deputy Executive Director

### What does your role involve?

Responsible for BIGGA's finances together with administration at Headquarters

### How long have you worked for the Association?

10 years

### Where were you born and brought up?

York

### Where did you work before you joined BIGGA?

Group Accountant for a Danish owned wholesale distributor involved in the building industry

### What are your hobbies?

Golf, DIY, Antiques and Furniture Restoration

### What is your favourite food?

A nicely cooked steak

### What is your favourite film?

I don't have one

### What was the last book you read?

Dick Francis

### Who is your all time hero?

My wife - for putting up with me for 33 years!

### What was the best event you've ever attended?

My own wedding

### What is your claim to fame? (None not acceptable)

In the days of the Benson & Hedges Tournament at York one year I helped out driving courtesy cars for the players and officials. Passengers included a much younger Seve Ballesteros but the most courteous was Gary Player who insisted on sitting in the front seat. He was a good conversationalist and we ended up stopping at a small corner shop one evening so that he could buy some carrots. Imagine the reaction of the shopkeeper!

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Membership Queries ..... 01347 833800

BIGGA Website ..... [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

## 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](http://www.bigga.org.uk), receives one of these FM desktop scan radios.

Our congratulations go to May's winner, Kerry Jones from Garnant Park Golf Club who's message was posted on the 25th March under the 'Talking Shop' section.

## MAY'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

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



# Course Feature

## Playing your Cards Right

When Robert Hogarth took over at a new development in Peeblesshire he had a great deal to content with but with the right attitude he is reaping the rewards



When I arrived at MacDonald Cardrona Golf and Country Club the Course Manager was in the quaint railway station building, acting as the temporary clubhouse until the official opening of the new one, counting money.

This wasn't anything directly concerning his staff wages or the maintenance of the golf course but money which had been taken in for the buggy or cart hire and green fees and Robert Hogarth, calculator in hand, was splitting it into the relevant accounts.

That's the way life has been for Robert since he arrived at the superb resort, just south of Peebles, in October '99. He has turned his hand to just about everything in that time and when Prince Charles opens Cardrona officially next month there will be few people more proud of what has been achieved than him.

Among the tasks Robert has tackled are drawing up the fixture lists; determining the Standard Scratch; naming the holes; sourcing a second hand bridge over the River Tweed... oh and selling space in the pro shop to top clothing and equipment manufacturers. All in a day's work for Robert, who also manages to fit being Scottish Region Education Convenor and GTC Liaison Officer for Lothian and Borders.

On top of that, of course, he had the growing-in of the Dave Thomas designed course from the moment the constructors left the site in November '99.

"Construction had started in May '98, which coincided with an extremely wet time and work was held up dramatically. The first sowing was done in July '99 and I arrived in the October. But, with it too wet to work, the constructors left the site in the November but didn't return the following spring to finish the job. It was the last I saw of them," recalled Robert.

"At that stage it became apparent that I could take one of two attitudes. I could take the view that it wasn't my job, nor my responsibility, and just wait for something to happen. Alternatively I could say 'Right, this is what we've got to work with. It's not the greatest, but let's see what we can do'. Thankfully I chose the latter approach."

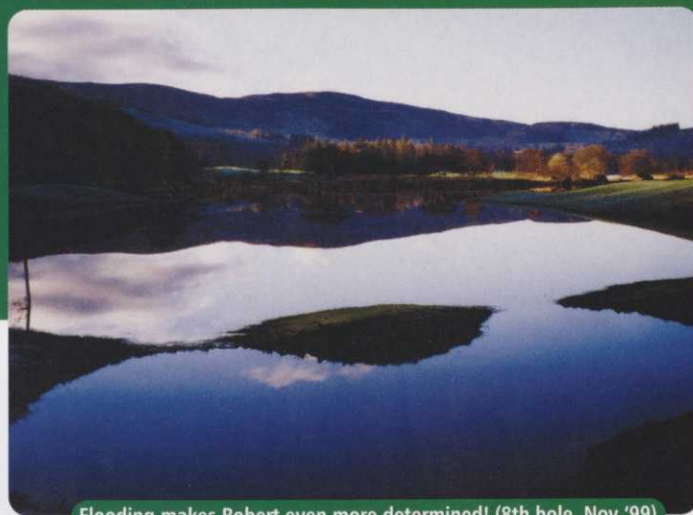
And he hasn't regretted the decision. It wasn't the easiest, as he had little or no equipment to work with at the start and no staff, but he set to work about finishing the job that had been started and moving the course forward.

"The whole episode taught me that you can achieve a lot more than you believe you can by having the right attitude and the necessary people skills. There were, and still are, a lot of contractors on the site, building houses and the hotel, using large machinery and by talking to them I was able to get favours done in exchange for games of golf when the course opened. It's what makes the world go round" he explained.

This pragmatic approach was also seen with the designing of the course as well.

"The course was designed and built for £1.5 million out of an overall project cost of £12 million and to meet budget Dave Thomas felt it best not to include every feature he intended for the course right at the beginning.





Flooding makes Robert even more determined! (8th hole, Nov '99)

"What we have achieved for £1.5 million is of a high standard, but what we have actually done is complete the foundations for a superb course with other elements to be added when the budget becomes available.

"For example there are still 40 bunkers to go in and in many cases we have the materials on site and seeded over them for the time being but they will be brought into play in the next couple of years."

The golf course has been designed to fit into the rolling hills and countryside of the local surroundings and uses its main feature, the River Tweed, to great effect.

The river, which is regarded as the best salmon fishing river in the country, also causes some major headaches and, as will be revealed later, to Robert, some leg aches.

"Because we have built a golf course on a flood plain it meant we had to raise all the greens and tees, which are built to USGA guidelines, and create a series of swails and ponds to move the flood water as quickly as possible.

"I was very sceptical at first that it would work but it is superb. There is no point attempting to stop the flooding so we put all the resources into trying to get rid of the water as quickly as possible."

And it needed to be as, three weeks after Robert started, they experienced what was a one in five year flood which drowned the still to be completed fairways under four feet of water.

"I wondered what I was getting myself into but the Tweed is a very fast flowing, clean river, not very silty and leaving very little debris, and we can get the course back into play very quickly. For example last November, the

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View of 16th hole

most common month for a flood, we had a bad one but had nine holes playable in 12 hours and the whole course in 24. Last year we were only closed for a total of 48 hours."

While the river is a superb feature of the area it does mean that the area is designated a SSSI from the river bank to the golf course and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Natural Heritage are very protective of what goes on.

As with the other areas of his responsibility Robert built up relationships with the people involved, earned their trust, and moved things forward.

"They were under the misconception that we were big fungicide junkies and that we'd spill out thousands of tonnes of chemicals, so I arranged, through Jonathan Smith of the Scottish Golf Course Wildlife Group, to bring a group from Scottish Natural Heritage here to explain what goes on.

"The argument I put over was that if the area was still agricultural farm animals would go to the edge of the river and the banks would slide away. I told them that it was absolutely essential that I maintain the river banks because that is what protects me from the river. I'm going to look after that river bank like no-one has ever looked after it in the past," said Robert, who was also responsible for sourcing a second hand bridge over the Tweed capable of taking all their machinery and a strong gallery, if and when the course is chosen for a professional tournament.

"CEPA then allowed me to take water out through the bank into the river as long as it was monitored by them, the work carried out by a company recommended by CEPA and that the river bank be maintained to its original standard.

"I got a lovely letter back from them afterwards saying that I'd changed their opinions on how it would be," he said.

Cardrona is a unique project and with the 280 houses, built by five different builders to fit varying budgets up to £1 million - a King's ransom in this particular location - and is actually the first new village to be built in the Scottish Borders since the 1700s.

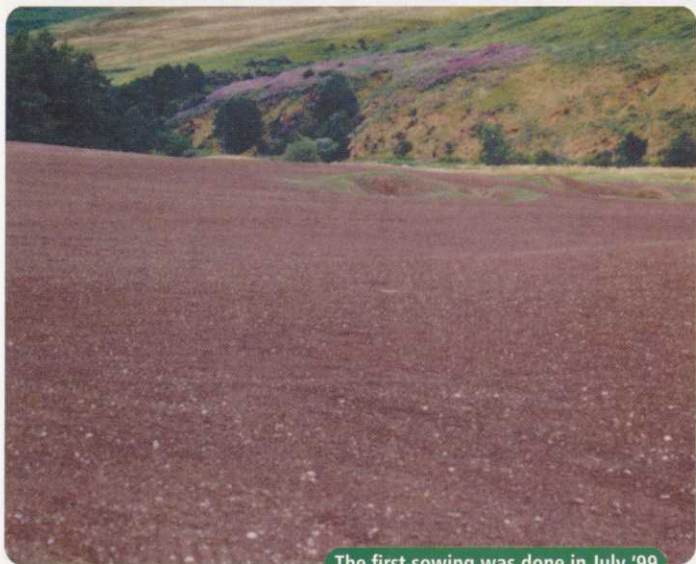
"The whole project was the brainchild of local farmer, Tom Renwick, who had the vision to see that agriculture was about to take a dip in the 80s, and had the idea to build a village together with the golf course. The idea took off when he contacted MacDonald Hotels in the 90s," explained Robert, who takes additional pride in the project as he was born in Peebles and has built a greenkeeping team of predominately local people.

Every visitor to the golf club will have valet parking, their own locker for the day, their clubs taken to the 1st tee and shoes cleaned for them by the butler.

"MacDonald's have 127 hotels but no five stars and although Cardrona will open with four they are going for five very quickly. Cardrona is going to be the flagship of the company."

"It will be an all year round resort with golf between March and October; salmon fishing October and November; December will be Christmas parties; January and February is the Conference season with March the start of golf and the wedding season. We have an events division so we can organise anything including falconry, archery, 4x4 quads biking, tank driving and ballooning," said Robert, who was Head Greenkeeper at Peebles at 19 and who arrived at Cardrona from Cathcart Castle.

"This has been the biggest development in Peebleshire in the last 200 years and so the local team, and it includes many of the others in the hotel as well, have a vested interest in making it a success."



The first sowing was done in July '99



Construction of USGA practice putting green (800m)



# Course Feature

And "making it a success" saw Robert turn himself into a super salesman and selling shop space to blue chip companies.

"Until recently MacDonald Hotels wasn't really a golf orientated company and as I had experience of working in the industry my General Manager asked me to find 17 nominated suppliers and sell shop space to them for a three year period to pay for the high class pro shop fitting we'd had done.

"When someone throws something like this at you you panic but that's what I did. I went through the golf magazines and got the names of companies, then a contact name and called them up. Some turned me down but by the end I'd persuaded companies like Ashworth, Greg Norman, Pringle Burbury Golf, Ping, Maxfli and Taylor Made to come on board and by the end I actually had a waiting list!"

When the club's new Director of Golf arrived from his previous job at Gleneagles he couldn't quite believe what had been done as selling shop space to companies is not even done at Gleneagles!

"It gave me a fantastic amount of satisfaction."

It was that same ability and golfing knowledge which led him to be the man who named the homes, organised the fixture lists and the temporary standard scratch for the course and he dismissed the tasks with the view that they needed to be done.

Robert's approach to maintenance is one of low feeding but he admits to being a realist and that his regime will be dictated by the levels of play.

"On the greens I put on very little feeding and a lot of top dressing and overseeding especially in the early stages which a lot of people might mind strange on USGA greens. I get away with it but I'm a new resort and the hotel hasn't opened yet - although the course has been open since August 2001 - and I haven't had the weight of play yet.

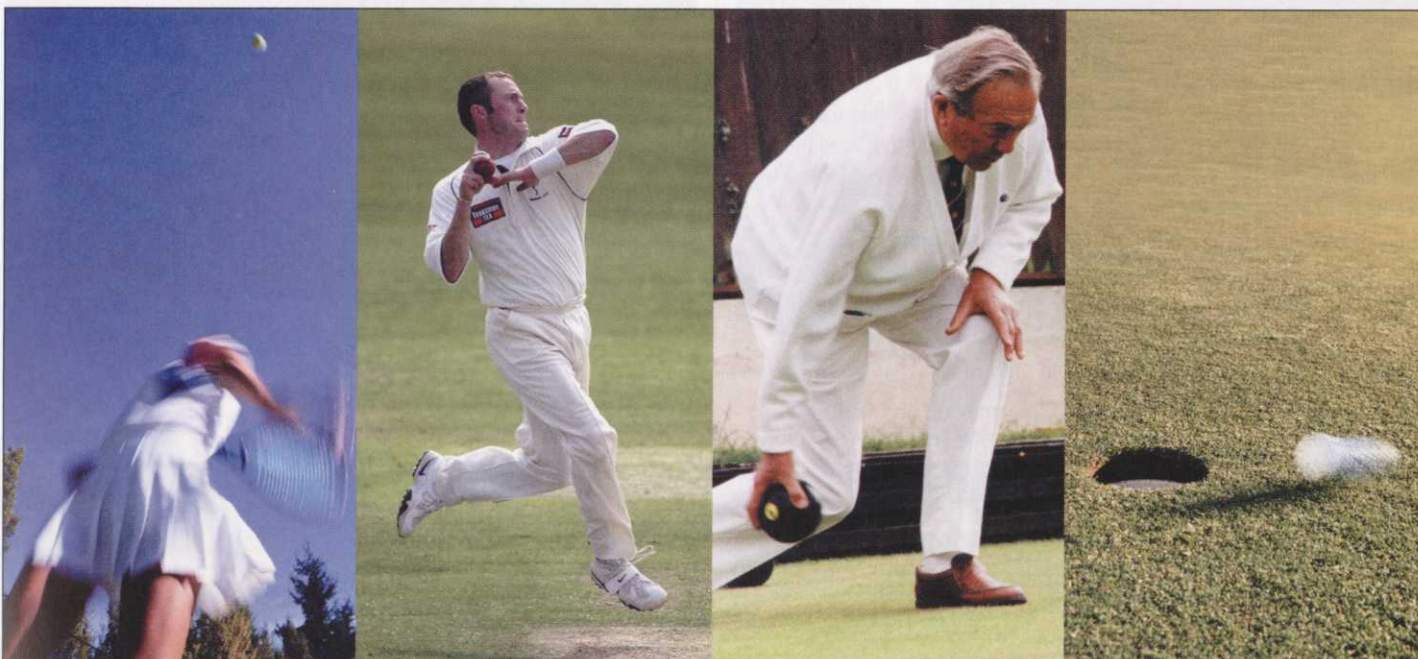
"I have good tight bent fescue swards and I'll do everything in my power to keep them that way but if I have to change the programme to suit customer needs so be it.

"The bottom line is that I'm a realist and I know that if I've got 100 golfers out on a soaking wet course in November my bents and fescues probably won't survive and I'll have to build a programme to suit that need. But that's modern golf. You must meet the requirements of the customer," he said.

"I'm very conscious of the company's role more than my own and it would take a stronger person than me to tell a Chief Executive that we can't take £50,000 worth of business at a weekend because it was going to damage the course.

"I used to see the golf course as my own but since coming here I've found that there are other ways, and there are better ways. I'm not saying that everything I did in the past was wrong, but you can always open up your eyes to something better.

Robert is delighted with the attitude and commitment of his seven man team which he will grow by one more in the summer.



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Bringing quality to play





View of 11th hole from the back of the green

"I've put together a really strong and willing team although there have been casualties along the way, people who have come in and worked very hard but been unable to maintain it. I'm very proud of the guys I have," he said, while revealing that at the beginning of March the team, along with the fire brigade had been out fighting a fire which accounted for 150 tubed trees.

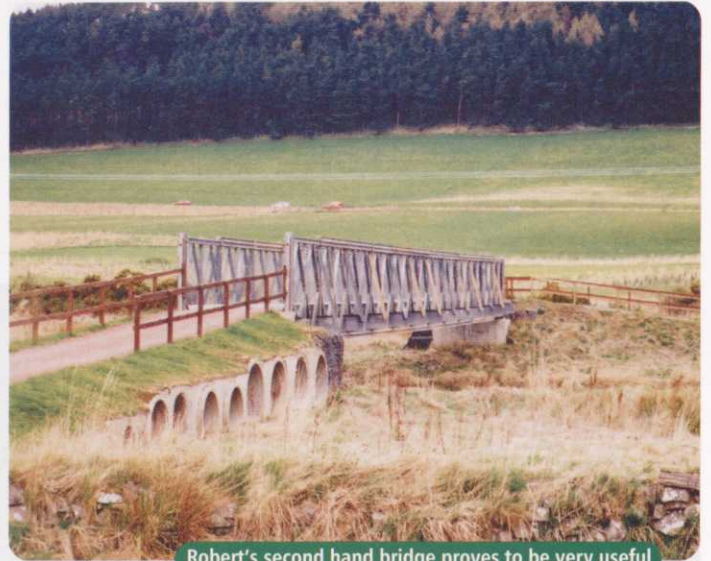
"A grow-in is hard graft and on this site we've got stones eight inches below the surface and when you dig stones they never seem to go away," while in addition they had carried out an extensive wood clearance programme.

"This is my first grow-in and I swore 18 months in that I'd never do another one but as time goes on the pain dulls and I think I would do it again," said Robert, who is indebted to the support he's received from local dealer, George Henderson, and, in particular, Graham Miller and William Smith.

One pain that has taken some time to dull is the one from his right leg after he broke his ankle falling into the river last year.

