

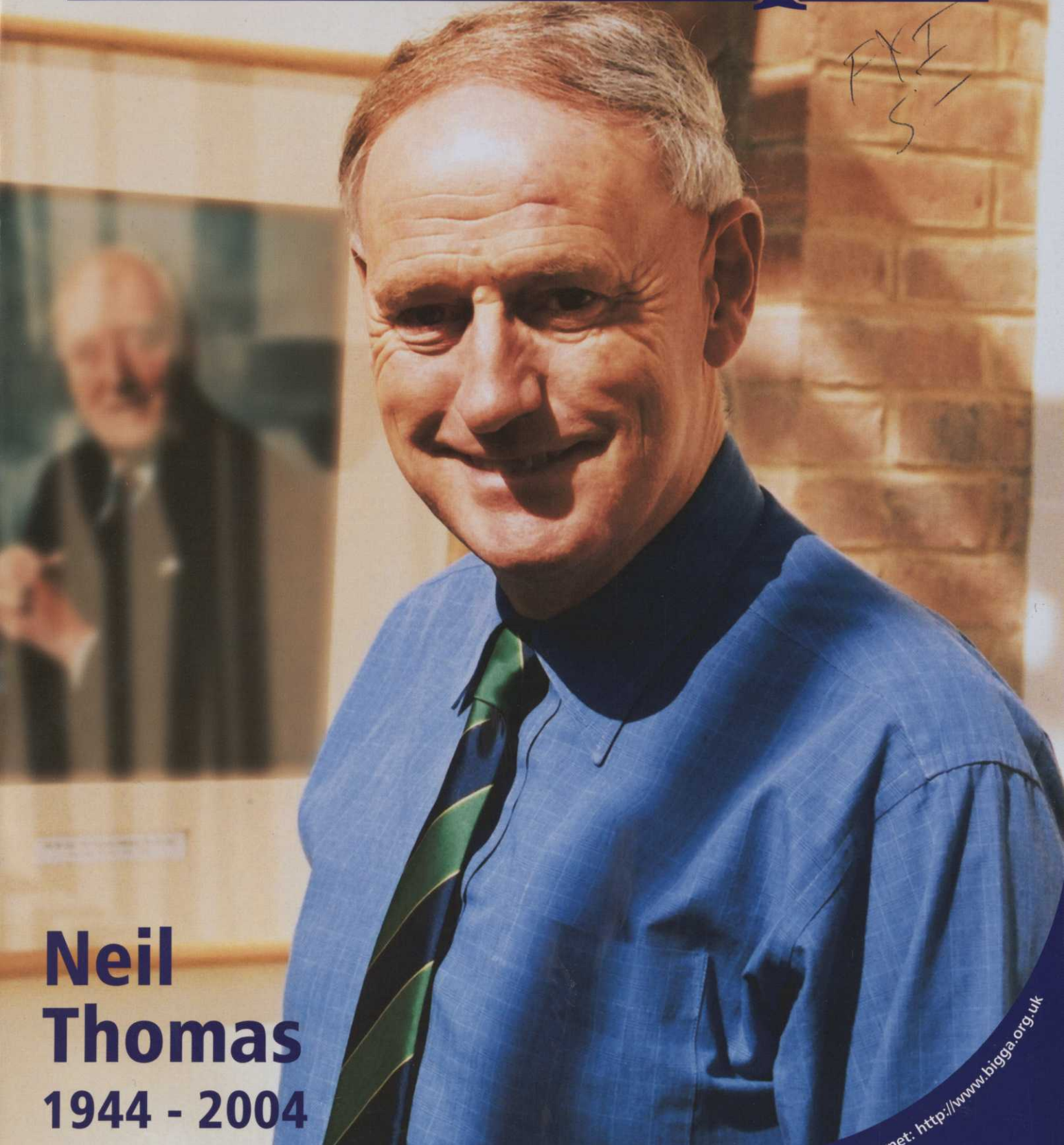
Award-winning magazine of the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association



March 2004 - £3.80

Greenkeeper

INTERNATIONAL



**Neil
Thomas**
1944 - 2004

Tributes to Neil Thomas | R&A Best Practice | Trentham Park GC | Drainage | Spraying

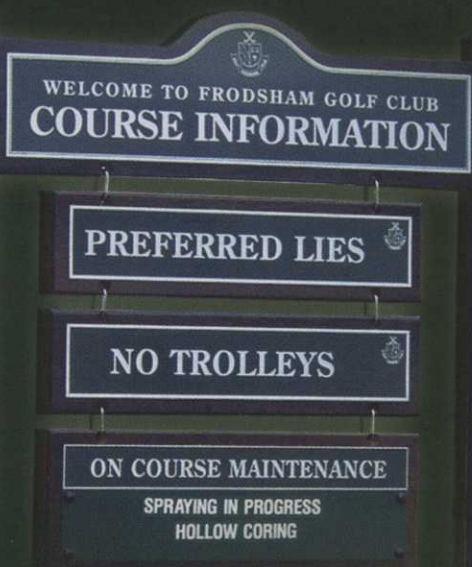
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Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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

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Welcome

MEMORIES OF NEIL THOMAS

Everyone who knew Neil Thomas well will have a memory of him that in the years to come, whenever his name is brought up in conversation, they will be able to recall, and then smile.

Having been with Neil at virtually every one of BIGGA's major events over the last nine years – ironically poor health didn't prevent either of us from attending any of these until Neil's devastating illness – I have been fortunate enough to have quite a few of these memories.

There were the Harrogate weeks which Neil always used to relish, despite the fact that the pressure on the week to succeed was immense; there were also Saltexes; National Championships; Open Championship weeks and any number of other occasions which we attended on behalf of the Association – he to do the formal bit and me to record them for the magazine.

After a long day it would be back to the hotel for a wash, a change and then out for a meal. It was often then that you saw Neil at his most relaxed, enjoying a glass of wine and entering into whatever conversation happened to be amusing the table at the time. He had an insatiable thirst for gossip but, such was his knowledge of what was going on in the industry, he was able to pour cold water on many of the tales which, let's be fair, do tend to grow particularly tall in this industry.

You see he had a vast network of "informants" who kept him up to date with movements and events within the industry. It wasn't the first time I'd shoot off to his office with news, hot off the press, only to learn that he'd heard it some time before.

But back to the memories. There was the trip to Finland, back in the mid-90s where Neil and I were introduced to the invigorating delights of the Finnish sauna, completed with a plunge into a freezing cold lake; the series of Hayter competitions, including the Hayter International Cup match in Atlanta, an experience no-one privileged enough to attend will ever forget and, of course, the opening of BIGGA HOUSE, by HRH the Duke of York, in October 1998.

Neil often used to talk about how he started off in a single room in the STRI building, at Bingley, with just himself and a secretary. To have seen the Association grow to the extent that we had our own purpose built office building, opened by a member of the Royal Family, showed just how far the Association had come. I know it made Neil extremely proud.

We also shared an interest in rugby and we would often sit in his office and bemoan the current form of our two national sides. The fact that Wales cuffed Scotland in the Millennium Stadium just before he died would certainly not have been lost on him. I know he was the first person I thought of when the final whistle went.

There you are. One of those memories popping up already.

Scott MacCallum, Editor

NEW AWARDS

The IOG is launching new Senior Awards this month which will provide important career advancement opportunities for greenkeepers as well as sports and amenity turf managers.

The IOG has been granted Delegated Authority by City and Guilds to award Licentiate and Graduate in Sports Turf Management.

The Licentiate Award (comparable to NVQ Level Four) is suitable for team supervisors and first line managers who have already achieved a NVQ Level Three equivalent qualification and have at least five years experience in the industry. Assessment is by means of a review of a detailed portfolio of career extension evidence.

The Graduateship Award (comparable to Honours Degree or NVQ Level Five) is aimed at more senior managers. The IOG offers two routes of entry for this award – the Project Route which requires a 10,000 word work-based thesis, and a direct route for those who have already achieved a Level Four equivalent qualification and who can provide a comprehensive statement of management achievement together with supporting evidence. Both routes require attendance at an interview board. Award holders are entitled to use the appropriate letters LCGI or UCGI after their name.

A HISTORIC REUNION

At The BTME Clubhouse exhibition in January this year, I had the pleasure of re-uniting an ex-greenkeeper with the 1964 18-inch Auto Certes greens mower he used on a daily basis at Cotswold Hills Golf Club during the 1970s. It had his name

"Rob" on the fuel tank. Robin Greaves, went on to become Head Greenkeeper at Bristol and Clifton and then Course Manager at Thornbury Golf Centre, Avon, before becoming a salesman for Countrywide, sports turf division.

It is an honour to be associated with the history of these machines. Think of all those man-hours and expertise that Rob's

mower witnessed over its 40 years of frontline service cutting greens on a daily basis for at least 20 years and then as a back-up unit for 20 years. All those special days for club events.

Peter Hampton



SISIS ADD TO TEAM



▲ Ian Campbell

Sisis has made three new appointments to its sales team.

After 22 years with Sisis, firstly in development and then as part of the demonstration team, Ian Campbell has now been appointed Territory Manager for Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffs and North Wales. He has a huge amount of experience of Sisis products and looks forward to meeting customers old and new.

Allan Gray is the new Territory Manager for N.E England and Cumbria. His experience in the industry will be of great value to Sisis customers,

many of whom will know him from his time as a Director of Yorkshire Mowers, and more recently as Area Manager for IBEA.

John Milner has been appointed as Demonstrator for S.E. England, working from the Sisis Depot at Merrist Wood College, supporting the S.E Sales team. Jon has experience of the hire trade and has four year's experience as a cricket groundsman at Championship Division 1 level.



▲ Allan Gray



▲ John Milner

SPEEDCUT JOIN UP

Speedcut Contractors Limited based in Oxfordshire, have been elected associate members of the BAGCC, following a recent invitation to join the Association.

"Having admired the professionalism and

quality of workmanship set by the Association and its members for many years, we are delighted that we now have the opportunity to contribute in a positive way from the confines of this prestigious organisation," said Kevin Smith, Contracts Manager.

INCREASING COVERAGE

Lloyds & Co, Letchworth, has appointed dealers in some areas not currently very well covered by its direct sales team.

EAZI lif'e Groundcare a division of Malpas Tractors based in Wrexham has been appointed as the new dealer to cover North Wales and Shropshire.

They have taken on demonstration equipment, Leda gang mowers and Paladin fine turf mowers, which are available for demonstrations to customers while larger equipment will be supported, in the short term, from Lloyd's demonstration fleet.

Pictured with the Lloyds Paladin Mowers, from left, are Roy Williams, Groundcare Sales Manager with Jeff Stockton and Rachael Reeves, Managing Director of Malpas Tractors, and Clive Nottingham Managing Director of Lloyds & Co.



ON COURSE WINNER

One of the first duties of BIGGA's new Chairman, Andy Campbell, was to draw the winning ticket in Vitax's annual greenkeepers' raffle at BTME.

Mike Stokes, of Whitchurch (Cardiff) Golf Club, took the prize of a gift voucher entitling him to £150's worth of BIGGA merchandise, which he is hoping to put towards the Association's "On Course" software package.

"This is a package compiled by greenkeepers, for greenkeepers. As well as spread sheets for fertiliser and maintenance, the software covers report writing, which I would find very useful. There was a demo disc here when I arrived two years ago, but it has now run out. Hopefully I'll soon be using the latest version," said Mike.



GREEN APPLE AWARD

MOX UK, specialists in the contract hire of golf vehicles and turf machinery, have recently been awarded the prestigious Green Apple Award. The award was presented was to Glynn Patrick, MOX's General Manager, at a ceremony at the Houses of Parliament where the likes of Ford, Fiat and Toyota were also honoured.

The Green Apple Awards are given each year by The Green Organisation which is an independent group dedicated to promoting the positive side of environmental endeavour. They achieve this by recognising and publicising individuals and organisations who are making the effort to preserve and protect the environment for future generations. MOX received their award for their work on pollution free electric golf vehicles.



The photo shows Glynn Patrick (right) receiving the award from Roger Wolens, of The Green Organisation. BIGGA won a Green Apple Award several years ago.

NEW CHAIRMAN

John Hall, European Marketing Manager, of Bayer Environmental Science, has taken over the role of Chairman of the Amenity Horticulture Committee (AHC).

In future the committee will be called the Amenity Expert Group.

The AHC meets twice a year, bringing together representatives from all of the major companies in the amenity/horticulture industry.

It acts as a channel through to the Health and Safety Executive and Trading Standards as well as the Pesticides Safety Directorate and also works to promote the Government's Voluntary Initiative on minimising the environmental impacts of pesticides.

John Hall brings a wealth of experience to the committee, having worked in the technical/commercial and marketing areas of the industry for over eight years.

"It is my aim to continue the good work of the committee in promoting best practice in the amenity and horticulture industry to work towards a better environment," John commented. "In the short/medium term this will be achieved through the important channel of the voluntary initiative," he said.

WRONG NUMBER

The telephone number listed for the White Horse Contractors (Northern) Ltd appeared incorrectly in last month's magazine. The number should have been 01845 567711. Apologies for any confusion.

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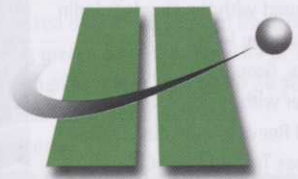


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JOBS IN IRELAND

www.golfjobs.ie is the only website dedicated to recruitment for the Irish Golf Industry. Jobseekers can register immediately and gain access to the best golf positions available.

It has been established in response to the increasing demand for specialist staff to service the expanding golf industry in Ireland. The internet has revolutionised the way employers recruit the best candidates and the golf industry has been neglected, until now.

www.golfjobs.ie is a central point for all employers and golf clubs to pool their marketing power and create an easier way for candidates to find golf related positions from Greenkeepers and ground staff to golf shop assistants and catering staff.



▲ Christy O'Connor Jnr launched the site

NEW MAN FOR BARENBRUG

Barenbrug has added to its sales force with the appointment of Warren Jefford as Area Sales Manger for the north of England and Wales as well as all of Scotland.

The position has been made



available due to the promotion of Jayne Leyland, who used to oversee the north of England, to Senior Area Manager.

Warren, who lives in north Manchester, will be working closely with distributors, and increasing the sales of the Barenbrug product range among local authority, amenity and sports customers, as well as turf growers.

Previously, he spent three years as technical sales representative with construction and amenity products distributor Rigby Taylor, in Lancashire.

NIGHT OF AWARDS

The Hayter Dinner, a Harrogate tradition for ten years, was its usual splendid occasion crowned at the end of the evening with the presentation of dealer awards.

Commercal Dealer of the Year was George Brown Implements Ltd; Outstanding Commercal Dealer of the Year was Oakleys Ltd, of Shropshire;

Export Dealer of the Year was Lyngfeldt of Denmark while the special Achievement of the Year went to Harry Gillespie of Cyril Johnston & Co Ltd.

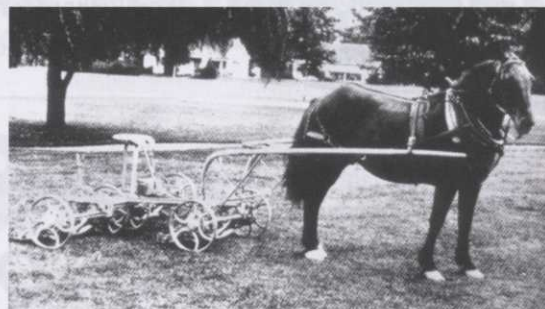
Amid a host of other presentations was a selection of cycling accessories for Hayter Managing Director Derek Boulton, who is about to cycle the length of Britian.



Picture shows Robert Bland, Director of Oakley's being presented with his award by Sales Director David Sturges.

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

HERITAGE !



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Don't put our heritage in a skip.
The machine's a dog and very old
It's obsolete so you've been told,
It stops when hot and won't start cold
And you're now due for your watch of gold --
Don't put our heritage in a skip.

Don't put our heritage in a skip Mr Greenkeeper
Don't put our heritage in a skip.
You've followed it for years and years
Through all the highs and all those tears,
So now retire it to pastures new
For all your friends to admire and view
Don't put our heritage in a skip.

Don't put our heritage in a skip Mr Greenkeeper
Don't put our heritage in a skip.
It's given all it's life to you
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People are here that think it's great
To fix it up and show your mates
Don't put our heritage in a skip.
I beg you Please Mr Greenkeeper, Please Mr Greenkeeper

Scribbler: Peter Hampton

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NEIL HOTCHKIN

Neil Hotchkin, a past President of the English Golf Union and described by many as perhaps the most outstanding man in the history of the union, has died, two days after his 90th birthday.

Mr Hotchkin was the man behind the sale of Woodhall Spa to the union in 1995 which not only ensured the future of one of the finest inland courses in the world but secured a modern headquarters for the EGU.

IS IT A RECORD?

With the golf season just around the corner I reflecting on achievements at McDonald Golf Club, Ellon. Without checking the Guinness Book of Records I believe McDonald Golf Club could have two records.

Firstly 16 holes in one were recorded during the year. Secondly, ten of these holes in one were at the same hole. The 15th. The Girdle, 147 yard par-3.

So is there a golf club out there who can surpass this achievement? I look forward to reading or hearing from anyone.

PS. Two holes in one have been recorded on the same hole during January of this year.

John Geddes, Head Greenkeeper, McDonald Golf Club, Ellon

Education

Ken Richardson gives a brief update on training courses and gives those who missed the Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate a chance to see what they missed



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Continue to learn

The spring range of courses has been very successful with more than 60 greenkeeper benefiting from high quality training presented within easy reach of their home. Subjects covered include: tractor driving, risk assessment, COSHH awareness, computer skills, fire safety, manual handling and supervisory management.

Places are still available on the Communicating with Committees course at Shirley Golf Club on 16 and 17 March, on the Influential Manager course at De Vere Carden Park on 25 and 26 March and on the Integrated Pest Management Course also at De Vere Carden Park on 14 April.

Each one-day course costs £30 + VAT and each two day course costs £60 +VAT.

Contact Sami for further details.

Planning is underway for Continue to Learn at Harrogate in January 2005, when the theme will be Back to Basics. There will be even more opportunities to continue to learn with 5 workshops and an extra day of seminars being provided. Workshops we hope to run include: Golf Course Design, Irrigation,

Continue to learn with BIGGA Regional Training Courses, at very low prices, thanks to the Education and Development Fund sponsored by the companies and individuals shown on this page.

