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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

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When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.



Welcome

SOME OF FOOTBALL'S PROFILE PLEASE!

Every two years I tend to question the decision my wife and I took some 16 years ago to move south for what at the time appeared better career prospects. Why every two years?

Well, I supposed I can trace it back to 1996 when "Football came Home", with the European Championships being played in the country I now call home. The excitement was palpable in every street, in every town. England were going to become European Champions! They played well but lost out on penalties in the semis.

Every two years since, England have been going to become World or European Champions on alternate two year cycles and the hype has grown and grown.

Now, we're there again and England, with or without Wayne, are going to become World Champions and everywhere you go you see cars festooned in St George flags, posters in windows and potbellied people wearing three lions on their shirt. Indeed you have to fight your way past St George inflatable hammers, fridges, frisbees, tee shirts and mugs to buy a tin of beans in the supermarket.

I often ask if I can buy a Scotland mini fridge or Scotland underpants to be met with a condescending smile from the shop assistant. Don't get me wrong, I'll admit there is a large amount of jealousy there, even if my own team has turned a corner and recently came home with some silverware, the prestigious Kirin Cup - "Scotland Win Trophy Shock". I just can't help feeling it's a little overdone and expectations are inflated to the extent that if England don't win - and only once have they not come up short - it must be someone's fault. A dodgy referee; the Hand of God; managerial incompetence; the lottery of a penalty shootout. Would it be heresy to admit that the opposition were just superior?

Having said all of the above wouldn't it be great if, just occasionally, golf could attract such an overwhelming place in the consciousness of the populous? Let's face it cricket managed it last year with the Ashes. If a new British golfing superstar were to emerge from an inner city housing estate and capture the hearts of the nation, golf would become hip overnight. At one fell swoop we would see kids swinging golf clubs in parks and putting along the pavements while posters of the new golfing hero would appear in the bedrooms of boys and girls alike.

Something similar did happen in the late '70s and early '80s with Seve Ballesteros, who was quickly followed by Bernhard Langer, Sandy Lyle, Nick Faldo and Ian Woosnam who won Majors and Ryder Cups. On the back of it came a huge golf explosion but that was over 20 years ago.

We could do with another popularity injection and for your clubs to have new golfers battering at the door demanding memberships. I'm sure there is much you could do with the larger budgets which would surely come your way.

I hope all BIGGA's English members enjoy the World Cup, but please remember the rest of us!

Scott MacCallum, Editor

NEW ASSISTANT EDITOR AT BIGGA

Melissa Toombs has joined BIGGA as Greenkeeper International's new Assistant Editor.

A graduate of the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, Melissa has a degree in Media Studies having previously studied at the University of Kent, in Canterbury, where she gained an HND in Media Production. Prior to this, she also achieved an Advanced GNVQ in Media Communications and an A Level in Sociology, at Canterbury College.

Melissa spent her formative years in Newington, near Sittingbourne, in Kent, having been born a little further north in Kettering.

Her journalistic career began at the Kent Regional Newspaper Group, where, among other things, she wrote theatre and travel reviews as well as covering football and cricket matches. Among her illustrious interviewees have been actor, Hugh Laurie, and actress, Brenda Blethyn,

She moved to Yorkshire recently with her boyfriend, Richard, himself a Sports Journalist, who joined the Press Association, in Howden.

A gym addict, Melissa is also a keen film goer and follower of current affairs.

"I'm delighted to be joining BIGGA and Greenkeeper International where I look forward to expanding my knowledge of golf and meeting many of the BIGGA members," said Melissa.



TURF GROWERS TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO ADDRESS WATER SHORTAGE

Members of the Turfgrass Growers Association (TGA) have united to address the drought problems which are likely to affect, not only themselves, but their customers too.

The association has formed a steering group to call for an exemption from any hosepipe ban for newly laid turf and to look at practical steps it can take to protect growers and reassure end-users.

"Although there are no current restrictions on water usage other than in the South-East, we recognise that water shortage is an issue which will affect everyone involved in the turf industry in the future. That's why we're taking proactive steps now to address it," commented TGA Chairman Stephen

Edwards. "In the short term, we're looking into the use of recycled water and water-retentive soil conditioners. In the longer term, growers are working with leading seed companies in the development of new, drought-resistant turf grasses which require less water both at the time of planting and throughout the life of the turfed area."

In the meantime, TGA members will be supporting and advising gardeners, landscapers, sportsturf managers and contractors who are buying and laying turf. A 10-point guide to choosing, storing and laying turf in dry weather is now available on the TGA website at www.turfgrass.co.uk.

NEW RECRUIT IN SALES



Marketing and exhibition professional, Lisa Rayson, has been contracted by BIGGA to work on Harrogate Week 2007.

Lisa, who has previously worked with Dunlop Slazenger, Nike and

Riley Snooker in the sports sector, is working within the existing sales team whose focus is to bring a new and broader appeal to the marketing and selling of BTME, Clubhouse and Continue to Learn.

"The strategy for 2007 is to bring a fresh impetus to Harrogate Week with a view to increasing the audience and exhibitor reach to include generic turf, sports and amenities alongside the traditional core interest of golf greenkeeping."

Lisa was inspired to work on behalf of the Association, by the desire to help develop an even greater awareness of the levels of professionalism, required in amenity turf management.

"The education programme, Continue To Learn, brings professionals together to create a forum of mutual respect. The exhibition is the UK's premier Turf Professional and Sports Club Management event and in 2007 we are broadening the product and service interests for a wider appeal to visitors and exhibitors at what is already a highly successful show," said Lisa.

CALLING ALL BUDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS!

A quick reminder that the BIGGA Photographic Competition closes at the end of June. This still leaves ample opportunity to snap your course in its spring finest.

Anyone wishing to enter should send their pictures to Scott MacCallum at BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO61 1UF or email them to scott@bigga.co.uk. The photographs should be in print, slide or disc format. Digital pictures should be at least 300psi and at least seven inches by nine inches in size.

Successful photographers will have their pictures selected for the 2007 BIGGA Calendar and the overall winner will receive a special prize. Happy snapping!

MANUFACTURER AND DEALER SPONSOR BIGGA REGIONAL FOOTBALL MATCH

Surrey and Sussex BIGGA Section's, recently played an eagerly awaited football match at Colliers Wood Football Club.

Sponsored by Grounds care equipment manufacturer, Ransomes Jacobsen and their local dealer, Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd, both teams arrived for the floodlit game with huge enthusiasm. Playing on a first class pitch, with hardly a blade of grass to cover the gravel, Surrey managed to establish a 3 - 0 lead by half time. Sussex failed to make a come

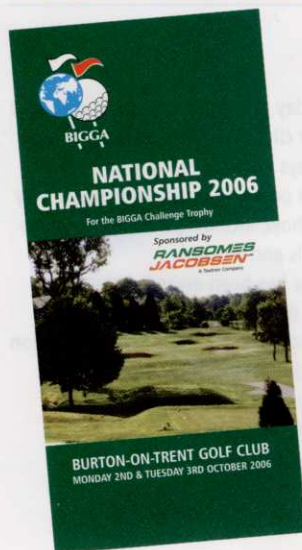
back in the second half while Surrey went on to score a further two goals winning 5-0.

It was a fun, if somewhat tiring evening for some of the not-so-fit players, but the bar takings showed a healthy profit. The Surrey team went home with an engraved trophy, courtesy of the sponsors, while the Sussex team eventually departed vowing to avenge their defeat as they climbed aboard their coach for the journey home.



Surrey (in white) and Sussex (in yellow) BIGGA Section's, looking rather tired after their grueling game!

BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



That time of year is upon us once again, when fellow greenkeepers and trade members play golf and socialise with old and new friends. Yes, you've guessed it, the BIGGA National Championship is back.

Sponsored by Ransomes Jacobsen, the two-day event will take place at Burton-on-Trent GC, Burton-upon-Trent on Monday, October 2 and Tuesday, October 3.

The main tournament for the Challenge Trophy will be played over 36 holes, medal play, with the best overall gross score producing the BIGGA National Champion.

Many members will be aiming to get their hands on the trophy this year, so expect some tough competition!

An information leaflet and entry form is included in this issue of Greenkeeper International. If you have not received this entry form in the magazine or require further information on the BIGGA National Championship please contact BIGGA HQ.

HANDING OVER THE REIGNS

One of the most respected personalities in UK turf production has retired. Derek Edwards of Inturf, who started his career in horticulture 40 years ago, plans "a little consultancy



and a lot of relaxation" after handing over the reigns to his twin sons Alex and Stephen, in 2003.

"I started as a glass house manager growing cut flowers, then moved to PBI to develop and test new chemicals and worked in sports turf irrigation throughout the world, before finally moving into turf grass production and establishing Inturf in 1985," said Derek.

Over the years Inturf has developed a reputation for innovation in the production, distribution and installation of its turfgrass products.