"I hopped over the dyke to check the outlet of the no-return valve but got my legs tangled up in the long grass and took a four foot drop into the river onto my right leg shattering my ankle in three places. I've had a metal pin inserted in it and I'm afraid my five-a-side days are over. I was indebted during this time to all my staff for a fantastic job, especially Deputy Course Manager, Colin Noble and First Assistant Donald Campbell."

However when Prince Charles arrives to open MacDonald Cardrona Golf and Country Club officially next month Robert will hopefully be able to forget even that pain and feel nothing but pride in what has been achieved.



Robert's second hand bridge proves to be very useful



Par 3: 13th hole



# Course Feature



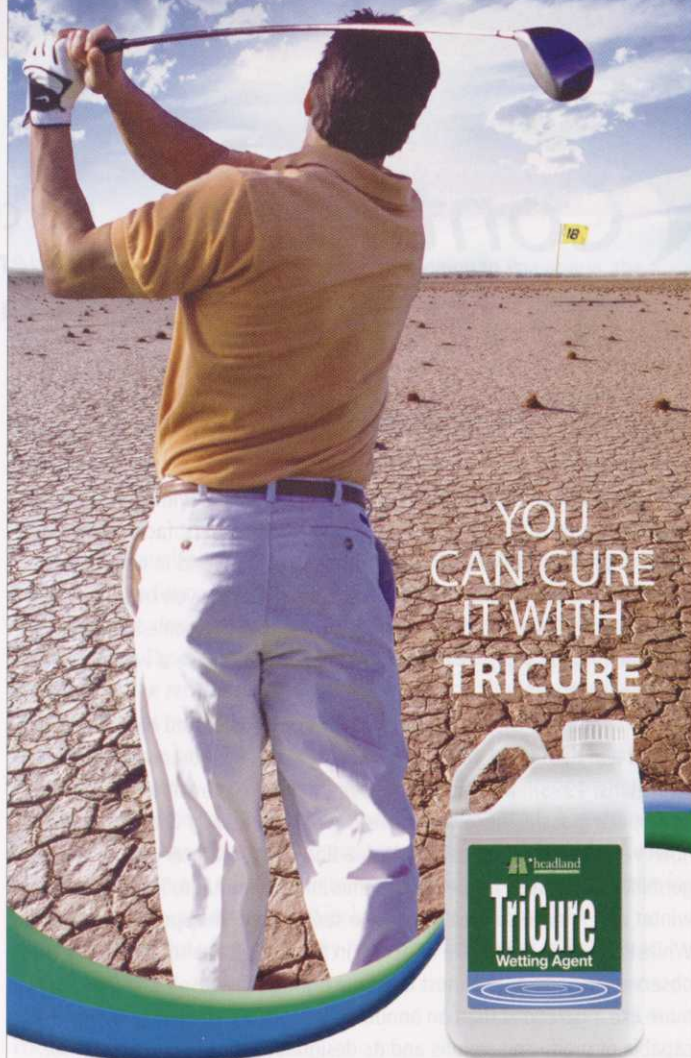
Par 4: 2nd hole with Hosburgh Castle in the background

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# POA ANNUA CONTROL: WHERE ARE WE NOW

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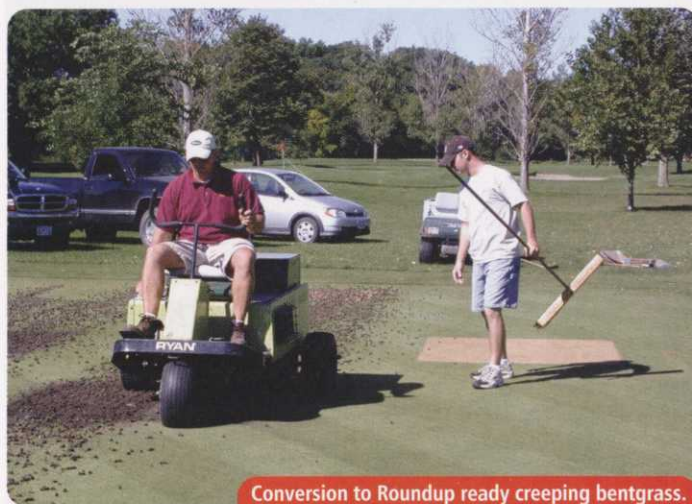
Nick Christians, University Professor, Iowa State University, gives an update on where we are in the battle to rid our courses of the old enemy.

Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua* L.) is one of the most widely distributed weed problems that Course Mangers' and greenkeepers' face. It can be found in greens, tees and fairways throughout the world in both cool-season and warm-season regions. This species has proven over the years to be one of the most difficult weeds to control. While some headway can be made in reducing it, *Poa annua* always seems to have a way of winning the ultimate battle.

*Poa annua* is a cool-season grass that can be identified by its boat-shaped leaf tip, folded vernation, and prominent membranous ligule (Christians, 1998). Botanic texts generally class it as a winter annual and as a bunch grass. Those who have worked extensively with this species, however, know that this can be misleading. A true winter annual should germinate from seed in the late summer to early autumn, live through the winter as a mature species, produce a seed crop in the spring and then die. While *Poa annua* is capable of acting in this way, it is also commonly observed to germinate almost any time during the season and may act more like a perennial than an annual. There are also many types that are capable of producing stolons and its designation as a bunch type is not always accurate.

There are a number of factors that make this such a difficult species to control selectively in golf-course turf. It is a highly productive seed producer. This gives it huge competitive advantage over grasses like *Agrostis stolonifera*. The seed can live for years in the soil and will germinate when it is exposed by a ball mark or divot. While *Poa annua* is not very competitive with other grass species at higher mowing heights, it is highly competitive at low mowing heights and can even be observed to produce seed at mowing heights as low as 0.254cm (0.1in). This gives it a big advantage over *Poa pratensis* which is poorly adapted to mowing heights below 4cm.

Its greatest competitive advantage, however, comes from its genetic diversity. While this grass is identified as a single species, it is really a compilation of hundreds, if not thousands, of biotypes, each with their own distinct characteristics. There are annual bluegrasses termed *Poa annua* var. *annua* L. Timm. (Beard, 1978) that are bunch grasses that act as true winter annuals. There are also types known as *Poa annua* var. *reptans* (Hauskn) Timm. (Timm, 1965) that act as weak perennials and may have stolons. Between these two extremes are the other biotypes, some closer to the *annua* types and some closer to the *reptans*.



**Conversion to Roundup ready creeping bentgrass.  
The process began with core aerification**

On older courses, it is not unusual to find distinct biotypes that are common to fairways, others that are common to greens, and yet others to tees (Lush 1989). It is common to also observe variable biotypes under each of these management regimes (Cline, 2001; Wu, 1991). Variations in colour, texture and time of seedhead production are often observed on the same green. This diversity of biotypes helps explain the variations in response to herbicide treatment that are often reported.

In 1996, I spent several weeks looking back at over 85 years of research on attempts to control annual bluegrass in golf course turf. My findings were later published in a Golf Course Management article titled 'A historical perspective of annual bluegrass control' (Christians, 1996). The history of attempts to control this troublesome grass has been one of temporary excitement about new herbicides or plant growth regulators in early testing stages, followed by disappointment once the material hit the market.

That doesn't mean that all attempts at control have met with failure. Some have provided limited, usually regional, success in selective control. Ethofumesate (Prograss), for instance, has proven to be quite effective at removing *Poa annua* from perennial ryegrass fairways and tees in the Midwestern United States. When used in other species and other locations, however, its use has been less successful.



Fenarimol, marketed as the fungicide Rubigan in the US, has been a very successful postemergence control of the annual types of *Poa annua* along the Gulf Coast in the Southern US, but has been shown to be much less effective on perennial types in the rest of the country. Plant growth regulators such as flurprimidol (Cutless) and paclobutrazol (TGR and Trimit) have also shown positive results in some situations and some environments and have been less effective in others.

The problem, again, can generally be related to the genetic diversity of the target species. I have conducted research on experimental herbicides that effectively killed *Poa annua* in both *Agrostis stolonifera* and *Poa pratensis* fairways. When the same material was applied to other biotypes, however, 12 times the rate of the herbicide would not even discolour the treated *Poa annua*.

Little has changed in the seven years since the Golf Course Management article. There are new materials such as rimsulfuron (TranXit GTA), that is showing some promise as a control of *Poa annua* in *Cynodon* spp turf in the Southern US (Walker et al. 2003).

Another experimental herbicide, bispyribac-sodium (Velocity), has also met with some success as a selective control in *Agrostis stolonifera* fairways. If these materials follow the history of earlier herbicides, however, they will likely be effective in limited situations and only certain biotypes of *Poa annua*.

I ended the 1996 article with the statement that I did not believe that a single 'magic bullet' herbicide would ever be developed that would be the final answer to the *Poa annua* problem. Nothing in the past seven years has changed my mind. However, there is some new technology on the horizon that may greatly impact the science of weed control. That is the developing science of biotechnology and genetic transformation. The most promising example of this new technology in the turf industry, is the recent development of Roundup ready creeping bentgrasses (*Agrostis stolonifera*).

Roundup (glyphosate) is a nonselective, systemic herbicide that has been used since the late 1970's to control a variety of grasses and broadleaves. It is very effective on all of the major cool-season and warm-season turfgrasses and is often used in the renovation process where all existing vegetation is to be killed before reestablishment.

Scientists have discovered that a gene exists that allows some plants to tolerate the effects of this herbicide. Recent advancements have made it possible for scientists to isolate this gene from an agrobacterium and place it in plants that normally would be susceptible to Roundup. This has been a very successful technology in crops like soybeans and has revolutionised weed control in many agricultural areas in the US.

Scientists at the O.M. Scotts Co. of Marysville, Ohio, in conjunction with scientists from the Monsanto Co. of St. Louis, Missouri have successfully inserted this gene into creeping bentgrass. This Roundup ready bentgrass is still experimental and has not been approved for sale as of spring 2003. When this technology does reach the market, it will provide one of the first truly effective means of removing *Poa annua*, which is susceptible to



Perennial ryegrass fairways area being seeded with Roundup ready bentgrasses

Roundup, from creeping bentgrass turf. In addition to *Poa annua*, the Roundup should also control most other weeds that compete with bentgrass on the golf course.

The technology is not fool proof. It is possible that resistance may develop in weeds over a period of time as Roundup is applied and Roundup ready *Poa annua* could be eventually develop. However, this would take time and if Roundup ready bentgrasses are released for sale, they provide the promise of many years of *Poa annua*-free greens, tees and fairways.

At Iowa State University, work is presently underway to determine the best procedure for converting existing turf to Roundup ready bentgrasses. The research is designed to study the effects of Roundup timing before and after seeding. The objective is to convert to Roundup ready bentgrasses while taking the renovated area out of play for the shortest possible time. The work began in the autumn of 2002 and involves the conversion of existing creeping bentgrass greens and fairways, as well as the conversion of fairways presently consisting of *Poa pratensis* and *Lolium perenne*.

Initial results indicate that conversion to Roundup ready bentgrass can be easily performed by seeding directly into existing turf, combined with Roundup applications to kill the existing turf. This project will continue for at least one more season and will include further work on the management of the areas once they have been converted to Roundup ready bentgrasses.

#### Footnote:

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Preparation of the area to be converted to Roundup ready creeping bentgrass



# ROOTING FOR SUCCESS

## TESTING TIMES



Above: A scene witnessed regularly on golf courses everywhere

Below: Testing begins with a 100mm core from three greens



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We can then use this to identify a top-dressing range that either matches the rootzone or improves it.

**The 70:30 myth**  
People who just mix sand/soil mix in the



Above: Peter Jefford, a well-known face in the industry

Below: Particle size is of key importance



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In the first of a two-part article, Peter Jefford and Mick Higgins of Rufford, talk about the benefits of top dressings and the importance of testing in order to establish compatibility with the existing rootzone

## TESTING TIMES

A frustratingly unpredictable climate, economic pressures and increasing numbers of players all demanding perfect playing conditions seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year. It's all a far cry from the challenges faced by greenkeepers 30 years ago and leaves today's successors nursing some major headaches. Establishing consistency and quality in such a fast changing industry is the key to creating successful greens - and that is all about testing.

### Definition

Before we go any further, let's stop and consider exactly what we mean by the term topdressings and why they play an essential role for greenkeepers today.

A farmer would interpret topdressing to mean the surface application of fertiliser (usually nitrogen) to a grow-

ing crop. However in the turfgrass industry the term topdressing is used almost exclusively to describe the surface application of sand, soil, organic material or any combination of these.

So why are topdressings necessary? We all know that long-term maintenance of high quality fine turf on golf courses is extremely difficult, especially given the factors mentioned in the opening paragraph. Greens only account for a very small percentage of the total surface area of a golf course - but every single player ultimately ends up there, resulting in a frightening rate of concentrated foot traffic.

However, frequent application of an appropriate topdressing will assist a greenkeeper greatly by providing the following benefits:

1. It helps maintain a smooth, true running surface which in turn improves mowing efficiency
2. In conjunction with scarification, it will avoid thatch build-up
3. Enables you to control organic matter content, water infiltration and aeration
4. It's essential in maintaining or increasing rootzone depth
5. Improves germination on overseeded areas
6. Improves or sustains appropriate soil texture

But you must remember that topdressings add to and become part of the rootzone. Over a period of years topdressings will either alter or sustain the physical (and to some extent biological) properties of rootzones. That's why it's essential to test and establish a green's existing profile before you can select and apply an appropriate topdressing.

### Compatibility

You can't take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach when it comes to applying topdressings. Because they eventually become part of the rootzone they

logically need to have similar composition and properties. For the majority of golf greens this means a particle size composition dominant in medium sand. But this is only a general guide - it's still essential to use a topdressing that's compatible with your existing rootzone. If you don't then you could be in trouble.

There's no way that a topdressing supplier can claim that they have a good product for you without first of all testing your greens. That's because there's no such thing as a universally 'good' topdressing - what might be right for one course could be completely wrong for another because applying a mismatched topdressing can cause major layering problems to the rootzone profile. A major risk is the creation of layers of different pore size systems within a shallow depth of the rootzone. If this happens then water retention and air/water balance will be affected and also rooting depth. The frightening fact is that this problem won't become apparent for several years, by which time it may be impossible to rectify through cultivation techniques.

### Guesswork

It's so frustrating when people cut corners through either cost constraints or lack of awareness, because that have gone before them to create a great green. It doesn't have to be guesswork when it comes to determining the compatibility of a topdressing and a rootzone - it's not a blind date! The only answer is to test. And that's what we've built the Rufford business on.

To illustrate this in practical terms we'll take a specific example of one of our customers. By testing we were able to establish that their greens contained a lot of fine material with around 40% or more in particles smaller than 250 µm.

Part one: Featured in the April 2002 issue of Greenkeeper International

The importance of a rootzone is a subject often overlooked and frequently misunderstood. We're not sure whether this is because it is out of sight or whether its importance has not historically been communicated properly. Whatever the reason, it's a fact that the rootzone is really the starting point in the long-term success of any green. Get it wrong and you'll have an uphill struggle on your hands from the beginning. So let's start with a brief refresher.



Following on from last year's 'Testing Times' article which focused on top dressings, Mick Higgins and Peter Jefford of Rufford look beneath the surface and try to clear up the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the issue of rootzones

#### WHAT IS A ROOTZONE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

We all need a nice place to live. In order to thrive as human beings we need air to breathe, space in which to grow, water to drink and food through which to gain essential nutrients. And a grass root is no different - it needs an environment providing all of these elements if it is to grow and flourish. We call this environment the rootzone ie the layer under the sward in which the grass roots live and breathe.

The problems begin when this environment isn't right and this is mainly to do with the space (or pore size) between the particles of material that make up a rootzone, otherwise known as the total porosity. Porosity can be divided into two categories:

**Capillary porosity** refers to the smaller spaces in a material that fill with water – these are great for water retention but poor for aeration and can subsequently lead to slow drainage rates and weak, shallow root growth.

**Non-capillary porosity** refers to the larger spaces that are filled with air – great for aeration but poor for water retention and therefore may cause higher drainage rates and the need for frequent irrigation and fertiliser application.

The trick, therefore, is to achieve the right balance between the two.

#### A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

When golf started in Scotland during the mid 18th Century, greens were built on relatively free-draining dune sands - an ideal environment for grass roots and perfectly adequate for the needs of clubs at the time. But as the game spread south more inland courses were constructed using native soils to create what are often referred to as push-up greens. Initially, these early rootzones weren't too much of a problem given the relatively low volumes of course traffic back in those days.

But now it's a different story. Today's greenkeepers are faced with a much greater number of players, all demanding perfect playing conditions seven days per week under all conditions. These demands have been fuelled further by TV coverage via which players see the standard of championship courses throughout the year and develop similar expectations of their own club. All of which leaves the poor greenkeeper with a major headache in creating surfaces that can accommodate this demand. This is where a good rootzone plays a major role.