Drainage, Soil Science, Course Preparation, Golf Course Management and a return of the Master Greenkeeper Workshop.

The same themes will run through the BTME Seminar Programme that will take place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with ClubHouse Seminars taking place on Tuesday afternoon. If you want to hear a particular speaker or have a favourite subject or wish to volunteer as a speaker then please let me know.

Anyone who missed Continue to Learn in January can now catch up on what they missed by buying a copy of the Continue to Learn DVD. Complete with audio and slides used on the day, a DVD of 4 presentations costs £20.

2 disks cost £34

3 disks cost £48

4 disks cost £62

5 disks cost £76

6 disks cost £90

Contact Sami for details

TORO Student of the Year

Brochures and application forms have been sent to all training providers in the UK and Ireland. If you have not received your mailing then contact BIGGA House as soon as possible.

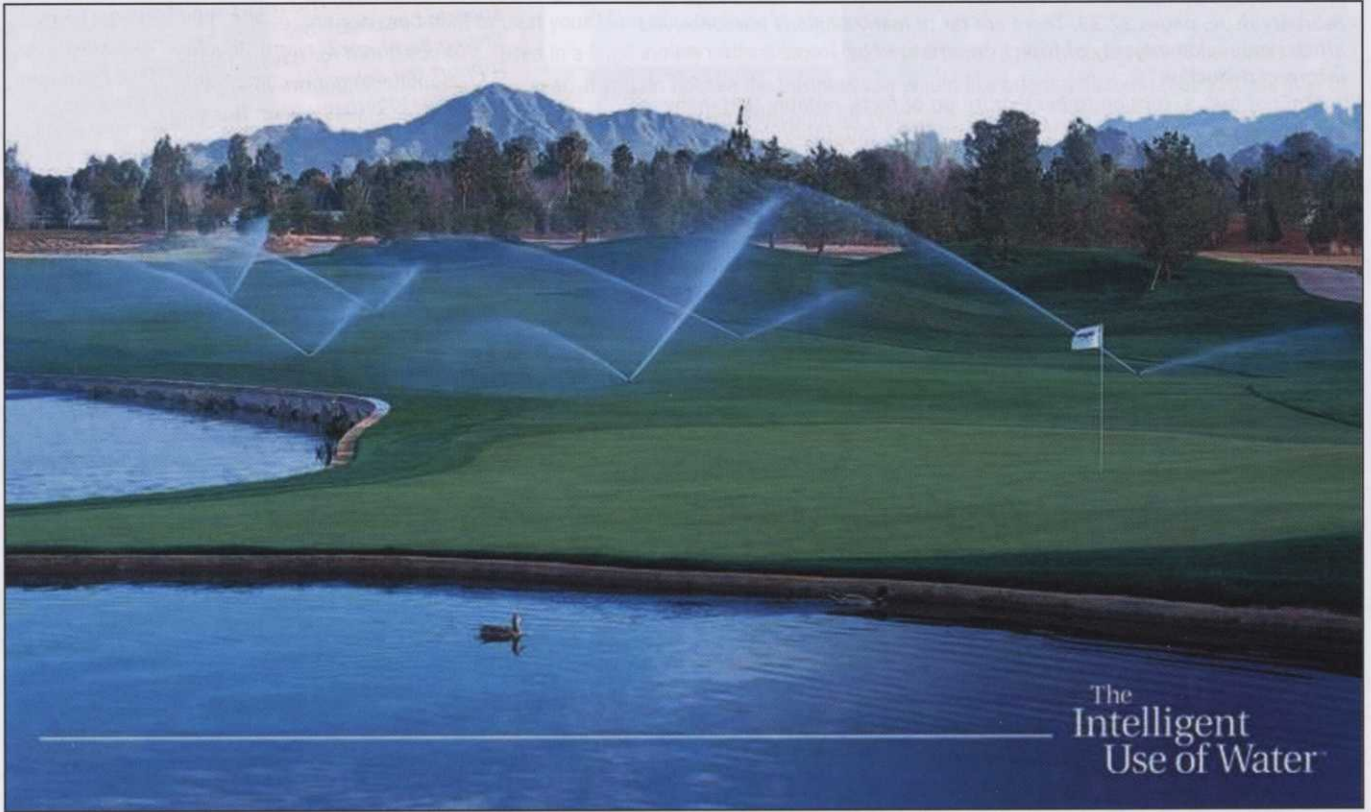


Golf Environment Competition

BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Watch out for further information on the 2004 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in the April edition of this magazine.

2004 Golf Controller Training



Rain Bird Controller Training

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I would like more detailed information about Rain Bird's 2004 Controller Training

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- Other :

YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

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

Taking Issue

I feel strongly that on behalf of the silent majority of good greenkeepers I must take issue over the article by Dr Kate Entwistle on "Fus" in the February issue, pages 37-39. There are far too many similarly misconceived articles on a wide majority of topics, summarised by "correct observation, incorrect deduction".

I do not take exception to her exposition of facts, notably that many potentially damaging fungi live happily on dead vegetation in all soils but if encouraged will attack, disfigure and even kill fine turf.

I do not agree, and most greenkeepers will not either, that "Fus" is primarily a winter (cold temperature) disease, or that, as she has stated elsewhere, that it is developing as a summer problem! It has, in all my half century of experience and for long before that, also been a summer problem!

There is an age old greenkeeping adage that "chronic fus is an infallible sign of bad greenkeeping". Partly this is because the incorrect management encourages *Poa annua* which is by far the most susceptible greens to be attacked (partly due to its soft sappy leaves). Nowhere in this article is this point mentioned, let alone emphasised.

The commonest fault of bad greenkeeping is over-feeding. The link between excessive quantities, of frequency of application and the incidence of disease is clearly shown by an R&A funded survey last year, with a big response from golf clubs of all types, status and financial standing.

This showed that 91% of all respondents used less than three tonnes of fertiliser per annum per 18 holes (21% well under one tonne). Few if any of these used autumn fertilisers. The amount of fungicide used annually related directly to fertiliser use. One club using 24 tonnes of fertiliser p.a also spent £24,000 on fungicide.

Frequency of spraying varied from fortnightly - often all year round - to nil) the last time that could be remembered in some cases was several years ago!) Perhaps the results could be published in GKI - they are freely available*.

The deductions must be important. First, cost, which is very relevant in these days of the reduced profitability of golf. Second, due to often unjustifiable prohibitions and even more so to withdrawal of some fungicides by manufacturers because of reduced returns on smaller markets, we shall soon have no fungicides available other than sulphate of iron. Those with lush *Poa* greens and high feed and water input will have no defence against serious chronic "Fus" attacks.

In passing, there is no evidence that potash induces disease resistance - in fact even low levels will in time encourage *Poa* invasion and so disease.

My advice to avoid, other than ephemeral attacks under humid summer/autumn conditions, is to use nitrogen only (sparingly), stop in late July, treat ephemeral attack with iron promptly, cut down shading trees - and especially "stagnating" undergrowth - keep greens well aerated and dry, stop irrigation early (late August) and limit watering any way and avoid smothering as well as over-feeding.

In short, with sound sensible greenkeeping you will never get chronic "Fus" - but some sufferers may have some leeway to make up.

Meanwhile, it would be helpful if cologists gained more field experience and resisted the temptation of correctly identifying spores etc under a microscope but wrongly assuming that the fungus was causing the problem, thus encouraging sufferers to pollute by over use of fungicides, instead of adopting sensible greenkeeping preventative practice.

I would get less despondent if culprits would learn from well over a century of proven research and practice that austere natural greenkeeping really does work, but for lasting success we must achieve the impossible - educating today's golfer that green is not great - and that we play golf on fine turf not colour.

For independent corroboration log in to the R&A website www.best.courseforgolf.org

J H Arthur, Honorary Member, Budleigh Salterton

* The results of the survey were published in the May 2003 issue of the magazine

Many Thanks

Having just returned from attending the GCSAA Conference & Exhibition in San Diego, I would like to register a big thank you, to everyone involved in making the visit possible. This may sound like a BAFTA acceptance speech, but please bear with me. I would like to thank Steven Bernhard for having the vision to continue to support the delegation, now in its fourth year.

Steven, together with Sam McLean, were excellent hosts. A big thank you must go to Kim Furnell, who "mothered" us all week, making sure that we were correctly dressed and keeping our hectic itinerary on the rails. Thanks to BIGGA for supporting the initiative and the members that gave up their time to assist in the selection process.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank the other nine delegates, friendships were forged that will last for a very long time. So, to Chunky, Young Burt, Dad, Irish, Warren "Don't mention the passport photo", Steve "Tea Total" Tierney, Terry "I must have an early night", Joe "I must go shopping", and Will "The Scribe", thanks guys, for a great week.

I will not go into any detail regarding the week as Will "the Scribe" will be doing that in next month's edition, suffice to say that we all came back more knowledgeable and would urge you all to enter, for a chance of attending the GCSAA Conference & Exhibition 2005. A great experience!

Paul Jenkins

Sharpening Debate

Having spent in excess of 20 years in the groundcare industry, I have to say I personally agree wholeheartedly with the piece in the magazine a couple of months ago, about non contact, cylinder to bottom blade, grasscutting.

However, this is not a new concept. The practice of none contact mowing has been around for many years.

Although I am not a greenkeeper, but a mechanic/engineer for a large local authority, I have, for many years, adopted this method. Not only for golf courses, but also for roadside verges. This method works very well as quality work always shows up. Damage and downtimes are extremely minimal over machines which have been (spin) ground and set up with contact.

In order to achieve this none contact combination, you require a machine which will relief grind the cylinder spirals individually. This method was demonstrated, proved, and taught to me twenty three years ago.

I have, for many years, used a Hunter Juno grinder, which is probably the only true way to relief grind the cylinder correctly to achieve the razor edge necessary for none contact mowing.

I think that it is nice to see someone bringing this to the fore, as I am sure that like myself, many other people have been adopting this practice for a great many years.

Although we have recently purchased a Hunter Jupiter grinder, purely for capacity and spin, and now have the best of both worlds, I still tend to use the single blade relief method, especially where the machines are used in high profile, showpiece areas.

Mark Hesp, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council



Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 70 new members to the Association.

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Frank Newberry, BB&O

MARCH'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 Barry Moggridge from Muswell Hill Golf Club.

Message of the Month Winner

Each month the person who has written the best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, which is found on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk, receives an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack featuring a multi function organiser, 2 mesh pockets and a grab handle. (Rucksack supplied may be a different colour to that featured).

Our congratulations go to March's winner, Perry Smith from Bramley Golf Club whose message was posted on the 11th January 2004 under the 'Talk about Turf' section.



NEW Additions to BIGGA Merchandise



With the rain ever present why not invest in a new waterproof suit.

The "Highlander Cargo Suit" at £55.00 features a Teflon coated micro fibre shell and waterproof breathable lining, with two cargo style pockets plus one covered back pocket on the trousers. This suit has a one year waterproof guarantee and is available in navy with lemon trim or black with pale blue trim.

If you do not need to purchase a full suit then jacket and trouser can be bought separately. New to the Cape Crest range is the "Sport" jacket priced at £48.00 with a two year waterproof guarantee, this is available in black with taupe rip trim or navy with red rip trim.

The trousers can be purchased separately to compliment the "Sport" jacket, these are available in navy or black and come in 4 lengths, 27" 29" 31" 33", they hold a two year guarantee, priced at only £40.00 per pair.

For further information about the new range or to place an order, why not contact Rachael Foster on 01347 833800.

◀ The Highlander Cargo Suit



▲ "Sport" jacket

Neil Thomas 1944 - 2004

To commemorate the life of BIGGA's Executive Director, Neil Thomas, who died last month, three figures who knew him particularly well from within the Association and the industry pay their own personal tributes to the man.

Walter Woods BEM, former St Andrews Links Superintendent was BIGGA's first Chairman and among those responsible for bringing Neil to BIGGA. Gordon Child is the only man to have served as Chairman for two years, and also as a former Regional Administrator, worked closely with Neil for many years.

From the trade, Kim Macfie was formerly Sales and Marketing Director for Hayter and through working with Neil on the Hayter Challenge and Hayter International Cup matches got to know him particularly well.



He will be Missed

It was with great sadness to the greenkeeping industry, and all related to the golfing world, to learn that Neil Thomas, Executive Director of BIGGA, had passed away on Sunday, February 22, after a serious illness bravely borne with courage and dignity.

Neil was born in January 1944, in Penarth, South Wales. After leaving school he attended Cardiff University and left with a degree in history. He then moved into a career in local government, initially in the Social Services Department of Glamorgan County Council and then, following reorganisation in 1974, to West Glamorgan County Council based in Swansea, where he rose to become Chief Administrative Officer of the Social Services Department.

On leaving this for pastures new he took up employment in 1987 as General Administrator of the newly created British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association.

Golf was changing during the period he took over. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, combined with the European Tour, could see that golf playing conditions would have to improve to keep up with the increase in demand and expectation on playing conditions for club memberships, along with the improved tournament playing preparations for Tour players.

The R&A anticipated this and funded the organisation of BIGGA. To achieve this they hired consultants to organise the foundations and to point the inaugural committee in the correct direction.

The most important objective would be an administrator capable of organising an Association and also assist in the creation of an education structure from trainee greenkeeper right up to the Course Manager.

During this period it was immediately thought that it would be someone with a greenkeeping background who would be the most appropriate to fill this important position but we were immediately advised by the consultants that the ideal candidate would be an individual with a solid background in administration, with the added skills of communication and delegation.

The day Neil Thomas took up his employment as General Administrator his office was in a small room at the STRI offices at Bingley. During the first year of reorganisation we had a total of 600 members and we didn't have a magazine. In fact, the new Association could be described as extremely poor.

But one thing that Neil Thomas had was faith in his ability, which over the next 17 years progressed to a current membership of over 7,000; one of the biggest and best organised trade shows in Europe; a magazine which is a credit to the industry and new office buildings which were opened by HRH the Duke of York on October 21, 1998 and contain paintings of our first two Presidents, Lord Whitelaw and Sir Michael Bonallack.

Those who were close to Neil soon discovered he was a patriotic Welshman who loved rugby and cricket. He was, in fact, a qualified cricket coach and before moving north, a member of Penarth and Mumbles cricket clubs. He also assisted with coaching at Harrogate Rugby Club. However, his main hobby was his work in the greenkeeping industry and the welfare of the Association.

Neil Thomas was a quiet, unassuming gentleman who will be a great loss to his wife, Elaine, his three sons, Scott, aged 21, Grant, aged 19 and Adam, aged 16, all becoming enthusiastic sportsmen and young daughter, Natalie aged 10, whom he doted on and idolised.

His family will miss him and we as an Association only hope that they will be comforted by his personal contribution to the greenkeeping profession throughout the UK and Europe.

Walter Woods



The Sad Loss of a Greenkeepers' Man

The passing of Neil Thomas will hit many people hard in our industry, but all our thoughts will be with Elaine and their children at this sad time.

Neil was a very private person and for many, who were not privileged to work closely with him, never really got to know him.

He was a dedicated and proud family man, and he had much to be proud of. Elaine, his wife, who Marion and I got to know over the years, and their four children are a close-knit family. I am sure that once the grief becomes a little more bearable, they will look back and feel that yes, Neil was taken too young but they were lucky to have had such a fine husband and father for so long.

Neil was a keen sportsman and was still playing cricket up to his illness. He was an avid Rugby Union man, especially for his beloved Wales. He took great pride in the sporting and academic achievements of all his children.

Neil's appointment in 1987 to run the affairs of BIGGA was indeed a very wise move, and credit to the Board of the time that made the decision. Without Neil in the driving seat it is hard to imagine the Association being where it is today.

Having worked as a Regional Administrator then becoming a Board member and later two years as Chairman, I got to know him better than most. I saw his dedication and drive first hand. These qualities played a big part in elevating greenkeeping and BIGGA to the position of respect we enjoy today. Greenkeepers everywhere have a lot to thank Neil Thomas for. He never gave up trying to improve our lot with his cajoling of companies and organisations to support us, and with great success. He promoted BIGGA and greenkeepers to such an extent that even many old fashioned and backward clubs started to take notice. Even at social events he would never miss an opportunity to slip greenkeeping and the Association into the conversation. He had the ability to talk to anyone and seemed to know just what to say to get the best reaction from him or her for our benefit.

Neil persuaded the National Board to increase staffing numbers so BIGGA could become more efficient, and he was proved right. On the other side, he never let staff forget that their departments had to succeed, and they have.

On a personal note, Neil and I had disagreements and he was a hard man to get to change his mind, but then again he didn't often have to, because more often than not he was right. I had high regard and respect for Neil, both as a man and an Executive Director.

Neil Thomas was not, and never claimed to be, a greenkeeper, but he was a greenkeepers' man who fought our cause for 17 years with success unrivalled. You only have to look at the platforms around the world where greenkeepers from BIGGA have a major input.

We have all greatly benefited from the friendships he has forged on our behalf all over the world, making us truly international. Our own BTME and ClubHouse Exhibition, which improves each year, The Education Conference, National Tournament, all very successful and achieved under his guidance, but most of all the greenkeepers' status is far and away higher than ever before. Neil has had a big impact on our lives he will be sadly missed...

Gordon Child



A Man with Natural Diplomatic Skills

"Pity you are Welsh," I'd say to Neil and he would spar back with some suitably disparaging comment about the state of Scottish rugby. Such is the nature of many human relations that cordiality and friendship are often disguised behind such jocular badinage.

Neil was a friend. Not only did he demonstrate real personal friendship to me but his actions and dedication showed how great a friend he was to greenkeeping and the trades that supply it.

My early dealings with Neil took place when we were establishing the Hayter Challenge Tournament that became the centrepiece of BIGGA sponsorship for five years. It was also the framework that led naturally to the Hayter International Cup – I believe one of the most significant initiatives ever to bond international greenkeeping and cement lifelong relationships. Throughout the period of establishing these events and for their duration, he remained a source of encouragement, strength and initiative without which the events would never have been so successful.

Although his primary concern was naturally to his membership, he was ever mindful of the commercial requirements of his sponsors. He managed to strike the right balance with quiet aplomb, reaching satisfactory outcomes for the disparate needs. Many other suppliers witnessed his natural diplomatic skills during the tenure of his office and greenkeeping will remain a beneficiary of his talents.