"We took the lead in establishing the Turfgrass Growers Association to help drive standards in the industry up - and I am proud to have been its first Chairman," claimed Derek.

In the early years of the business its focus was almost entirely on sports turf, forging long-term relationships with just about every premiership football club - the FA itself for Wembley, Lord's Cricket Ground, The All England Lawn Tennis Club, and most of the UK's leading golf courses. The company's activities have also extended overseas with contracts throughout Europe and the Middle East.

"I can look back on a lot of success and a lot of fun. The best thing though is that I believe strongly that, for Inturf, the best is yet to come."

FOREST HILLS APPOINTS NEW GREENKEEPER

Richard Evison, has recently been appointed Head Greenkeeper, at Forest Hills Golf Club, Botcheston, Leicestershire.

Richard, 30, began his greenkeeping career in 1992, when he joined Sherwood Forest Golf Club on a YTS. Richard was no stranger to the industry, he became interested at an early age, mainly because his dad, John Evison, was Head Greenkeeper at Gainsborough Golf Club.

Richard brings over 14 years greenkeeping experience with him to Forest Hill Golf Club and is looking forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

NGCCA BACKS CALLS TO CHANGE RIGHT-TO-ROAM LEGISLATION



National Secretary for the NGCAA, Michael Shaw, wants designated access points for non-golfers

The National Golf Clubs' Advisory Association (NGCAA) is backing the Scottish Golf Union's (SGU) call to change the right-of-way legislation.

Since the 2003 Land Reform Act was passed, ramblers have had enhanced rights-of-way across Scotland's courses,

a change in the legislation will endorse that non-golfers stick to footpaths and off course fairways and greens.

National Secretary for the NGCAA, Michael Shaw, comments: "There are many health and safety issues associated with giving unrestricted access to non-golfers, not least the risk of serious injury caused by a golf ball being mis-hit or driven off line. There are other issues including the potential for serious damage being done to the course, which could cause a person to trip or fall and for example, the unpleasant issue of dog mess left behind by irresponsible dog walkers - a known health and safety issue."

The NGCAA is in agreement with the SGU and proposes that non-golfer access is managed, rather than completely restricted. Shaw continues: "Designated access points for non-golfers should be determined and safe pathways clearly marked. Simple measures such as these would enhance safety for both golfers and non-golfers."

The NGCAA aims to reduce the risk of needless accidents and to continue to attract golfers to Scotland's courses.

TOP DRESSER FOR SPEED AND EFFICIENCY

Opened in 1993, Wharton Park is a high quality, 18-hole championship length golf course, constructed to USGA standards and situated in a parkland setting within the rolling Worcestershire countryside.

Course Manager, Neill Smith has recently taken delivery of a Turfco WideSpin top dresser, mounted onto a Cushman Turf Truckster, to aid his turf maintenance regime at the Club.

Graham Willetts, a Director at Wharton Park, who works closely with Neill on all greenkeeping matters said: "our previous machine wasn't the spinner-type, which resulted in large quantities of sand being deposited on the greens and sometimes they were out of play for as much as a week! On Neill's recommendation

we have gone for the little and often approach and the WideSpin allows us to do this. It can put down anything from a fine dusting, to a really heavy application. With the little and often approach, our golfers don't really notice that we've top-dressed! We now have the flexibility to get out on the course as and when we want to - quickly and with minimum disruption."



JCB GROUNDHOG TEES OFF AT TOP SCOTTISH GOLFING VENUE

The new JCB Groundhog is now a familiar sight on the fairways of the Strathpeffer Spa Golf Course, situated in the Scottish Highlands. It is one of the first JCB Groundhog utility vehicles to be delivered and sales of the latest addition to the range have really taken off.

The challenging landscape of the 40 hectare, Strathpeffer, is no problem for the yellow and black newcomer.

Head Greenkeeper Mike Wilson said: "We evaluated the JCB against the competition and we were immediately impressed by the performance and agility of this rugged utility vehicle. The JCB Groundhog was the most suited to our golf course.

It was the easiest and most comfortable to drive and has the performance to tackle all our terrain."

The keys were handed over by JCB Groundcare dealer, Frank Nicol Farm and Garden Machinery Sales Director, David Nicol, who said: "We're delighted with the reception the JCB Groundhog has received. It's proving a tough and versatile vehicle, which our customers in the Highlands demand."

The JCB Groundhog is designed for the grounds care industry with features that include four wheel drive and high flotation tyres, to give the vehicle excellent traction for transporting loads in remote or rough ground locations.

PLUMPTON COLLEGE OPEN DAY

Twelve thousand visitors flocked to Plumpton College, Sussex, last Saturday, for what turned out to be one of their most successful Open Days to date. This specialist land-based college, covers a wide range of courses including Greenkeeping and Sportsturf Management, from entry level to degree.

Set in a 700 hectare estate, at the foot of the picturesque South Downs, many visitors were keen to participate in guided walks, including the beautiful bluebell woodland, around the College estate. Garden lovers enjoyed the attractively landscaped grounds and colourful horticultural displays, while those with a sporting interest enjoyed the outdoor sports



Visitors to Plumpton College were impressed by the Open Day's machinery displays

displays, including clay pigeon shooting and a chance to try out a canoe or climb the climbing wall.

Machinery displays received many admirers, as they enthused at the powerful agricultural machinery and equipment on show, including tractors, combine harvesters, seed drills and mowers.

Plumpton College has been awarded status as a Centre of Excellence (CoVE) for Rural Business Management Training as well as Sport and Recreation and Horticultural Technologies. It has also received accreditation as Action for Business College. For further details on the wide range of Land-based courses at Plumpton College you can visit the website: www.plumpton.ac.uk, telephone: 01273 890454 or email: enquiries@plumpton.ac.uk

BIGGA's Fantastic Outdoor Range

BIGGA currently have a great stock of outdoor clothing at fantastically low prices for all of its members. BIGGA's new range includes jackets, fleeces, trousers and waterproof suits. All products are available in numerous sizes and colours and can be purchased by contacting Rachael Duffy on 01347 833800 at BIGGA HQ.

1. The Highlander Cargo Suit is the whole package. The suit features a coated micro fibre shell and waterproof breathable lining, with two cargo style pockets, plus two pockets on the trousers. The suit comes in M, L, XL & XXL. £55



**PHONE
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to
order!**

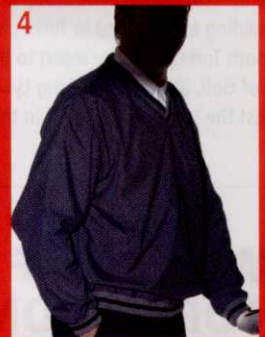


2. The Tour Suit, which comes in either a Weatherbeater or Full Zipper style (pictured), has a waterproof outer fabric, which is fully lined. The Weatherbeater jacket is a short zipped pullover style with two pockets and has an adjustable draw cord waist. It also contains zip off half sleeves. The trousers come with a three pocket styling. The Full Zipper version comes with a full length covered zipper on the jacket and the trousers have velcro adjustable bottoms. Jacket size ranges from S - XXL and the trousers come in 27", 29", 31" & 33". The suits come in a choice of colours. £130



3. This does exactly what it says on the tin. The Four Seasons Breaker is just that, perfect to wear all year round. This item is a multi option pullover style top with a short zip and elasticated draw cord. This breaker zips off in two places to create three different garments, full sleeve, 1/2 sleeve or a sleeveless top. Available in a multitude of colours and sizes. £26

4. When it blows, it really does blow and the Windbreaker ensures that you don't feel any of the resulting chill. This stylish top features a soft Teflon coated microfibre outer coat and is a pullover style, with high v-neck and two side pockets. It comes in navy, black or charcoal. Sizes S - XXL. £25



5&6. This top, which is Teflon coated and contains a soft waterproof breathable lining system, comes in two different styles. The Sport Weatherbeater (5) has an adjustable draw cord and is a short zipped pullover style. The Sports Jacket (6) is a blouson style with a full covered zip. Both come in a variety of colours and sizes are available from S - XXL. £42

7. The Reversible Waistcoat has two pockets both sides, is fully reversible and has an adjustable elasticised draw cord. Teflon coated, this top comes in black and grey or navy and stone (as pictured), with sizes ranging from M - XXL. £22.50

8 The Gear Crew Neck Fleece is ideal for work and play, is fashionable and practical. Available in S, M and L. Colours red, navy and grey. £22

9. If you truly want to be protected from all the elements then look no further than the Outerwear Jacket. This strong jacket is a acrylic coated waterproof, has a full zip with storm flap, and concealed hood. £40



10. These smart, yet tough, polo shirts are made with a fabric that actively pulls moisture away from the skin by rapid evaporation. The Dry Gear shirt is just £16 and is available in white, with either blue, green or red collar trim. The Nailshead polo shirt is moderately priced at £19.50.