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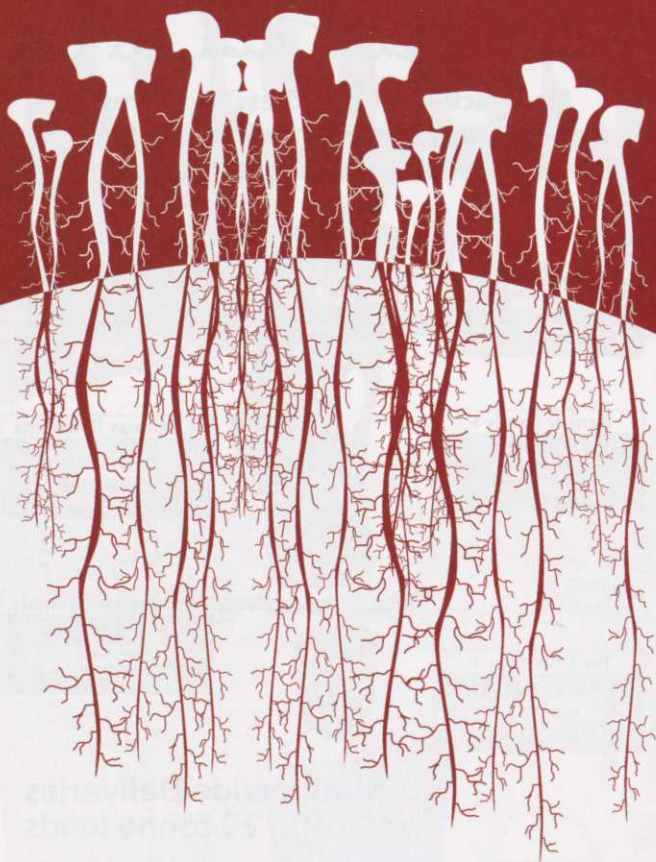
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An example of a good rootzone profile

### SO WHAT MAKES A GOOD ROOTZONE?

An ideal rootzone for healthy grass is natural soil and if you were building a lawn at home then this would be the first choice. But then you wouldn't anticipate hundreds of golfers walking over your turf every day of the year, even in saturated winter conditions. If they did then your new lawn would quickly turn into a mud bath!

Soil alone does not provide the drainage (or in the case of football and rugby, the stability) needed for a good commercial playing surface. This is basically because there is insufficient pore space between the particles in a compacted natural soil. Water drains through soil primarily via voids created by earthworms and particle aggregation. But excessive foot traffic and play quickly compacts these voids and subsequently slows drainage right down leading to a waterlogged profile.

Hence, to create a rootzone for commercial applications, an addition is needed and this comes in the form of sand, the physical properties of which provide the drainage and stability sometimes lacking in natural soils. This is because the space between sand particles (provided you use a correctly graded sand) remains even when compacted, hence allowing drainage.

And so a good rootzone is composed mostly of a well-graded sand together with the addition of an organic amendment (of which there are numerous forms but the most commonly used are soil, peat, compost etc).

### THE NEED TO SPECIFY

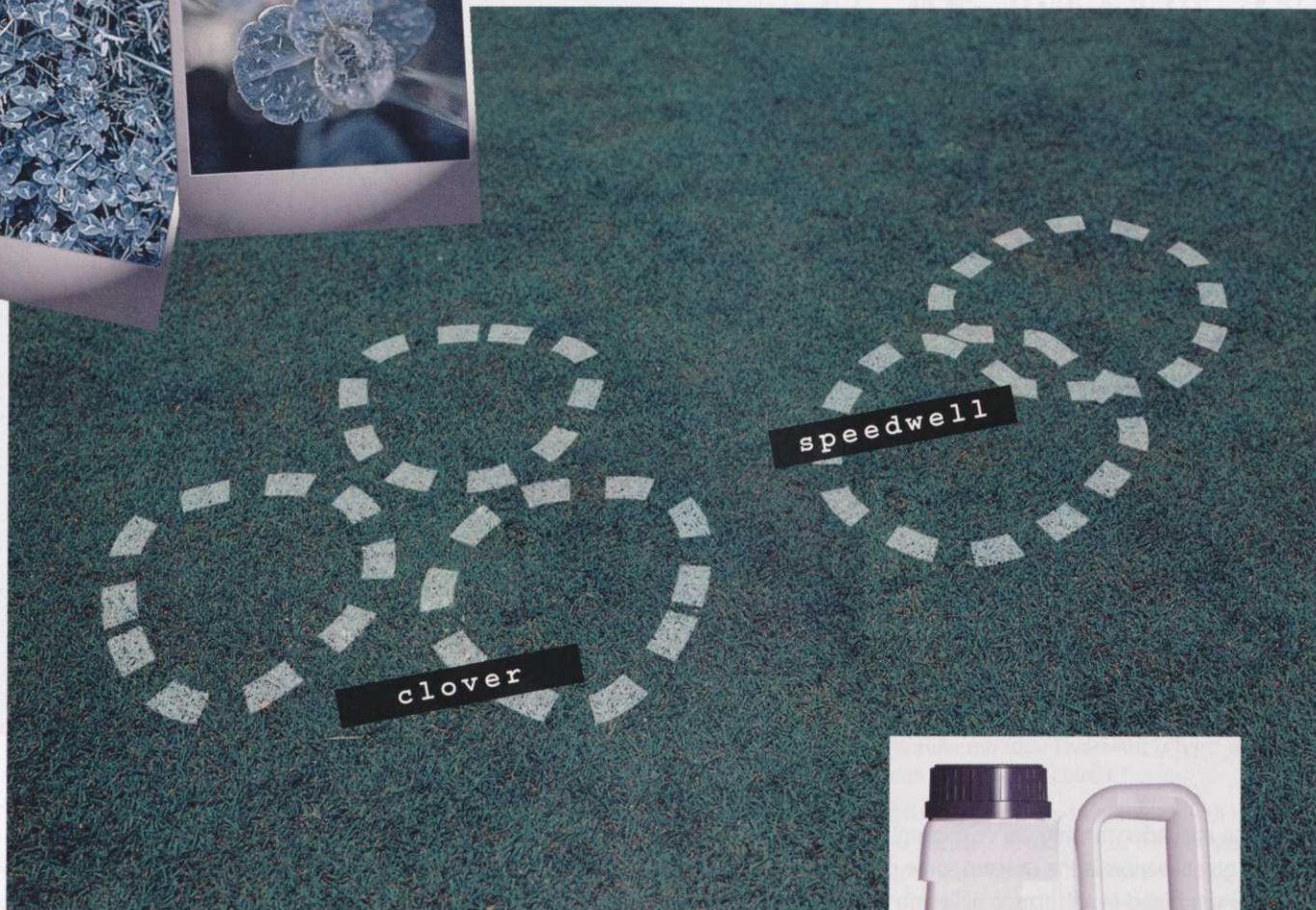
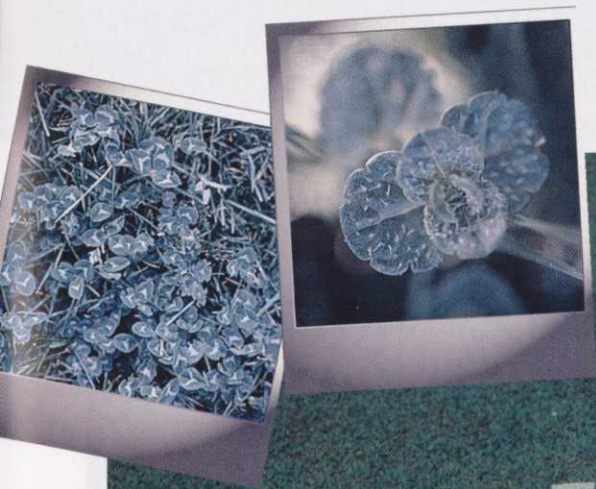
This does not, however, mean that you can use a blend of any old sand and soil. And asking for a 70/30 mix isn't going to help either. This specification tells you nothing about the physical properties of the sand in terms of lime content and grading, nor anything about the soil which could range from peat-based to a heavy clay content. Unfortunately you need to adopt a slightly more technical approach that takes into account such factors as:

- **particle size distribution** (the separation of sand grains into distinct diameter sizes)
- **silt and clay content**
- **saturated hydraulic conductivity** (the constant rate at which a saturated material is able to transmit water downwards - usually measured in mm/hr)
- **organic matter content**
- **pH** (or the acidity of a substance)

Unfortunately we don't have enough space here to go into detail about the implications of these factors, but suffice to say that each can have a significant impact on the performance of a rootzone. The important thing is to work with your rootzone provider to understand and establish your precise requirements. You can also find more information on our website at [www.rufford.com](http://www.rufford.com).



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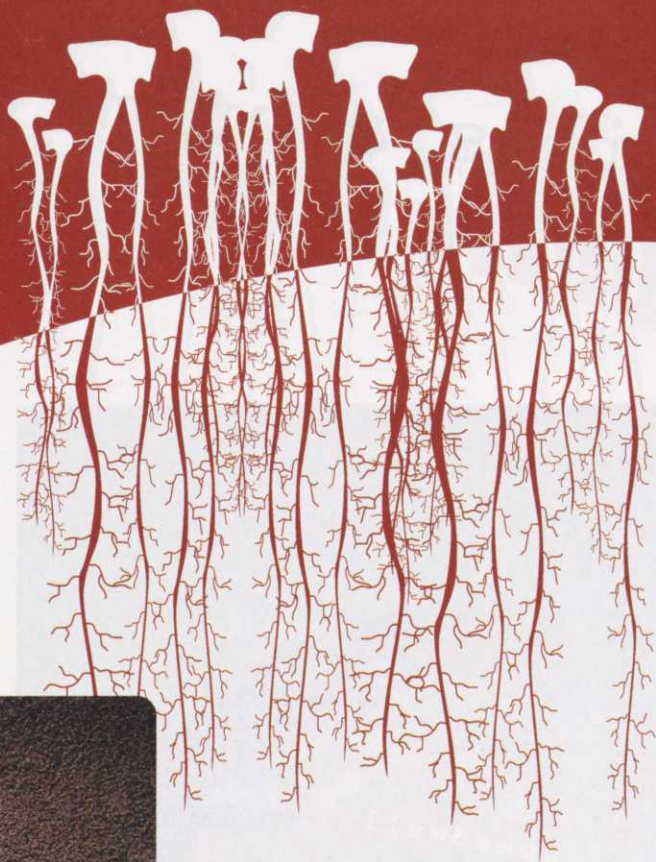
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USGA construction

## COLOUR

A common misunderstanding we've encountered when speaking to greenkeepers is the concern some people have with the colour of sand used in a rootzone believing that it makes a difference to its performance. Believe us, it doesn't! Sand is obviously a naturally occurring mineral and colours are unique to each deposit/quarry. Technically speaking, the whiter the sand the fewer impurities it contains but this shouldn't influence how your grass grows.

## USGA CONSTRUCTION

The current benchmark for putting green construction is laid out in the USGA Recommendations (1993 Revision). This utilises the suspended water table design which allows the surface to drain while still retaining essential moisture above a gravel layer. It is important to remember that USGA refers to the **whole** construction, from the particle size of the rootzone through to the grading and depth of the drainage gravel and the diameter of drainage pipes.

The individual elements of the USGA Recommendations only work to their full potential in conjunction with one another. And so there's little point having a USGA rootzone sitting on a clay bed rather than gravel. Similarly, if a green is constructed using a USGA rootzone of insufficient depth then the rootzone will not drain as designed and may even remain waterlogged.



Mick Higgins at Chelford quarry in Cheshire, one of eight silica sand quarries owned by Rufford throughout the UK

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN CONSTRUCTING A NEW GREEN

Green construction can be an expensive business and your club will need to think hard about the budget available before undertaking any construction project. But it's important to bear in mind that using inappropriate materials to cut initial construction costs could end up costing you more in the long run.

Once the green is built you obviously have to consider maintenance. Many greens are built perfectly well only to be ruined by the application of just any old top dressing. Construction is only the start of the story and, as we emphasised in our previous article, the top dressings you apply will add to and become part of the rootzone, eventually either altering or sustaining its physical (and to some extent biological) properties. This can result in the creation of 'layers' of the different materials used over time, which in turn can slow drainage considerably as the water is forced to pass through the varying particles and pore spaces of each.



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## CONCLUSIONS

While it may be out of sight, the rootzone really is the starting point of a good green and therefore can't be overlooked. Before commencing construction it's worth taking the time to think about your long-term performance expectations and sourcing a rootzone material that can help deliver these.

This doesn't have to (and shouldn't) be left to chance if you are sourcing materials from a reputable provider.

While there are many technical aspects to consider when choosing a rootzone, essentially you are looking to create (in conjunction with other construction elements) an environment in which grass roots will flourish through an optimum balance of air, space, water and nutrients. Achieve this and you'll be a long way to creating greens that will perform consistently in even the most demanding conditions!

You can find more information and technical advice at [www.rufford.com](http://www.rufford.com)

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# READY... but not Rough

ROLAND TAYLOR LOOKS AT THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROUGH MOWER

The first golf courses must have been virtually made up of 'rough' with small islands of relatively flat turf for the greens. This is a far cry from the modern course. The golfers who played these old courses probably spent a great deal of time searching for their lost balls.



In recent years it has been reported on a number of occasions that professional players in major UK tournaments have complained about what is relatively light rough. Many of the manicured fairways and virtually non-existent 'rough' that fill our television screens show very little signs of any vegetation or blades of grass out of place. Most of these are not in this country. The 'rough' is part of the challenge of the game, but they also have other roles. A fair amount of management is required so it is not just a question of mowing to a specific height, a few times a year. Recently, there has been more interest shown in developing these areas to provide habitats for our native flora and fauna. To this end the introduction of wild flowers is just one aspect that some clubs have adopted. For these projects to be successful a control mowing programme is required that ensures the rarer species of plants are not destroyed by more aggressive and invasive varieties.



## IN THE BEGINNING

Looking back in history it is clear why the rough evolved. Up until the early 1950's, apart from a manual scythe, the only type of machine available, for cutting long vegetation, was a mower with a reciprocating blade system. Originally horse drawn it was adapted for the tractor and used mainly in agriculture for hay cutting and as a binder for cereals. Some courses probably used this method of controlling their rough areas, but as the only other alternative was to scythe it by hand, one suspects it was more often left. The fairways were kept open by firstly using horse drawn gang mowers and later tractor towed units or the larger self-propelled mowers.



## ONE MAN WENT TO MOW

The rotary mower had first been introduced as a domestic machine just before the second world war but it was not until the early 1950's that it began to become established as an alternative method for mowing turf.

In this country the development of the rotary system was largely due to Douglas Hayter. From a small factory at Spellbrook on the Hertfordshire/Essex border he introduced his first machine, a 24" pushed rotary mower. The famous Hayterette quickly followed this, but both these units were aimed at the owners of large gardens with orchards. In talks with a Bishop's Stortford agricultural dealer it was decided to develop a tractor mounted rotary mower for use in orchards. Apple production was prolific along the Suffolk/Essex border and throughout Kent and Cambridgeshire so the potential market for this type of machine was encouraging. At this time golf courses were few and far between. A prototype machine was built around the little 'Grey Fergie' which was the most popular tractor for orchard work because of its size. At one of the Essex Agricultural Shows in the early 1950's Hayter launched their 6/14 tractor mounted rotary mower - the first of this type of machine in the world. It consisted of a PTO and belt driven 6-foot main unit with three rotary cutting heads. To this could be added wing units that then made the total width of the mower 14-foot. Swing-wings were also available which, when they came in contact with a fixed object, would fold back. This meant the machine could cut close to trees and fences.



Toro Groundsmaster 325-D out-front rotary mower

The 6/14 was an immediate success in the market that it was originally designed for - orchards. Large areas of long relatively dense vegetation could be mown down in a relatively short period of time and it was not long before other possibilities for this machine began to surface. One of these was 'the rough' on golf courses. Here was a method of taming these areas that was fast and easy. As with all things, it was not long before other manufacturers introduced alternative rotary machines and today there are plenty of these types of mower available.



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# READY... but not Rough

## THE CUTTING SYSTEM

At this stage it is worth looking at the factors that make the rotary principle effective and efficient.

Its action is similar to manually using a scythe without all the time, sweat and energy this method requires. Blade revolving speed is critical for the finish and ejecting of the cut material. It must be at least 3,000 rpm, which means the blade tip will be travelling in the region of a 130-mph. There are a number of factors that alter this speed. Because the blade is generally working in dense growth the revolutions can slow down very quickly. This places a considerable loading on the engine. If the governors do not react immediately the drop off continues until the unit comes to a halt. The grass is torn rather than cut and flow of scythed material is not ejected so a blockage occurs in the system. This situation will occur when a machines cutting height is set too low for the crop being cut. Where the vegetation is long it is quicker and less stressful on the machine and the operator to mow it down in stages.

## SHARPNESS

Another factor that greatly changes the mower's performance is the sharpness of the blades. A rotary will tear and hack down grass even when it is relatively blunt. This is highly dangerous and it places considerable strain on all the machine's components. Exhaust and noise levels plus fuel consumption increase rapidly. With a powerful tractor driving the mower it is easy to overlook the fact that the cutting mechanism may be blunt or damaged. Blades will need balancing after sharpening otherwise vibration occurs which, if left unchecked, becomes unsafe and will eventually shake the machine to bits

## SCALPING?

Because the rotary blade works on a horizontal plane the question of scalping does often arise. Obviously, the wider the machine the more chance of this happening. To help overcome this problem there are mowers on the market that are made up of a series of small independently floating units each with their own cutterhead. These are said to follow the ground contours closely without scalping.

## HEIGHT AND FREQUENCY

The correct cutting height is important. Some users discovered early on that regular rotary mowing would, over a period of time, produce a lawn type finish, especially where machines are continually set low. This aspect is particularly important when managing wild flower and plant areas. They require a different schedule to that of cutting the 'rough' that is only being maintained



Lastec Articulator

at a specific height. The mowing frequency is probably less and at certain times of the year, for instance, in the case of bulb areas, these are best left until after all the foliage has died down which is generally sometime in June or early July. In the case of wild flowers mowing usually takes place after the flowers have seeded. In both these examples the cut vegetation needs to be removed.