For the seven-year period that both tournaments spanned, Neil and I traversed the length and breadth of the country in support. However, here Neil demonstrated he possessed a shortcoming. Fortunately for me, I always arranged to meet him at the destination – that way there was a sporting chance that one of us would get there! Road maps were an anathema to Neil and his skills in this department provided ample ammunition for public, good-humoured humiliation. He took it all in good part and always seemed to get there in the end. Fortunately his navigational skills for BIGGA were vastly better.

From personal experience I know that Neil was a kind and sensitive man – I can testify he was there when people needed help. He was seldom outwardly demonstrative but that could not belie the sincerity of his feelings.

First and foremost he was a family man and it would be my earnest desire that Elaine and his children derive strength from the knowledge that the great legacy he leaves from his life's work is appreciated and cherished by those who knew him. All of us, not just the Association, will be the poorer for his passing but rejoice in his life.

Kim Macfie



Course Feature

A Masterly Approach

Scott MacCallum visits Phil Gates MG and views first hand the work he has done at Trentham Golf Club.

It was a proud moment in the professional life of Phil Gates, Course Manager of Trentham Golf Club, near Stoke-on-Trent. The venue was the Harrogate Lecture Theatre, the time, Wednesday morning of Harrogate week, just a few minutes before Alvin Hall was to thrill the packed audience with his remarkable Keynote Speech.

Phil's name was announced and he walked to the stage to be presented with his Master Greenkeeper Plaque by BIGGA National Chairman, George Brown and Walter Woods BEM.

For all Master Greenkeepers, including Phil's fellow inductees, Norbert Lischka and Steve Matuza, it marked the end of a long road during which hours had been spent pouring over books and reports written.

But for Phil there was the added satisfaction of knowing that, back at the club, the work he and his team had spent on the greens was beginning to bear fruit.

"A lot of people had been asking if I was doing the right thing but this winter the greens played like links greens. They were smooth, the bent content was there so they are hard wearing and members have been able to enjoy them throughout the winter," said Phil Gates MG, speaking exactly three weeks after he had officially become a member of the 39 strong Master Greenkeeper Club.

"It has taken us three or four years to get there and there has been a lot of really hard work but the benefits are now there."

That hard work had begun six years ago when Phil moved to Trentham from the K Club in Country Kildare where he had as Assistant Superintendent and learned a tremendous amount on the preparation and set up of the golf course for tournaments. This knowledge was gained from Richard Stillwell, Director of Greenkeepers for the European Tour. Following many successful European Opens the K Club is now due to host the Ryder Cup in 2006.

"When I started here in January '98 the greens drained poorly and were like poa puddings, with three inches of thatch in them. The previous regime had been one of feed and water and the club gave me the brief that they wanted the greens improved," explained Phil, whose first task was the revise the working conditions so that the team began at 7am and

not 8am, which had been the previous official starting time 12 months of the year.

Phil looked at the options which at that stage included everything from rebuilding all 18 greens to a USGA specification, installing new drainage systems in all greens, to introducing a more intensive general aeration programme.

"The club asked me if we could build greens to USGA standard in-house and I told them that the answer was 'yes'. In the October of that year we re-sited and re-built the putting green to USGA standard. The sort of person who has the confidence and ability to do this in-house as well as many other demanding tasks taken on in-house is the sort of person that goes on to gain Master Greenkeeper Status."

Having built the putting green the members took the view that they preferred traditional push-up greens for the course itself.

"The putting green was very much a trial but the club. Thinking then was that because USGA greens play differently they didn't want them. So we were asked to fix the existing greens."

Phil and the team Litag banded the greens and set about changing the grasses from Poa Annua to Avalon, overseeding four times a year to the extent that the percentage of bent in the greens is currently between 50 and 70.

"The banding was tremendous from the point of view of playability but changing the grasses was done to get rid of the dead time between March and May during which the poa-dominated greens suffered and for more sustainability in view of future chemical legislation etc. Putting the bent in benefited that time of year and we didn't have to rely on the weather to

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▲ The Trentham team with Phil Gates, far left

make the course playable."

However the natural progress of the 'new' greens was rudely interrupted by the cold drought of 2000 which killed off six of the greens altogether.

"We'd stopped feeding and stopped watering but the weather at the time meant it was a disaster and everyone was asking what we were doing and what the plan was," said Phil, who was able to count on the support and advice of Alistair Beggs, of the STRI, who was the regular advisor put into the club by the R&A on the strength of Trentham's position as an Open Qualifier venue.

"We held a couple of open days to explain what was happening but really it was a punching session for the members and I had to stand and take it. Fortunately a few of them were positive and we were able to come through it."

Looking back, Phil can also see the good that came about because of the drought.

"In hindsight it was a benefit because so much of the poa was wiped out, so when we overseeded we got a much higher percentage take."

Having climbed the hurdle placed in his way because of Millennium year weather Phil's traditional approach has brought steady improvement.

"We slit every week and haven't used any fertiliser in a year. The thatch was being eaten away naturally and we've had an excellent germination rate from our overseeding. We also have a good IPM programme in place and didn't spray fungicide for four and a half years.

"We do get fusarium but we use it as a biological cleanser, so although it's been frustrating for the members, it's been a benefit to us in helping to get rid of the poa annua. We do try to stop it, but we use calcium, sulphur, liquid iron and potassium nitrate rather than fungicide."

He still feels that the greens are not where they should be, but positive comments from members over the last couple of months have been a positive sign that things are on the up.

"I always try to get the membership away from the theory that green is good and that if the greens are grey or white and putt tremendously that is the most important thing. I tell them to concentrate on their putting and not the visual side of things," said Phil, who also advises at another club, Broughton Heath, near Derby, three times a week.

With the greens under control Phil and his team - it numbers six full time and two who work three days a week - have spent time improving the paths around the course and refurbishing the bunkers.

"Tom McKenzie, of Donald Steel's company, came in and taken things a step further on and the bunkering is very much improved now," said Phil, who added that they still had two holes to do.

Although it would appear that the club has grasped the nettle and spent money on their golf course in recent years, Phil revealed that much had been done with a relatively limited budget. Therefore all the renovation work has been carried out in-house.

"Had we reconstructed all 18 greens it would have cost around £400,000 but the drainage work we did cost us £21,000 instead. We spent £8,000 on the putting green and will be extending it, costing a further £5,000, while we also spent money improving the trees on the course, spending around £4,000 each time on three phases; moving, removing and adding trees. So in effect we have saved the club a great deal of money in the way in which we have done the work."

Phil can't praise the club highly enough as employers.

"It is a very conscious club, spending money wisely and it is full of very professional people whose contribution to my well being since I arrived has been fantastic. They appreciate what I've done and I appreciate being around them."



▲ The new bunkers have improved the definition of the course



▲ A new tee built over the winter

One member comes in for special praise and that's David Beech, who has been Chairman of Green for the past six years and who is about to stand down.

"There is no negative in David at all and he draws people towards positive conclusions. A solicitor he's a very good communicator and a real go-getter who knew nothing about greenkeeping when he started but has now learned so much I think he could go for a Head Greenkeeper's job.

"There have been a few people throughout my career who have had a huge influence on me. David Beech is one of them and Laurence Pithie is another," said Phil.

"I worked with Laurence at Wootton Bassett Golf Club in Swindon for three months and a day, CV in hand, I approached him about improving my career prospects. I went off on holiday and when I got back he told me to go down to Dummer in Hampshire, to be interviewed for a First Assistant's job, at the club which was being grown in."

Phil got the job, and quickly moved on to become Head Greenkeeper and spent two and a half years, in his own words "cutting his teeth", learning a lot and mixing with the likes of Fergie's father Major Ron Ferguson, a member, and Tara Palmer-Tompkinson, a regular in the village shop.



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He moved to the K Club in January '95 as Assistant Superintendent in the then team of 42 for the 18 holes. Numbers subsequently dropped to 35 but there was a great deal of construction and renovation work going on and again it added to his portfolio of experience.

Phil, a keen amateur taxidermist - there was a recently mounted fox head on his desk when I went into his office - is also extremely keen on the environmental side of the job.

"I love nature and we've been pro-active in erecting bat and barn owl boxes, while we ensure when we fell trees we don't burn the wood but stock pile it to provide homes for mice, voles and invertebrates.," said Phil,



▲ The view down the 18th with the clubhouse in the distance

who is also involved in the English Nature/STRI programme which sees Lee Penrose making regular visits.

It was thanks to Laurence Pithie, whom he considers a mentor, that Phil first considered tackling the Master Greenkeeper programme.

"I saw how good Laurence was, and the likes of people like David Whitaker, and thought that I'd like to be as good as them one day. I felt that Master Greenkeeper was something they'd attained and that I could work towards as well."

Phil enrolled in 2000 and worked through the process until he passed the final exam in 2003.

"A lot of people think it is a mysterious process. I was one of them, although it's very well organised once you become involved. The first stage, that of collecting sufficient credits to move to the second stage was easy to complete but the second, the course visit, was very tough."

Phil's course visit was conducted by Andy Campbell and David Leach. They were tremendously supportive both prior to the visit and through it as well.

Trentham's maintenance facility is not the most modern in the country but Phil brought in an architect to draw up plans to demonstrate to Andy and David what is in the pipeline. It is expected that the new facility will be built in the next two or three years.

Once the course inspection had been successfully completed it left the two stage exam and Phil was again indebted to Laurence for supplying him with a series of test questions and answers to build him up for the examination process.

"I am absolutely delighted to have achieved it and would encourage more people to think about taking it on as you benefit individually and indirectly your club benefits from the knowledge you pick up."

The plaque, now mounted in the clubhouse bar, is evidence that the hard work paid off for Phil Gates MG.

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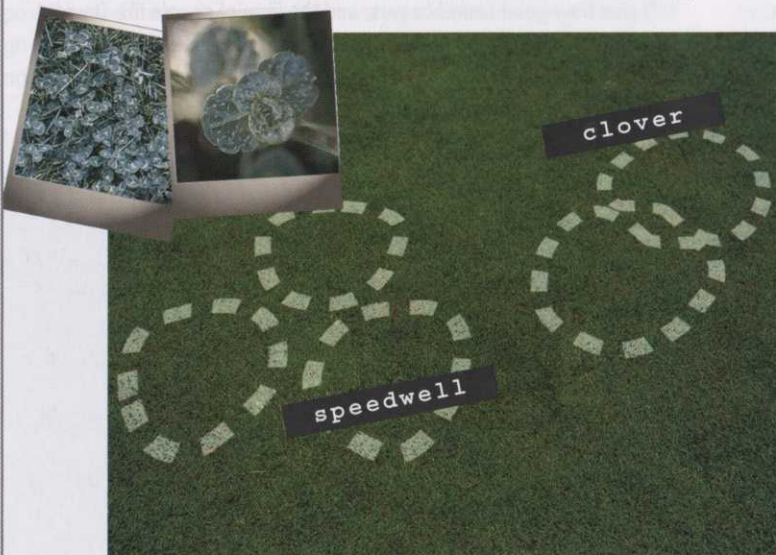
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NOZZLES and SPRAYING: Your Fairway to Green Spraying

TORO Count on it.

In 2002, about £19.2 million of herbicides, fungicides and insecticides were used in the UK amenity sector, almost all being sprayed with nozzles that – for the sake of following a few simple rules – can ‘make or break’ their performance. Bill Taylor of Hardi Limited covers some basic rules of nozzles and their performance.

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to learn*

Amenity pesticides will only do what they are intended to do if they are applied correctly. The goal is to apply the product only where it is intended, not in a neighbour’s garden, the nearest watercourse or over yourself. Less wastage increases the chances of you doing the best job but also reduces risks to the environment; an approach that must be welcomed by all your visitors.

The key to success is the correct use and calibration of nozzles. You will not only get the best out of the product’s performance but also increase safety and make the job more efficient.

NOZZLE TYPES

The most commonly used nozzle types are flat fans, hollow cones, flood jets [reflex] and those used for liquid fertilisers, each of which has its place with greenkeepers.

Flat fans are the most common and are used on spray booms to produce a uniformly distributed swath. Hollow cones have now been largely replaced by new flat fan designs capable of the uniform accuracy that is demanded today and produce the whole array of drop sizes required for differing tasks.

Flood jets remain very popular on knapsack sprayers as they enable a wide swath to be gained from one nozzle, and the large metering hole avoids nozzle blockages and can be used just a few cms off the ground.

Finally, the move to liquid fertilisers and the recognition that these products need to target the soil surface rather than plant leaves that could

be scorched, has triggered the development of dedicated liquid fertiliser nozzles, such as the Hardi Quintastream that produces five jets that penetrate the crop canopy to the ground below.

GROUND RULES FOR NOZZLES

Nozzles may be just small precisely formed pieces of plastic but they have to meet a number of critical functions for effective spraying.

The most important is to regulate the rate at which the spray liquid is applied; too much or too little and you will over or under dose the green.

After much use the metering part of the nozzle may wear so it is important to calibrate regularly and check the actual rate of emission. Modern sprays – unlike the older ones – are unlikely to cause rapid nozzle wear; a bigger wear problem can be caused by sand particles which have been swept from the mains with the water into the tank when filling. But even low wear will cost you dearly so be warned.

Since the rate of nozzle emission is influenced by spray liquid pressure, manufacturers quote ‘rated’ pressures in their literature which you should use. The sprayer needs to have an accurate gauge so that you know the pressure every time you calibrate and spray.

Different nozzle sizes emit smaller or greater quantities of spray liquid so consider what water volume rate you want to use. High volumes might be needed to saturate the ground but using them is very energy and time demanding.

Nozzles also have to distribute the spray so that on a boom you have uniformity of spray all the way across. Optimal distribution is dependent on the right boom height – normally 50cms – above the first point of contact for the spray, be it soil or the top of the grass on the green. If the boom is too high the risk of drift is increased; too low and you can cause striping.

The design of the nozzle influences the spray quality produced using terms that reflect their mean drop size: Fine, Medium, Coarse or Very Coarse. As a rough rule of thumb, Fine and Medium sprays are well retained by plant surfaces while Coarse and Very Coarse can be ideal for soil applications.



▲ Hardi standard flat fan nozzles are colour coded to quickly identify water volume rates and sprayer quality, from fine to very coarse

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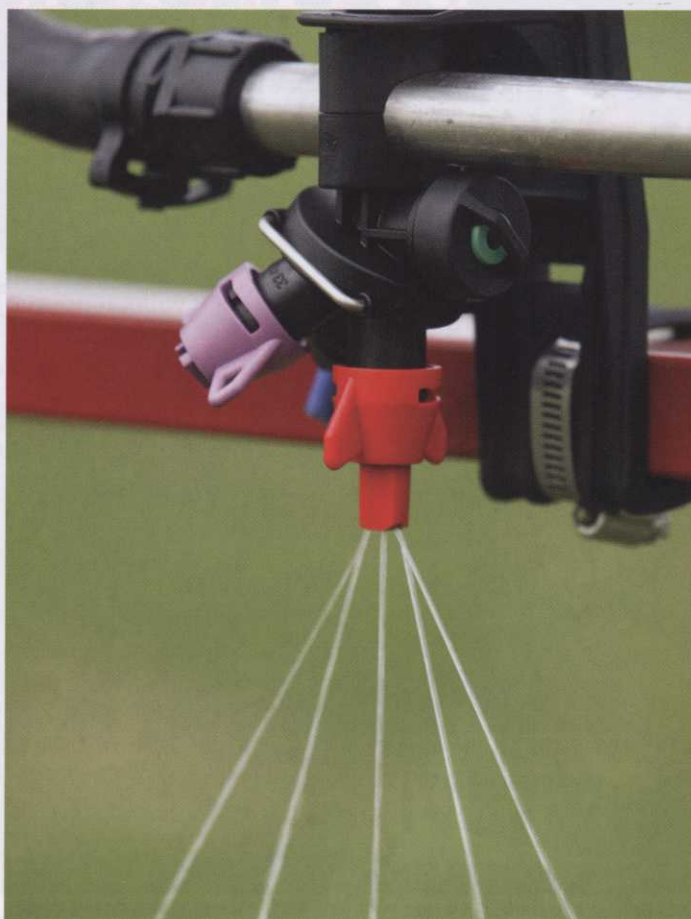


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▲ The Quintastream liquid fertiliser nozzle ensures good crop penetration to avoid leaf scorch

NOZZLES FOR ALL AMENITY PRODUCTS

Advice on how to spray is often written onto the product's label and can determine nozzle selection so you will find that you can no longer do every job well with just one nozzle; you may need to have a range of types ready for use at your fingertips.

The label may tell you to use 1000 litres of water for every hectare or it can be as low as 100 l/ha – alternatively it may just say 'use a Medium' quality spray. Whatever is asked – you should try and deliver.

If you are given a range of volume rates or spray spectra then it will be much easier to use the lower water rate to avoid wasting time and energy carrying water. If you can use the larger drop size advised then drift risk will be reduced. Some labels might actually tell you to use LERAP rated nozzles such as the Hardi Injet if you are considering reducing buffer zone widths next to ponds, lakes and streams.

Hardi offers four types of nozzles for pesticide use, all of which will give you the full range of water volume rates needed but produce different spray qualities. In general – use Hardi Standard nozzles for Fine/Medium qualities, LowDrift for Medium and Coarse, Minidrift for Coarse and Injet for Very Coarse. Having identified the spray quality from the label – then found the best nozzle type – look at the nozzle tables to determine which size to use to get the right water rates at your preferred speed.

BENEFIT FROM THE PRODUCT'S APPLICATION ADVICE

Soil applications often advise the use of lower water volumes and coarser spray qualities that will avoid water cartage and reduce the risk of drift.

In contrast, a foliar applied grass weed killer or fungicide may require finer sprays to ensure the spray is retained where needed. Often these

products will work better in lower water volumes but this combination may give you drift problems.

To avoid this, a shrouded boom such as the LERAP 3 Star rated Hardi Defender should be used to virtually eliminate drift.

As a rule, many systemic products used in broad leaf weed control advise the use of Medium spray qualities so are easier and safer to apply than a 'contact' type as you can use larger drops and lower water rates.

However, a 'contact' type product or one that contains one part of a mix with contact action may specify Fine to ensure these drops are retained all over the plant surface.

Labels may also suggest that water volumes are increased when plant canopies become denser and very high water volumes might be recommended where the product needs to reach the soil surface on greens, as the higher volume will run off the leaves to the surface below.