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LYKIAGOLF TO OPEN IN TURKEY

Located on the beautiful coastline of Turkey, Antalya, this will be the first LykiaGolf Course in the country.

Due to open in May 2007, LykiaGolf will have two courses built on a 100 hectare site. The 18 hole Championship Course will be 6527 metres long and have a par of 72 and the 9 hole Academy course will be 1254 metres long and have a par of 27. Both courses are designed by Perry Dye who, along with his father, has designed over 300 golf courses worldwide. There will be no water hazards on the Championship course but on the short Academy course hole 7 will have an island green. The Championship course will have Links style bunkering and big waste bunkers.

LykiaGolf will be situated near the River Köprüçay, alongside the Mediterranean coast, its neighbour will be its sister resort, LykiaWorld Antalya which will compliment the golf club, where golfers and holidaymakers alike, can stay and use the facilities. LykiaWorld Antalya will be very similar to LykiaWorld Ölüdeniz, offering its Children's Paradise Island, Lake Bungalow's Island and Spa Island.

Attila Silahatoglu, Board Member of LykiaGroup and in charge of the LykiaGolf project said: "This is a huge investment for LykiaGroup and by designing and building a world first in Turkey, we want to push both Turkey and the resort to the top in the world of Golf, as well as placing LykiaGroup amongst the leaders in tourism in this country."

A WEALTH OF INFORMATION

DLF Trifolium's recently launched website, has been generating plenty of interest. The website provides a wealth of information, such as: up to date news items and recently launched initiatives, as well as specific technical information.

Pro Range and Johnsons Sport and Amenity, can be found in the well illustrated Amenity section, where you can view a comprehensive range of grass seed mixtures to meet all your needs. Also available on this site, is a range of wild flower seed mixtures and other products, such as hydraseeding and fertilisers.

See for yourself! Visit www.dlf.co.uk.



WOOSIE GETS TO GRIPS WITH THE GREEN

European Ryder Cup Team Captain, Ian Woosnam, is aiming to lead Europe to a third successive victory over the USA, when the 36th Ryder Cup takes place at The K Club in September.

Looking to inspire his team both on and off the course, eight-time Ryder Cup player, Woosie, is now fine-tuning his own short game on his newly refurbished Huxley all-weather practice green.

Installed originally by Huxley Golf in early 2001, the 1,500 sq ft practice green has seen long hours of use over the past five years, as Woosie worked on his putting and pitching strokes. Following the announcement last year that he is to captain the 2006 European Team, Woosie, decided to have his Huxley practice putting green restored to peak

condition well ahead of this year's Ryder Cup matches.

"The Huxley surface looks and plays just like a really top-class tournament green," he said. "It's been of huge benefit in allowing me to practise my short game at home without having to worry about maintenance."

However, after five years of constant use, the all-weather surface needed a service and Woosie asked Huxley Golf to give the green "a birthday".

Carried out over two days earlier this year the refurbishment has restored the green, close to its original condition, producing a ball speed of around 9 on the stimpmeter.

LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT

Golf-related environmental issues are to be addressed, in a new European initiative, announced at The European Tour headquarters, Wentworth.

Golf Environment Europe (GEE), has been formed by the Trustees of the European Foundation for Golf and Environment (formerly the Committed to Green Foundation). The program of GEE's activities, will be led by the European Forum for Golf and Environment - a partnership of golfing and environmental organisations.

Jonathan Smith, Chief Executive of Golf Environment Europe, commented: "This is another important step forward for golf in Europe. The initiative represents golfing and environmental organisations working together. We now have a formal European interface between the golfing and environmental sectors."

GEE builds upon over 10 years of golf environment program development from the Committed to Green Foundation. Forthcoming projects include: the launch of the website - www.golfenvironmenteurope.org, the organisation's environmental information centre, the re-launch of the former Committed to Green environmental management system for golf courses



and the launch of a program that will enable new golf course developments to register and be certified, for properly integrating environmental issues, into their planning, design and construction.

George O'Grady, Executive Director of the European Tour, added his support, saying: "The European Tour has worked closely with the Committed to Green Foundation for many years. We are keen to continue to support Golf Environment Europe, alongside a number of other golf organisations and demonstrate that golf can address a number of important environmental issues...after all, part of the enjoyment of golf is to be outside in a clean environment close to nature."

ETT'S DAY OUT AT THE REEBOK

Sam Allardyce, Manager of Bolton Wanderers, recently received an Investors in People award. Presented by Richard Lawrence, Managing Director of ETT, Sam received the award at a Premier League match.

The presentation took place on the pitch and was the highlight of the ETT team's day. Also at the presentation was Richard Norton, Head

Groundsman at the Reebok, who has worked with ETT for a number of years and despite often difficult conditions, has produced consistently excellent facilities. Roy Winter of Business Link who had advised ETT on the procedure of attaining the Investors in People award was also present as the guest of ETT.

UNDER THE SURFACE



A unique research program, investigating the benefits of using the Verti-Drain on sports turf, could not have been completed without the long-term support of Redexim Charterhouse. Redexim initiated a three-year study on the subject - one on which little scientific data had previously been available.

Dr Alan Gange and Dr Don McGregor, of Royal Holloway College, investigated the effect of deep tine aeration, using the Verti-Drain on microbial communities in sports turf. Their summary of findings were presented at the College to an invited audience of turf professionals.

"Compaction is perhaps the most common cause of turf health problems, yet is among the most serious. A golf course may have to withstand as many as 100,000 rounds of play per year," said Dr Gange. "A football pitch might experience 250,000 studded boot imprints per year, equating to 4,200 imprints per square metre in a season."

Left untreated compacted and poorly draining soil would suffer from reduced oxygen content and lower levels of water and beneficial microbes, including helpful bacteria and fungi. This would adversely affect root growth and the health of the grass plants, and could lead to anaerobic 'black layer' conditions. By letting air back into the soil, deep aeration (using the Verti-Drain) encouraged microbial activity, invigorated the roots and increased disease resistance. This would then cause

less fertiliser to be required and the tolerance of drought would be enhanced.

Dr McGregor explained how the project had involved detailed aeration trials using a Verti-Drain on two clay-based football pitches at Royal Holloway and on sand-based greens at Liphook Golf Course in Hampshire.

The assistance from Redexim Charterhouse, enabled the researchers to use cutting-edge technology in the form of modern phospho

lipid fatty acid analysis (PLFA) equipment. This quantified the effects of Verti-Drain aeration on microbial communities. Tests were also carried out for soil strength and carbon dioxide levels.

Dr McGregor said that there had been a clear reduction in compaction on those areas that had been treated with the Verti-Drain. He also found that there was a marked improvement in levels of beneficial bacteria on areas aerated using the Verti-Drain during every season of the year.

Dr's Gange and McGregor, have helped Redexim Charterhouse produce a 'best practice' guide derived from their research, explaining the correlation between Verti-Drain aeration and soil health. Entitled 'Beneath The Surface', the guide is targeted at all turf professionals and available free from Charterhouse Turf Machinery Ltd.

"We are very grateful to Redexim Charterhouse for their invaluable interest and support," said Dr Alan Gange. "They have supplied essential equipment and technical backup needed for the trial procedures."

Philip Threadgold, Managing Director of Charterhouse Turf Machinery, the UK distributor of the Verti-Drain, believes the research has taken a major step forward. "This is a terrific piece of work that quantifies the huge benefits that use of the Verti-Drain brings. It will be invaluable to greenkeepers and groundsmen at all levels. We are proud to have played a part in this research."

NEW LDCA WEBSITE HITS ANOTHER LEVEL

The Land Drainage Contractors Association (LDCA), aims to increase awareness of its services through the launch of a new user-friendly website.

From July 1, the site will be packed with useful information relating to land drainage, sports turf drainage and water management, which will be even easier for visitors to access.

"Our aim is to provide sports providers and local authorities with key information," said Bruce Brockway, Secretary of the LDCA.

"Rather than just providing a list of members, if a club wants to undertake drainage of a golf course or football pitch, or slitting, or sand banding, they can source the information by category of work, or

the region of the country they want the company to work in."

The first three items coming on stream are: increased classifications for contractors, manufacturers and suppliers, together with their contact details; technical specification standards required for lottery funding, with appropriate paid-for documentation which is downloadable from the website; and a regularly updated news-page for those who want to keep in touch with developments, within the drainage industry.

For further information please visit: www.ldca.org or email secretary@ldca.org, alternatively phone 01327 263264.

BSH APPOINTS NEW TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR SCOTLAND AND THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND

British Seed Houses have a new addition to their team of technical advisors. Alistair Eccles, has been appointed to cover Scotland and the North East of England.

Alistair has worked within the agrochemical industry for 18 years, spending the last decade as an agronomist. He is BASIS registered and lives in Perth.

"Alistair's previous experience and technical ability adds another dimension to the advice available from our dedicated sales team," said Amenity Development Director, Simon Taylor.