## COLLECTING

There are plenty of rotary mowers available with collecting facilities, but the thing to watch out for is their efficiency in performing the operation. A yardstick to use when looking for this type of machinery is check the size of the outlet aperture and how many obstacles the cut matter has to travel through or over before it reaches the collector. The shorter the distance between blade and the rear of the box and the bigger the opening the better. Vegetation is not always dry and if very wet it can quickly block up a collecting system so you need a machine that will efficiently collect in these conditions.

## FLAIL

The flail mower is an alternative method of mowing rough areas. They use a series of flails or knives mounted on a drum. Again, speed is important to the machine's efficiency, mainly because flails are not cutting against a fixed blade; they are travelling vertically into the vegetation. This absorbs a lot of engine power. The action of the cutting mechanism tends to lift the cut material and throw it backwards hence the reason that flails generally have a rear collector. Compared to a rotary a flail tends to be slower, but will often take denser amounts of matter such as heather. The smaller units on long reach arms are excellent for getting into confined spaces and mowing banks and ditch sides.





John Deere 1600 Turbo

Blade balance is critical, and any damaged flails should be replaced as soon as possible. The drum is mounted on bearings and if it becomes unbalanced, the vibration that occurs will quickly damage the machine and make it highly dangerous. Cutting height is also important. If it is too low the same effects will occur as they do with a rotary and the chances of scalping are increased.

#### GANG MOWERS

Some rough can be, and probably is, mown using gangmowers. These usually have fewer blades in the cylinder than those used for cutting fairways. As with all cutting mechanisms how sharp they are is the major factor. As this type of system is likely to take a fair amount of hammering it should be checked at regular intervals for any signs of damage or wear. Back lapping is only a temporary measure and at the earliest possibility the cylinder and bedknife will need grinding.



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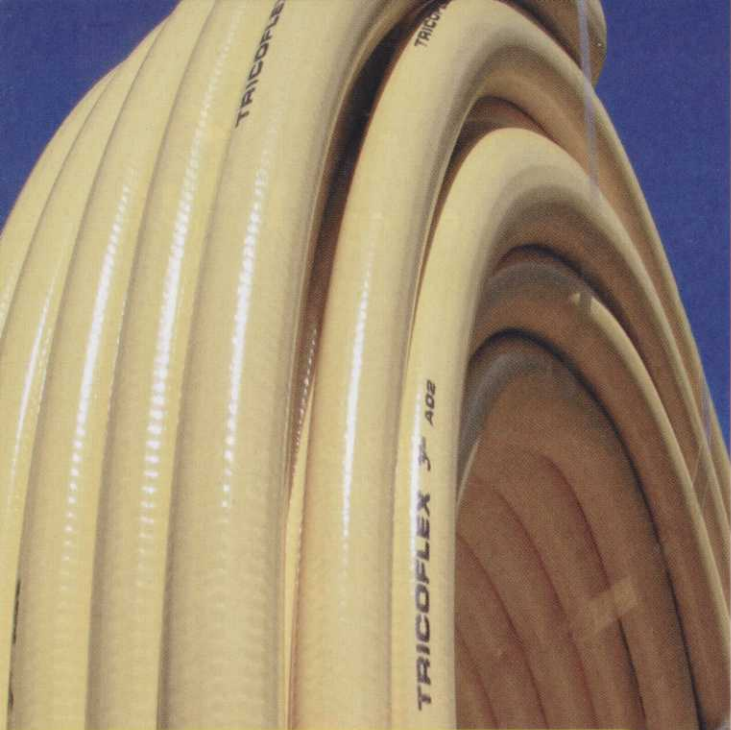
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## READY... but not Rough



New Holland MC35

### COMPLETE PICTURE

Often a course is an oasis in an intensive agricultural or suburban landscape and 'the rough' is the dividing lines between where man made and maintained areas meets nature and a haven for flora and fauna. It is like a frame round a picture, with the tees, fairways and greens as the subject. If presented right the contrast enhances the appearance of the course. With the machinery now available, this is relatively easy to achieve, so it is worth spending time shopping around to ensure you find the right ones that match your specific requirements.

Thanks to Ray Goodsall, Course Manager at Saffron Walden GC, for his co-operation in the taking of the photographs.



Jacobsen HR-4600 Turbo



# ARM YOURSELF FOR THE MOLE INVASION

Golf courses across the UK are preparing themselves for an explosion in the mole population by training staff in pest control techniques.



An increase in the number of moles can cause havoc on fairways as each one can tunnel up to 20 metres a day. The hills of earth they create are not only unsightly but they also create additional unwanted hazards for golfers. Molehills also cause problems for greenkeepers by damaging grass cutting machinery and disturbing plant growth.

Experts from the British Pest Control Association have said that a number of factors have caused the population surge. First there was the Foot and Mouth outbreak, which allowed the mole population to go unchecked for 12 months as pest controllers were prevented from treating infestations on agricultural land. Secondly we have seen warmer winters, which have increased the availability of the worms that make up a mole's diet. This increase in mole numbers has led many golf course managers to reassess how best to tackle the problem.





Knowing your enemy is the key to effective pest control.

"The mole spends most of its life underground and it will use its tunnel network to look for food such as insects, worms and slugs living in the soil. The tunnels run at a depth of about six inches underground and their length will depend on the abundance of food. Each network of tunnels will cover approximately 1,000 square metres," said Tony Stephens from Rentokil Pest Control.

"Moles are solitary creatures and are highly territorial. Each litter will contain three to four young and these will disperse during the mid-summer months to set up their own territories near by."

The traditional method for controlling moles has always been trapping. This may be effective for a single mole with a small network of tunnels.

"First you have to find the tunnels. You do this with a probe such as a metal rod. As you probe the ground between the molehills you should be able to feel less resistance when you locate a run. Ideally the more tunnels you locate the better, however the process can be very time consuming. Once you have located a number of potential trap sites you have to dig a small hole down to the depth of the tunnel. Be careful not to disturb the run too much as it may collapse. Once the trap is placed in

the hole it will need to be sealed to prevent the light coming in and this can be done with a piece of turf," explained Tony.

"The traps will need to be checked daily to see if they have been successful. Unfortunately traps can be set off by accident which can limit their hit rate. If the tunnel has been disturbed too much it has been known for moles to block up the run or tunnel around the trap.

"The setting of mole traps is said to be an art form and some have called it a country craft. It is not easy to get it right and it requires someone with experience and skill to use them effectively."

Other traditional methods of controlling moles include burying bottles up to their necks along the length of the run. When the wind blows across the top of the bottles the sound they make is meant to scare the mole away. However, pest control experts have dismissed this technique as being ineffective.

"The research and development team at Rentokil Pest Control have investigated the effectiveness of a number of methods that use sound to scare moles away. They rarely work and, if they do, they usually remain effective for a just a short period of time. Once the moles are used to the sound it no longer has the desired effect," said Tony.

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One of the simplest ways to control the pest is to ensure that they do not enter your land in the first place. This can be done by burying a strong wire fence in the ground up to the depth of a few feet. If you can extend this up to six foot deep it will also help keep out other burrowing animals such as rabbits and rats. However, this may be too costly or impractical for the majority of golf courses.

The most practical approach suggested by Tony was the use of Phostoxin (Active ingredient: Aluminium phosphide 56%w/w).

"This is a very popular technique and it is very effective too. Phostoxin is a specialist poison that gasses the moles in their tunnels. It comes in small tablets which when exposed to moisture in the air or soil, release the highly toxic gas Phosphine. It is potentially a very dangerous substance and must only be used by personnel trained in the use of this chemical," he said.

"To carry out a treatment with Phostoxin you would locate the mole tunnels in the same way as you would if you were trapping. However, rather than dig a hole that could disturb the tunnel, a special applicator is used which injects the tablets through the ground into the run. The area must then be kept clear of people and pets until the gas has dispersed."

The benefits of Phostoxin are well known and a growing number of golf courses are ensuring that their staff are trained to use it. One such course is Wychwood Park in Cheshire, which is owned and run by the conferencing company Initial Style. The Head Greenkeeper, Keith Ratcliffe, is currently preparing the course to host the PGA European Pro Tour in July.

"At the moment we have been lucky and we do not have a problem with moles. However they are on neighbouring land and I guess it is only a matter of time before we have to deal with them. That is the main reason why I sent one of my greenkeepers on a course to learn how to use Phostoxin. I want to be able to deal with the problem effectively and quickly as soon as it arrives," said Keith.

Courses on how to use Phostoxin are run by a number of organisations including agricultural colleges and the British Pest Control Association (Tel: 01332 294288/www.bPCA.org.uk). The BPCA can organise two-day and three-day courses on how to deal with moles and rabbits. The courses teach participants all they need to know to on how to use Phostoxin safely without posing an unnecessary risk to humans or other animals. Always read the label - Use pesticides safely.



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# To Rebuild or not Rebuild

**Robert Laycock looks at the options facing you when a green is failing to perform.**

The other day I was thinking just how many old golf courses I knew where the worst green on the course was a reconstructed one. In fact, when clients from a potential new golf course first approach me as an agronomist and tell me about a problem green, I would put money on it being the new "USGA" green they were persuaded to build a few years ago which, after a good start, has gradually gone downhill!

In these circumstances of course I do not know how bad its predecessor was. However, I am sure from those instances where I have been brought in before old greens were dug up that, very often, more could be done to preserve them and improve their condition before considering rebuilding.

A golf club should think very carefully before re-building just one or two greens on the course and should seriously consider other options.

## BEFORE MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

Some agronomists have too close an association with particular golf course architects. Such people can be almost as dangerous as those too closely associated with a fertiliser company. Independence in agronomy is vital.

If a club feels it is being unnecessarily persuaded (or pressured) by its agronomist to re-build one or two greens, there is nothing to stop it from getting a second opinion or changing agronomist altogether. The recently launched Register of Independent Professional Turfgrass Agronomists (RIPTA) gives a list of qualified agronomists from which to choose.

## WHY REBUILD?

Sometimes there are legitimate and unavoidable reasons for rebuilding greens. Examples would be the proposed re-routing of a road through the course, major drainage problems necessitating reconstruction of all greens and major issues such as length of hole and safety issues related to the game of golf.

However, if these are not the case, all other alternatives should be seriously attempted before rebuilding is carried out, as the new greens and old are usually like chalk and cheese, both in terms of their putting quality and in their management.

If some greens are not performing well and have not improved or have been getting worse over a period of time, there are things to try before rebuilding.

1. If greens are genuinely getting worse in spite of the club paying for agronomic advice and following it, the club should change its agronomist to see if there is an alternative way forward – no reputable agronomist wants his or her name to be associated with a course which is gradually performing less well.
2. Correct shady conditions or locally poor drainage, as these will contribute to poor performance. If the course is based on a naturally free-draining soil, rebuilding is less likely to be necessary.
3. Improve the management regimes of poor greens for routine tasks such as aeration, scarification and nutrition.

If none of these do the trick after a year or so of trying, then rebuilding may be inevitable.

The next choice is that of construction technique. Most choose USGA greens.



Excellent rooting on washed turf laid 30 months previously

## WHAT IS A USGA GREEN?

The term "USGA green" covers a multitude of sins in practice, but all should, when first built, fulfil the criteria laid down by the USGA. The USGA Recommendations specify the characteristics, mainly physical, of a golf green construction. All USGA greens, at the time they are constructed, are designed within defined limits to drain well in wet conditions yet hold water in dry conditions.

All USGA greens must fulfil these criteria, but every USGA construction is different in some way – for example, I have come across golf courses supposedly running USGA greens where the rootzone pH values were less than 4 and others where they were up to 8. Clearly such greens would need different management. New greens are built using different sands, different sources of organic matter, and so on. The chances of any green of this type having similar requirements to those of an old green are pretty remote.

USGA greens can never easily be brought into the routine management of an old course. Their characteristics of drainage and nutrient requirements are





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so different from old golf greens that they need a completely different management – something that the typically stretched course management team find very difficult to cope with. The different irrigation programmes, top dressing applications and fertiliser applications that are necessary to keep both old and new greens in good condition put a great strain on the green staff.

The option chosen by some, i.e trying to maintain the new greens in the same way as the old ones - trying to bring their management into line with the others by, say, using the same top dressing on the new greens as was used on the old ones - is a recipe for disaster. Spending a lot of money on a USGA green and then capping it off with a fine textured top dressing so that water is held near the surface is just a waste of money.

For a USGA green to work it has to be maintained like a USGA green. If it isn't, it will deteriorate over quite a small number of years until it is as much a problem as its predecessor.

#### EXAMPLES OF WHAT CAN GO WRONG WITH A NEW GREEN

Even if built and maintained correctly, a new green can still fail to thrive. The most common reasons are:

**LOCATION** – if the existing green is failing because dense trees surround it, the new green will fail for the same reason.

**DRAINAGE** – if the green is located in a bowl at the bottom of a hill, a new green taking its place will also be difficult to drain and, will probably develop anaerobic black layer which is probably why its predecessor went.

**TURF** – for speed you may decide to use turf rather than seed. Conventionally grown turf will import a layer of the soil the turf was grown on, which will interfere with the movement of water from the surface. To avoid this, use washed turf or turf grown on a rootzone compatible with that you are going to use. If you want to know the botanical composition of the turf you are buying, most members of the Turfgrass Growers Association are able to supply a certificate at point of harvest listing the grasses and their percentages in the turf – note, not the percentage in the seed mixture, the percentage ground cover in the actual turf.

#### CHOOSE THE RIGHT GRASS SPECIES FOR THE NEW PUTTING SURFACE

Using turf from the original green (if the new green is no bigger than the old one) is often the best option. The turf will match the original greens, thereby overcoming the objection to the new green that it has a different putting surface. If recently used top dressings are compatible with the rootzone chosen for the new green, the possibility of problems with water percolation can be minimised.

If there is not sufficient old turf to be found on the green, turf or seed of traditional greens grasses will have to be used. Attempting to produce a putting surface reasonably similar to existing greens effectively eliminates the use of seed mixtures or turf with a high fescue content. Many old greens are replaced because they are too wet and thus tend to have a high annual meadow grass content – this is completely different from fine-leaved fescues in its management requirements and thus fescue



Laying turf grown on fine-textured soil on a USGA rootzone always leads to disappointment



Accumulation of incompatible top dressings on turf laid 5 years ago, leading to thatch build up and shallow rooting

should normally be avoided for this purpose. (I hasten to add that I believe that red fescue has a place as a greens grass, but this is unlikely to be the case when an old green has to be replaced by another of similar playing quality and management requirements.)

This leaves the bent grasses, which have a leaf blade more similar to that of annual meadow grass. It can also be managed in a similar way, maximising the chances of success with the new green and, as annual meadow grass invades, it is less obvious in a bent grass green. Browntop bent is traditionally used and is probably the best bet. In fact, if the rest of the greens are a mixture of annual meadow grass and bent, they may gradually come to have similar proportions of these grasses.

#### GET THE MANAGEMENT RIGHT

There is plenty of advice around on USGA green maintenance. In fact where a whole course has been constructed in the same way, whether a brand new course or a set of re-built greens, management is not a problem. It is the mixture of new and old that seems to cause the difficulties.

#### SO, WHAT CAN A CLUB DO WHEN REBUILDING IS ON THE CARDS?

First, do not expect the rebuilding to solve all the course's problems at a stroke. Different, unforeseen, problems may be created.

Second, if you decide to rebuild, use a USGA construction unless you have a proven alternative technique on the course, as on seaside links, where USGA greens should not be necessary (though I know some where, sadly, it has been done). However, the new greens must be managed in the most appropriate way.

Third, if possible for consistency and for the long term good, aim to rebuild all the greens rather than just a few, whether all at once or a few a year, though this can be the most problematic approach in the period while there are still different greens to be cared for. Also ensure that if the rebuilding is going to take several years that the source of rootzone is safe – avoid changing supplier half way through the job.

If circumstances allow for keeping an original green as a temporary or alternative green, this can take some of the pressure off the new green as it matures.

You could spend thousands of pounds on building a new green to replace the worst green on the course and find that it is still the worst green on the course! Think twice before rebuilding and do not allow the club to be rushed. Make sure you have tried all the alternatives to re-building, because once done, you cannot turn back the clock.

#### WEB SITES:

Robert Laycock: [www.robertlaycock.co.uk](http://www.robertlaycock.co.uk)

Turfgrass Growers Association: [www.turfgrass.co.uk](http://www.turfgrass.co.uk)

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## Don't gamble with your top dressing

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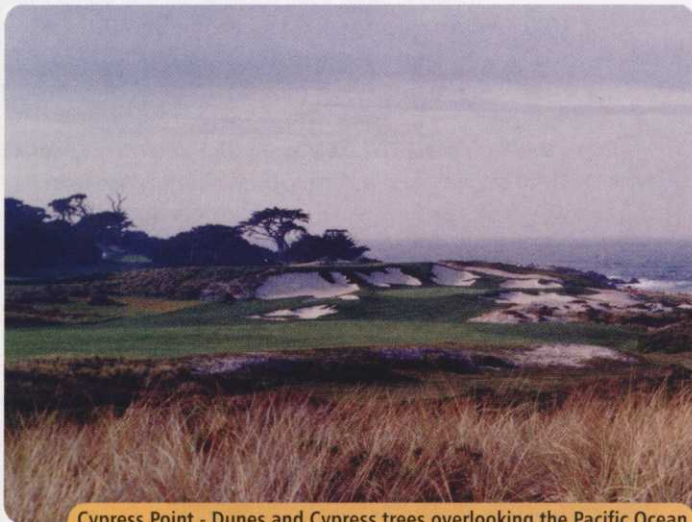


# A Golf Course Pilgrimage

Malcolm Peake goes on a golfing pilgrimage and comes back with concerns for the future of the game

It all started with the idea of visiting my sister Val and husband Ken in New Zealand, but it soon developed into a round the world golf course pilgrimage.