EASY JET USE

Manufacturers have made the selection and use of nozzles much easier now. Bayonet fittings need just one quick flick of the wrist to fit nozzles and line them up automatically whilst colour coding means that at a glance you have the same size nozzles on a boom so you will apply the same dose.

By carrying three or four nozzle sets – one for each of your jobs – on special turrets they can be quickly snapped into position as you go from one use to another.

Even when the wind gets up half way through spraying, by switching nozzles you can simply switch to one with the same output – but producing a coarser spray – and keep spraying, avoiding the need to stop to recalibrate or go back to base.

Nozzles can also be individually turned off so that if you want to reduce the width of your swath as you spray around the outside of the greens, then just turn off those you do not want to spray.

'GREEN'ER SPRAYING

To get the best performance out of your products follow the advice that is offered on the label. In particular, identify any specific dose that you could use for the task in hand rather than use a higher 'catch all' blanket rate and then precisely time your spraying at the growth stage/pest levels described.

Good timing comes only with sound preparation. Calibrate the sprayer with clean water before you start, as you will save time, not delay the application, do a better job and reduce the risks of anything going wrong.

Many reported incidences of drift damage are due to boom heights being excessive. Booms are meant to work at 50cms and also remember to use boom cut-off sections to avoid overlapping a treated area and any ground that is not intended to be treated. You may be concerned at accidentally missed areas; the environmentalists are more concerned at those areas you have overdosed.

Any other advantages from better spraying practices? Wise operators will already know that when they use Very Coarse sprays or shrouded LERAP rated booms such as the Defender, anyone can very clearly see the much reduced drift. Although total volumes may be quite small – like Scottish midges in June – these small losses are becoming hugely troublesome to the bystander!



▲ Flood jets are commonly used on knapsack sprayers as they provide a wide swath and are less prone to nozzle blockages

More information on nozzles, sprayers, calibration and all the latest spraying news is on the Hardi International A/S (www.hardi-international.com) and Hardi Limited (www.hardi.co.uk) websites or write to Hardi Limited at Unit 1 Europark (A5), Watling Street, Clifton-upon-Dunsmore, Rugby CV36 0AQ.



▲ Foliar applied sprays often require a finer spray, which are more prone to drift. A shrouded boom will virtually eliminate this problem

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SEE THE 'TURFTIME TEASER' ON PAGE 45

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Some Thoughts on Bunker Drainage

Will Bowden uses his experiences travelling to some top clubs in America to share some useful advice on bunker drainage.

I would like to introduce myself as a young greenkeeper who like many others in my profession is continually keen to learn more and broaden their practical and theoretical experience and knowledge.

Although still in the early years of my career I believe that whatever your level of experience good ideas must be shared in order that as broad a spectrum of people as possible may benefit.

In recent years I have been fortunate to be involved in numerous experiences overseas as well as having worked on some fantastic golf courses under some very progressive and innovative Course Managers.

I do not claim to be an expert in any aspect of my profession, however I do believe that sharing ideas and experiences is a vital part of our development in order that we can understand more and appreciate the intricacies of greenkeeping. The aim of my articles is hopefully to strike a chord among other like minded enthusiastic greenkeepers young and old.

In May 2000 I was selected to take part in the inaugural Grand Tour Scholarship Scheme. Organised by Bettina Shrickel and at the time sponsored by Rainbird International I was offered one month to travel the entire East Coast of America stopping off at some of the world's most famous venues along the way!

As you can imagine it was an unbelievable learning experience and above all a great opportunity to learn a wider range of new philosophies and solutions to problems that in many cases were echoed back home in the UK. One such method was an innovative idea regarding bunker drainage and, primarily, the potential to reduce the severity of bunker washouts.

Although a problem of alarming proportions in the US where at certain times of the year flash floods reek havoc, I recognised its relevance to the British Isles and our ever-changing climate.

The method was being employed at a golf club called Winged Foot in the New York State. This is one of America's finest and most established golf courses regularly staging major tournaments and most notably host to several US Opens.

The entire course was under major renovation during our visit and although a club of extensive resources and facilities even these were being stretched to the limit.

As with our UK climate the frequency of flash flooding in New York State was increasing and with the combination of a comprehensive course overhaul and the ever more unpredictable weather, several maintenance issues were brought to the fore.

Most significant was the constant need to repair bunker washouts (at worst approximately two to three times per week). This had become such a huge drain on both manpower and financial resources that it was having a detrimental effect on the presentation of other golf course areas. The following investigation was therefore made to establish a successful method of damage limitation.

Picture 1 shows a typical bunker at Winged Foot and highlights the basic principle of perimeter draining that the club was embarking upon.

THE PRINCIPLE

The idea of the perimeter drain is to enhance the already existing drainage infrastructure within a bunker, by plugging in a new perimeter drain and installing a two-inch perforated pipe in a trench dug to approximately eight inches at a four to six inch distance inside the top edge of the bunker. This drain line is then back filled with shingle to just below the lip and capped over with fresh sand.

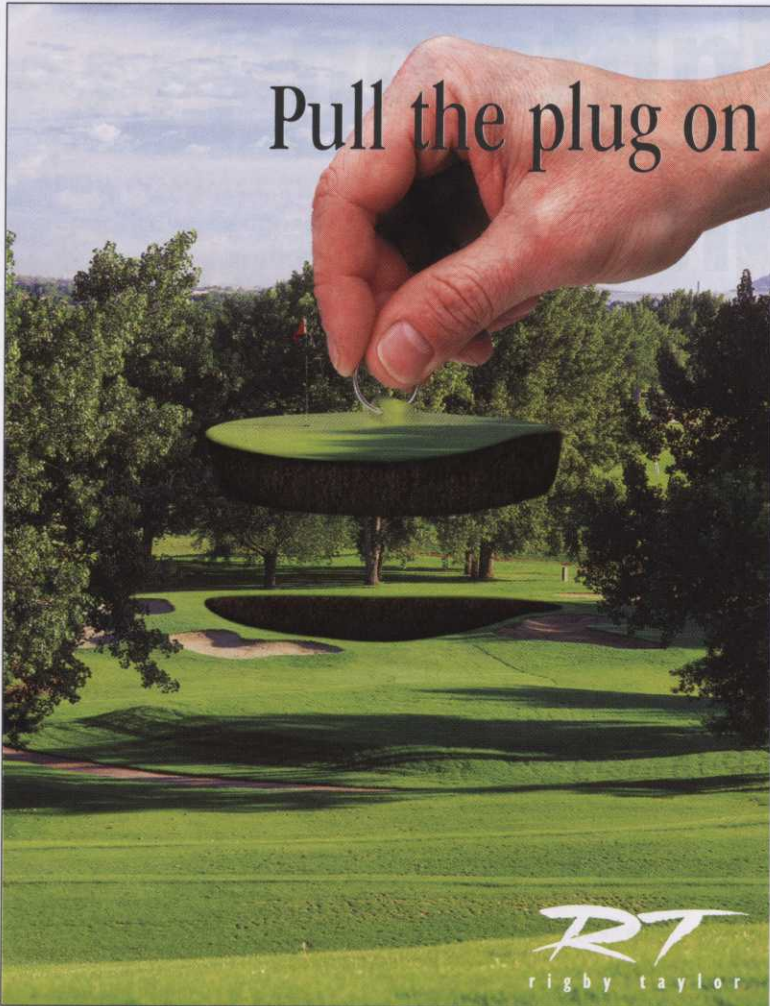
Picture 2 (over the page) illustrates the trench has been dug in to the bunker face and pipe laid with a back fill of shingle over it. This drain was plugged in to the main drain at the base of the bunker by a single lateral.

This method was proving to be extremely successful, it relies on catching the majority of the water being channelled down the bunker face and draining it away before it has a chance to gain momentum and in turn wash



▲ Picture 1

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Some Thoughts on Bunker Drainage



▲ Picture 2

the sand down the steep face. Although undoubtedly a time consuming task in the short term it has proved itself to be a successful solution to a long-term problem.

A year later I was working as an Assistant at The London Golf Club and with a huge number of bunkers on both their Jack Nicklaus golf courses the damage caused by frequent washouts was a constant drain upon resources.

After describing this method to the Course Manager, Peter Todd, and his team we decided to test the effectiveness of this theory in a British climate. We began initially by selecting the worst two or three bunkers on the International Course.

The results were a resounding success, through the installation of perimeter drains complimenting the already existing infrastructure we were able systematically to pick off the worst affected bunkers and in turn embarked upon an ongoing drainage plan to encompass all greenside and problematic fairway bunkers over the coming years.

One of our fears was that these drains would rapidly become contaminated with sand and silt migration. This has not occurred as the first bunker we renovated over two years ago is still performing perfectly.

Over a period of time we began to make modifications to this theory and as the following picture shows we started to place perimeter drains outside the top edge.

The basic principle behind this echoes that of the internal drain. At The London Golf Club it is a characteristic of many holes to shape the long

grasses around the outer edge of some fairway and greenside bunkers. Not only did this create an attractive visual effect but it also allowed us to place drains on the bank of the hazard which would be effectively be hidden as the native grasses grew in the Spring.

This outer placement of the drain resulted in equal success and greatly reduced the likelihood of any silt/sand contamination. It is ideal in the sense that it actually catches the channelled water before it even has an opportunity to reach the bunker.

It has become clear that both methods are equally successful and having recently spoken to Peter at The London Golf Club he is continuing to employ this method of bunker drainage. Far from being a practice that is exclusive to more 'top end' establishments this is a simple method of bunker drainage that works and I believe can be utilised by all golf clubs large and small.

The key is to prioritise which are your problem bunkers and deal with those first, then systematically and over a number of years attempt to improve the overall drainage of all the bunkers on your golf course. It can be one a year, it doesn't matter!

Although by no means revolutionary I hope this suggestion will help those who have historically suffered from the constant nightmare of bunker washouts. I am sure many of you are employing similar methods already and, if so, rest assured your work is of great long term benefit and well worth the effort you and your team are putting in.



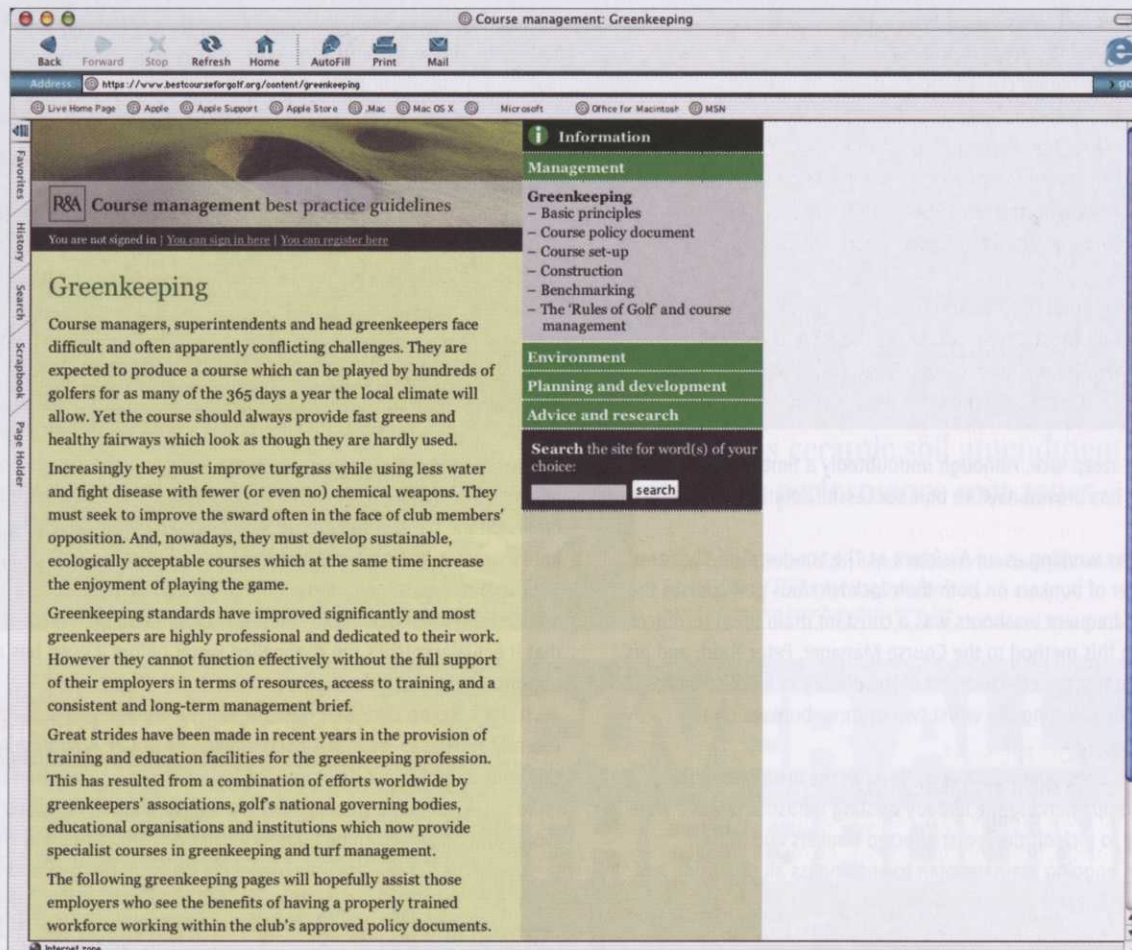
▲ Picture 3



▲ AFT Trenchers

The R&A's Course Management Best Practice Guidelines

Steve Isaac, Assistant Director - Golf Course Management introduces the new R&A website.



THE WEBSITE

February 18 saw the launch of our Course Management Best Practice Guidelines website, www.bestcourseforgolf.org. It could be said the production of this website has been "in response to popular demand".

At the end of 2001, golf administrators and greenkeepers at the "Changing Course in Europe" conference in Portugal called for the R&A to take the lead on a number of pressing issues such as co-ordination of research, promoting the good name of golf to national governments and the European Union in Brussels - and promoting best practices in course management.

Since then, the need for help, guidance and leadership has been underlined by the increasingly stringent environment legislation the game of golf has to observe.

The purpose of this article is to explain the reasoning behind the development of the website, provide an introduction to the site and outline our hopes for its use.

WHAT IS BEST PRACTICE?

Our definition of best practice is:

Management of golf courses in an environmentally and economically sustainable way.

One would hope that every course is managed to these fundamental principles. Any golf course is an integral feature of its environment and what happens on the course will have an impact on the ecosystem of the course and adjacent land.

Each club also has to live within its means, so economics has to influence course management policy. Fortunately, in most instances, environmental and economic sustainability often complement course quality.

Anyone working outside these parameters now has increasingly stringent environment-led legislation to contend with. You may have seen the implications of national government interpretation of EU Directives in Sweden and the Netherlands highlighted in the September issue of *Greenkeeper International*. This is a global phenomenon and not just restricted to Europe.

We must never forget that golf courses are a form of land management and this, in itself, requires positive action and inputs. Peter Dawson, the R&A's Chief Executive, summed this all up very well by stating:

"The challenge for golf is to maintain course quality and playability while respecting and positively contributing to the social and natural environment."



WHY HAS THE R&A DEVELOPED THE WEBSITE?

In addition to the call for the R&A to take a leading role in matters pertaining to course management, as previously mentioned, the R&A has a history of contributing to this subject.

The documents, "The Way Forward", published in 1989, and "A Course for All Seasons" (1997), were the product of the R&A's Golf Course Advisory Panel which was formed in 1986. Latterly, the Golf Course Committee has taken on much of the Panel's work but to a more dynamic remit.

The website is a natural progression from the publications mentioned, and a great deal more. Most of you will know the R&A as the organisation which hosts The Open Championship every year and is responsible, along with the United States Golf Association, for the Rules of Golf.

The R&A is far more deeply involved in promoting the development of the game at home and, increasingly, abroad. Production of the best practice guidelines is a major step for the R&A within this objective. It is a statement of intent and support for those implementing or trying to implement sound greenkeeping.

Persuading those in government or environmental lobby groups who may be anti-golf that we are responsible users of land and can produce sustainable courses has to be a positive contribution to the worldwide development of the game.

WHAT WILL YOU FIND ON THE SITE?

Access and use of the site is **completely free of charge**.

On entering the site we strongly advise that you study the downloadable User Guide. Read this and you will be able to make the most of the site.

The information on the site has been divided into the following sections:

- Management
- Greenkeeping
- Environment
- Planning and development
- Advice and research

The text is comprehensive yet intended to provide guidelines and not the definitive way to manage your golf course. We hope the guidance helps everyone using the site to develop a management system and programme which gets the best out of their club and course – but the manner in which this is achieved has to be site specific.

In the space of a brief introduction it would be impossible to give a worthwhile taster of the site's content but it does concentrate on the need for partnership, communication and documentation for a successful management operation, e.g. through the production of a business plan, course management policy and environmental statement. The best way to find out what is on the site is to visit www.bestcourseforgolf.org.

It has been a difficult task to produce material comprehensive enough to satisfy the needs of those we hope will make use of it, yet not so detailed that it is irrelevant to those not working on courses in temperate climates such as the UK.

Remember that, just like any other site, ours can be viewed globally

and the R&A has a responsibility to all of its affiliated national governing bodies, ie. the golf unions, federations and associations that number more than 120, not just those based in Britain and Ireland.

We hope to have gone some way toward achieving this, but await feedback to help us develop the site so it is of real value to those responsible for course management around the world.

If the content of the site does not answer your question, the Advice and Research section is its "Yellow Pages" where links to the most respected organisations around the world can be found - these are sources of specific, detailed information.

The website does not only contain text. Those directly involved in course management can register to the site and complete checklists which will help in the professional, documented management of the club and its course.

The information you enter on to your site area is secure and only you can access this to manage the input. The R&A can view details of the clubs that register and how much they are making use of the site but not the comments linked to the checklists nor the content of any documents you produce as a result of working to the guidelines.

WHO IS THE SITE AIMED AT?

The obvious answer to this is anyone involved in course management. Hopefully, course managers, greenkeepers, club committees, agronomists and the host of other professionals working in this field will gain from the use of the site.

However, beyond the obvious, the site is open to anyone, so club members and the general public can dip into our world and see how complex and technical looking after turf has become!

Great pains have been taken to compile text in plain English (with the possibility for translation into many other languages) and to produce information which is fully supportive of those working to or towards best practice. Whether striding down this road or wishing to start down the path of sustainability, the vast majority of greenkeepers have nothing to fear from the website and, we believe, much to gain.