Alistair can be contacted on 07887 578802 or by email at alistair.eccles@britishseedhouses.com.

CHANGES ARE AFOOT



Hayter, makers of Golf-grass cutting equipment, have announced changes to their sales team.

John Quinton has been appointed Territory Manager, for Wales and the South West of England. Robin

Boyes, who as UK Sales Manager had also been covering Wales and the south west area, will now take on the responsibility of national accounts. These changes are with immediate effect.

Born in Zimbabwe, John Quinton came to study agricultural engineering at Harper Adams University College, shortly after leaving school. After completion of his studies, he worked in the UK as a design engineer but went back to Zimbabwe to work on the family farm. Upon returning to England he joined Glendale before ultimately joining Hayter.

"We are delighted that John is joining us. With his engineering background and comprehensive knowledge of the industry he will be able to lend considerable support to his dealers to promote the Hayter range of products," said David Sturges, Sales and Marketing Director.

"His appointment will allow Robin Boyes to take on national accounts and to spend more time working with our UK dealers to develop their Hayter business," he added.

GTC News



As the GTC welcomes Nick Bisset to the Chair of its Technical Committee, David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, reflects on their long-term association in the sector and how they both feel effective communication is so vital, in today's competitive world of the golf business.

My first dealings with Nick, were while he was working as a turf lecturer at Askham Bryan College, near York and in his spare time he was administering a GTC, without funding. I was a greenkeeper, having completed an apprenticeship which was achieved by working three years on a golf course and towards the end of the term, a week at Bingley, as we affectionately called the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI).

Oh how times have changed! Nick has now retired from full-time college work but I am pleased to say (with his wife Pat's permission), he is still involved with the sector and his experience will prove invaluable to the GTC and me.

The GTC enjoys funding from the English, Scottish, Welsh Golf Unions, BIGGA, R&A and PGA European Tour and this has allowed for full time administration, to make the progress that Nick was planning for back in the late 70's and early 80's.

As for me, yes, I am proud of the fact that from an apprentice, back in the days of walking behind that damn overgreen mower, at Buxton & High Peak Golf Club, I can now front the sector to ensure greenkeepers and golf club employers can all access education and training, guaranteeing a better working and playing environment.

Having spent enough time reminiscing, one thing I have learned through life, is that you are only as good as the team around you.

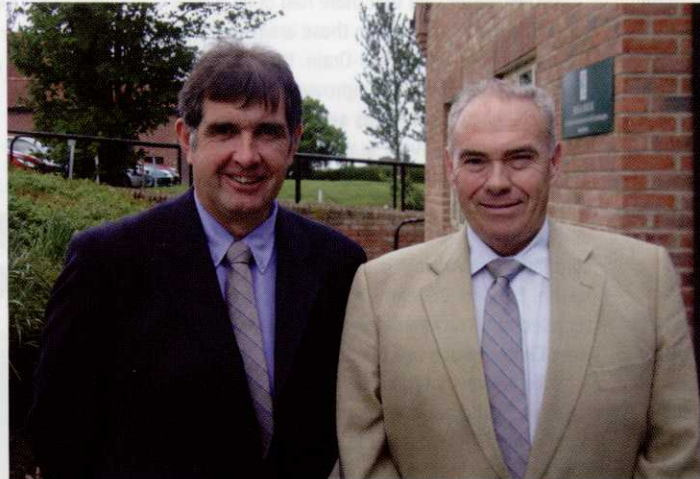
I firmly believe, that if golf clubs adopt a team spirit within the club from the owner or committee, then everybody stands to gain.

Throughout all greenkeeper qualifications, communication skills are featured, as well as the more technical aspects of the awards.

The R&A's now dated but still relevant "Way Forward" guidance document highlighted the importance of good communications throughout golf clubs and BIGGA are forever promoting the subject and arranging courses to help greenkeepers become more confident in communicating with colleagues and their employers.

The GTC through its Board and technical committees are always looking to how we can encourage golf clubs to adopt more of a team approach to the day to day running of the facility.

We know that there are more and more golf clubs looking to recruit competent Secretaries/General Managers, Professional Golfers, Catering Managers and



David Golding, left, and Nick Bisset

of course a Golf Course Manager, to ensure the services to the customers are to a standard that makes members content and not looking to move elsewhere and that visitors want to play their course and enjoy the facilities.

The GTC is aware of how the greenkeepers are very passionate about "their" golf course but we are also ensuring that they must be aware of the "bigger picture" and are actively promoting, through training, the importance of promoting the team approach, both within the greenkeeping team and also the club management personnel.

All the current discussions relating to sustainability in golf course maintenance and management, can only be achieved if there is a team commitment.

Yes, Course Managers can influence Course Policy Documents, Health & Safety and Environmental policies but it is for employers to promote a team culture within the whole facility.

The GTC will continue to raise this culture within greenkeeper education and training, however, everybody involved in the management of golf clubs has a duty to encourage an environment conducive to a pleasant, effective and efficient golf club.

Many greenkeepers who attended Askham Bryan College or the very early BIGGA Management Courses, when Nick presented his unique training session on communication skills, will ever forget just how much importance was put on presentation!

I for one, am looking forward to working closely with Nick and I know the GTC will benefit from his enthusiasm and experience.

GTC is supported by:





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

For details, please contact Ken Richardson on 01347 833800 or via ken@bigga.co.uk

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Education Update

Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager, gives us an insight into Harrogate Week 2007.

Over 1500 delegates attended education sessions throughout Harrogate Week 2006, and Continue to Learn 2007, looks set to provide you with even more opportunities to expand on your knowledge and skills.



Ken and Sami have been busy collating feed back from Harrogate Week 2006, to design an even more extensive, Continue to Learn Education Programme, for Harrogate Week 2007. The Continue to Learn programme at Harrogate Week 2006, supported by the GTC, broke all records with three times more education on offer. Delegates numbers also broke records with more than 1500 attending education sessions throughout the week.

Continue to Learn 2007, will contain even more opportunities for you to attend an educational session to help develop your knowledge and skills. The programme will include five more two-day workshops; four more one-day workshops; extra seminars and a range of 'fringe events'. We have also looked at the cost of education events and we are planning to offer discounts for quantity ie. the more sessions you buy, the cheaper they get.



There will be two Harrogate Week programmes for 2007, one aimed at greenkeepers, groundsman and their managers and a second aimed at golf and sports club officials.

The R&A has agreed to be involved in Continue to Learn 2007 and they will be running a one-day Workshop and a one-hour Seminar on Sustainable Golf.

Please note that BIGGA will not be booking accommodation for Harrogate Week 2007 therefore you should use our Accommodation Booking Agents –

Reservation Highway. You can use their web-site www.reservation-highway.co.uk (password bigga) to book you accommodation. Please remember to ask for January 2007. Reservation Highway can be contacted by phone on 01423 525577.

BIGGA Education and Training Manual

The BIGGA Education and Training Manual has been available through the BIGGA web-site Members area, since early April. The Manual has been designed to give golf course and golf club managers the information they need to recruit, train and develop their staff. It is designed in three main parts:

- **Text** - that gives you information on 'why and how'
- **Video** - that supports the text and is a useful recruiting tool
- **Sub-text** - that provides a wide range of downloadable documents and hyper links to other relevant web-sites

For those members who do not have internet access, do not like using internet based products or would rather read hard copy, we are looking at producing a hard copy/CD version of the Manual. The hard copy version will cost approximately £30.

Health and Safety

BIGGA and the AGCS are continuing to cooperate in producing an internet based, Example Health and Safety Management System. The System should be available later this year/early 2007.

It is not easy to obtain information on accidents, incidents or near misses on golf courses, or within golf clubs and we would appreciate your help in gathering some data.

If you have had an accident or been involved in a near miss, no matter how minor, then please let us know by sending the details to ken@bigga.co.uk We shall then produce a data base to store and analyse the information ready to publish it to our members.

Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 73 new members to the Association and talk about the car breakdown cover available to members.

Competitive Car Breakdown Cover

BIGGA members have access to a competitive car breakdown package from Europ Assistance. The package covers your vehicle and is remarkably good value for money, as you can see from the table.

There are three levels of cover to choose from so all budgets and requirements are catered for:

The first level is Roadside Assistance and this covers you for incidents occurring at least one mile from home, it includes one hour of roadside labour and transportation to the nearest repairer. Roadside Assistance is available for £19.04.

National Recovery and Doorstep is the next level of cover and this includes everything in the roadside assistance package, as well as cover for incidents within one mile or at the owners home and, if your car cannot be repaired at the roadside - can get you home, to your original destination or a repairer of your choice. You are also covered for 24 hour car rental or overnight accommodation up to £100 if necessary. National Recovery and Doorstep is available for £44.95.

Finally National Recovery, Doorstep and European includes everything in the last two packages, as well as European Cover for trips of no more than 31 days. This is priced at £63.66.

For more detailed policy information or to purchase cover please call 01603 828255 and quote BIGGA.