A conversation with Walter Woods started the ball rolling then Walter contacted his old friend Ron Read in California. Ron has worked for the USGA for 22 years and through his contacts I received an invitation to play Cypress Point with the current and past Chairmen of Green. They had a combined time in office of 10 years, which ensured great continuity for the Superintendent and the golf course.



Cypress Point - Dunes and Cypress trees overlooking the Pacific Ocean

Cypress Point is one of the most exclusive private members clubs in America. It has an attractive and understated Monterey Colonial style clubhouse with a friendly and hospitable membership. Then there's the golf course, and what a golf course. Cypress Point must be one of the most spectacular golf courses in the world and with 28 green staff, the presentation is immaculate. There is the superb Alistair MacKenzie architecture, epitomised by the bunkering, the wild dunes areas, the magnificent Monterey pines and of course Cypress trees, and finally there is the Pacific Ocean and the rocky coastline. If you are lucky, and I was, you might see seals, sea lions and otters. The one species I did not see was the migrating whales, which apparently are a spectacular sight. The sea comes into play on only three holes, but you are in sight and sound on many others and it dominates the subconscious.

The club is in the final stages of renovating the bunkers returning them

to the original MacKenzie design, and conscious of environmental responsibilities they are reinstating the dunes areas. Only reclaimed water is used in the irrigation system and as a consequence the golf course has a rather green and lush appearance, which applies equally at all courses in the area. Many well-informed golfers are of the opinion that Cypress Point may well be the best golf course in the world, and who am I to disagree with them.

But what of the other courses on the Monterey Peninsula? Of the ones I visited I liked the architecture of The Links at Spanish Bay designed by Robert Trent Jones, Tom Watson and Sandy Tatum. The original concept was to create an old world Scottish links golf course. This depends on a number of issues, and all except one were in place. The seaside location with wind and elements playing an integral role. The design with rolling fairways and large undulating greens, sand dunes, and plenty of bunkers. Sadly the final ingredient was missing- instead of firm playing surfaces to complement the classic chip and run type shots, there were soft lush fairways and greens, 100% Americanised for target golf.

I understand that this changed from the original intention of the design team. Fescue and bent grasses were originally used to ensure a true links playing surface to keep water and fertility low. Unfortunately the influence of THE GOLFER destroyed this concept and the intention was changed. The Links are now more expensive to maintain, mowing is more frequent, and more water, fertiliser and of course herbicides are required. This to me is all very sad, and in my experience is what can spoil well managed golf courses. But I'm getting on my hobbyhorse now, and more of that later!

I visited Pebble Beach, which was being prepared for the AT&T, again a superb site (but very green), it was certainly millionaire golf with green fees up to \$425 about £270. I walked a few holes of Spyglass Hills, which took me back to happy trips in the Algarve. Very reminiscent of one of my favourite courses, Quinto de Lago. But it is not all sunshine and light on the Monterey Peninsula. Superintendents are under great pressure from pests, not just golfers, but also nematodes. They are taken a liking to the

NEW FEATURE COMING SOON...

# Whispering Grass



putting surfaces and "it's driving the Superintendents nuts"!

Onto New Zealand and what a contrast. We arrived at Val and Ken's farm after 14 km on unmade roads, 20 minutes drive to our nearest neighbour, 45 minutes to the shops and the DB draught beer tasted like nectar. The next day Ken took me to play at his club Wairoa (pronounced Why Roa). This was a little gem with undulating fairways and greens with subtle borrows. The annual subscription was a bargain at £110 and green fees of about £5.25. The course was managed by four members, little irrigation or fertilisers were used, and I saw more bent and fescue grasses than I had seen in a long time. You could play every shot in the book and some great golf holes made the course a real joy to play.

Later in the week we went to Poverty Bay Golf Club at Gisborne, the first town in the world to see the dawn each day. This is what I would call a semi links golf course with the sea in view on a number of holes.

The greens were as good as you could find anywhere with a high proportion of bent grasses in them. I met Rowan Clarke, the Course Manager, who explained that he worked hard at encouraging the bents to the detriment of *Poa annua*, and had long term plans to take out non-indigenous species of frees and improve the management of the water feature. Because of financial constraints Rowan had only one member of staff, but was hoping to be able to employ an apprentice later in the year. It was quite amazing to see a golf course maintained to this quality by only two people. I hope it is appreciated by the membership, as their subscription was certainly not excessive at about £175. I paid my green fees of about £8.50 and collected my trundler (trolley). The course was another gem and comparatively old being opened in 1894. It held professional tournaments in the 1960's and 70's with players like Bobby Locke and Bob Charles participating. The holes from the 15th at Poverty Bay make it a particularly good finish where level par would be more than satisfactory. In the bar one of the members came up for a chat and enquired where Ken's home club was. When told Wairoa he said, "It's a tricky little course but the biggest hazard is getting out of the 19th!" But I think that's a national problem, hospitality in New Zealand is superb.

On the way back I stopped at Te Pohue Golf Club for a quick look. This was golf as it used to be. Sheep grazed the fairway, "free relief if impeded by sheep dropping, electric fences protected the greens (which you need to turn off before you play or risk the consequences) and an honesty box for the green fees.

In total contrast, the last course I visited in New Zealand was Wairakei. This is in the heart of the lovely countryside surrounding Lake Taupo, an area that bubbles with hot thermal springs, geysers, and burping mud pools. The resort golf course is built on pumice and volcanic cinder, and must have some interesting management challenges. Unfortunately I could not find a greenkeeper to hear about the unique problems. The course had some stunning golf holes, which made use of the natural features of

gullies, woods and creeks. The greens looked superb with a high proportion of bent grasses.

Finally I arrived in Australia and a visit to Royal Sydney Golf Club. This was very interesting as the greens were being rebuilt. I wondered if the new construction would return the links feeling golf course to its heritage. The tees are generally on higher ground with fairways and greens in full view, the marvellous bunkering and the humps and hollows were a real feature of the course. Sea breezes are a big factor at Royal Sydney, as on most seaside courses. The early part of the course has a definite links feel; in the middle of the course the fairways are separated by indigenous stunted trees, making straight driving essential.

Royal Sydney is a traditional golf course, which has hosted the Australian Open on a number of occasions. The layout of the course gives you the opportunity, if you are good enough, of fading or drawing drives, hitting the ball high but more often low below the wind. The visit was an interesting experience and I hope I have the opportunity of playing the course again to see how the new greens have developed.

The old greens were constructed over about a five year period in the early 80's to USGA specifications. However, for reasons unknown there were many greens which were not constructed correctly. They had poor quality material and the different layers of material under the greens were not at consistent depths throughout. The result was that the greens did not drain well and had inferior turf quality. Sadly, not an usual story which happens all too often.

It was decided, after much investigation and scientific evaluation, to rebuild them using local sand as the base without any drainage being placed in them. All green sites were fully excavated, in many cases, right down to the water table. The green bases were filled with local sand and the top 30cm being "amended" with peat. The greens turf is "G2" the fairways are Wintergreen Couch and most tees are Santa Ana Couch."

They were reconstructed and designed by Ross Watson, formerly partner with Graham Marsh. He is a prominent Australian architect with many courses here and in Asia. He has recently done a lot of remodelling work in Sydney.

So what are my impressions of golf in California, New Zealand and Australia? Obviously I saw golf courses of immense contrast in site, climate, architecture, maintenance and, most of all budget. In America I thought the design and architecture of the courses was superb, but was disappointed by the green and lustiness. But that I think is sadly a perception of golfers worldwide. If a golf course is not green, golfers think something is wrong, and nothing could be further from the truth. In some areas I visited there was an acute water shortage yet golfers still expected the golf course to be green. It's irresponsible and unnecessary. At most clubs the Course Managers are doing a good job, but they are juggling too many balls. Maintaining a balance between the demands of the

## Are you in possession of a juicy piece of gossip and are just dying to tell someone? Or have you just moved job and want to pass on the good news?

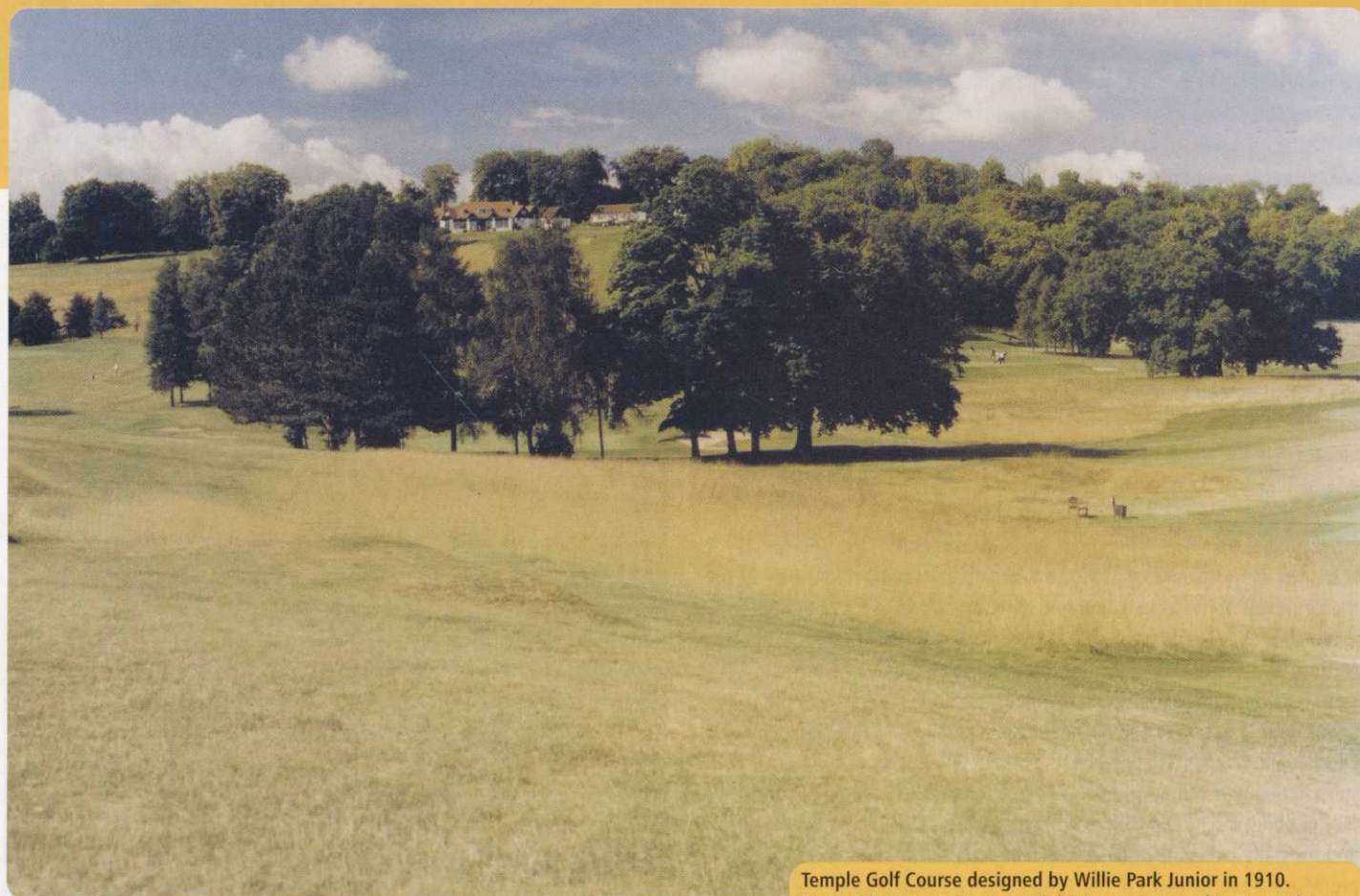
A typical example appeared in a recent Around the Green column:

*Who was the person who thought he'd overslept on hearing The Counterfeit Stones playing Honky Tonk Woman in the Majestic Hotel during Harrogate? He jumped up, got himself dressed and down to the ball room only to discover it was the sound check!*

Let us at Greenkeeper International know and we'll spread the word. Names could be withheld to protect the innocent... or not so innocent!

The Editor will need to know your name, and in specific cases discrete checks made, but he will protect his sources. Just email your info to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk) titled Whispering Grass.





Temple Golf Course designed by Willie Park Junior in 1910.  
Natural Fairways, greens with high proportion of bent and fescue

uneducated members and keeping the course in good health is an almost impossible task.

The Americans I met were in the main the aficionado golfer who appreciates that green is not necessarily great, wants to play our classic British and Irish courses. Not only the great links but also the little gems like my own club Temple. They enjoy courses where you can play bump 'n' run, as my American friends describe it, where you use your imagination to play a shot not just to smash a wedge into a green, but to play a classic, a subtle shot, the sort of shot that has been played for over 200 years. Golfers from all over the world come to our country to play this traditional style of golf, yet sadly in many cases because of GOLFER influence we are trying to produce courses that are green and lush, and American. Why? I don't understand it, we are following instead of leading. Golfers are being influenced by television, by what they see of Tournament golf, by the glossy golf magazines, but do they realise how much it is going to cost, how unrealistic it is, how much water, fertiliser, herbicide, pesticide is going to be required and at a time when environmental issues worldwide need to be considered. Why? This style of target golf is not nearly so much fun, it takes the chance, the luck of the bounce out of the equation, the natural part of golf out of the game - it may be what the pros want but they want everything on a level playing field. You might as well play on all weather astroturf on a billiard table, a tennis court or a bowling green. What fun would golf be then?

Golf on a traditional British golf course is superb, it has so many facets it must be protected from the uneducated golfer. The man on site - The Course Manager is the expert. He is paid to manage, agree a plan and a budget and let him get on and do it!

At Temple, Martin Gunn, Course Manager, and I developed a system which has been used as an example of best management practice, a template if you like. Everything is monitored and recorded so we can put a cost, a value on every part of the golf course and its management. Not only the sports turf, but on the non playing areas - the time and money

that is saved by leaving areas natural and has helped to keep subscriptions down. It adds to that subliminal factor, the pleasure got from playing a traditional golf course. Perhaps not to Philistines, but the people who really know about golf. You can play every shot in the book, the thrill of squeezing a ball off firm turf, playing a chip and run from 40 yards or a putt running the ball over little banks and through shallow hollows. Where is golf going to go? Where are we going to end up - you tell me (answers on a postcard). I feel golf is at a crossroads with the distinct possibility of the traditional game of golf - the game I love, being lost forever.

**Malcolm Peake is the author of "Confessions of a Chairman of Green" which is available from the STRI Tel: 01274 565131 priced £10.95.**



Reconstruction of the greens and bunkers at the Royal Sydney Golf Club





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# Managing a Golf Course

**Duncan McGilvray is Course Manager at Potters Bar Golf Club, a private members parkland golf course, in South Hertfordshire. His remit is not only to take responsibility for the management of the golf course but also to assist the club as a whole, in ensuring a high standard of customer service at reasonable cost, which he believes can only be achieved with an extremely professional approach in every area of management.**



**A greenkeeper now for 34 years in both Scotland and England on Links and Parkland golf courses.**

**He is a qualified NVQ D32/D33 and D36 Industry assessor/advisor and believes strongly in the NVQ system and the sterling work of the GTC under the guidance of their Education Director.**

**He is a strong supporter of BIGGA and demonstrates this by sitting on the new "Futures" Sub Committee formed in 2002 to assist the Association in ensuring a bright and prosperous future.**

**He is a strong believer in taking personal responsibility and control and therefore achieving high standards.**

To those of my colleagues who remember my series of articles of seven years ago on just this subject I make no apologies for believing that there is a need to repeat the process.

The conversations, and correspondence in this magazine, I have had over the past 12 months or so have frustrated me sufficiently to feel the need to do it all again and I have therefore taken the opportunity to update my previous series of articles.

The message is, however, exactly the same - competent Course Managers of today and those of the future must be in control of their own destiny, and therefore that of their golf courses - or someone else will come along and do it for them - probably less successfully but they will do it all the same!

Much of my time which I allocate to the furtherance of our profession as a whole is taken up in trying to convince the powers within our golf clubs to allow their Course Managers to manage (within an agreed policy) and they will not regret it.

You can therefore imagine how upset I become when I am approached by such powers to inform me that they want their Course Manager to manage but they have chosen not to, in the mistaken/misguided belief that they will have an easier life!

This situation upsets me even more than the club that will not allow their Course Manager to manage - the reason being that the employee in place has made the choice of being controlled by someone who does not know the job and therefore the course will undoubtedly suffer.

These people are avoiding all responsibility and this cannot be right - they do no service to our profession in choosing this route.

I upset some of my colleagues in my last series of articles by stating categorically that the name of the person responsible for managing a golf course should be named a "Course Manager".

I hope sufficient time has now elapsed and my colleagues understand that I meant no snobbery or inflated ego in that person's character but merely that it best describes the job that the person does!

The name "Head Greenkeeper" describes at best a Foreman of greenkeepers and not a Manager - that may upset some of my colleagues but it is, and will remain, a fact!

Now that I have got that off my chest - down to the content of these proposed articles. I believe they will clearly indicate the skills required to manage a golf course competently and therefore successfully which will keep everyone happy - honestly!