THE FUTURE FOR THE SITE

What you see now is just the beginning – it is a skeleton that will need fleshing out. We are fully aware of the need to constantly review the site, to see it evolve and sustain its intended purpose. This is a project that will never be finished.

Some of the information will change with time as innovations in turf management appear. Additional material will be posted as our programmes of research and technical investigation progress. **Your** contributions and suggestions will be a vital part of this evolution, so do feed your thoughts and ideas back to me:

Steve Isaac, Assistant Director - Golf Course Management
R&A Rules Limited, Beach House, Golf Place, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9JA
E-mail: steveisaac@randagc.org

We hope many of you will make regular use of the site and hope you find it of value as a management tool. Most of all, we hope you take ownership of the site and help it to evolve.

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A Stitch in Time...

Roland Taylor provides you with a handy guide to looking after your machinery

While the fundamental principles of machinery, especially mowers have remained the same, there have been considerable changes in engines, drives and cutting systems. One change now evident is that modern equipment requires less maintenance than its predecessors.

While, manufacturers are constantly looking for ways of improving their products, other factors have brought about and influenced changes in design.

Over the last two decades major developments have taken place in engines. These have been driven by noise and emission regulations.

Before this legislation dominated the scene, another big introduction radically altered the reliability and starting of both four and two-stroke petrol engines. In the early 80s the electronic ignition was launched. Prior to this there had always been the uncertainty of whether an engine was going to start and run correctly.

Many readers will remember the days of contact points and how often they became worn or contaminated. These points had to be cleaned and the gap set correctly before a satisfactory spark was achieved. Often this was a time consuming operation.

Electronic ignition, which was a sealed unit, did away with contact points and eliminated one maintenance routine.

With proposed legislation on noise and emissions in the offing, engine manufacturers were faced with having to channel considerable resources into research in order to meet the specified requirements.

This has resulted in compact units without the loss of power. In fact, horsepower ratings increased whilst dimensions were reduced. Improved manufacturing standards mean engines are built to very fine tolerances. There are reductions in oil and fuel consumption and noise levels, while still achieving a power unit's maximum output.

Periods between servicing have also been extended. It is now commonplace to find more than one year's warranty even where a machine is used commercially.

As far as emissions are concerned, one leading engine manufacturer states that the levels emitted from their lawn mower engines, has, since 1995, been 70% lower than similar models produced in 1990.

This all sounds fine, but unless the machine and engine are well looked after, all this goes out of the window. A routine maintenance programme is essential if optimum performance, with minimal affect on the environment, is to be continually achieved.

MAINTENANCE 2004

An engine is the vital component in all machinery. By comparing some of its requirements to that of a human, it is easier to see how things can start to go wrong.

OIL

This circulates the system and has two main functions. Firstly, it provides a protective film between two surfaces, enabling them to move freely. Secondly, oil also acts as a coolant and dissipates any heat build up.

In human terms, most people at some time in their lives experience a stiffening of the joints.

It can be difficult to carry out the simplest of tasks and often considerable strain is placed on other parts of the body. Taking some form of oil (cod liver) is often recommended to keep those joints working freely.

In an engine the lack of that vital oil film between two metal surfaces causes the movement to become less fluid and the friction created is the main culprit.

On a cold day it is a common practice to rub your hands together to generate heat. Likewise if there is no oil between two metal surfaces heat is produced and eventually they become red hot and are fused together, causing considerable damage and a danger.

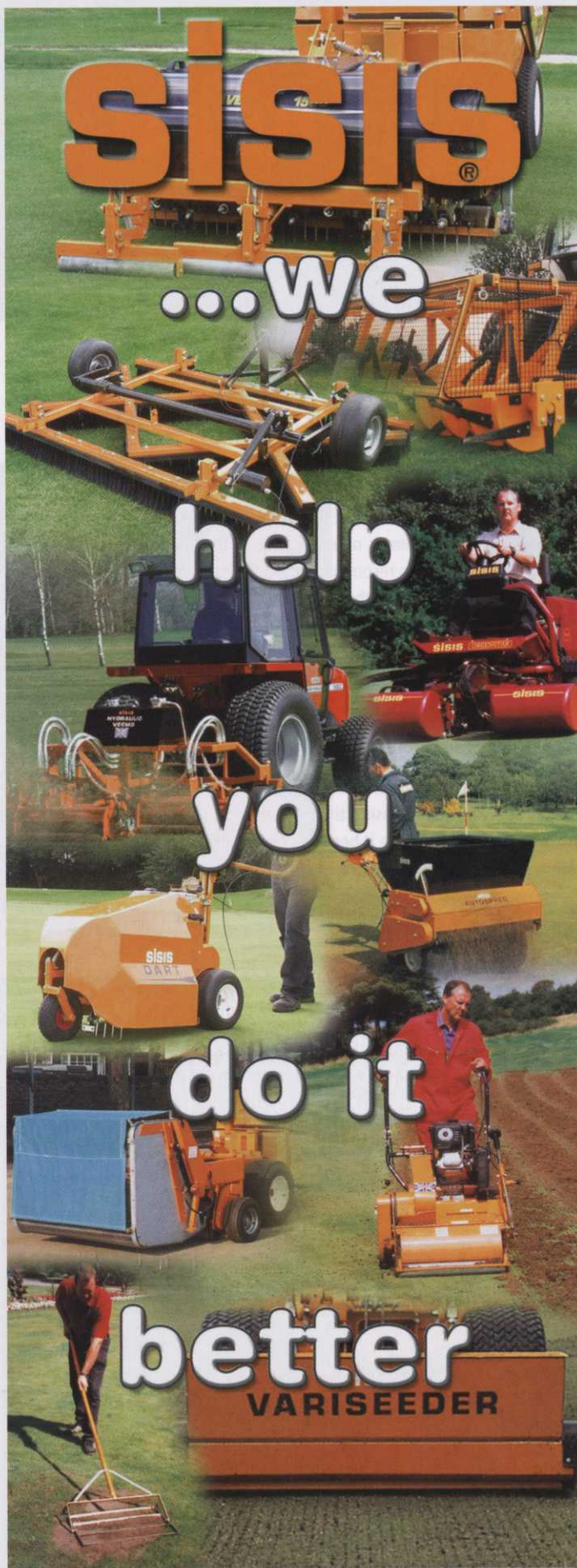
Oil is measured by its viscosity and this is effected by temperature, hence the reason for choosing the right one to suit the time of year. As the oil flows round the engine it becomes contaminated and, to help keep it clean, some power units have a filter in the system. This is not always the case, especially on the smaller engines.

Combustion is a dirty business, with carbon and sulphur as by-products. Condensation and unburned fuel are also present, so oil becomes quickly contaminated and its lubrication properties reduced.

Engine components wear and add minute particles of metal into the system. The volume of the oil over a period of time will be reduced due to burning off. The combinations of these factors results in the oil becoming useless.

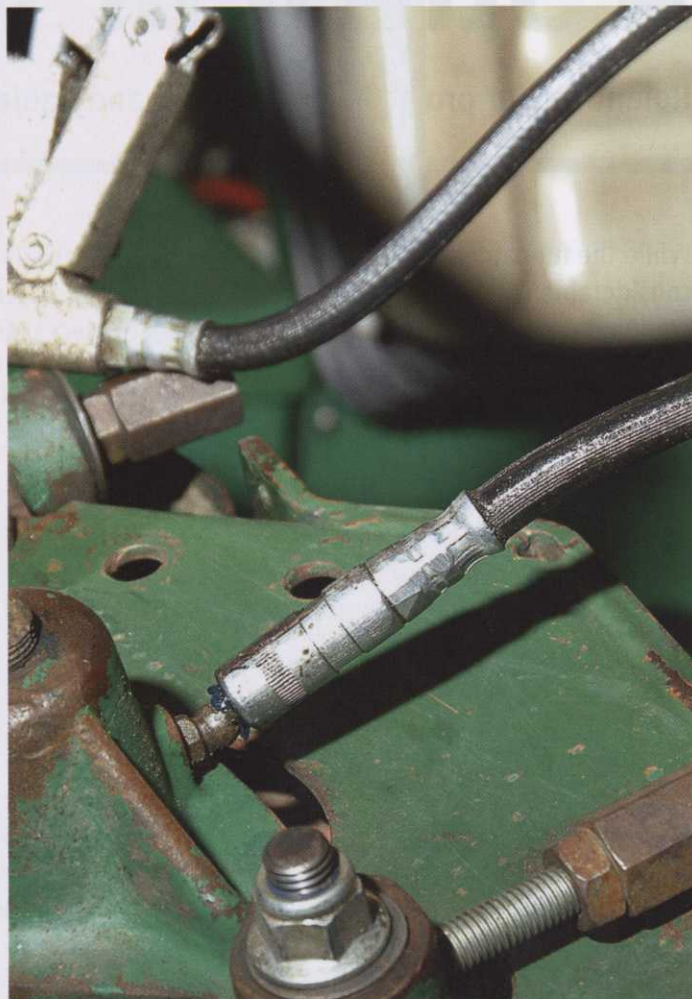


▲ Every time a machine is used ensure the engine oil level is correct



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A Stitch in Time...



▲ Use grease gun sparingly

Oil changes should be carried out as laid down in the manufacturer's instruction manual, using only best quality lubricants. It is essential to check the oil level every time the machine is used and top up if necessary.

This procedure does not just apply to engines. Hydrostatic drive systems are just as important. With these the oil's cleanliness and the correct levels are paramount if they are to work correctly.

One should always be on the look out for those tell-tale signs of oil leakage, especially from the joints of hydraulic hoses. Early discovery and rectification of these will avoid the dangerous possibility of being showered with hot oil from a split hose or a loose joint.

There are other areas that require periodic greasing as a form of lubrication. Sealed bearings are common, but some machines still have grease nipples and with these there is always the chance of overdoing it.

The results can be blobs of grease that attracting dirt and sand forming an excellent grinding paste for wearing away components. By over zealous use there is also the possibility of the grease pushing a bearing seal out of its mounting. Regularly and sparingly is the answer.

AIR

Without it we humans would not exist. The same applies to an engine if starved of air, and a number of things start to happen

Combustion needs air in the right proportions to the fuel, for maximum efficiency. Air has to be free from contaminants such as dust, to achieve this it must pass freely through a filtration system. It has another very important role; air acts as a coolant to ensure an engine is kept at the correct temperature.

Everyone has at some time experienced a heavy cold or congestion and knows how debilitating that is. Symptoms can be difficulty in breathing and sweating. With an engine it is not dissimilar.

If the airflow, that is either passing into the engine or over the cooling fins is obstructed in any way, things start going wrong. When the air intake system becomes restricted, the air to fuel ratio is changed and the engine runs rich. The result is that power output becomes erratic, fuel consumption increases and large amounts of emissions are pumped out into the atmosphere.

Air filters become contaminated quickly and need regular cleaning or replacing, especially in the dry climate and dusty conditions we now experience throughout spring and summer.

Where air acts as a coolant the build-up of debris (grass cuttings) and dirt will restrict its flow, thus causing hot spots to occur. Keeping cooling fins clear on engines; radiators and hydrostatic transmissions need to be a daily routine, especially in dry hot weather. Failure to do this may result in a fire.

WATER

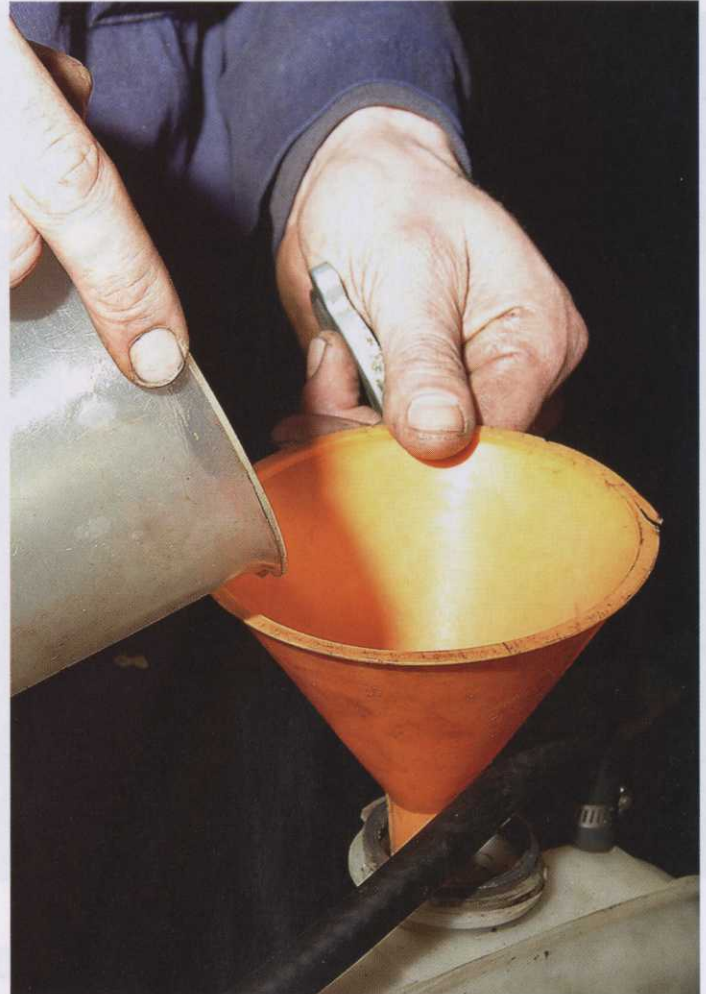
This can become polluted over a period of time and the fluctuations in temperature result in deposits forming. If a water cooling system is used, it should be flushed out at regular intervals. In hot weather the water will evaporate much faster, so check the levels at least daily.

FUEL

Would we drink a contaminated glass of beer? An engine will not respond well if its fuel supply is dirty. The chances are it may not start, if it does then it will run erratically. Where there is dirt, of an abrasive nature present, internal components will be damaged. Fuel should be stored in the correct containers in a cool location.



▲ Replace spark plugs as advised in the engine manufactures manual



▲ In hot weather the water wants checking at least daily

Some readers may not be aware that fuel should only be transported in two -gallon quantities and in the approved cans. There will be serious trouble if larger quantities of fuel are moved around a course and an accident occurs.

Modern fuels have a sale by date and therefore deteriorate if stored in a machine which is not used for a long period of time. Where this is likely to happen there are two choices.

Drain the fuel tank, and then run the engine to remove any left over fuel in the system, or alternatively use a fuel additive. These additives are readily available from outdoor power specialists and will keep the fuel fresh for up to two years.

SPARK PLUGS

As already mentioned, virtually all engines now use electronic ignition, but the one thing that has not basically changed is the spark plug. It is said to have been invented by a Frenchman, Edmond Berger in 1839.

A fellow countryman, Albert Champion, a name now synonymous with spark plugs, went to America to compete in a series of races. He discovered a shortage of parts and started making his own. To cover his racing costs he began manufacturing spark plugs and sold them to friends.

On a second visit to America in 1908, backed by the Buick Motor Company, Albert formed his own company - AC Spark Plugs. Albert Champion died in 1927 and General Motors purchased his company, but his name lives on.

In a lot of instances the spark plugs are components that tend to get overlooked until the day an engine fails to start.



THE TRI-PLEX THAT RAISED THE BAR NOW PUTS IT OUT OF REACH



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Introducing the new John Deere 2500A Tri-Plex Riding Greens Mower. When it was first introduced in 1999, our 2500 Tri-Plex defied all comparisons. With offset cutting units, a distinctive control arm and low ground pressure, the 2500 became an immediate hit with greenkeepers, technicians and operators alike.

But there is always room for improvement. With our new 2500A, we put in a new radiator system to increase cooling performance. An enhanced lift/lower assembly increases feel and response. Plus we updated the back lap valve and enhanced the wiring system.

To find out more about the tri-plex that continues to set the industry standard, contact your local John Deere grounds care dealer or call 01949 860491. Nothing Runs Like A Deere.

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▲ If conditions are dry, hot and dusty the air filter system should frequently be checked and cleaned or replaced

Electrodes wear and the gap increases and the spark shorts out or is weak, placing greater strain and unnecessary wear on the engine. Replace plugs as recommended to ensure the engine's performance is retained.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Budgets are always being squeezed, so it makes sense to be continually on the look out for ways of trimming costs.

One possibility is to consider LPG or natural gas. Not only is there a saving in running costs, but environmentally they are of considerable benefit to both the planet and the operators.

At present the government has not taxed this fuel at the same rate as petrol and diesel. The price of 'off road' gas is between 19p and 25p depending on the supplier.

If a club is already using this form of fuel for other activities, such as buggies or heating, some companies take the total amount of gas supplied into account when calculating the final cost per unit of gas. Because of the high usage the unit rate will further reduce machinery running costs.

The storage installation may also be free-of-charge. Some companies will supply a one-ton bulk tank. All that is required of the recipient is a level base built to their specification, plus the cost of connecting the unit's electrical supplies by a qualified electrical engineer.

As far as the machinery is concerned, there are a number of companies who carry out engine conversions and they cost in the region of £750. While this figure does add extra to the purchase price of a machine, the savings over a two year period are considerable.

However it is dressed up, fossil fuels such as petrol and diesel, are gradually coming to an end. In the meantime they are doing considerable damage to the atmosphere for future generations.

Research has shown that LPG is cleaner than other alternatives with the exception of electric power. If looking to save costs or wanting to help protect our environment, then LPG is worth investigating further.

BLADE SYSTEMS

Regardless of whether it is a cylinder, rotary, reciprocating or flail system the one common factor to all is the sharpness of the blades. A blunt blade or badly adjusted cylinder is not only dangerous; it also places considerable stress on the machine's components. More fuel is used; the

job takes longer and the turf can be severely damaged.

Rotary blades tend to be left longer before sharpening, usually because of the vegetation they are cutting and the signs of bluntness are not as obvious as those of a cylinder mower being used on fine turf.

Bearing in mind that a blade tip is travelling in the region of 130-mph, it must be correctly balanced to avoid vibration build up. It could become lethal. From the safety aspect, replace any damaged blades immediately. These criteria also apply to flail mowers.

As far as cylinder mowers are concerned, correctly ground and set reels and bedknives, are imperative to the quality of cut, there are no margins for error. Back lapping is not the answer; it is only short term and therefore should be considered only as a stop gap measure.