Price Comparison Table

	Europ Assistance ⁺	AA [*]	RAC [*]
Roadside Assistance	£19.04	£56.00	£43.00
National Recovery and Doorstep	£44.95	£185.00	£157.00
National Recovery, Doorstep and European	£63.66	Ring to obtain quote	

^{*}Prices quoted are for the nearest equivalent cover and do not include internet discounts.

⁺Prices quoted are for cars up to 9 years old. For older cars please call 01603 828255 for a quote.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BIGGA National Tournament

Burton on Trent Golf Club2nd & 3rd October

Scottish National Tournament

Leven Links22nd June

Golf Management Trophy

Northern Region

Sandiway Golf Club11th July

Hornsea Golf Club2nd August

Midland Region

Verulam Golf Club27th July

Boston Golf Club9th August

South West Section

Minchinhampton Golf Club14th July

South Coast Section

Moors Valley Golf Club26th July

South Wales Section

Neath Golf Club27th July

Contact your Regional Administrator for more information

JUNE'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 £10 Music Voucher. Our congratulations go to Nathan Kimsing of Sutton Green Golf Club, who wins a Digital FM Scan Radio/Alarm.



BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Samuel Bothwell, West Scotland
Fraser Downie, North Scotland
Mark Gillies, East Scotland
Mark Halliday, West Scotland
Craig Jowett, Central Scotland
Jamie Mcelroy, Central Scotland
Blair Middleton, North Scotland
Ryan Queen, Central Scotland
Harry Rae, North Scotland
Edward Ralph, North Scotland
Matthew Smith, North Scotland
Terry Smith, West Scotland
Richard Sweeney, North Scotland
Gavin Watson, Central Scotland
Ian White, North Scotland
Steven Wilson, West Scotland

NORTHERN REGION

Daniel Butterfield, North West
Derek Chew, Northern
Morgan Flack, Northern
Robert Hancock, Cleveland
Paul Harvey, North West
David Hazlehurst, North Wales
Derek Jones, North Wales
Paul McFerran, North West
Stephen Pope, Sheffield
George Senior, North West
Alan Smith, North East
Scott Wheatcroft, Northern
David Jones, BB&O
Alan Mitchell, BB&O
Matthew Morris, Midland
Geoffrey Palmer, East Midland

MIDLAND REGION

Simon Tunn, Mid Anglia
Martyn Turbayne, BB&O
Robert Bond, London

SOUTH EAST REGION

Steven Cooper, Surrey
Paul Cox, Sussex
Roger Dobson, Sussex
Samuel Fromage, Kent
Graham Gardner, Surrey
Matthew Gray, Kent
Michael Haig, Surrey
Ben Jacques, Surrey
Paul Keen, London
Matthew Le Brun, East Anglia
Michael Muldoon, Sussex
Shane Plummer, Surrey
James Radford, Sussex
Hugh Sandeman, Sussex
Jamie Williams, Kent
Mark Cox, Sussex

SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES REGION

Alastair Cummins, Devon & Cornwall
Chadwick James, South Wales
Anthony Large, South Coast
Rhys McDonagh, South Wales
Robert Powell, South Wales
David Roberts, South Wales
Leslie Uniacke, South Coast
Steven White, South West

NORTHERN IRELAND

Trevor Andrews
William McCann
James Paterson

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

Andrew Fillery, Norway
James Evans, USA

STUDENT MEMBERS

Christopher Cobb, North West
Sebastian Doca, London

CORPORATE MEMBERS

Paul Currie, West Scotland
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Yvonne Park, West Scotland
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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.

Letters

Riders for Health

I am currently Golf Course Manager, for Chichester Golf Club, a 45-hole facility in West Sussex.

The reason for contacting you, was to inquire if anyone would be interested in supporting me in a charity event, this coming November.

I am a keen motorcyclist (my pressure release from work!) and I have been fortunate enough to secure a ride in "Enduro Africa" this November - this event is only available to 100 riders worldwide. I have attached some details of the event, but in a nutshell I have committed to raising £4500 for the charity "Riders for Health", the money I raise buys a trail bike that I will use on the 14 day rally around South Africa, I will then have the satisfaction of handing the bike over to a local African support worker, enabling them to deliver much needed medical aid and support to the remote communities. More details can be seen at www.enduroafrica.com - a link from this site will take you to the Riders charity site.

Many of my suppliers at work have already helped with donations and so far I have raised £1500. My £4500 will be paid to the charity in August, so they can purchase the bikes and start training the aid workers - so between now and then I am pushing to raise as much money as possible - any support Bigga or the magazine could give me, would be very welcome.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. If you require any more information I can be contacted at darrenjohnhomer@aol.com / mobile 07860748830 / home 01243780245 anytime.

Darren Homer



Free Legal Advice

I wanted to write to thank BIGGA so much, for the free legal advice service you offered me as a member of the Association.

For almost a year now I have been in dispute over issues relating to a previous employer - but the matter was concluded successfully for me with an agreed settlement during a recent tribunal.

I could honestly never have got to this stage, had I not been offered the advice and assistance of General Legal Protection Ltd and subsequent support from my solicitor and barrister.

I would wholeheartedly recommend this service to all members, and assure them of a professional and sympathetic service.

Thank you so much.

Will Bowden

As Easy as ABC

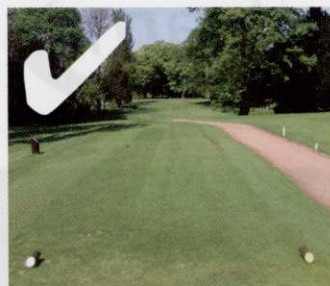


You never stop learning so, in conjunction with the GTC and lecturers from some of the UK's top greenkeeping colleges, GI has launched a new series which gives the developing greenkeeper the chance to add to their knowledge with some useful advice.



Wayne Roberts

MOVING TEE MARKERS



One of the most overlooked and yet important operations on the golf course is the positioning of the tee markers correctly. Leaving them in the same spot for too long can lead to all sorts of problems including weakened, stressed turf, soil compaction and poor cosmetic appearance.

As a rule of thumb you need to move tee markers in accordance with the playing/competition programme for your course and the type of play being carried out on the teeing area. High-handicap golfers produce many large

divots, so you should move the markers on a daily basis. On the other hand, if your course typically hosts above-average players, moving the markers every other day might be sufficient.

Remember, though, to co-ordinate the tee marker placements with the pin placements for the day, altering the length of the course too much could invalidate the competition being played!

Placement of the markers must also take into consideration the current tee position and the wear that has been currently received. Tee markers should be moved backwards away from the current position to allow the position to be divoted with seed and rootzone (if required) and allow the area to rest thus allowing a new clean surface to be available next time it is needed. Develop a tee placement plan highlighting the available positions that everyone on the team can follow.

Align the tee markers. Once you have determined the location of the tee markers, you must ensure that they are properly aligned. The goal is to align the markers so that when golfers stand between them in their normal stance, they are aiming at the landing zone in the fairway. The rest is up to them!

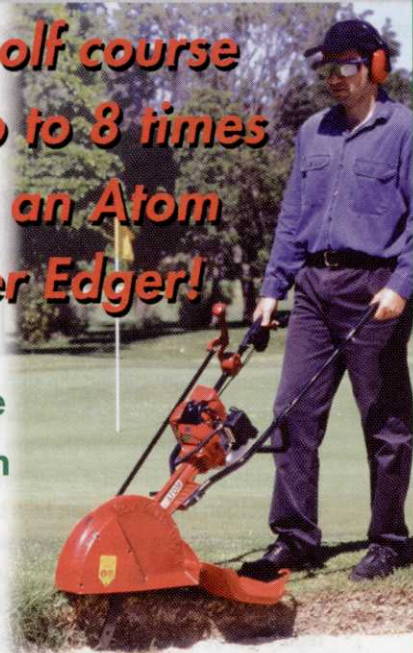


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CASHING IN

Only a decade ago, the majority of golf clubs considered running a fleet of golf cars as a pointless venture. This was due primarily to a lack of demand and interest from golfers, which meant investing in fleets would have been expensive and unnecessary. Now, in the 21st century, a growing number of golf clubs across the UK are introducing fleets for the first time, investing in brand new ones or expanding their existing golf car fleets. We examine the reasons why.

*Continue
to learn*



Seve at 1997 Ryder Cup

This shift in attitude can be attributed to various factors, such as adding value for members and attracting more corporate and society golf days. However, the most significant influencing factor in deciding to introduce or increase a golf car fleet, seems to be the creation of additional revenue. Club Car, the market leading golf car brand, has been carrying out extensive market research on a bi-annual basis for several years, and this clearly shows that attitudes have changed over the past 10 years. The most recent data shows that fewer clubs than ever now count themselves as golf car 'abstainers' and that once clubs have established that, their members and visitors will happily pay to hire a golf car, thus guaranteeing a return on investment and making investment in golf cars more likely to happen.