Over the next four articles I will cover the basic responsibilities as I see it that modern day competent Course Managers must accept to be successful.

## 1. MANAGING AND TAKING CONTROL

- Taking a major role in the formulation of agreed policy.
- Overseeing the short, medium and long term maintenance of the course which is dictated by the agreed policy.
- Presenting and implementing work schedules.
- Presenting and implementing machinery maintenance programmes.
- Keeping accurate records.
- Keeping up to date with modern methods, materials and equipment.

This second article will cover the basic structure within which we work - setting agreed policy and working within it - showing your employer that you are in control, and therefore gaining their trust in making day to day, as well as more important medium to long term decisions.

## 2. CONTROLLING FINANCES

- Formulating, presenting and maintaining agreed budgets.
- Observing tight cost control and ensuring cost effectiveness.
- Reaching a reasoned final decision regarding the buying of materials and equipment.



## The first of a series of five articles detailing duties of the modern day Course Manager

This is the one area which many of my colleagues continue to shy away from, believing that a sub-committee or treasurer will do this work for them thus making their workload easier.

I believe however that there is no-one better than the course manager for calculating how much it costs to maintain a golf course and this will be covered in simple terms.

A few days spent setting budgets at the right time of the year, in line with the club's financial year, makes the remainder of that year so much less problematic.

### 3. MANAGING STAFF

- Supervising and assisting in the training/development and recruitment of staff.
- Endeavouring at all times to improve supervisor/manager and staff relations.
- Delegating effectively.

"You are only as good as your staff" someone once said - and how true that proves to be."

This fourth article subject area is an enormous one but I will try to cover obvious areas of supervision, and give some ideas on how to overcome staff "friction", which can be so harmful in restricting efficient working practices and is common in small staff set ups which is often the case on golf courses.

### 4. COMMUNICATION

- Endeavouring at all times to continually improve staff and golf club member/employer communication.
- Ensuring the safety of the staff and the golf course environment.

Although this fifth article will be the final subject area it is by all accounts the most important - the more the golfer knows about the job of the greenkeeper and Course Manager the easier and more satisfying our jobs will become.

I will cover many different areas of communication under this heading - the importance of which cannot be overstated.

One particular area within this heading, which has become more and more important over the years, is personal presentation - I have believed for some time now that without the skills of being able to present ourselves appropriately and properly when the occasion arises, then we fail in what we are trying to achieve - I will therefore cover this more fully in this final article.

In closing this introductory article it is important to point out that it is my wish to convey a common-sense approach to managing a private members' golf course.

I therefore do not propose to go into any subject area in any great detail (I am no expert anyway!).

The general aim will be - again in the immortal words of my esteemed colleague Billy McMillan - to "keep it simple".

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# TALKING HEADS

## BUDGETING

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

# 1

**Do you have control of your own budget and if not what input do you have into the setting of it?**



Name: Scott Ballantyne  
Course: Cowglen Golf Club  
Region: Scotland  
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes  
Staff: Course Manager, plus five

I pretty much have control over the budget on wages, ordering new equipment etc. I make an initial recommendation to the committee and it goes from there.



Name: Andy Peel  
Course: Bull Bay Golf Club  
Region: Northern  
Course type: Cliff top heathland, 18 holes  
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus two

Yes. I issue a planned budget every 12 months and itemise every aspect. I also put in an amount for unexpected items.



Name: Phil Chiverton  
Course: The Grove  
Region: Midland  
Course type: Parkland. 18 holes  
Staff: Course Manager, plus 19

Yes, I have full control. I agree the budget after talks with the Managing Director and Finance Director.



Name: Nick Sears  
Course: Basildon Golf Club  
Region: South East  
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes  
Staff: Four greenkeepers

We have control in part. It is a municipal course and we need to balance the books so we set the fees at the start of each year and can't exceed the bottom line.



Name: Tony Ramsden  
Course: Budock Vean Country House and Golf Hotel  
Region: South West and South Wales  
Course type: Parkland, nine holes  
Staff: Course Manager, plus one, plus summer part-timer

I don't have a budget as such. I explain to hotel directors what I need and they usually ok them.



Name: Paul Mathieson  
Course: Hollywood Golf Club, Belfast, Co Down  
Region: Northern Ireland  
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes  
Staff: Course Manager, plus four

I present the budget to the Green Committee and try to treat the money as if I was spending my own so we don't go overboard.



2

**Do you involve your staff with the budgets?**

No, not generally. I talk to the Chairman of Green and then we move to the full committee.

One of my staff was trained as a fitter so I discuss proposed mechanical expenditure with him.

I have regular discussions about machinery and training, for example, with specialists on our staff in their particular fields before finalising budget figures.

No. I talk to my area assistant and the club professional before suggesting the budget amount.

No, I only have one full-time member of staff and the budget items are done between me and the hotel directors.

My assistant will be involved. I seek his opinion on certain matters before I present the final figures.

3

**Give a brief description of how your budget works.**

I have a budget sheet and write everything down that I can think of that we need from switches to hole cups and fairway mowers. We also have a contingency fund in case I have forgotten anything.

The budget is broken down into four areas - day to day; machinery; annual, and capital and this goes forward to the finance committee each November after I have had a chat with the Chairman of Green. It then goes on to the full committee.

Our financial year runs from May to the end of April and a spread sheet is produced with all items under their various headings and budget codes.

I have money to set against each type of service in the council and can't go over that figure

I anticipate what bigger items we need on an annual basis and the smaller things every three months.

I break down the budget into the various areas for fungicide, materials, new machinery etc. A lot of it is historical of course. For example, if we needed 50 bags of fertiliser last year and the year before, the odds are that it becomes a repeat order.

4

**How do you monitor your budget?**

Every invoice comes through myself. I sign them off and they then go to the Secretary for totalling in the different sections. I get a monthly breakdown on every aspect of the budget to see where we are.

I have a monthly appraisal to see how the figures are holding up, but I like to think that I treat the expenditure as if it was coming out of my own pocket.

I give a monthly report and have talks with our financial controller. The system works very well.

I keep very tight records. Each item on the budget has a budget figure against it and every time I buy something it is recorded on a day to day basis.

I am not given a budget. I just requisition items and they are usually forthcoming.

I have a monthly meeting with my greens chairman and discover what we have spent and what needs spending the following month.

5

**Are you finding that finances are tighter now than they used to be?**

No. In fact the opposite is the case. As long as I can make a good case out for an item then I never have a problem getting it.

Very definitely. Finances are a lot tighter now, despite the fact that green fee income has gone up by 20 per cent in the last two years.

We have a new Championship golf course here, designed by Kyle Phillips, which is not due to open until the summer of 2003. We have agreed a budget which is appropriate to the venture.

Yes they are. We can't spend more than we earn and the golf course has to pay its own way. We run it like a business.

Our finances depend on how well the hotel is doing. It has been doing well so the directors are also keen to look after the golf course. All in all things work out well.

Very much so. To give you an example, we suffered a big falling off in revenue from visitor green fees late last year because we had a huge amount of rain which caused the course to be closed for many days. In these circumstances we have to keep a close check on spending.



# NEW PRODUCTS

## NEW AIRONE SLITTER-AERATORS

Airone slitler-aerators offer five different aerating options and are available in 0.9 metre and 1.6 metre working widths. Adjustable rotor spacing further increases the versatility of the equipment, which is distributed in the UK by Reco.

Hollow tines, with or without springs, remove soil cores and maximise penetration of light, water and nutrients. Springs fitted round each tine minimise surface disturbance by holding down the turf during coring.

Slitting blades in two lengths - 100mm and 150mm - provide root-cutting and encourage growth by allowing light, water and nutrients to penetrate the surface. Open C-section tines are available for deeper penetration without soil removal.

The 0.9 metre machines have eight rotors, and the 1.6 metre models have 14 rotors. An integral frame allows extra weight to be added to increase penetration on hard ground. The equipment is three point mounted and suitable for 20hp to 40hp tractors.



## SPRAY IN SAFETY

Due to the increased demand for low cost compression sprayers outside the agricultural/garden market sectors to spray more concentrated industrial chemical formulae, Allman has released the new Saturn Compression Sprayers to replace its Jupiter range.

The new Saturn range offers improved design features over that of the Jupiter fore runner.

- Viton rubber seals and Desomopan pump plunger seal for greater resistance from chemical attack
- Improved attachment of pump seal to plunger shaft
- Viton seals and shut off valve to lance trigger
- Bottom of tank completely sealed with hose outlets positioned in top of tank making them less vulnerable to accidental damage

In the past some products have proved too aggressive and have attacked or softened the Jupiter seals, O rings and valves. However, the new Saturn models with Viton and Desomopan plunger seal offer greater resistance to chemical attack are better suited for a wider range of applications.



## NUTRITION FOR YOUR PLANTS

Angus Horticulture Ltd has brought out a new range of plant nutrition products for the Amenity Turf Industry.

Based on their Turf Rise range and using their knowledge in plant nutrition and manufacturing, the new range incorporates Zeolite (Clinoptilolite), a naturally occurring mineral. Marketed under the banner EcophaZe they are products suitable for Spring, Summer and Autumn applications.

## ROUGH GRASS CUTTING

The ME and ZME series of mowers from Ferri are highly effective for cutting rough grass and light scrub and are designed for mounting on the type of compact tractors commonly used by golf clubs and amenity contractors.

Both models incorporate several high-specification features such as large diameter adjustable rear rollers, dynamically balanced rotors, bolted balance weights, double-skin flail housings and pto shafts with over-run clutches

The ME series offers 1.05, 1.25 and 1.55 metre cutting widths and is suitable for 14hp to 35hp tractors. The machines are three point mounted directly behind the tractor, and cutting is performed at 2600rpm with hardened steel articulated Y-shaped blades. Versions for front mounting or reverse drive tractors are also available.

The ZME models are particularly versatile, as they can work in-line with the tractor or off-set to left or right while the cutting head can be rotated to any angle between 90° vertical and 50° downwards for cutting hedges, level ground or ditches. The ZME models have a choice of 1.25 metre or 1.55 metre cutting widths and use a similar flail design to the ME machines. The smaller models require 18 to 30hp and the larger models 25 to 40hp.

Maximum side reach is 2.1 metres from the tractor centre line.

The Ferri ME and ZME mowers are distributed in the UK by Reco.





NEW TRAILER SIEVE

The new SCH Supplies Ltd trailer sieve attachment (G TSA) is designed for use with the dump trailers, this mild steel sieve improves the grading of soil and compost heaps. The adjustable corner legs allow the levelling of the attachment when the trailer is not attached to a tractor unit or is on a steep bank. By transporting larger quantities of sieved product in one go, the backache is removed out of an important job.



STIHL TO THE RESCUE

Grass, weeds and scrub thrive best wherever they are out of reach of the lawn mower: in inaccessible areas, under trees and bushes, on steps, along walls and around fences. The new Stihl FS100 and FS100R brushcutters, and the innovative technology, mean that wild growth can be kept in check, conveniently and without harming the environment. Employing the new mixture-lubricated Stihl 4-MIX engine, the new brushcutters combine the benefits of two-stroke and four-stroke engines in one, driving high torque and powerful performance through these versatile machines with optimum eco-properties.

On steep slopes and uneven ground, the new STIHL FS100 and FS100R brushcutters cut through long grass, strong weeds and tough scrub.

Unlike a conventional four-stroke engine, the STIHL 4-MIX is fuelled with a mixture of petrol and oil. No need for a separate oil tank, oil pump and oil filter; no need to check oil levels, change or dispose of the oil. Using a completely new lubrication principle, the STIHL 4-MIX engine is lubricated in every working position (crucial for hand tool applications), and the reduced number of components makes the engine surprisingly compact with the new brushcutters weighing distinctly less than conventional four-stroke machines with separate lubrication.



MAKE IT SNAPPY

The Snapper range of mowers from Saxon Industries has been extended by the addition of the latest zero-turning-radius Snapper EYZ15334BE riding mower.

It is fun to use, thanks to the joystick control which pilots the mower easily round obstacles such as trees, garden ornaments and flowerbeds with accuracy enhanced by the front positioned deck which lets the operator see exactly where he or she is cutting.

The genuine, zero turning capability is the result of dual path transmission which allows the wheels to counter rotate.

An electric-start Briggs & Stratton 15 hp overhead valve engine supplies plenty of power for the largest grassed area and the 33" Hi Vac articulated cutting deck hugs the ground, coping with any undulations.

There is a choice of grass disposal methods: mulching, side discharge and collection.



IMPROVED WEBSITE

STRI have recently launched a Turfgrass Pests, Weeds and Diseases Guide as part of a major overhaul on its website [www.stri.co.uk](http://www.stri.co.uk).

"We believe this is the most comprehensive on-line guide available in the UK for greenkeepers, grounds staff and turf growers. Users can also supplement the on-line guide with telephone advice and sample analysis to identify or confirm their turfgrass problems," said Dr Ruth Mann, STRI's Turfgrass Pathologist.

The re-designed site has lead to a direct rise in monthly hits. In less than a month of the site being live the number of hits has more than doubled. An independent report, based on a key word search of 51 main search engines, highlighted that STRI appeared among the top ten positions 40 times and was number one in each of the top twenty positions.

Other new developments on the site include: A News section; staff profiles; guidelines for sending in samples for analysis; lists of current research; a golf research database funded by the R&A; bookshop news for new titles; content details for our magazine the International Turfgrass Bulletin magazine and the annual Journal of Turfgrass Science, including electronic access to back issues for STRI subscribers.







**SCOTTISH REGION**  
Peter Boyd  
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

The Scottish National Tournament will be held on Tuesday 17 June 2003 over the Kintyre Course, Turnberry Hotel, Ayrshire by kind permission of the Management of Turnberry Hotel. The cost of the event will be £30, which includes coffee/tea, filled roll and evening meal, plus prizes. Entry will be restricted to 80 entries. Thereafter a waiting list will be in operation.

Tee off times will be from 10.06am to 12.57pm. Entry forms will be available at all Section Spring Outings and from the Regional Administrator.

The Kintyre course will host this year's Seniors' Championship and will be used as a qualifying course for the 2004 Open at Royal Troon.

All entries with remittance must be sent to the Regional Administrator. Peter J. Boyd, 10 Meadowburn Avenue, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 6TA by Sunday 8 June 2003. Cheques made payable to BIGGA Scottish Region.

Peter J. Boyd

## East

Well what can we say? A great start to the year and the season and we all hope that it continues and we can get some good grass growing weather. Well as you sit and read this the first tournament of the season is only a few days away on Wednesday, May 14, at Kingsknowe GC.

We hope you have got your entries in by the closing date as there will be NO late entries and we mean exactly that. Also if you send no money or form there will be no entries and no paying on the day and that means everybody. This year we will except no excuses so remember get entries in as soon as possible. On the entry form it will tell you that a draw will take place on a certain date and you will have to phone one of the numbers after that date to find your tee time in advance of the tournament. So don't turn up on the day hoping to find out your tee time because if you miss your time you will not be able to fit in at the end of the field. Clubs only give us the tee for a certain length of time as they have other golfers playing. Therefore, get calling to find out your time. The committee will be strict on these rules this year.

The winners of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Classes will qualify to join the Chairman in the East Section Team to play in the Norrie Whytock team tournament later in the year. Play your best and I look forward to your company in that tournament.

The Section wishes Willie Ness (formerly Thomas Sheriffs) all the best in his new venture and all the best for the future. Willie, we hope

you still pop in if you're passing at anytime. Willie has written a thank you letter elsewhere in this magazine. Well that's it for this month if you have any news you know the numbers, let me know. Come on lets hear from you. Coming up next month news from the spring outing at Kingsknowe GC and any other news I hear on the grapevine.

PS. The annual dinner dance is at the Kilsindie House Hotel on Saturday 6 December. More details next month. See you all at KGC on the 14th. Cheers.

Chris Yeaman

## Central

Apologies for the lack of section news so far this year, I did send in a report for the February magazine but "Ed" must have got fed up with me trying to stretch the deadline to its limit and decided to "teach me a lesson" by not printing it! I thought I would give you a rest in March and decided to take a holiday at the time I should have been concocting more "information" from the Section.

Anyway we are back on track now and since our last report there have been a few new members joining us. We extend a warm welcome to Thomas Adamson, from Dullatur GC; Jamie Downie and Neil Cross, from Ladybank GC; Wayne Meikle, West Lothian GC; Douglas McFarlane, Aberfoyle GC and Hector Forgen-Moreno, from Gleneagles.

The first three draws for "Club 2000" have been made and the winners are as follows; January, M. Baxter, No. 47 (£30), M. Graham, No. 212 (£20), February, T. Adamson, No. 146 (£30), P. Boyd, No. 590 (£20) and March, D. Leith No. 287 (£30) and J. Meikem No. 625 (£20), cheques are in the post to all the winners. To the 204 members who didn't purchase their ticket/s Hard lines, it could have been you winning the money!

The date for this year's Autumn Tournament has now been confirmed and is Thursday, September 25 at Alloa Golf Club. I have had virtually no response to my reminder that All matches in the Inter - Club tournament have to be completed by the date of the Autumn Tournament, so if you have still got matches to play and scores to return please get your fingers - sorry that should have been clubs out and get playing!

Results of the Spring Tournament held at St. Andrews Bay Golf and Spa Resort last month will be in next month's issue, but it might be a bit difficult presenting the trophies as only one winner from last year's event has contacted me following my request in the March magazine for all trophies to be returned for engraving and valuation. I hope I don't have to send the Section Chairman round to get them as I've heard he is a "Mean Man" when he gets his "dander" up.