The benefits of having modern in-house grinding machinery make it a worthwhile long-term investment. A cylinder problem can be dealt with quickly and efficiently, without the delay of having to wait in a queue. With one of these units in the workshop all the cylinder mowers can be maintained at the highest of levels all-year-round.

CLEANLINESS

Any machinery that is involved with grass, water and soil will get dirty and to what degree this is allowed to develop, is down to each operator and the golf course machinery maintenance programme.

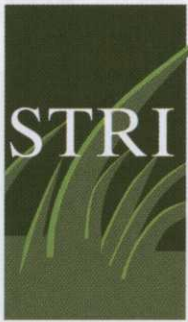
A cleaning-down routine, with a pressure washer, is beneficial for both the equipment and all those people involved in using or repairing it. Accumulations of dust and debris will cause heat build up problems, hide broken welds and missing nuts and bolts.

A clean well-kept machine is much more pleasant to operate and is very likely to fetch a higher trade-in price.

Keeping a course to the high standards now expected by players and members, requires machinery that is reliable and continually operating at optimum performance.

Having a well-planned maintenance programme ensures as little as possible can go wrong. It will never be foolproof and breakdowns will occur, but at least by being on the lookout for unusual signs and taking early preventive action most of these can be either avoided or kept to a minimum.

Like humans, giving machinery some TLC will pay dividends.



Don't Worry

Lee Penrose looks at those rare and protected species which can make your golf course such a special place to be

On hearing their course is to be visited by one of the STRI ecologists, Bob Taylor or myself, there are always one or two members within each golf club who raise the concern; "What if he finds something rare on the course?"

This inevitably leads to visions of a throng of crusty, sandal clad ecologists arriving at the club in a Citroen 2CV (or worse still – bicycles!) in order to erect fences around colonies of beetles, mushrooms or other equally unrecognisable wildlife.



Understandably, these members are often fearful that the power of management will be taken away from the club and put into the hands of environmentalists whom care little for the future of the golf course and are merely interested in the preservation of the species in question.

In practice this could not be further from the truth. The STRI do often encounter rare, endangered and protected wildlife on golf courses and it is immediately recognisable that their presence is because of, not despite of, the golf course and its past management.

Indeed, according to their policy on golf courses, English Nature; "recognises that the wildlife present on the site is a result of the past and existing management of the land as a golf course; the presumption will be continuance of existing management practices which do not reduce that special interest".

WHAT ARE RARE AND PROTECTED SPECIES?

Interesting wildlife can be found on every single golf course in the UK. Whether it be a pair of blue tits nesting in the greenkeepers' sheds, a family of foxes utilising the wide open spaces for playing and hunting or a flock of goldfinch pillaging the seed from stands of thistle and dock.

However some species are less common than others or have experienced significant population declines and are vulnerable enough to

be included within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

A mention within one of the various sections within this Act affords a particular species, and their immediate habitat, protection from intentional or deliberate damage. Furthermore, Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW), lists 391 species of principal importance for which Species Action Plans have been produced by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (available from www.ukbap.org.uk) this list is constantly under review with species being added and removed as necessary.

For the sake of other articles in this month's magazine a full list of these species is not included here, however some species that do support statutory protection and are commonly found on golf courses include; great crested newt, badger, all 16 species of bat, water vole, red squirrel, brown hare, adder, grass snake, skylark, kestrel, song thrush, grey partridge, linnet, bluebell and juniper.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS LAND OWNERS/MANAGERS?

If any of the above species (or one of the numerous others on the aforementioned CRoW Act) do reside on, or regularly use, your golf course then you do have a responsibility to protect that species and its habitat from damage or destruction. You do not have a responsibility to notify any organisations of the presence of such species; however it will be beneficial to do so as government funding is often available for the further enhancement of the environment.

If management work is to be carried out that may affect a protected species then the correct channels must be followed in order to ensure the golf club fulfil their legal requirements as concerns the particular species.

Pond management, tree felling, building work and course architectural changes are all procedures which may affect the habitats, or access to, of species such as newts, bats or badgers. It is therefore always advisable to conduct thorough surveys of the areas in question before undertaking any work. Relatively cheap (or even free) surveys can often be sourced from local wildlife groups or even expert members within the club.

If it transpires that planned management work will affect individuals or habitats of protected species then a special licence must be acquired from English Nature (or the relevant statutory body in your part of the UK) and a licensed handler must be 'on-call' throughout the procedure. Do not be tempted to bypass any of the above advice in order to save time and cost as the penalties for non compliance are severe and well administered.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO PROTECTING RARE SPECIES?

Aside from the obvious benefits of the membership being able to boast



to other clubs and visiting golfers that their course supports a rare orchid, mammal or newt and the satisfaction you will gain from monitoring its success, there are also financial benefits to harbouring protected wildlife.

Obviously the golf club cannot directly 'profit' from their presence, but management work funded via external bodies will inevitably benefit both the ecology and aesthetics of the course and therefore all parties benefit! Financial assistance with protected species management is available under the following schemes:

Biodiversity Grants Scheme: The scheme aims to restore priority species and habitats, to encourage all sections of the community to get involved in conserving biodiversity, and to deliver national conservation through local action. Application packs can be obtained from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101

The Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES), funding is available to golf clubs located on Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) through English Nature. Management agreements will be arranged that will best suit the species in question and the golf club. Application packs can be obtained from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101.

The Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish National Heritage and the Northern Ireland Environment Service run similar schemes to English Nature in their respective countries.

The Environment Agency may fund local survey and habitat management projects for specific protected species. Contact the Environment Agency Headquarters at Rio House, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS12 4UD,

Main grants programme. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for grants to fund projects which benefit the heritage of Great Britain, including urban green spaces and habitats. Contact Heritage Lottery Fund 7 Holbein Place, London, SW1W 8NR, 020 7591 6045

World Wildlife Fund. Projects involving wetland species and habitats of special concern are eligible for funding. Contact WWF, Panda House, Weyside Park, Godalming, GU7 1XR,

The Chestnut Fund, an independent charity, makes grants available to encourage and enable community groups to carry out conservation activities. The grant is administered by British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). The maximum grant is £300. Contact the BTCV Community Unit on 01302 572236

There are several established organisations throughout the UK that deal with specific collections or species. Groups such as the British Dragonfly Society, the Bat Conservation Trust, RSPB, The Mammal Society etc.. may not only aid with financial assistance but are also an invaluable source of information and technical advice. The majority of these organisations can be found on the internet or via contacting English Nature.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Involvement with professional ecological consultants such as the STRI and statutory conservation organisations such as English Nature would represent a sound way forward.

Specialist advice is available on all aspects of wildlife management and legislation including general methodologies such as managing grasslands



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in order to maintain small mammal populations at a level that will support the protected kestrel.

Ponds within courses that support colonies of great crested newt or natterjack toad or rough grasslands that are filled with breeding skylark or lapwing will necessitate more specific advice and a tailored management programme will be required to maintain and enhance the habitat, equally there is legislation specific to each species outlining management methodology and timing that must be adhered to.

It is always advisable to find out more about the species in question. A good port of call is the UK Biodiversity Action Plans (www.ukbap.org.uk) which outlines the current legislation and objectives for each species.

In addition, English Nature produce several excellent information booklets regarding best practice management and the legalities relating to the majority of British wildlife species that are available from English Nature's enquiry service team on 01733 455101.

The STRI ecology department deal with these issues on a daily basis and will be happy to assist you with any concerns you may have.



WHO ARE THE STATUTORY BODIES AND WILL THEY GET INVOLVED?

For the sake of simplicity the Statutory Organisations for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be considered together as they all work in a similar fashion and are 'partner' organisations.

They are the Government funded bodies whose purpose is to promote the conservation of Britain's wildlife and natural features, and in essence are the groups whom are responsible for ensuring the survival of rare flora and fauna assemblages and have legal powers to enforce protection.

However, do not be alarmed by the use of words such as 'enforce' and 'legal powers', as the groups are very responsive to the requirements of a golf club and, usually working closely with the STRI, will work out species protection programmes with golf clubs that support interesting wildlife whilst ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the course.

The Chief Scientist of English Nature, Dr Keith Duff, is himself a keen golfer and understands all too well the problems caused by inappropriate course management.

In general the statutory bodies will not become involved with a golf club unless they have reason to believe a protected species is being damaged or destroyed, or if they are called for assistance from, or on behalf of, the golf club.

IN SUMMARY

Do not be perturbed by what may at first appear to be more hassle than benefit when discovering a rare or protected wildlife species on your golf course – the bearded tree huggers will hopefully leave you alone to manage at your discretion!

Certainly seek out advice from professional ecologists or local wildlife groups and do bear in mind the legalities that go with such species. Most of all enjoy the prestige and challenges associated with ensuring survival of our natural history and be sure to boast to other clubs about how valuable your course is to British wildlife.

Lee Penrose is an ecologist with the STRI

NEW PRODUCTS

NEW RELEASES FROM BILLY GOAT

Pinnacle Power Equipment has announced a programme of product improvements for 2004.

Billy Goat continues to be the number one outdoor vacuum sold in the UK and new models and higher specification machines are arriving in time for the coming season.

The KD512 is replacing the smallest KD model Billy Goat, the KD410. A 5hp horsepower Briggs & Stratton engine replaces the 4hp unit and the fan now has four blades for greater efficiency and quieter operation.

The KD511C Briggs & Stratton and KD511H Honda are replaced by the Honda powered KD512HC for the same retail price as the old KD511C.

Other Billy Goat updates involve the Professional SV50H vacuum. For the new season this popular machine is replaced by the new specification SV50HR and a price reduction to £1,295. (excl Vat).

For further information telephone: 01932 788799.



PRO RANGE CATALOGUE



A complete makeover of the 2004 Pro Range catalogue includes an easy to use, mixture guide with more technical data available than ever before. New top rated cultivars and up-dated mixtures are available from the DLF Trifolium in-house breeding programme.

An addition, this year, is the introduction of Micro Clover into the Ecosward mixtures which offers a real choice in specifying and sowing a self sustaining sward – an added bonus with

increasing pressure to reduce chemical and fertiliser usage.

In 2004 customers will be able to reap the benefits of the recent merger between the DLF Trifolium Group and Cebeco. Site visits, reports and product back-up to all sectors of the market are offered through the nationwide field support team.

For further information telephone: 01386 791102.

SOIL RENOVATORS/STONE BURIERS

Rustons Engineering has added Rotadairon soil renovators/stone buriers and combination seeders to its portfolio of ground care and amenity machinery.

The range covers a wide choice of models for different requirements and tractor power ratings from 15hp to 210hp, all allowing renovation and seeding to be completed by one machine in a single pass.

The most significant feature of the machines is a cutting rotor with special blades that turn in the opposite direction to a conventional rotary cultivator. Working against the direction of travel, the blades cut upwards away from the base layer, minimising compaction and panning.

Stones, trash and soil are then thrown upwards to the rear on to a special separation screen. Vegetation, stones and trash hit the screen and fall to the bottom of the worked area, while fine soil passes through the screen and falls on top, burying the larger particles. This creates a structured series of strata, with stones at the bottom, followed by woody material, then clods, with a fine tilth on top, which is firmed by a rear roller. This structure gives improved drainage, better aeration and easier root penetration into the substructure.

If a seeder unit is fitted, the whole operation can be carried out in one pass, speeding up the process of creating a suitable seedbed and avoiding the moisture loss associated with multiple passes with conventional machinery.

Rotadairon machines have been developed over nearly 50 years and incorporates many patented features, including a hydraulic clutch that stops the rotor when the machine encounters large obstacles such as tree stumps or boulders before shock loads are transmitted through the driveline back to the tractor PTO.

RECO will be marketing the Rotadairon equipment through its nationwide UK ground care/amenity dealer network alongside the existing products, which include Kioti compact tractors, hedge-cutters, mowing and turf care products, rotary cultivators and fertiliser spreaders.

For further information telephone: 01480 455151.



BOTTLED LIQUID BACTERIA

For those currently buying bacteria in bottled liquid form and probably spending around £20.00 per week, the availability of bacteria in freeze dried form must be good news.

Now available from Hydroscape and suitable for any type of biological wastewater treatment system, these freeze dried bacteria come in water-soluble PVA sachets and have a shelf life of up to 2 years, compared to a few days for the bottled liquid version (if not stored in a refrigerator).

More importantly, prices for the freeze-dried form are around half those of liquids.

For further information telephone: 01425 476261.

VERTICAL MOWING FROM ALLEN

Allen Power has launched a Vertical Mowing System for its National 8400 and 84 (Vanguard) triple mowers.

Fitted in under an hour by replacing the three mowing units with the vertical cutting heads, the system features 30 blades per head at 1" intervals.

The hardened spring steel blades are designed for long-lasting performance and frequent use.

This new unique thin blade design produces excellent slicing action while virtually eliminating turf damage. This allows the professional user to vertically mow more frequently – without disrupting play.

The National system can reduce de-thatching time by up to 50 per cent over conventional, dedicated machines.

With the exceptional climbing capability of the National, this new introduction means steep banks and slopes can now be vertically mown quickly and safely.

The design also incorporates a 'Dial-A-Height' precision depth control.

This feature allows the blades to be adjusted easily from a shallow depth for simple thatch removal or as deep as 3/8" for growth stimulation and increased shoot density for stronger, healthier turf.

For further information telephone: 01235 515400.



NEW VITAX FUNGICIDE

Vitax has launched Insignia, their first new fungicide for many years, which they confidently claim gives the most effective and long lasting control of Fusarium Patch Disease on the market.

Insignia, which has been developed by BASF, has undergone trials over several seasons on 25 different turf grass cultivars throughout the UK and Europe. The fungicide, first registered in cereals, is active throughout all stages of the disease from initial spore germination and leaf infection through to the prevention of further sporulation.

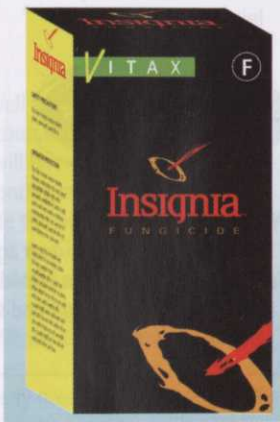
With this protection, one application should last for the duration of the period where there is a high risk of disease development. Application should be made at the first sign of disease or when conditions are favourable for disease development.

"During trials Insignia was applied at up to four times the registered dose rate to test for phytotoxicity and it came through with flying colours," said Vitax's Clive Williams.

"We also discovered side benefits which include an increase in stress tolerance, an increase in nitrogen uptake potentially leading to a greening of turf."

Insignia, which is active against Fusarium Patch, Red Thread and Dollar Spot, is available as a water dispersible granule in a container sufficient to treat 2,000 sq.m. of turf.

For further information telephone: 01530 510060.



NEW FRONT HITCH OPTION

Kioto compact tractors can now be fitted with a front hitch for mounting mowers, sweepers and other equipment.

Two models are available – one with a 800kg lift capacity for 35hp and 40hp models and the other with a 1500kg lift for 45hp and 50hp models. Both are close-coupled to the tractor so a good balance is maintained.

The hitch assembly is supplied with a front 1000rpm PTO incorporating an electro-hydraulic engagement that provides a soft start to avoid shock loads on machinery. The heavy-duty link arms float independently by 50mm to allow for uneven ground and fold vertically for transport.

The equipment, which is distributed in the UK by Rustons Engineering, costs £3,500, excluding fitting.

For further information telephone: 01480 455151.



BUNKER AID

Rake Up is a new clip on support lifting the handle clear of the sand and inviting its use. Raising the rake a few inches it can then be lifted without touching the sand either by hand or by being hooked by a sand iron. Replacing the rake also doesn't disturb the raked sand.

Available from Newart and Accessory Distributors the Rake-Up is priced at £3 and comes in packs of 10s or 50s. It is self adjusting to various handle sizes.

For further information telephone: 020 8275 0018.



NEW MODELS JOIN RANGE

Lloyds has added further models to its range, with the latest greens mowers being the Paladin TG and Paladin Dual.

The PaladinTG has the addition of a groomer, which is fitted closely between the cutting cylinder and front grooved roller.

The Paladin Dual has been developed to give the adjustment demanded by the requirement of today's fine turf managers for the very best finish.

This has been developed from the Lloyds Paladin TG but provides the same features as the TG without the groomer fitted. The front grooved front roller can be located closely back to the cutting cylinder, ensuring the shortest roller distance, to follow the tight contours of golf greens etc. The dual adjusters located on each sideplate effect the front roller adjustment.

Available in 21" and 24" widths the Paladin Dual and TG are supplied with infinitely variable height adjusters, grooved front roller, and choice of 9 or 11 bladed cutting cylinders, and 11 bladed on the with groomer on the TG.

For further information telephone: 01462 683031.



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
 Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440



Peter Larter
NORTHERN & MIDLAND
 Tel: 01476 550115

SCOTTISH REGION

North

Two new members to report this month, they are both from Newmachar GC and they are David Steven, and Mark Rae. Welcome to the Section lads.

Harrogate has come and gone for another year and went well again with the turnover of visitors very high again, and a good representation from our Section. I did not get down this year myself, so no real gossip as yet, but no doubt it will all come out before long. Our thanks to all the staff down at the BIGGA headquarters for organising the whole event, and making it such a success. Ben Brooks, from Newmachar, would like to thank Mike Dooner, from Thorntree Amenity, for his trip down to Harrogate, Ben received this for being the young greenkeeper who supports his Section at outings and seminars.

The Scottish Conference at Dunfermline College is on March 2 and hopefully the weather will hold for the members who will be travelling some distances to go to the event.

The 200 club is being run Hugh Mclatchie and it is going well again. There are still some tickets available if anyone wants to join up. If you do not want to renew your tickets then please send them back so as they can be sold onto someone else, and no offence will be taken.

Dale Robertson the new Section Secretary has set up Moray Old course for our spring outing on May 27. It is a quality championship course and I am sure there will be a good turnout for the day. Dale can be contacted on

Dalengc@hotmail.com and mobile 07711274525, and home number 01224 821574.

The feedback to the Level 3 Fastrack has been good with quite a number of our Section interested. The biggest hurdle I have found in trying to get people interested in taking it further, is in the availability of the funding. The members in Grampian Region have no problem in accessing funding through Elmwood, but for other members of our Section in the Highlands and Ross and Cromarty it is different where the members have to access their own individual funding. This can make things difficult particularly if the club which employs them is not interested in funding their staff to improve their qualifications. There is a group of about 10 required to do this Fastrack course using Elmwood as a training provider and anyone interested can contact me on 01997 420155 or 07766 956521. The course takes about one year to complete and should improve the person's ability to do their job if attained.