Neil Woodfin, Club Car's Sales Director for Europe and North Africa, encourages clubs to look at the entire cross section of club members when considering investing in golf cars and to take a multi-tiered approach to examining the potential revenue opportunities. He says: "Whether you are in your twenties or eighties, golfers today are prepared to hire a golf car to enhance their enjoyment of the game. Courses that introduce golf cars experience immediate revenue growth, not just because of the new hire revenue but also by indirectly enhancing traditional revenue streams. In other words, clubs find that older players will start to regularly book more rounds, younger players will try and fit in a round after work, plus clubs with golf cars tend to attract more corporate golf days - the related revenue streams for which are key to increasing the profitability of the club."

We are still a long way from the US culture of expecting to have use of a golf car wherever we play, but golf cars have certainly become more acceptable and common place for golfers in the UK. Some speculate that over time, golfers have become accustomed to seeing them used at European Tour events and major championships, such as the Ryder Cup, which Club Car has been involved with for 10 years. The company is also the 'Official Golf Car Supplier to the European Tour',



European Tour Rules Car

and provides at least 70 of its vehicles to every European Tour event. All of these vehicles are essential to the creation and smooth running of each tournament and the entourage is divided into 25 staging cars, eight rules cars, with the remainder used by television crews.

Ultimately, this acceptance of golf cars as commonplace has trickled down to club level and has certainly influenced buying decisions. However, according to the company's research, there are two additional key factors that drive the decision to operate golf cars: provision of additional income and improving the club image.

Technological and sociological factors can be identified as significant reasons behind the shift towards golf car use. As golf club and ball technology has evolved, courses have been lengthened to ensure that they are still challenging enough. The downside of this, is that it takes even longer to play a round, so the provision of golf cars can be a big factor in maintaining enjoyment of the game. Younger, working golfers have less free time than ever, which means they want to play rounds in faster times, whereas older members are living and playing for longer, regardless of mobility - both elements of which have led to the increasing demand.

The final influencing factor is purely financial. Golf clubs are more commercial and as they are now run predominantly as businesses, are expected to make a profit. The general manager or club secretary, who generally has the final say in the decision-making process, has to consider and offset the short-term

By Nicole Wheatley, Professional Sports Ventures,
on behalf of Club Car.

Club Car - Investment and Return

Golf Cars			
	DS	Precedent	
Investment	1 car	£59/month	£64/month
		£708/year	£768/year
Return		£900/month	£1,200/month
		£10,800/year	£14,400/year
Profit		£10,092/year	£13,632/year
Investment	15 cars	£885/month	£960/month
		£10,620/year	£11,520/year
Return		£13,500/month	£18,000/month
	100%	£162,000/year	£216,000/year
	50%	£81,000/year	£108,000/year
Profit	100%	£151,380/year	£204,480/year
	50%	£70,380/year	£96,480/year
Gross Margin	50%	87%	89%

Assumptions: Each car hired for two rounds per day
DS hire cost £15 per round
Precedent hire cost £20 per round

buying groups such as: De Vere or Troon golf, without compromising their own purchasing power.

Club Car's research is the most comprehensive ever conducted in the golf car industry and spells out the potential return on investment. It is estimated that one of their DS cars, used just twice daily at £15 per round, will produce an annual gross profit of over £10,000. Even if a fleet of 15 cars is run at 50 per cent capacity, according to Club Car, golf clubs should still expect an annual profit between £70,000 and £96,000. Certainly a figure not to be sniffed at!

Another strategy that has brought golf cars to more golf courses and golfers, is the Walk to Ride scheme. This scheme, which is also available from some other manufacturers, was originally launched by Club Car in 2003 to help promote the potential revenue opportunities and related benefits of running a fleet of golf cars. The premise of the entire promotion was to allow clubs to trial cars and see for themselves with no obligation or risk. The scheme has been focussed primarily on introducing golf cars onto courses for the first time and clubs who had historically been reluctant to take on golf cars, were given the opportunity to take five cars for around six weeks and keep the revenue generated from them.

The Walk to Ride scheme, allowed the company to react to feedback from the clubs involved in the test and combine their experiences with the market research. The result was to introduce a new long-term sales and marketing strategy, designed to meet the needs of a very diverse client base, as Neil Woodfin explains: "Club Car's aim has always been to open up the golf car market to clubs and budgets of all sizes. User experience, combined with feedback from our market research has led us to develop a



Walk to Ride at Styrrup Hall



Langer and Montgomerie on course in 2004

investment against the potential return on investment. This is true of every purchasing decision.

This new commercial approach has resulted in a tendency towards leasing golf cars rather than purchasing them outright. Leasing cars has enabled many cash-poor clubs to make new golf cars available to members and make an instant profit. This has been a great way to avoid any large one-off payments and to address the issue of seasonality in golf car usage. Club Car, which set up a National Account programme over two years ago, has witnessed a move towards leasing even among large

Good, Better, Best product range. Our Silver Standard factory refurbished car is now our entry level golf car, the DS established us as market leaders for the past 20 years and the new Precedent is now our premium vehicle."

It is certainly clear that demand is driving the golf car business. With the market opening up and new sales initiatives being introduced, these once-expensive luxury items are now becoming commonplace and the mark of a high-quality establishment. We are certainly set to see more golf cars than ever before, making their way down our fairways in the coming years.

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Course Feature



Golf Environment
Competition

From Spiders to Wild Boar

Scott MacCallum visits a golf club which has embraced the concept of ecological friendliness since becoming involved with the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition.

The story of Robert the Bruce and the spider is entrenched in Scottish folklore but it is also a tale which has resonance today and in particular, a certain Suffolk golf club.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Scottish warrior King and the arachnid, Robert, was holed up in a cave after a heavy defeat and was contemplating his future. On the verge of giving up he watched a spider attempting to create a web. It failed time and time again before one last attempt brought success. Robert took this as a sign, brushed himself down and went on to win the Battle of Bannockburn, having told his men: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again."

Ian Willett, Course Manager at Thorpeness Golf Club, in Suffolk, hasn't spent time in a cave, at least as far as I know, nor does he spend time studying spiders, but there are still similarities between him and Robert the Bruce.

Ian first entered the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, now sponsored by Scotts, Syngenta, Ransomes Jacobsen and Course Care, eight years ago and quickly began picking up Commended and Highly Commended awards. In 2003 they made progress by winning the Regional Award, but the National prize still eluded the club. Then, last year, they cracked it and Thorpeness Hotel & GC was announced as BIGGA's environmental champion for 2005.

"It's been a long road and we did get despondent on occasions when we thought we were there, only to find that the bar had been raised again, but we are absolutely delighted to have finally made it," said Ian, who credits much of the success to Managing Director, Tim Rowan-Robinson, the man who ensured budget was set aside to implement the changes and who was very much at the forefront of the Club's environmental push.

Indeed, while there were knock backs and near misses on the golf course something wonderful was happening at Thorpeness Hotel & Golf Club as a whole, for which the BIGGA Environment Competition could claim to be the catalyst and which, in turn, helped the club over that final hurdle and through the winning line.

The competition pricked Thorpeness's green conscious and the hotel has since introduced a plethora of environmentally inspired initiatives while the individuals involved have taken ideas back to their homes and become far more ecologically active.

"We set up a Green Committee within the Thorpeness staff and we look at all aspects of our work from an environmentally-friendly perspective," said Operations Manager, David James.

"For example we recycle our corks, which now go to a charity which turns them into shoes for African children; in the restaurant we don't use any fish which is on the endangered list, including locally caught cod; we use returnable crates for deliveries so we don't use cardboard; there are recycled pens beside the beds in the rooms; we're in the process of changing to environment friendly light bulbs throughout the hotel and also installing bubble showers which don't use as much water while the staff have helped tidy up the beach at Aldeburgh," explained David, who has stopped using plastic bags for his own supermarket shopping preferring



Ian Willett, (blue jacket), with his team

instead to load everything directly from his trolley into a box which he keeps in the back of his car.

Ian actually has a small windmill attached to his home which supplements the electricity drawn from the national grid.

"It would be fair to say that all this work started as a consequence of Ian becoming involved in the BIGGA Golf Environment Competition and making us conscious of what we could do as a business," explained David.

Thorpeness is a village which takes you back in time. A haven for well heeled London residents the wonderful old cottages, traditional pubs and a boating pond, paint a picture of idyllic English life, while the quirky



The Sizewell A and B Power Stations are nearby neighbours

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House in the Clouds and the magnificent old windmill add a little something not found in many other locations.

Ian, who was brought up at Wentworth where he was son of the Club chef and later a greenkeeper, has been at Thorpeness for 10 years and it seems the perfect club for a man who enjoys nature as much as he does.