John Crawford.

## NORTHERN REGION

### North Wales

Borra dar, yaki dar, sids my hedgehog and wallop a donkey. A warm welcome to May in the greenkeeping calendar.

Firstly congratulations to Tracy Schofield, of Llangollen Golf Club, on the birth of Osian Ellis a baby boy weighing in at just over 8lb. Mother and baby are doing fine the question now being, is changing nappies better than changing holes?

Congratulations also to Dylan Hughes, of Pwllheli, on passing his NVQ Level 3 - education being the forefront for success and achievement.

We wish Peter Sproston, of Sutton Hall GC, a speedy recovery after a short spell in hospital and look forward to seeing him once again in action along with many others of our section at the spring tournament held at Mile End GC Oswestry on April 14.

We would like to enlist the help of a non golfing member or guest that could help out as a 'starter' for this event and indeed the autumn and Christmas tournaments. It helps the smooth running of the day and your efforts will be truly rewarded, and you could also have a good laugh at your fellow members tee shots!

This month we focus on Bromborough GC as with many clubs formed at the turn of the 19th century this year is their centenary year and, as previously reported, Richard Littler and his team have transformed the course to accept all year round playing conditions. At the start of its life a local farmer Ernest Hassell knocked a ball around the land, then owned by the Earl of Shrewsbury, before it became part of the Leverhulme estate he and his friends built a nine hole course. It was then extended to 18 in the 1920s. It has been through two World Wars and the interruption of the M53 motorway, being right alongside in the 1970s new land was acquired and three new holes were added. A wealth of golfing champions have passed through this championship layout, now with its new greens and new clubhouse Bromborough is looking forward to the next 100 years, after which Richard plans to retire?

Moving on Gary Martin is staying in the US for another six months now working at Pinehurst No5. Life is tough, Gary.

We have two new members from Pwllheli GC. They are Chris Moore and Tomos Tait and also a belated welcome to the Section to Carl Croucher who recently took up the Course Manager position at Caldly GC.

And that's it folks see you next month. 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



## North West

Firstly, let me apologise for there being no section news in the February issue of our magazine. The Section notes were sent in on time but there was a problem at HQ.

I did mention in those notes that 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 during 2003. I also reported that Jim McDonald had past away on Monday, January 20, after a short stay in hospital. Jim was a credit to his profession and had been at Royal Lytham since 1964. Our thoughts are with his wife, Carol, and his children, Andrew, Claire, and Allison.

This month we also have news of another death in the Section. Patrick Sheehan, brother of Chris and Mike Sheehan was killed in a car accident on his way home from work. Patrick was a greenkeeper at Ashton in Makerfield and will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

The Mere seminar held on March 18 was attended by 55 delegates, and was an excellent day. I am sure you are all aware of the programme of the day, as you all received an application form with your Fixture List for the year, so I will not make a full report, other than to say that all the speakers were excellent. I must, though, congratulate Steve Oultram on his talk about Conservation and Presentation at Wilmslow GC. Steve had never given a talk before, and I know that as the day grew closer he started to panic, but on the day he was as cool as the professional speakers who followed him, and his presentation was first class. Well done. As I mentioned earlier we had 55 delegates, but this is only 10% of the Section members, so next year let's make it 20%.

The next golf is the Spring Tournament to be played at Wigan Golf Club on Thursday, May 22. The tee is available from 1:30pm with Lunch at 12:30pm and an evening meal and presentation after the golf. All applications to Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park Golf Club, Beacon Lane, Dalton. WN8 7RU. Including a cheque for £20 made out to BIGGA. N/W Section.

Finally, people moving about - Paul Pearce is now Head Greenkeeper at Warrington GC and Chris Watson, from Dean Wood GC, is moving down south. That's it, so any news or views contact me on: 0151 724 5412 mobile: 077615 83387.

Bert Cross

## Northern

I am sitting writing these notes a week before our first tournament of the year at Kirkbymoorside Golf Club. I feel the response has been very good and everyone by a miracle has paid a week prior to the event. Well done and keep it up. I will report on the fun and good time we'll all have had in my next notes in June.

The weather at the moment has been remarkably dry for a number of weeks, we have definitely had the driest late February and March I have known. I do hope by now we have had some rain and we no doubt will all be struggling to keep on top of our mowing regimes.

I understand Bob Gee's golf club at Crow Nest Park have recently installed some power tees in their driving range facilities. If anyone is interested in looking at this, he would be willing to show you around the ins and outs of this equipment.

I am sad to report the sudden death of Life member, Donald Roberts, at the age of 83. Donald started his career in greenkeeping at Woodhall Hills GC. Later moving to work under Lawrence Sharp before becoming Head Greenkeeper at West Bowling GC, where he remained until his early retirement in 1982. Donald was a staunch member of the Northern Section of the BGGGA committee, serving a short stint as Chairman. He and his wife Freda regularly attended the National Tournament where he made lots of friends and was a regular winner on a single figure handicap. Family and friends will sadly miss him.

Our next golf tournament will be President's Day at Pike Hills Golf Club on the Thursday 12th June. A £16 cheque will reserve your place. So why not come and support the sponsors, Bob Wild, and your President, Den Cockburn, on what will be a great day out.

Last but not least may I welcome John Taylor, of Woodhall Hills GC; James Senior, of Lightcliffe GC, and James Bentley, of Otley GC, who have all joined our Association this Month.

Wishing you all a trouble free May,  
16 Westwood Ave, Eccleshill, Bradford, West  
Yorks, BD2 2NJ. Tel: 01274 640739 Mobile:  
07976876264 Email: Dthackray@aol.com

Dave Thackray



**MIDLAND REGION**  
Peter Larter  
Tel: 01476 550115

## BB&O

At long last it's time to dust the cobwebs off the clubs and head down the driving range for some much needed practice as the first Golf event of the year is fast approaching. Magnolia Park plays host to the Spring Tournament which is to be held on Wednesday, May 28. This event will be sponsored by Tacit.

The first tee is booked from 11am and as with previous events there will be a rolling tee off as people arrive. The format will be 18 hole Stableford (singles). There is a restriction on numbers so please get your entry in early. David Haskell-Craig is moving house so I have stepped in to handle entries, which should be sent to the following address - East Lodge, Badgemoor Park GC, Rotherfield Grays, Henley on Thames, Oxon, RG9 4NR. If you need to speak with me you can get hold of me on 01491 578147.

This event also doubles as a qualifier for the National Championship to be held at Hollingwell & Coxmoor Golf Clubs on October 6/7. The lowest scores from category 1 & 2 will qualify for the above event. The Section will cover the cost of entry for each of the qualifiers. Good luck!

The Rigby Taylor fourball knockout is just getting underway, reports on this event will be posted throughout the summer. Please ensure that all games are played within the allocated time. All results must be phoned through to Gary Underwood Tel: 07771 804703.

I would like to welcome several new members to our Section: David Grant, Mathew Nutt, Robert Palmer, Simon Graham, Gary Cousins, Gary Bateman, Justin Randall, David Peters, Gerald Pead and Craig Marsh.

Thought for the month: Why is it that when you have one small section of fairway left to cut the one golfer on the tee always manages to land in that small spot delaying your progress?

Lindsay Anderson

## East Midlands

This year's Go-Kart evening was once again held at The Wymeswold Industrial Estate Race Track on March 13. Unfortunately numbers were down once again, and we were only able to muster 20 people and half of these were friends and not Greenkeepers. However, after a very competitive evening of racing our eventual winner was Adrian Summerfield, in second place was Gavin Robson, followed by Adie Porter. Thanks should once again be extended to Toro/Lely U.K and P. S. Marsdens who both generously sponsored the event.

Our trip to John Deere (Langar) was cancelled due to lack of interest, only 12 members put their name forward for this event. So please try to support the Spring Tournament at Ashbourne G.C. on May 15.

This year's AGM will take place at 4.30pm at Kibworth G.C. following our usual Texas Scramble golf Competition.

Antony Bindley

## Mid Anglia

Well we find ourselves experiencing another spell of strange weather patterns, the dryness has been welcome as it has enabled us to finish off construction tasks we might not have been able to, and to start landscaping around a new clubhouse that we have at Ashridge. If you are lucky enough to play in The Course Management Trophy (Midland Region) this year you will be able to experience a new concept of golf club interior design. The only negative side of the weather I can see at the moment is that soil temperatures are still quite low, on greens we have no growth, the Masters will soon be on the television, so start making things stripy.

I thought I should point out that these notes are written a month before you receive them so they will probably have no relevance to what's happening at that time, I must also apologise for not realising that last month's magazine only came out the day before we had organised a trip to The Grove, therefore not many of you would have known the date this was about to take place. Our thanks go to Philip Chiverton and his team for making us so welcome. The course is superb with Penn A4 greens that are so smooth and total Ryegrass fairways with some lovely undulations. The hotel is under construction at



present with 400 people working on it. This is a serious project and we wish it every success. Fortunately, Philip has agreed to allow us to return some time later in the year and I will give plenty of notice next time.

Just a reminder. I have not joined the BB&O Section although the Bucks border is just across the road, and don't forget our Spring meeting takes place at The Bedfordshire on 16 May hope to see you all there.

Jim Cassidy

## Midland

Well, where was last month's Around the Green then Lanky Bloke? Can you image my surprise, after writing and sending such on the so called "Super Highway"! Apparently, a problem regarding the web address. The Russian translation evades me, but my apologies, comrades.

Anyway, this time of year brings us to the metamorphosis of our courses from the unappealing swamp bog, to the verdurous masterpiece we humbly are proud to put our name to. About time too! Is it me or am I getting old? Has this winter been arduously lengthy? My father in his infinite wisdom answered "As you do, they do". Cheers mate!

Thank you for your responses to the questionnaires, I'm glad that I don't have shares in the Royal Mail!

A snooker and darts evening is to be held on Thursday evening May 29, at the "Perfection Snooker Club" in Stirchley, just south of Birmingham city centre. The format for competition shall be decided on the evening via a general consensus. Also a buffet (and maybe prizes) will be provided, kindly sponsored by Nigel Tyler, of Alpha Amenity. May I make it quite clear that all attendees shall have their own table for the entire evening. If interested please call me on: 07816 410552 or 0121 414 0637.

Andy Smith is organising an extensive Mole Control Course, to be held at the end of May/early June. Such is a half day course at a cost of £75 + VAT per person. Anybody with a mole problem will surely benefit from such a course. There is no examination, but attendees shall receive a recognised certificate of attendance. For further details or to register please contact Andy on: 07977 145091.

Mr Woodham, fancy putting your lovely wife, Diane, through that yet again, have you no consideration. Double trouble now. Paul if he's anything like you chap, let's hope he has his mother's lovely traits. Jest aside, congratulations to you both on the arrival of little Nathan, born February 2.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome nine new members to our Section: A. Davies, K. Threlceld, J. Yates, B. Bouchier, R. Hindhaugh, K. D. Williams, M. J. Beetlestone, S. J. Watkins, and by God help him, R. Writtle.

Please remember folks BIGGA exists for you as Greenkeepers and enables many opportunities for future development, such gives opportunity to meet and converse with many fine learned characters to whom you shall

find most welcoming and free with their council. Value indeed.

Finally, it is with greatest of fondness that I recall the first Head I ever served under, as a young Greenhorn who knew it all. (Oh the naivety of youth is delicious!). I was always amazed by his pipe's ability to remain in his mouth while fast asleep during dinner breaks. During such I often found myself unduly concerned with the ignition of his jumper from this somewhat volcanic pipe. Just as my concerns reached panic mode, he would spontaneously awaken with a great flapping of hands and extinguish himself. Fred Bubb, ex Head Greenkeeper of Fulford Heath GC (Retired 1988) passed away in January of this year. A lovely man who will be fondly remembered by many.

I look forward to seeing you at the "Mole Control Course", the "Snooker and Darts Evening", or at Blackwell G.C. for the Summer Tournament on 4 August.

Auf Wiederhoren!

Sean McDade



**SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES**  
Paula Humphries  
Tel: 01288 352 194

## Devon and Cornwall

Our Spring meeting was held at my home club, Yelverton on 25 March. With the course bathed in glorious sunshine, you could be forgiven if you thought it was the middle of July.

Our joint sponsors for the day were Supaturf and Bayer Environmental Science. Our morning's golf competitions, The Supaturf Trophy for Head Greenkeepers and Trade and The Bayer Trophy for Assistants, were started by John Mullins and John Palfrey. There were 40 competitors in all and the results were: Supaturf Trophy. 1. Mark Evans, Royal North Devon; 2. Gary Foster, Tavistock; 3. Tony James, Killiow. Bayer Cup. 1. John Gawman, St Mellion; 2. Lloyd Overy, Exeter; 3. Graham Fitzpatrick, Dainton Park.

The remaining 27 members were escorted by Yours Truly on the customary course walk - a greenkeeper's nightmare - comments and advice to my assistant Billy Mitchell at [www.myshedisonfire.com](http://www.myshedisonfire.com).

The Section would like to thank John Mullins, of Supaturf, and Paul Clifton, of Bayer Environmental Science, for their continued support of our Section and Yelverton Golf Club for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities. The golf course was in excellent condition and I would like to thank my staff, Stephen Pearn, Michael Zmaczynski, Simon Pratt and Tony Newland for all their hard work.

After an excellent lunch and prize presentation, our afternoon talk was presented by Bill Pile. Bill has had over 40 years experience in greenkeeping and entertained us all with a debate of topical issues in our profession.

Congratulations to Chris Gadsby on his promotion to Head Greenkeeper at Launceston Golf Club. The Section wishes him well.

The Section would like to pass on their best wishes to Alan Dommet, of Devon Garden Machinery, who has just undergone an operation. Alan has supported our Section for as long as I can remember and we hope to see him up and about very soon.

Our summer meeting will be held at Trethorne Golf Club on Tuesday 17 June 2003 and details will be sent out in due course.

Thank you to all 67 members who turned up to Yelverton. I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

If any members have any information for this column, please contact me on 01822 617671.

Steve Evans

## South Wales

You must have all been too busy to send me any news or views this month,

I've got hardly anything to write about. Not much happens between December and April so the notes do tend to be fairly brief, news on our first competition at Langland Bay GC, and our seminar at Royal Porthcawl GC will appear in next month's magazine. If anybody has news for next month please contact me ASAP. There MUST be somebody in Wales who has something they want to see in print in the magazine. Contact me via email at: [ada.panks@ticali.co.uk](mailto:ada.panks@ticali.co.uk). or call me on: 02920 884172, soon please.

Adrian Panks

## South West

I do hope by the time you are reading this we're all complaining "I can't keep on top of this growth". Whose idea was it to put the bloody US Masters on in early April anyway? No golf to report on so I would like to mention some forthcoming attractions.

I am running a seminar day here at Bath Golf Club on Wednesday September 24, starting at 9am, there will be three hands on seminars presented by Toro, PSD Agronomy and John Nicholson Associates. The format will be three groups of ten, each spending an hour with each company on the golf course looking and discussing there relevant subject. Toro will have a full fleet of their latest equipment to put to the test. Jay Dobson will answer any agronomy queries (there will be quite a few on this course?). John Nicholson's brief is arboriculture and golf design (he has as part of his team BBC TV's golf commentator Ken Brown). After lunch there will be a question and answer session. There is no cost for the day. Numbers will be limited so you must contact me to book your place. Don't delay it will be a great day.

Congratulations to Samantha Kennedy on her move from Minchinhampton to Bowood as First Assistant. We wish her well.

Please don't forget that letter to Nobby as to why you should be selected for a free trip to BTME 2004.

Well done to Mark Lewthwalte, Bath GC; John Keenaghan, Kendleshire, and Duncan



Smith, Weston, for being selected to join the Greenkeepers' Support Team for The Open Championship.

Don't forget G/A Greensomes at Orchardleigh GC Wednesday May 21 at 1pm.

Countrywide have announced the appointment of Martin Townsend, formally of Scotts UK, as their new Turf and Amenity Sales Manager. So along with top quality seed and fertilisers you can also order half a cow and some pig feed.

Right back to more irrigation repairs.

Email:

greenkeepers@bathgolfclub.fsworld.co.uk.

Telephone: 01225 483486

Mobile: 078123 80936

Guy Woods

## South Coast

As I sit and write these notes I am distracted by my television, and the sight of a statue of Saddam Hussain in central Baghdad being pulled down as American troops liberate the Iraqis. It is a very sobering vision and brings life very much back into perspective! My original opening was about the great difficulties that the weather is blessing us with once more. We are once more under drought conditions and with the temperature reaching 18 degrees our members are wondering why they are not playing on greens with summer characteristics. Well if your course is similar to ours then you will be struggling to get any sort of growth! But as I said, we should put things into perspective.

Life in the Section is quiet at the moment. I have two pieces of news to pass on to you. Firstly we say a very fond farewell to a quite remarkable lady. Our Regional Administrator, Paula Humphries, is retiring at the end of April to enjoy life with her husband, Mike. I have had the privilege of knowing Paula for a number of years and she has worked relentlessly on behalf of the South West and South Wales Region, which our Section falls within. During that time Paula has not been in the best of health but has never let this affect her work or enthusiasm for it. Probably more importantly she has never let her illness dampen her spirits and I have never heard her complain about it once. We all wish Paula a long and happy retirement with Mike and she has assured me that she would like to attend some of our golf days so she can keep in touch. Thank you Paula!

We also say farewell to Kevan Glass, of Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club, as he ventures across the border and takes on fresh challenges at Loch Lomond Golf Club. It's a big move for Kevan and I know it is a challenge he is relishing and one he will rise to. Good luck Kevan and keep in touch.