Not much else to report so until next month
 Iain Gunn

NORTHERN REGION

North East

Well another BTME is over again and many thanks to Terry Charlton, of Turf Care, for once again providing transport for the North East Section.

During the show we gained some new members for the Section from as

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Derek Farrington
SOUTH EAST, SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES
Tel: 01903 260956

far away as Cumbria and north Northumberland we hope to see you in the near future.

At the show I met up with the runner up in the Toro Student of the Year, John Talbot, from Ravensworth GC, and he informed me that he is going to make an effort to play in the Section competitions. Let's hope you can make it, John, along with the rest of the new members.

News from Slaley Hall is that they are in the process of changing the style of their bunkers. So far 12 have been done, but as you are aware they have a long way to go yet. Steve Cramm also tells me that work on their new shed should be started soon - twice the size of the present one.

The competitions have now all been sorted out and the first one is at Matfen Hall on April 22; Autumn competition at Morpeth GC, and the annual match against the East of Scotland, at Slaley Hall in the first week of October. Members will be notified for both the Spring and Autumn competitions.

Any more news, please get in touch.

Jimmy Richardson

North Wales

The Spring seminar at Carden Park was well attended and our thanks to all our speakers, the main theme being on course set-up for tournament play. We hope those of you who attended will have a few ideas to put in place on your courses for the start of the monthly medals in April.

Once again, a number of the Section made the trip to the GCSAA show, this time over in San Diego - for most of us it was just that bit too far. There are some great tales of the courses visited, including watching the Buick Invitational, at The Torrey Pines Resort and looking around La Costa. I am sure Andy Campbell, Terry Adamson, Wendy O'Brien and Ian Beckett will tell you about the West Coast swing.

Here in North Wales, though, we have many great courses that give the Americans a run for their money. As you travel the coast from Chester to Bangor, taking in Prestatyn and Conwy (Caernarfonshire) links, North Wales and Measdu from Abergele to Aberdovey, the somewhat flat beginning blossoms into ideal duneland territory then on to the Island of Anglesey taking in Holyhead and Bull Bay. Around the Llyn peninsula, Nefyn & District, Pwllheli, Porthmadog, and the staging of Welsh Championships and, more recently, the European Senior Tour under the historic shadow of Harlech Castle. Royal St Davids, on a blustery day, is a test for anyone... including Jeremy Hughes. Back across the mountain heartland of Snowdonia to Llangollen and up the Wirral estuary to Wallasey and Hoylake.

I wonder why, when we decide to travel to far off places around the world, we don't just get in the car and have a drive around Wales?

I know I will now receive phone calls saying why didn't you mention my course! Well, they are all great and we are blessed to be involved in the Golf Greenkeeping industry.

Any news, views or stories for next month, give me a call

Home 01925 263394 - Mobile 07778 162162

e-mail acorngolf@supanet.com

Mesen Cymru

Andrew Acorn

Cleveland

Well, BTME has come and gone and I think I speak for most members when I say that it was another success! Well done to all those who organised the event and all who supported it.

Many of us believe that the new season is 'kick started' by the Harrogate show. Minds turn to ordering the spring starter fertilisers and checking that the machinery is 'ready for the off'.

Firstly, on behalf of Section members may I wish Phil Hargrave good luck? He has just been appointed as Head Greenkeeper at Crook Golf Club. His experiences at Wearside and South Shields should stand him in good stead for the challenges ahead.

Not too much news has reached me this month. However there are

some details of forthcoming social events.

1. March 4. Baz Walker's Annual Section Quiz at Darlington Golf Club, 7 pm start.

Barry and Allie put a great deal of effort into the organisation of this event so please come along and support it. We know the Wearside team will win, as they know the answers to the questions before they are asked. However the rest of us really enjoy the challenge of competing for the second place prize! Please remember dress code on the night! The Section treats all members who attend to the famous Darlo Golf Club Pie and Chips - wonderful!

2. March 26. We're all going to the dogs tonight. Have a trip to Sunderland Greyhound Stadium with the Section. The committee have arranged a great deal with the track. For a measly £ 10 we'll get entry, a race card, three pints or drinks and a tasty baguette. A free bus will be provided for members who wish to travel from the Middlesbrough and Darlington areas. It is important to book early so contact Barry Walker on 07968 308892. Let's have a good night out and win some cash.

3. April 21. SPRING OUTING taking place at Castle Eden and Peterlee Golf Club. Registration from 9am. First tee off time is 10am. Please book a slot by

ringing Barry Walker on 07968 308892. Let's have a good turn out and support the Section please.

Any news to T.C. on 07831 214879.

Terry "El Prez" Charlton

Northern

Hi chaps, hope all is going well, and your courses are starting to recover from the winter play which will have taken its toll on areas around the course.

This will probably be the last time I write these notes as Adam Speight is waiting in the wings to take over as Secretary, (hooray, I hear you say).

You will all now have received your events and golf fixture list. So, as per last year, can everyone please pay for the golf day a week prior to the event?

If you are reading this before March 3 there may still be places left at the seminar at Bradford GC and the Dinner Dance at Riddlesden GC on the 6th. If you want to go to any of these events please drop me a line.

At a recent committee meeting Jim Brown decided the time was right for him to step down from the committee. So on behalf of everyone in the Northern Section - Jim, thanks for all your work over the last few years. Andy Slingsby has stepped up to take over the role of Vice Chairman that Jim has left behind. Adam and Andy are now our representatives at the regional meetings.

I would like to welcome Richard Bull, from West Bradford GC; Charles Poulter, from Knaresborough GC; Gavin Pickard, from Malton and Norton GC, and James Hopkins, from Moortown GC, who have all joined our Section recently.

Thanks for reading my ramblings over the past couple of years.

Dave Thackeray

North West

Did you get to the BTME at Harrogate this year? I am sure that if you did you will have seen some of the machinery you would have loved to get your hands on. The exhibition was once again well worth visiting as record numbers found out, and of course the seminars were first class with top speakers from the UK, Canada and the USA.

While on the subject of the USA, this week ten greenkeepers will be flying out to San Diego courtesy of Bernhard & Co to visit the GCSAA Exhibition. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet other professionals from a different country doing the same job but under different conditions.

This opportunity was open to all members of BIGGA. All you had to do was apply and attend a short interview. So if the chance comes along again, get your application in.

I have just completed the golf fixtures for this year which I will be

sending to the printers, so hopefully you will all be receiving your fixture list shortly. In the meantime here are the fixtures for the year.

Spring Tournament, Ellesmere GC, Tuesday, April 20, North West v North Wales; Vale Royal Abbey GC, Wednesday, June 9. Summer Tournament; Wigan GC, Thursday, June 24, North West v Northern, to be arranged; Whitelaw Bowl, Penrith GC, Wednesday, September 8; Autumn Tournament, Hurlston Hall GC, Tuesday, September 14. Stewards' Match – to be arranged. Presidents Cup and AGM. Wilmslow GC, Thursday, December 2.

Any queries or news contact me on 0151 724 5412 or 07761 583387.
Bert Cross

MIDLAND REGION

BB&O

As I am writing this report the first of this year's snow has just fallen. Looking on the bright side so has my weight, mainly due to the famous Atkins formula.

The BB&O's first Golf event takes place at Badgemore Park GC. This Spring Tournament kicks off at 10am on Thursday, April 22 with groups of three scoring. We look forward to seeing a few old and new faces at this event. Contact John Scoones for further details on 07880 550 380

Badgemore Park GC has just opened one of the latest design and technology greenkeeping complexes in the land. It boasts a state of the art lighting system with built in heater elements, water filtration unit and special maintenance bays for grinding equipment.

This ultra modern facility has the very latest security system that even the crew of the Starship Enterprise might find hard to fathom. Lyndsay Anderson and his team are as proud as punch of the facility and would be delighted to give a guided tour of their new premises on the golf day. Lyndsay can be contacted on 07810 553 012.

The Cornetto ice cream has a whole new meaning for Roy Kates, of Wexham Park GC, who recently tied the knot in Remo, Italy. We wish Roy and his wife Monica all the best for the future. Congratulations to you both.

Simon Marsh joins the Section from St Mellion GC, in Cornwall, and starts his new position as Course Manager of Harleyford GC. Simon, originally from the fringes of the BB&O Section, supports Aldershot FC and says, "I am happy to be in the land where Pizza gets delivered". I couldn't agree more, but I am on the Atkins diet. We all wish Simon the very best in his new position in Buckinghamshire.

Just as Simon arrives another member from our Section is departing. Gary Kenny, also known as Bravedart, is leaving Wycombe Heights GC to take up a new position as Course Manager at Ashford Manor GC. His dartboard has been bequeathed to his trusty Deputy who is currently undergoing training in the latest tarmac technology.

Nathan Chapman has secured a position as Head Groundsman at the Territorial Honourable Artillery Company in London, having been Greg Wheadon's Deputy at Aspect Park GC for the last few years. We all wish Nathan the very best in his new position with the Territorials.

Beaconsfield GC had their Christmas party on December 18. This became a double celebration when Michael Homer (now a major shareholder in Nappy's R Us) became a very proud, first time dad the next day. Mike's baby daughter has been named Georgina and from all over the BB&O we send him and his new daughter our very best wishes.

Congratulations to Brian Payne, from Burnham Beeches GC, who was presented with an award at BTME Harrogate for being an "Unsung Hero". Brian jets off for a week's holiday in France and a chance to reflect his time in greenkeeping with a bit of French cuisine and a few bottles of Chablis.

After a very successful tournament held last year, the new Rigby Taylor

Matchplay Competition 2004 gets underway. This year's format will be Singles and played between the months of April and August. All members of the BB&O Section are invited to enter this competition. The final of this event has been scheduled at The Berkshire GC in August 2004. Entries must be in by April 1 and good luck to all who participate. Anyone who requires further information can contact Gary Underwood on 07771 804703.

Any further information contact me on mark@tacitgolf.com
Mark Day

East of England

First of all, sorry for not putting anything in last month's issue but at the time of writing there was no news to report. Planning for the year is well under way and we have got some very good golfing venues for the year including Belton Park, Lincoln Golf Club, Torksey, Boston and the first golfing date of the year, April 19 at Rutland County GC. Final dates and fixtures will be published and sent out in the very near future. As a committee we are always looking for educational courses to run for our Section and if you have any ideas on subjects that you would like to learn about or possible venues for the future please let me know. Don't forget the seminar day at Newark GC on March 3. See you all there.

Les Howkins

Midland

Well it's the end of an era! Yours truly has left Schwillbilly Towers of the Weoley Schloss Estate and taken residence in Handsworth Wood. Perhaps my pseudonym of old, Raggerty, should now be re-employed. Think about it, I am also a tree surgeon "Rupert"!

By now you should have received this year's fixtures and their relevant entry forms. Don't forget the Spring Tournament at Trentham Park, and the Scotts Doubles (final at Wentworth on September 16). Entry closing date for both is March 15.

As of the Spring Tournament, and all the following attire requiring events, members shall be expected to sport an official BIGGA tie, particularly at golfing evening meals. Those not doing so shall incur a £1 fine.

Proceeds will be collected over the year and presented to charity. The Section is currently carrying a small stock of BIGGA ties, and is offering them to you at a £2 reduced cost of £4.50. I'm sure you will agree that this can only improve our professional status and image, and promote our proud Section. Mr Fellows, I can't wait to see a BIGGA bow-tie.

I have the pleasure of welcoming nine new members to our smashing Section:- M. I. Gunn, G. Matthews, J. L. Tomlin, I. Holborn, L. Giles-Townsend, T. L. Reynolds, S. P. Walther, I. Cureton, and R. Dimmock. We all look forward to your support and to meeting you at our many events.

Sorry that this month's 'Around the Green' is a little light but moving home has taken-up all my free time. Anything to report? Please call the Raggerty hot-line: 07816 410552.

Until next month take care, and be cheered by the thought that Spring is only just around the corner. Honest!

Sean McDade

Mid Anglia

Doesn't time fly. BTME done and dusted for another year, pen and paper ready for yet another maintenance programme and all keen to get the cutting season started.

A fairly mild Winter again, (a few frosty days, some snow, hail and rain) but in general quite warm. Currently half way through February with signs of trees starting to bud, grass starting to grow, that time of year is almost upon us again.

I hope you managed to attend the BTME this year as it is a great way of seeing all the reps doing some work for a change, (only joking lads) but also to see the commitment of our Association towards us and trying to promote our trade as a professional body.

I met quite a few of the Mid Anglia Section on the day I visited and some faces from days gone by. We have had our first committee meeting of the year and as I said at the Christmas meeting these venues for 2004 have been chosen – Spring meeting: John o'Gaunt, 36 holes and National Championship qualifier. Format to be confirmed. Thursday, May 13.

Summer meeting: Mount Pleasant, 18 holes, 2pm start, buffet style meal and casual wear in the evening – date TBC, but hopefully last week in July.

Autumn meeting: Woburn G&CC, 18 holes plus the AGM. Wednesday, October 27. Christmas meeting: Chesfield Downs, 18 hole Texas Scramble, there will probably be a limited entry on this one. Thursday, December 9.

Please make a note of the dates as we are keen to get some of you new guys playing so it is not the same old names and faces winning all the time.

Finally I would like to thank Stewart and Martin, from SJS irrigation, for their time and insight into the world of the watering system. Twenty of our members attended, and thanks must go to Dunstable Downs GC for hosting the lecture.

Steve Mason

East Midlands

Once again the start of the year sees our first BIGGA event as our annual trip to Harrogate. As usual the show just gets bigger and better each year. It is also great to meet up with all your old friends, and to make a few new friends too. At section level we will have enjoyed our first event of the year, the go-kart evening on February 25 at the Wymeswold Centre, (results and a more detailed report will appear next month). The second event is our trip to Wimbledon on May 6, followed very quickly by our Spring Tournament and National tournament qualifier at Kirby Muxloe GC on May 12. Every member should now be in possession of their forms. If you have not received yours by now please let me know. Finally our AGM this year will take place at Rushcliffe Golf Club on November 11.

Antony Bindley

SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES

South Coast

At last a little spell of winter! A cold snap which has been long overdue and much appreciated by many of us that have been experiencing the unusually warm weather, which has brought us many problems including repeated outbreaks of Fusarium.

I have just returned from Harrogate and BTME. On a personal level this year was very different for me as I was giving a presentation at the National Education Conference.

After travelling up on the Sunday I had an evening meeting with Frank Newberry who wanted to run through my presentation with me. An hour later and Frank had given me some excellent pointers and feedback and it was back to my room to change much of the running order. Frank's support was much needed and although I had to change my presentation it certainly looked and ran better.

It seems a very crass statement to say 'it gets better every year' but as far as I'm concerned this was certainly the case this year with BTME.

The full programme of workshops and the conference started on Monday. The conference gave us a wonderful range of presentations with Billy McMillan the highlight for me. His presentation looked at how course management has changed and highlighted what makes greenkeepers so special. Commitment, passion and dedication were just some of those ingredients and it was covered in an excellent presentation which was sharp, witty and very moving at times.

Monday night and the conference dinner which was superb. After

dinner speaker Jimmy Bright was in side-splitting form, reeling off so many stories and gags and the top table were the brunt of many of Jimmy's jibes. Tuesday was back to the conference and another day packed with presentations. Kate Entwistle and Terry Buchen were my pick of the day and then it was time for the show.

Wednesday was keynote speaker day, always a highlight of the week. I vividly remember Frank Dick who was one of our first keynote speakers some years ago. I never thought I would see a better motivational presentation but it was eclipsed by Alvin Law.

His very powerful presentation 'No such word as can't' took us on a rollercoaster ride of emotions and experiences. His determination and will to succeed was a lesson to all of us and the standing ovation was inevitable and much deserved. I will remember this presentation for a very long time. I wasn't the only one in the audience found wiping a tear from my eye.

The seminar programme followed with many excellent presentations covering a wide range of topics from stress management to greens construction.

The show was bigger and better than ever and was very busy with much positive feedback from the stands that I visited. Wednesday also saw a glimpse into the works of our 'futures committee' during a presentation.

They have identified many areas of concern and are currently working hard to shape our association's future as well as outlining a directive into the concerns over education in the industry.

This was followed by the AGM which ran very efficiently and professionally and saw the Chairmanship pass from George Brown to Andy Campbell. Well done George for last year and good luck to Andy in his year in office.

Our Section's Past chairman Kerran Daly is now Vice Chairman and I am looking forward to being present when he becomes Chairman. The whole week was rounded off by the banquet and the sounds of 'Bootleg Abba' I didn't realise so many greenkeepers were Abba fans. We were treated to a collection of their greatest hits and the dance floor was packed all night. Another great night! I'm looking forward to next year already! Many thanks to all of our staff at HQ for all their hard work in making my week such an enjoyable one and hopefully there will be more faces from our section there next year.

If there is any news you want to include in next month's section notes then please contact me

Phone 01202 661106 mobile 07966 386232 email
a.mccombie@ntlworld.com

Until next month

Alex McCombie

Devon and Cornwall

Our January meeting, sponsored by Barenbrug, was held at Royal North Devon Golf Club on Wednesday, January 14. Just for a change, the weather was horrendous with gale force winds and driving rain. Despite the conditions, we still had an excellent turn out, with 64 members in attendance.

Twenty-four members braved the conditions and attempted to play golf. Thanks to David Singleton of Barenbrug for setting the golfers on their way at the 1st tee. The rest of us were escorted on the customary course walk by Head Greenkeeper, Mark Evans. Many thanks to Mark for keeping the course walk brief!

I would like to thank the secretary, Bob Fowler and RND GC for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities. I would also like to thank the catering and bar staff for an excellent lunch and refreshments, and Mark Evans and his staff for presenting the course in superb condition, despite the weather. I would also like to thank Barenbrug and David Singleton for their continued sponsorship of our Section.

After lunch, the prizes for the golf were presented by David Singleton. The competition was reduced to 12 holes and in third place was Justin Woods, from St Mellion, with 21 points; 2nd place went to home player,

Nicholas Moyse with 22 points, and the winner with 23 points was Gordon Tambllyn, from Mullion.