"If I go out at night the number of hedgehogs you see is amazing while, when I walked my dog, Buddy, recently I ended up rescuing toads which sit in the middle of the road. I picked up about two dozen and carried them to the pond or the grass at the side so they can get on with mating. They are the same colour as the road and would be run over. You see the local children doing the same all the time.

"Then there's the nightjars and the woodlarks, for which we have SSSI status. It really has a vibrant wildlife community."

When he first entered the competition Ian genuinely believed that they had a good chance of winning.

"I didn't really know the criteria at that point and it was only through going through the process of the competition and speaking with STRI judges, Bob (Taylor) and Lee (Penrose), that you learn what is looked for. Then you try to integrate their thinking into the work that you are doing. At that point for us it became a journey.



The unique House in the Clouds overlooks the course



"As standards increased, the bar was being raised and there were occasions when we knew we were getting close but just as we were about to jump we discovered the bar had gone up by about three feet and we missed it totally!"

An example of this came a couple of years ago when composting and controlling waste water became more of an issue. I went on a seminar to learn about it then persuaded our MD that we needed to install a waste water system but it was still in the process of being installed when judging time came and I think that counted against us."

That highlights another of the issues Ian had to deal with. Having a small team - there are five in total - and doing most jobs in house meant completing jobs would take more time than might be the case at other clubs with larger staffs or who contracted more jobs out.

"We installed the concrete wash down area for the Waste2Water system ourselves and also put in the concrete composting area, completed with a bunding.

"We do have a budget, which isn't huge, to work within but we are particularly lucky to have Ray Hardinge, an ecologist who is also a member of the club, who gives us a lot of his time and expertise."

Ray built a set of bird and bat boxes for the course and together with the team spent a great deal of time up ladders studying compasses to make sure they were facing in the right direction.





"In the first year we had a 60% success rate with these and credit for that must go to Ray and his knowledge. He has always been keen to know who had won the competition and always made a point of visiting the winning club to see first hand the work that they had done"

Ray is also on hand to assist Ian and his team when they do any major work on the course.

"Every job we do has an environmental impact. If we are refacing bunkers, Ray will speak to me about which of them we are intending to do. Then we'll go out and take an environmental record of what flora we have within a metre and a half of the bunker. Then we'll tackle the job using locally grown fine turf and once finished compare what we had to what we've got. We leave gaps to allow the original seed beds to come through and recent work has shown us that we can get 55% of the original plants and wild flowers back within two to three years and we reckon it will take about nine years to get it back fully."

Ian is well aware of his responsibility to provide year round golf to members and hotel guests and the course copes with well over 30,000 rounds per year.

"We do practice sustainable golf at Thorpeness but not what the R&A are taking about, as we do take preventative measures to control disease because guests wouldn't want to pay on diseased covered greens.

"I don't have the luxury of closing the course for a couple of weeks to give it a rest. It just doesn't work like that."

So what turned the perennial bridesmaid into the 2005 bride?

"I'd say it was the whole club's involvement. I'm lucky that around 30% of the members are interested in the fact that we won the award and are champing at the bit waiting to see the Scott's Weather Station (part of the prize) in action," said Ian, who also has an ongoing programme of heather regeneration.

There is very much a collective feel to the management style of the Hotel, club and the course.

Thorpeness is lucky to have a small but dedicated and committed greenkeeping team comprising Deputy, Mark Henderson, Chris Guy, Paul Barber and Toby Alexander, and Ian is quick to involve all of them in decision making and often finds some of the best ideas come from the least experienced team member. More widespread consultation takes place



The club is heavily involved with heather regeneration



The team do all construction work in-house

throughout the club with everything being discussed at the Golf Committee so the members, the golf course, hotel guests and environmental issues are all considered from everyone else's perspective.

Ian's advice to other Course Managers thinking about entering the competition is short and to the point.

"Give it a go. That's what I did. I got so fed up with people turning round and telling me that golf courses were detrimental to the environment I wanted to show them that they are anything but and this competition showcases the great work that goes on up and down the country.

"You may not get a certificate in the first years, you may not get a visit, but you will improve your golf course through the information which is available from the judges," he advised.

Ironically, for a golf club with such green credentials it is a close neighbour to an establishment whose very name stirs the passions of environmentalists. Nuclear power stations Sizewell A and Sizewell B can be seen from the 10th tee and although A is currently being decommissioned there are still groups protesting that they should never have been built in the first place.

"We don't glow green at night, nor do we have two headed swans but the local waters are good for fishing as the water around Sizewell is a little bit warmer than further out," said Ian.

Although banned from entering the competition for three years, Thorpeness will continue with their environmental work and Ian is hoping to sign up to the EGU/STRI certificated programme.

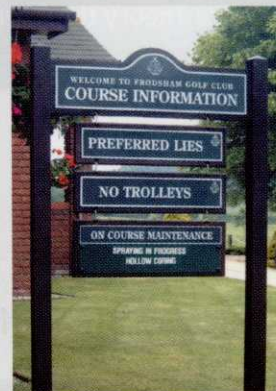
"I'd also like to experiment with using sheep to manage areas the way Hollinwell has done, while I do believe you can do things with iron age pigs or wild boar which I'd like to look into."

As I said at the beginning you won't ever find Ian Willett in a kilt but he does have some similarities to Robert the Bruce, who as well as studying spiders, no doubt knew a bit about wild boar as well.

There is still a little time for anyone interested in entering the 2006 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition, sponsored by Scotts, Syngenta, Ransomes Jacobsen and Course Care. Details and entry form can be downloaded from the BIGGA Website www.bigga.org.uk. But be quick entries must be submitted by June 23.



Heather regeneration areas are protected by blue rope



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THE DISTURBANCE THEORY

These articles aim to give you a better appreciation of how to favour the finer grasses. Disturbance Theory comes from an ecological perspective and simply states that the nature of the environment, controls the composition of the sward. These three articles explain how the finer grasses can be successfully established and maintained within the modern golf green by simply managing the environment correctly. The role of the greenkeeper, is to understand and control the environmental pressures, to set the correct conditions for the finer grasses to flourish. If you understand The Disturbance Theory the finer grasses stand a chance. Our golfing heritage rests on fine turf.

Do Not Disturb!

Richard Windows, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist.

Putting surfaces, dominated by the bents and fescues, provide consistent year round surfaces. Unfortunately, many of our greens continue to be dominated by annual meadow grass. A recent survey conducted by all STRI agronomists in the UK and Ireland for the R&A, proves this is the case. The results showed the average species composition in our golf greens in 2005, to be 56% annual meadow grass, 32% bent, 7% fescue and 5% perennial ryegrass/Yorkshire fog. Out of 598 courses assessed, 75% had greens supporting more than 50% annual meadow-grass. The annual meadow-grass dominance, makes our greens vulnerable and inferior during the winter. This information shows how many courses may be failing to reach their potential.

History has always blamed excessive fertiliser and water applications, to be the main cause of annual meadow-grass dominance in our greens. I used to as well, until I considered the ecology of the grasses involved the article "Changing the Nature of your Greens" explains this in more detail (www.stri.co.uk). In summary, annual meadow-grass enjoys disturbance, while the finer grasses flourish in a more settled environment. Annual meadow-grass, is so successful in golf greens because the environment is so disturbed or being constantly damaged. Disturbance pressure comes from surface preparations and of course play. In this article, we examine the effect of surface preparations on sward composition. The aim is to help you think about the preparation of your greens a little differently.

The true cause of annual meadow-grass ingress, comes from the creation of gaps in the turf. Constant physical damage (or disturbance) of the grass plant, creates these gaps. Modern greenkeeping practices and their mechanisation, have radically increased the disturbance pressure imposed on fine turf. We now mow incessantly and verticut and groom in an attempt to please the ever more demanding modern golfer. While such aggressive practices are done for the right reasons, they might, in the end, be causing untold harm. The symptoms can be seen, when the turf thins and the soil surface is exposed. Annual meadow-grass is adapted to exploit these conditions. It may therefore be true to say, the misuse of the triplex mower and modern turf refinement tools, are one of the main reasons for annual meadow-grass dominance in our golf greens.

Before we had these ultra efficient tools, the amount we refined our greens was restricted by time and the physical constraints of the human body. For instance, it took a long time to mow greens with a pedestrian mower and even longer when using a push mower or scythe! Not to mention the physically

demanding nature of the work. This meant it was largely impossible to over-manage and over-disturb putting greens. Consequently, the golf green environment was settled, which allowed the fine grasses to dominate. Fertiliser and water were kept to a minimum, as over-application simply made the grass grow faster! Greenkeepers knew the surface would be inferior, if grass growth was rapid. Growth was the last thing they wanted. A settled, undisturbed and unproductive environment, suited the finer grasses. It also produced the best year round putting surfaces. Old Tom Morris understood this.



"Fast growth was the last thing greenkeepers of yesteryear wanted when they were using scythes and birch besoms. This meant a settled and unproductive environment was created in which the finer grasses flourished." Photo courtesy of St. Andrews Links Trust.