As I said before, it's been a quiet month and I have promised Scott that after my version of War and Peace last month I would keep it short and sweet this month. Please contact me if you have any news you wish to include.

Until next month

Alex McCombie



**SOUTH EAST**  
Derek Farrington  
Tel: 01903 260 956

## Surrey

Although you are reading this in the May edition of our magazine I am sure that every member will remember what an excellent day we all had at Cuddington Golf Club on March 13. Many thanks to Stuart Shoppard and his staff for presenting the course in such a magnificent way and arranging for such superb weather. Cuddington was bathed in glorious sunshine and the temperature was really warm. Michael Sawicki took full advantage of the conditions and scored 37 points taking first prize. Nigel Colly was second losing only on countback with Steve Holmes just pipping Greg Richardson into third position. Longest Drive was delivered by Anthony Freeman and Nearest the Pin was Gary Rowe's finest hour. Best par 3 score was accurately obtained by Mick McLaren at -1. Our next tournament is on May 29 at Old Thorns Golf Club so please send your application in on time with your payment to Ian Sellars.

Congratulation paragraph informs us that Dan Wheeler, Roehampton GC, has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at Mottram Hall Golf Club and Gary Kenny takes over at Hampton Court following John Biermont's retirement due to ill health. Our best wishes to John and an early return to full health. David Andrews celebrates 25 years at Purley Downs Golf Club and John Day takes control at Woking Golf Club.

Brian Willmott



What about yer. There's not much to write about this month. So far, a spell of fine weather and all you do is work, you're getting to be a boring lot (Joke).

Friends in England often ask me where to go in Ireland as they are thinking of visiting for a few days, I say that's not long enough, but I also tell them pin a map up on the wall, throw a dart and go there.

I have been blessed with having seen every square inch of the whole of our country, quite often in beautiful weather, I suggest they start at

the Europa Hotel in Belfast. Go south, keep going and end up back in the same hotel. I tell them, though, to keep out of Northern Ireland. It's mine! However I have just got back from Donegal, windy, cold, sunny, beautiful.

Loving Northern Ireland as I do, there is something special about Donegal. They say it's the last place God made. He practised on the rest of the world and when he got it right he built Donegal. Now I know when you receive my calling cards most of you leave the country. Well the best yet, Jim McKenna, at Doonbeg, had gone to get measured for his wedding suit! I mean would anyone go that far?

I've just had my hair cut, I told the barber to cut a bit more off one side than the other leave the back and top a bit scrappy and cut the fringe on the slope. He said he couldn't send me out looking like that, I said you managed it last time.

There have been two educational events both were very well attended and proved very beneficial.

Many thanks to Bernard Findlay, and Portstewart Golf Club. Bernard gave a tour of his newly built golf course and talked of Links management. Thanks also to Ruth Mann, from STRI, who generously gave her time and a very good talk on Pests and Diseases. It was unanimously regarded as an excellent day.

Greenmount held an event on reel sharpening and Soil Science, many thanks to Neil McLaughlin and the college and to Ken Richardson and Sami Collins from BIGGA. Again another excellent day.

The next golf outing will be at Lungan Golf Club, 1pm on May 27. "I am not looking forward to it" sponsored by Tacit.

Last month I wrote about the shows. There is something special for me about them. Not only do I meet my friends I see how well you all get on. There is something about your profession that brings you together, similar to other people who care for the land. Knowing everyone I can sometimes introduce greenkeepers, I remember once in Dublin introducing John Rouine, from Lahinch, to Andy Robertson, from Ballylifen.

They became good friends in seconds so much that John visited Andy while on honeymoon in Donegal. I hope Mrs Rouine ironed Andy's shirts he certainly needed them doing.

I've just had a cup of tea with Jimmy Jones at Kilkeel (a real gent). I am now going to write a best seller, titled "Irish World Tour of Greenkeepers' Canteens". I may give prizes. The best will take some finding, the worst even harder.

Cheers Everybody  
Graham Prosser



**TIME TO TALK**  
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Turftime Teaser, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. Entries to reach us no later than Monday 12th May 2003. The first correct 2 entries drawn will receive a Cutter & Buck Polo Shirt each.

This competition is not open to BIGGA Staff or non-members. The solution to the April 'Turftime Teaser' was Shirley Aldred & Co Ltd. The 5 lucky winners are: Stephen Whitwell of Gog Magog Golf Club, Mr S Pickering of Rotherham Golf Club, Jeremy Smith of Rushden Golf Club and Malcolm Jervis of Chelmsford, Chris Tozer of Bridport & West Dorset Golf Club

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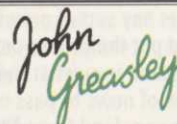
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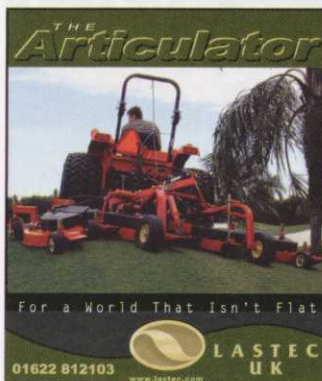
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## YOUR LETTERS ARE NEEDED!

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

### A Positive Advertisement

The article "Looking After Your Sand" by Alistair Beggs which featured in the April edition of Greenkeeper International highlighted some common sense guidelines to bunker maintenance. However, the statement "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..." needs addressing. This statement clearly implies that greenkeepers are unable to undertake any kind of bunker reshaping or drainage improvements without the help of an architect: this is obviously not a reflection of reality.

While I accept that there is a place for golf course architects in the appropriate circumstance, the work we have undertaken at Highgate in recent years is, I feel, a positive advertisement for in-house renovations. I am happy to extend an open invitation to Mr Beggs, or indeed any greenkeeper, architect, consultant, etc, to come and cast a critical eye over the improvements we have made at this course.

I would be interested to know whether Mr Beggs would feel that "the first step" we should have made would have been to contact a golf course architect.

Richard Andrews, Highgate Golf Club

### No Apology Needed

Joe Findlay has no need to apologise for his long-winded essay in your latest issue. After 30 years learning how to produce greens as good as those at Portrush, it would be a shame if he felt he could not use our magazine as a vehicle to pass on what he has learned to "youngsters" like me.

As I've mentioned before, it has been a tough learning experience for me to make the transition from parkland to links greenkeeping with only an open mind, some helpful and enthusiastic staff, an understanding boss and Jim Arthur's rantings to help me out, so any snippets of information people like Joe or "Chairman George" can send my way will always be gratefully received.

It is reassuring to note the similarities between the programmes Joe and I currently favour (although his is obviously more intensive as he has more wear to deal with, and a bigger budget to utilise), as we are both dealing with exactly the same weather and working with exactly the same sand (Portrush is only about 30 miles from Islay).

Anyone who feels they have anything to offer that can help their fellow greenkeepers should do what Joe has done and pass their ideas on - we cannot expect Scott to do ALL the work now, can we?

Simon Freeman, Head Greenkeeper, Machrie GC, Islay

Editor's Note: Like Simon, I would be delighted to hear from any greenkeeper who wishes to do an informative article along the lines of Joe's.

### Thanks to Ransomes Jacobsen

I am thrilled to hear that I have been awarded a Ransomes Jacobsen Higher Education Scholarship. I am looking forward to investing it in the realisation of my dream: to be educated at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland, which will result in an MSc grade in golf course architecture.

Thank you so much!

As a matter of course I will keep you informed on any progress and all relevant ins and outs.

Thank you once more for your generosity.

Cees van Nieuwenhuizen, The Netherlands

### Thanks to All

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone I have been fortunate to have been involved with in my four years in the trade. To Drew Harkness and everybody at Sherriffs; everyone at John Deere, and all the UK dealers that I have met. The guys at Wiedenmann UK and all the companies I have dealt with.

Finally, a big thank you to all the customers who I have had the pleasure in dealing with. I will miss you all. Thanks a million.

Wullie Ness

## Recruitment

### FOYLE INTERNATIONAL GOLF CENTRE

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### HEAD GREENKEEPER

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The successful applicant should possess the following.

- Appropriate qualifications and certificates
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- Sound knowledge of Health and Safety regulations
- Man-manager who can motivate and lead from the front
- Able to manage resource through good time management skills

Applications with full CV salary will be negotiable. Closing date 23 May 2003

Applications to: The Secretary, Carholme Golf Club, Carholme Road, Lincoln LN1 1SE



## SOUTH BEDS GOLF CLUB



Luton, Bedfordshire  
Established 1892



### Invites applications for the post of **COURSE MANAGER**

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The successful candidate will play a major part in this project.

To be considered for this post you should hold appropriate qualifications, be well versed in all modern practices and be able to demonstrate a commitment to continual professional development. In addition, it is expected that you would be conversant with current Health & Safety aspects of greenkeeping and be capable of planning and budgeting for the maintenance of the course. Most importantly, you should be able to demonstrate management and motivational qualities, together with the ability to lead and develop the existing team.

Salary by negotiation

Closing date: 26th May 2003

To apply, please write, enclosing a full CV to:

Secretary/Manager, South Beds Golf Club,  
Warden Hill Road, Luton, LU2 7AE



## BLACKMOOR GOLF CLUB

Established 1913

### Applicants are invited for the position of **HEAD GREENKEEPER**

at one of Hampshire's finest courses, home of the Selborne Salver and an Open Regional Qualifying course.

Candidates for this important position will be enthusiastic, appropriately qualified and experienced, have skills in preparing and managing budgets, be aware of current Health and Safety requirements and possess the ability to motivate, manage and work with a young team.

The successful candidate will report to the Secretary/Manager and salary will be negotiable.

Written applications, including full CV, should be sent to:

Mr A N Harris, Secretary/Manager, Blackmoor Golf Club,  
Firgrove Road, Whitehill, Bordon, Hampshire GU35 9EH

### Parks Services Unit

## Head Greenkeeper (Towneley Park Golf Courses)

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You will be responsible for the maintenance of the courses, supervision of up to 8 permanent and seasonal green-keeping staff and have responsibility for materials and equipment budgets. You will also be responsible for supervising contractors, planning and implementing improvements to the courses and liaising with the Towneley Park Golf Club.

You must have fine turf and golf course and supervisory experience, together with a recognised qualification to NVQ 2/3 in fine turf or an equivalent qualification. Good interpersonal skills, the ability to manage and develop staff and control financial resources are also essential. We offer a 36.25 hour working week, generous holidays and an excellent pension scheme. Rented accommodation in a park lodge house may also be available if required.

For an application form and further details please contact:  
Christine Crossley, Support and Member Services Unit,  
20 Nicholas Street, Burnley, BB11 2AP Tel: 01282 425011 ext 2644

Minicom (uniphone) Tel: 01282 425011

For applications outside normal office hours - 01282 428235

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No existing accommodation is available, but arrangements may be possible.

Salary negotiable based on experience.

Contact: Peter Strand on: 01342 850087  
or Cowden, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 7JN.



## Feature listing from May 2001

**May 2001;** Foot and Mouth Disease Special Report; Maintenance Facility report; Bunker Sand; ATVs; RainBird Profile; Fineturf Genetics; BTME2002 countdown; Electric-powered machines

**June 2001;** Stoke Park Club profile; Stuart Cagle MG; Tractors; Leaf Spot Disease; Take All Patch; Construction

**July 2001;** Royal Lytham profile; Tees Mowers; Fertilisers; Green Grasses; John Deere profile; Sandy McDivot; College Listings

**August 2001;** Aeration Survey; Machrie GC profile; Rough Mowers; Saltex Preview; Dr Alan Gange - environmental research; Hayter Profile; Ponds; Open Championship review; Toro Student of the Year profile;

**September 2001;** Ryder Cup preview; Chafer Grubs; Drainage; BIGGA National Championship preview; Sandy McDivot; Machinery Maintenance; Soil Analysis; Wild Flowers

**October 2001;** Major Award for Walter Woods; Royal Portrush GC; Portstewart GC; Irrigation; Soil biodiversity; Leaf collection systems; Scotsturf preview' Saltex review

**November 2001;** BIGGA National Championship review; Environment Competition winner; Spraying; Toro Awards Preview; Cutting regimes; Dyke GC

**December 2001;** Toro Award Winners; Southern Gailes GC; BTME preview; Specialty equipment; Thatch removal

**January 2002;** Walton Heath profile; Greenkeeping in Denmark; Moving materials; A first for Andy Campbell; New products

**February 2002;** Harrogate 2002 Review; Drainage; Castlerock GC; Trees; Recycling; TurfTrax profile; Barn Owl special report

**March 2002;** Donnington Valley profile; Utility vehicles; Essay competition winner; Irrigation; Seeds; Sandy McDivot

**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 Isacss; 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

**April 2003;** Oakmere Park GC; Spraying; Golf Course Security; Bernhards Delegation; Ransomes Jacobsen Profile



# Patience is the Game



What goes around comes around. Having endured some of the wettest weather any of us can remember over the past couple of years, we are in the middle of the driest and warmest March/April people up here in Scotland can remember. Temperatures are what we would hope for in the height of the summer, while at the moment rain seems like a distant memory.

People will accuse us of never being happy and always having something to gripe about but we all know that while excessively wet weather is not what we look for, neither is what we have at the moment.

In the daytime short shirt sleeves are the order of the day which is very pleasant but night time frosts are still keeping soil temperatures down. In fact, we are so dry here at Turnberry that we have had grass fires on our course and there have been several fires on roadside areas. Now you might expect grass fires in the height of a good summer but certainly not at this time of year.

It is ironic that this year it was Augusta National which had to put up with torrential rain, which made the course unplayable for the start of The Masters, while we were having to water our curled up winter turfing just to keep it alive. Who would have believed that?

The extended mild spell has meant that we have had so much play throughout the winter months, which has been followed by almost 4,000 rounds of golf on the Ailsa course during the month of March alone. This has led to some walkways becoming so dry and worn that they are breaking up already and we are having to turn our attention to them much earlier than we would normally have to.

Our second course, the new Kintyre, has also been very busy, with almost 3,000 rounds of golf in the month of March alone.

Talking of Augusta National. Yes, here we are in that time of year when committees expect our courses to be in better shape than they are! Unfortunately many of them do not realise that despite the recent

sunshine, as I write, it is still only the middle of April and with the ever increasing amount of winter play on semi dormant golf courses and the crazy demand for fast greens, courses have to pay the penalty with UNDESIRABLE grasses or, in some cases, little grass at all on their greens.

But the saddest thing of all is that the resultant problems are invariably blamed on the poor greenkeeper. What is more alarming is that many good, hard working greenkeepers are facing dismissal for carrying out these ill advised practices that are imposed upon them. BIGGA offers as much support as is possible in these situations with the panel of experienced greenkeepers available to offer advice and mediation on greenkeeping and agronomic issues. The opinion of a respected greenkeeper from outwith a golf club might just carry enough weight to change ill informed views from within. If it does everyone will benefit, including the beleaguered greenkeeper and the club itself.

The month of May will soon be upon us and most of our courses will be in better shape. Nothing every changes.

Patience is the game.

George Brown  
Chairman

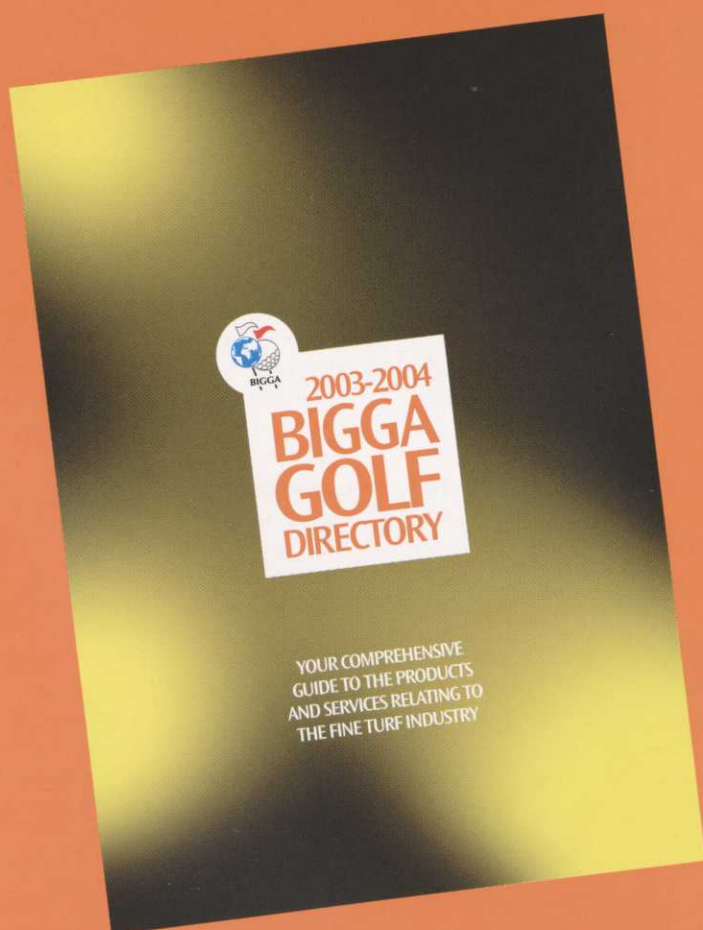


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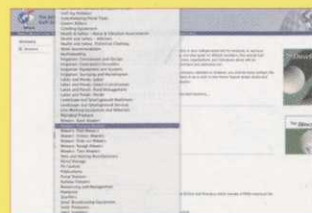
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