Our afternoon educational talk was presented by agronomist, Andy Cole, of PSD Agronomy. The talk entitled, Green Speeds, Myths and Misconceptions, was very informative and excellently put together using Powerpoint. Many thanks to Andy for a superb presentation. We really did appreciate you coming to our meeting, especially when you were moving house the following day! Please relay our apologies to your wife and daughters!

Our annual trip to BTME in Harrogate was another resounding success and a great time was had by all. A big thank you to Regional Administrator, Derek Farrington, and to all the staff at BIGGA HOUSE for their hard work. Also a big thank you to Stewart Ashworth, of Amenity Technology, for once again sponsoring the coach.

The Toro/Ransomes Jacobson Machinery Workshop will be held at Seale Hayne College, Newton Abbot on Monday, March 8.

Our Spring meeting will be held at Teignmouth Golf Club on Thursday, March 25 with guest speaker, Lawrence Pithie MG, Director of Maintenance with American Golf.

Details of the meetings should be with you before you read this. If not, please give me a ring on 01822 617671.

Steve Evans

South Wales

Creoso I pawb un waith eto. Hello to all of you once again.

Firstly, I would like on behalf of the SWS to welcome Andy Campbell as the new Chairman of BIGGA and wish him well on his year in office.

BIGGA were kindly invited to attend a tour, presented excellently, by Tony Horn of the Millenium Stadium, which was co hosted by Inturf and the IOG. The evening mainly concentrated on the pitch movement and installation ready for this year's Six Nations' Championship.

Those who attended would all agree that Tony has a lot of work on his hands. One of the more evident things that arose was the diversity of events that take place at the stadium – requiring good project management due to the tight deadlines – events that varied from rugby to football and motocross to music.

We would like to thanks Tony and Inturf for an excellent night and wish you well in the up coming internationals. (Tony has kindly offered anyone wanting to help him fork the field at half time in the up coming internationals, free tickets, lunch with the players after and free bar. Give him a ring on 00021 666 666).

Unless you are living in bubble you will know that Wales has been battered by the weather with severe flooding across the whole of the country. Hopefully it has not affected you that much and has enabled you to get winter works back on track

The BTME has come and gone and if you were lucky to attend, I hope you enjoyed it. I have heard that some upstanding figures of the South Welsh Section were seen having a serious discussion about one of Harrogate's fine beverages. The world famous Vodka Nipple jelly! It wasn't only the vodka that was jelly night.

A prediction

I am writing this on Feb 5, nine days before the Clans of Scotland descend on Cardiff to do battle against the Welsh team, I decided to make a prediction of the score, so by the time you read this it will be all over. The Score. Wales 29 Scotland 3 (which was awarded to them as a thank you for just turning up) .

Anyway that's it from me

P.S. With regard to my prediction, if I am way out on the score then blame Peter Lacey it was his idea. If I am close it was my idea, Cheers.

Editor's note: Well Wales didn't score as many as predicted and Scotland scored more. So there!

Cofion cynnes/Best Wishes

Kerry Jones

South West

In reference to last month's article, I am pleased to announce that Andy Boyce has been promoted to Course Manager here at Bath GC. I am sure we would all like to wish him every success for the future. Another recent appointment has been John Jarvis who is now the new Course Manager at Lansdown GC. Well done, John.

Education? Yes I am still going on about it. What I am aiming to do this year is give you a list of courses, venues and dates and not rely on waiting for sufficient numbers to ring in and then try and match dates up with everyone. So please support these courses, you should be receiving information shortly.

Finally just a quick note to all you Course Managers. If you need extra help in the coming summer months to cover holidays, sickness, maintenance or pre-tournament preparation, then I would be more than happy to offer my services on a daily basis.

Contact me on Tel: 01225 333928 Mob: 07812 380936.

Guy Woods

SOUTH EAST

London

Under New Management.

A rare occurrence indeed took place at Sandy Lodge GC in February. The London Section held a committee meeting. Under the direction of new Chairman, Rob Phillips, a Committee of eight gathered around the table to decide the best way to shake off their "sleeping giant" image. They have not made a bad start.

Golf days have been finalised for April 29 at Batchworth Park; July 22 at Sandy Lodge and the Turkey Trot will be held on December 1 at Ashridge. An educational day on IT is well into being arranged and very generous sponsorship has been agreed to give a substantial prize to the 'Golfer of the Year'. All Section Members will receive details and entry forms for the Golf Days in the near future.

Rob and his team, which include Paul Clark, Secretary, and David Badham, Treasurer, are determined to get the London Section back on its feet and would be delighted not only with a great turnout for the above dates but would welcome any suggestions from Section Members.

Derek Farrington

Surrey

The welcome paragraph this month starts with the arrival of Charlie George Fletcher, 8lb 5oz of bouncing baby boy and the first born of Pete and Jo.

Pete, Course Manager at Selsdon Park Hotel and Golf Club said the delivery was straight forward and only Aspirin was taken for the pain. Pete took this on arrival at the hospital with a glass of water. Congratulations from us all. Other arrivals to Surrey Section are Michael Merrick, the new Course Manager at Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club and John Biermont, Deputy at Tyrrells Wood Golf Club.

Clive Osgood is leaving Walton Heath Golf Club after over 30 years and is taking early retirement. I am sure that Clive will keep in touch with Surrey Section and we look forward to seeing him at our golf days. Ian McMillan leaves Queenwood GC to take up the position as Clive's successor and we wish him every success in his new challenge.

Brian Willmott

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Turftime Teaser, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. Entries to reach us no later than 19th March 2004. The first correct entry drawn will receive a fantastic fully thermal backpack hamper.

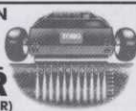
This competition is not open to BIGGA Staff or non-members.

The solution to the February Turftime Teaser was 'Barrelfield Construction'. The 5 lucky winners of the Padded Body Warmers, courtesy of Greenlink International & Rigby Taylor are Neil Fryer, Scott Smith, Mr J Attmere, Mr R J Evans, Malcolm Jervis. Well done to you all!

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- Relevant qualifications in greenkeeping, including PA1, PA2 and PA6 spraying certificates
- At least 7 years experience on links greenkeeping and construction, with at least 2 years as a deputy head greenkeeper
- A working knowledge of maintenance of modern golf course machinery and irrigation systems
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- Active golfer with a handicap of 12 or better

Closing date for applications: 31st March 2004.

Apply in writing, with CV to:

Mr Graham Ferguson Lacey, Castletown Golf Links, Fort Island, Derbyhaven, Isle of Man



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Require

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We need a Head Greenkeeper who will:

- Plan and deliver the highest standards of course seven days a week
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Please apply in writing with full CV to:

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The Course Manager, Lilley Brook Golf Club, Cirencester Road,
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Any enquiries please phone Matthew Coles on 07899 848 099.



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- Experience in the maintenance of USGA greens and tees
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- Experience in bringing a new course through the initial and vital 'grow in' phase
- Demonstrate a number of years in a similar position

Salary is negotiable depending upon experience.

Please apply in writing together with current CV to:

The Secretary, The Royal Ascot Golf Club, Winkfield Road,
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The Club is now under new ownership with plans to develop new facilities and make further improvements to the two championship courses designed by Jack Nicklaus. The successful candidates will be working at a club with a reputation for high standards and excellence providing great opportunities for personal development and training.

HEAD GREENKEEPER

Reporting to the Courses Manager the Head Greenkeeper will be responsible for the daily operation and management of the International Course.

The successful applicant will be a professional greenkeeper with the ability to train, motivate and supervise staff. Candidates must be proactive, flexible and hardworking, with good planning and organisational skills. A minimum of five years experience in all aspects of modern golf course maintenance is required, including management of USGA greens, together with PA1, PA2, PA6 and NVQ2 or equivalent.

This is a challenging 'hands on' role that offers the opportunity to develop technical and management skills at a large facility, using modern, progressive work practices.

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are seeking to recruit an individual with sound practical skills and experience, with a strong desire to learn and progress. Applicants should be hardworking, well motivated and be able to work successfully with a team approach.

Salaries will be based on experience and qualifications.

For an application form please telephone or
e-mail Frances Moore, Personnel Manager, 01474 875720, or frances@londongolf.co.uk
The London Golf Club, South Ash Manor Estate, Ash, Nr Brands Hatch, Kent TN15 7EN

Selsdon Park Hotel & Golf Course

This classic 4 star deluxe country house hotel with an 18 Hole Golf Course seeks experienced and dedicated team players in the following roles:

DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

Qualified to NVQ Level 3. Spraying Certificate PA 1, 2 & 6 and machinery experience preferred, but not essential.

GOLF SALES MANAGER

Previous experience in Golf Sales and Co-ordination required, this is an administrative role.

Our benefits package includes competitive salaries, flexible hours, free meals on duty, accommodation if required and excellent training.

Closing date for applications: Monday 31st March 2003

Send a full CV to:

Personnel Department, Selsdon Park Hotel & Golf Course,
Addington Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon, CR2 8YA
or email to selsdonpark.hr@principal-hotels.com

ABRIDGE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Require an

EXPERIENCED ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Qualified to Level 2 Standard Spraying Certificate an advantage.

Good rates of pay.

The successful candidate must be well motivated and be able to work as part of a team on a 40 year old woodland course.

Please apply in writing to:

Mr J Selwood - Course Manager, Abridge Golf & Country Club,
Epping Lane, Stapleford Tawney, Romford, Essex RM4 1ST

MONTROSE GOLF COURSES

Has a vacancy for an

EXPERIENCED GREENKEEPER / MECHANIC

Must have a sound Practical Knowledge of all types of Golf Course Machinery and Equipment.

Must be aware of current Health and Safety Requirements.

Salary commensurate with experience.

Closing date for applications 31st March 2004.

Applications in writing, including CV to:

Mrs M Stewart, Secretary, Montrose Links Trust,
Traill Drive, MONTROSE, Angus DD10 8SW

HILLINGDON GOLF CLUB

Require a

2ND IN CHARGE / HEAD GREENKEEPER

Hands-On person required as soon as possible for this 9 Hole Course.

Two other staff currently employed.

Salary negotiable dependent on experience.

Please telephone for more information
or apply in writing preferably with full CV to Captain/Secretary:

Hillingdon Golf Club, 18 Dorset Way, Hillingdon,
Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 0JR Tel: 01895 467062

SUTTON GREEN GOLF CLUB

Require an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are looking for an enthusiastic, hard working and reliable greenkeeper to join our existing team.

Applicants should have minimum of 3 years experience in modern greenkeeping.

Qualifications preferred.

No accommodation.

Applications with full C.V. to:

Nathan Kimsing, Head Greenkeeper, Sutton Green Golf Club,
New Lane, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7QP

THE ADDINGTON GOLF CLUB

Invites applicants for the post of

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

To join our professional team at this special golf course.

You will be qualified to NVQ2 and PA1, 2 and 6 would be an advantage.

Applications in writing with full C.V. to:

Mr R A R Hill, Secretary Manager, The Addington Golf Club,
205 Shirley Church Road, Croydon CR0 5AB

WESTON TURVILLE GOLF CLUB

Requires an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

We are looking for an enthusiastic self-motivated assistant greenkeeper to join our existing team.

Qualified to or working towards achieving NVQ Level 2.

Spraying Certificates would be an advantage.

Salary negotiable depending on age and experience.

Apply in writing with CV to Mr Nick Burchell, Head Greenkeeper

Weston Turville Golf Club, New Road,
Weston Turville, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5QT

Recruitment



EXPERIENCED DEPUTY HEAD GREENKEEPER

(Salary Negotiable)

AND

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPERS

(Experience preferred)

We are expanding our Greenkeeping Team following major refurbishment of the Championship Golf Course and Hotel. Accommodation may be provided.

Apply in writing, stating qualifications and previous experience to:
Mike Symons, Head Greenkeeper,
Bovey Castle, North Bovey,
Devon TQ13 8RE

OAKLAND PARK GOLF CLUB

Require a

1st ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Oakland Park is an attractive, family owned golf club located on the edge of the Chilterns.

The successful applicant should preferably be qualified or working towards NVQ Level 3 with PA1, 2 & 6 Spraying Certificates.

A sound knowledge of irrigation systems would be an advantage.

Salary negotiable depending on experience, no accommodation available.

Written applications with full CV by 21st March 2004 to:-

General Manager, Oakland Park Golf Club,
Threehouseholds, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4LW



MOORTOWN GOLF CLUB

Requires an

ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants will be enthusiastic, hard working and reliable, have good practical knowledge of machinery and its maintenance and be suitably qualified.

Salary is negotiable depending on experience.

Apply in writing with full CV to:

The Secretary, Moortown Golf Club,
Harrogate Road, Alwoodley, Leeds LS17 7DB

Canons Brook Golf Club

Require an

EXPERIENCED ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

You should be qualified to a minimum of NVQ 2 in Sports Turf Management.

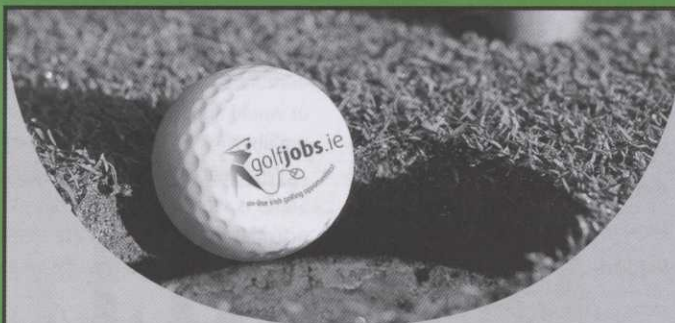
Spraying Certificates would be an advantage.

Please see our website for course details:
www.canonsbrook.com

We are committed to development and full training is available to the suitable candidate. Salary is based on experience and qualifications.

Applications please in writing with your CV to:

Mrs S Langton - Secretary/Manager, Canons Brook Golf Club, Elizabeth Way, Harlow, Essex CM19 5BE



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Feature listing from March 2002

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; Caldyc 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 Annuua - Jim Arthur

July 2002; Open preview; Turf; Steve Isaacss; 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

May 2003; Cardrona Golf & Country Club; Poa Annuua; Rough Mowers; Mole Control; Rootzone; Green Construction

June 2003; Irrigation; Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarships; Fertiliser; Fairway Mowers

July 2003; Irrigation Water; Greens Mowers; Bent Grasses; Course Management; Rakes

August 2003; Aeration; Open Review; Saltex Preview; Waste Water; Toro Student of the Year

September 2003; Hanbury Manor; Irrigation; Disease; Integrated Pest Management; Communication

October 2003; Construction Machinery; Pay Recommendations; Saltex Review; Pesticide Legislation; Finance

November 2003; Temple GC; Trees; Environment Competition Results; Sandy McDivot; Drainage

December 2003; BTME & ClubHouse Preview; Downfield GC; Compact Tractors; Architecture; Bio-tech

January 2004; Ipswich GC Profile; Grass Seed; Environment Competition Awards; Utility Vehicles (sit in)

February 2004; Harrogate Review 2004; Tyneside GC; Utility Vehicles (sit on); Irrigation



Overcoming Shared Challenges



San Diego in February certainly has its attractions, great climate, blue skies and a more than welcome family holiday that proceeded the GCSAA Conference and Show. From the comments of most visitors, including a number from the UK and Ireland, the GCSAA are definitely on a winner with this location.

While it was a great place in which to holiday, the second week of my trip brought with it a good dose of education and a round of meetings along with John Pemberton, with GCSAA, the Australian Superintendents Association and representatives of our Canadian counterparts.

The purpose of these meetings was to explore ways in which we can work together particularly in the area of education, to deliver better value to our respective memberships, in an efficient and financially prudent manner.

This should mean we can deliver educational opportunities to those who ordinarily would find it difficult to make the time to be away from the workplace or would find that to do so would be financially prohibitive.

While I accept that for some members the trip to the States is seen as something of a jolly, I can assure you our activities during the week are specific and measurable, as indeed they should always be when spending Association money.

The esteem in which BIGGA is held by others allows us a place at the table and we should continue to work with our allied associations around the world to better the lot of all Greenkeepers – it's indeed interesting to hear that regardless of different agronomics, much of the issues and challenges facing associations and their members are the same. Surely by working together we will overcome these challenges more quickly and thus be able to move on to the next stage of our development.

Back at Carden I have a hectic two weeks before my travels take me to Scotland for their National Conference, and then the following day to Nova Scotia for the Canadian Superintendents Conference and Show.

During that spell there is also a meeting to attend at the De Vere Belfry convened by the English Golf Union, with an impressive list of attendees from the world of golf, to discuss a vision for golf up to the year 2020 – in other words, our future and the means of attracting customers to ensure that future.

It's quite a challenge staying focussed on a fairly busy maintenance and capital programme at Carden, and at the same time recovering from jet lag! We have some bunker reconstruction underway as well as some

drainage work on the Cheshire and Nicklaus courses, together with a project to construct a new covered parking and maintenance area for our 80 strong cart fleet.

In the formal Gardens we are nearly finished with a refurbishment of steps and lawn edgings. Preparations are complete for the North Wales Section Seminar and by the time you read this 70+ people will have enjoyed another educational opportunity.

It's also nice to see some of the 10,000 newly planted spring flowering bulbs appear – a tough job for our gardeners but they seem to have got them all the right way up! Just when we see signs of the usual early false Spring, the Countryfile forecast warns of more snow on the way – but then it is only the last week in February.

One amusing story from one of our North Wales Section committee members. Last week his Chairman asked why he had left it so long before he had mowed the golf course. This on a course that had been mown virtually wall-to-wall in the middle of February – how we have moved on!

The above raises an interesting point - do you remember the days when Augusta National, The Masters and April brought thoughts of the sack? Now we face these pressures most of the year thanks to the superb coverage of Tournament Golf, by Sky TV and others.

The very fact that we have, in the main, coped with this raising of the bar, is cause to be proud. Take a moment to give yourselves a pat on the back, you deserve it – but don't linger in a self congratulatory state too long, for be sure, somebody, somewhere is continually raising the very same bar.

Footnote: Having just completed this column I have learned of Neil Thomas's death. I shall pay tribute to Neil in my next column but in the meantime I pass on my condolences to Neil's family and friends.

Andy Campbell
Chairman

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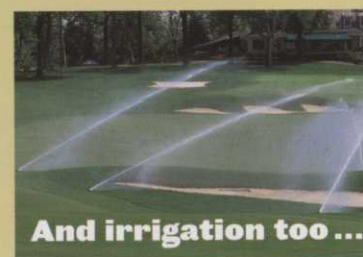
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