



Feature listing from April 2003

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

May 2003; Cardrona Golf & Country Club; Poa Annua; 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

March 2004; R&A Best Practice; Trentham Park GC; Drainage; Spraying

April 2004; Know your Rules; Tournament Preparation; Landmarks in Greenkeeping; Security

May 2004; Goodwood Club; Seed or Turf?; Biological Product Survey; Water Features; Recycling; BIGGA Environment Competition

June 2004; Fairy Rings; Biologicals; The Grove; Kubota Profile; Turf; Sand and Rootzone

July 2004; Royal Troon Open Preview; Mowing; Disease Analysis

August 2004; Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day; Open review; Royal Cinque Ports; Irrigation; Mowers (2); Saltex Preview; Best Practice; Top Dressing

September 2004; Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Preview; Ravensworth Golf Club; Turf Disease; Royal Holloway College; Tractors; The Greener Approach to Greenkeeping

October 2004; STRI 75th Anniversary; Kenwick Park GC; Ecology; John Deere National Team Championship; Best Practice; Top Dressing; Saltex Review; Aeration

November 2004; Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Final; The BIGGA National Championship; Comrie GC; CV Advice; Drainage; Construction; Fences

December 2004; BTME & ClubHouse Preview; Henley GC; Grass Identification; Trees; Environmental Winner; BIGGA Delegation; Interview Advice; College Listings

January 2005; Sir Michael Bonallack; Parkstone GC; Machinery Servicing; Ransomes Jacobsen Scholarship; Recycled Products; John Deere Team Championship; Tees; Negotiation Advice

February 2005; Harrogate 2005 Review; Meet the Chairman; Environmental Competition; Tyres; Coombe Hill GC

March 2005; Alwoodley GC; Difficult Areas; Drainage; Irrigation; Greens

The reduction in fungicides - a new dawn or a nail in the coffin for commercially viable golf?



Last month I talked about change and the need to embrace it. Nothing illustrates this need better than the current reduction in available fungicides. As a turf manager, one can bemoan their loss or alternatively, see this as a positive step towards sustainable swards providing economical golf played on traditional, hard wearing, dry firm surfaces based on indigenous grass species.

Having just returned from the South Coast seminar I feel very positively stimulated about the health of our profession when it can produce such high level debate to a full house. The dissertation from Ian Tomlinson about how he had converted Poa greens to fescue/bent greens after the ban on fungicides in Denmark, where he works, was inspiring and he must be congratulated on such an excellent piece of work, which he is willing to share with all.

His recipe for getting back to sustainable greens is creating much interest from the R&A, who have published their first of two articles on this in this magazine. For all Course Managers who have concerns about having Poa dominated greens with future restrictions on fungicides looming, it is well worth the read. His pictures of a Danish golf course with 100% fescue on all areas were extremely thought provoking.

It was also most encouraging to note the enthusiasm of all speakers for the current work being carried out by the R&A on their best practice website, www.bestcourseforgolf.org. The best practice now being advised encourages natural sustainable management practices based on fescue/bent swards. As an Association we very much welcome such initiatives and are happy to support the R&A in any way we can. Members can help by signing their clubs onto the site to join over 1000 clubs who have already done so. To have the leading industry body advocating sustainable environmental management of indigenous swards is of huge assistance to us as greenkeepers. We must congratulate the R&A for this positive initiative and I would recommend all to support it.

It seems to me that in this ever more increasingly commercial world there are two ways our industry can go. The one is based on single minded, autocratic leaders of the various bodies squaring up to each other like Tweedledum and Tweedledee to defend their own self interest. The other is based on leadership styles which are strong enough to allow for inclusion, cooperation and mutual support for the good of all.

This latter style is the more demanding and requires people with the conviction and determination to carry it through but it is surely the way forward. Open criticism of other bodies, whatever their perceived shortcomings, can only cause division, mistrust, suspicion and ultimately a slowing down of any progress for our own Association and the whole industry.

The GTC is a case in point. Five years ago, all interested parties were at loggerheads and it was going nowhere. Now, due to the mutual cooperation of BIGGA, the Home Unions, the R&A and with the help of the STRI we have a vibrant, thriving GTC. Under the respected leadership of David Golding, we now have secured funding, hundreds of trained assessors and have returned basic training back onto the golf

course where it belongs.

This has led to training becoming more affordable and more accessible to greenkeepers, something our own Association must strive to do more of. The GTC have even produced standardised learning materials which are solely dedicated to golf greenkeeping, totally related to the NVQ standards they are written to compliment and which extol the virtues of fescue and browntop bent as the grasses best suited for British golf courses. What a refreshing change from the mixed up confusion of previous years.

None of this would have happened without the mutual respect and cooperation between the various bodies. David Golding, Executive Director of the GTC, should be highly congratulated for achieving all of these positive outcomes. No one would claim that all is perfect at the GTC, nor at BIGGA for that matter, but we will only go forward and improve matters if we continue to support all interested parties in any way we can. We fully intend to do so.

As part of our inclusive philosophy, I recently attended the conference of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland at Limerick. Their hospitality was much appreciated and I am hopeful that we shall cooperate further to the benefit of both Associations. Our own Peter Wisbey gave two very interesting talks and Frank Ainsworth, a canny Scot working in Ireland, showed once again how fescue dominated greens can be achieved by application of the correct agronomic principles.

Frank had no worries about the removal of fungicides. On a parkland situation with lots of trees and with eight year old USGA specification greens, he has no need for them. It does beg the question about the future of our profession.

The restrictions on fungicides can be seen as an infringement of our civil liberties and freedom to choose but, much the same as 'seat belts' and 'alcohol limits', it would appear that sometimes restrictions need to be imposed upon us for the good of the nation and our own long term health.

If we do not want imposed restrictions and regulations then maybe we need to act a little more responsibly. As Robert Zimmerman ironically puts it:

'To live outside of the law you have to be honest'
Being honest, especially with oneself, is rarely a bad thing.

Kerran Daly
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