Old Tom Morris taught us the real art of greenkeeping. Those that still follow these traditional principles produce the best and most consistent year-round putting surfaces. Photo courtesy of St. Andrews Links Trust.

The tranquillity of this settled and unproductive environment, was forever interrupted with the introduction of the triplex mower around 1968. Suddenly, greens could be mown in a fraction of time, meaning they were done so more regularly. They were even mown when it was not necessary! Further technological advances allowed the machines to follow contours, which facilitated ever closer mowing. In essence, triplex mowing increased disturbance pressure on the turf.

Soon after the triplex mower, came the introduction of more efficient and effective turf refinement tools. These mechanical tools, with their motor driven rotating steel blades (now with tungsten tips), were much more aggressive than the bristles of a brush - you can almost see the fine fescue and bent turf quivering at the prospect! Their ease and

efficiency of use allowed the frequency of operation to increase. The result was increased disturbance pressure on the turf.

The use of the triplex mower and more efficient turf refinement tools, gave golfers the faster surfaces they demanded. However, little regard was given to their damaging effect on our fine turf. To put it simply, the fine fescue and bent could not cope with the damage. Consequently, the sward began to thin and gaps were created. Annual meadow-grass exploited these gaps - the invasion had begun. To help the thin and damaged turf recover, more fertiliser and water was applied. The annual meadow-grass thrived in this more disturbed and productive environment. Our fine turf putting surfaces began their decline and many would never be the same again. The era of aggressive surface preparation and high input greenkeeping had (to our shame) arrived.

Many greenkeepers ignored the trend of more aggressive surface refinements. They knew it wouldn't make their surfaces any better. To this day, courses that have upheld austere greenkeeping principles, continue to provide the best putting surfaces. The greenkeepers charged with the management of these courses, still follow what Old Tom did all those years ago. They know the slow growing fine fescue and bent grasses, only require gentle refinement to produce high quality putting surfaces. While modern machinery is used, it is used with great caution. For instance, verticutting is implemented occasionally and only when the fine grasses are growing strongly. The greens are never scalped. Fertiliser and water, are always kept to a minimum - as over application will only require more aggressive refinement. Consequently, these environments remain

settled and unproductive, which is why the fine grasses continue to flourish. Old Tom Morris taught us this approach. We now call it "traditional greenkeeping".

The results of traditional greenkeeping were once again highlighted to the international golfing fraternity, during the 2005 Open Championship played over the Old Course, St. Andrews. During the Championship, the greens were maintained at 4.5 mm. Mowing was omitted when it was not necessary - the slow growing fescue and bent, simply did not need to be mown every day. Light brushing, light top dressing, a little rolling and May verticutting was sufficient to provide over 10.5 foot on the Stimpmeter and smooth true ball roll for the world's best players. Contrast this to the normal maintenance for Major championships, when the greens are scalped two or three times a day! It is obvious which grass this will promote.

I have perhaps blamed the triplex mower and modern turf refinement tools rather unfairly, as they are, of course, great innovations and have improved the quality and efficiency of surface production. Of course the problem does not lie with the machines but the way in which we use them. All too often they are used too frequently and too aggressively. Such misuse increases disturbance pressure on the turf. When the pressure becomes too great, the turf thins and gaps are created and annual meadow-grass invades. To help the turf recover from the pressure, requires a heavier hand with the fertiliser bag and irrigation sprinklers. It is this combination of disturbance and greater productivity, that leads to annual meadow-grass dominated greens.

I have no doubt that the production of better putting surfaces can be achieved by the promotion of the finer grasses. To be successful in this aim, we must adapt our management practices to minimise disturbance and reduce productivity. In essence, the way in which we prepare our surfaces must become less aggressive. This is not too difficult to achieve so let me describe some simple strategies...

- Reduce mowing frequencies. Ask yourself - do you really need to mow all the time? Can occasional operations be missed?
- Raise the height of cut. Every greenkeeper knows what height is comfortable and stress free for their turf. You should go no lower than this height. Do not push the limit of your turf it simply will not cope.
- Miss out the final perimeter cut a couple of times a week. The perimeters of the greens are where we see the first symptoms of excessive disturbance. Never engage groomers or verticutters on this perimeter pass.



The results of traditional greenkeeping were once again highlighted during the 2005 Open Championship at St Andrews



Careful use of rollers can help provide the playing conditions golfers require without imparting excessive disturbance pressure on the turf

- Relax verticutting and scarification. Consider brushing or light grooming, to gently refine the turf. When verticutting or scarification is necessary, ensure the finer grasses are growing strongly to aid rapid recovery and follow with bent/fescue overseeding, to encourage the restoration of full grass cover. Under no circumstances scarify when annual meadow-grass is seeding.
- Increase top dressing frequencies to smooth and firm the surface, as well as diluting the thatch. Avoid harsh operations to work the material off the surface. This hurts your turf.

- Use rollers or a Turf Iron to provide a little extra pace and smoothness when required. This will ensure the greens can be maintained at a higher cutting height.
- Increase hand mowing instead of triple mowing, as it causes less disturbance and allows you to closely monitor the environment.

The true reason for annual meadow-grass ingress into our fine turf putting surfaces, was the creation of gaps in the turf. Aggressive surface preparations were one way such gaps were created. Excessive inputs of water and fertiliser were applied to restore the cover after damage. This created a productive and highly disturbed environment, in which annual meadow-grass thrived and dominated. The current era of aggressive high input greenkeeping, continues to promote this undesirable species. To restore the dominance of the finer grasses, we need to provide a more settled and less productive environment. To do this, we will have to prepare our surfaces differently but not to the detriment of the playing quality. The key to this strategy is the minimisation of disturbance. This means being less aggressive with your surface preparations, by more cautious use of the triplex mower and modern turf refinement machines. With this approach, you will soon see the finer grasses returning to your greens.

Irrigation - The Tool of Agronomic Change

Alistair Beggs, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist.



The misuse of irrigation delivery, is one of the reasons for the decline of the finer grasses on UK golf courses, over the last 40 years. This, alongside the arrival of the triple mower and compound fertiliser in all its forms, spelt disaster for the bents and fescues. The production of softer and lusher turf, made the game easier and also happened to suit the TV companies who could send appealing ultra green images into our living rooms. The "green is god" age had dawned and we quickly descended into agronomic oblivion to drown in a sea of *Poa annua*!

So, how do we set about righting the wrongs and creating the correct environment for our preferred grasses? Well, the very tool that partly initiated the decline, could be the salvation. Irrigation is the most powerful agronomic tool, providing it is used correctly.

In the article "Changing the Nature of Your Greens" (www.stri.co.uk), the argument is made that unnecessary disturbance, is the main reason for the loss of finer grasses on our golf greens. We have inadvertently created an environment more suited to opportunistic grasses such as annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) by feeding and watering and then having to use aggressive disturbance techniques to create the playing surface. The finer grasses simply cannot cope with intensive disturbance, whereas *Poa annua* likes nothing better.



The installation and subsequent misuse of automatic irrigation systems, was one of the maincauses in the decline of our fine grasses



Hand watering is an essential but often forgotten aspect of accurate irrigation delivery

Greenkeeping requires a basic knowledge of the ecological strategies, of the two or three major grasses. Success will come, if we create the right environment for the finer grasses to flourish. In summary, the fine bent and fescue, enjoy settled and unproductive environments, while the annual meadow-grass dominates when productivity and disturbance pressure is high. By understanding these simple ecological strategies, we can easily reverse the botanical decline of our putting surfaces, experienced during the last century. We need to move away from high input and aggressive greenkeeping practices. One of the key tools in this process, is the correct use of irrigation. Believe me, if we get this right, the finer grasses will return and we will restore the true enjoyment of real golf.

Let us consider two scenarios. The first is the classic annual, meadow grass dominated surface. It has been over fed and overwatered for years, with two inches of thatch residing at the base of the turf. The summer surfaces are satisfactory but the winter surfaces become soft and disease ridden. To improve turf and playing quality here, we must reduce the productivity of the environment, by minimising irrigation and fertiliser inputs. At the same time, we must create the right soil conditions, in which the fine grasses can flourish by removing the thatch. This improves the firmness of the surface and reduces the need for excessive disturbance, which creates the more settled environment. When reducing productivity, a gradual approach is required, as radical reductions in irrigation or fertiliser inputs will excessively compromise playing quality.

The second scenario is a sward dominated by both bents and fescues with some annual meadow grass contamination. Here the objective is to retain the dominance of the fine grasses. We do this by exerting controlled stress on the shallow rooted annual meadow-grass, by tight regulation of irrigation to stop it gaining advantage. To help achieve this objective, we can be even more hard-line with irrigation inputs towards the late summer, to further reduce the competitive ability of the annual meadow-grass before bent/fescue overseeding.

In both scenarios the aim is to create a more settled and less productive environment as possible. At the appropriate time, irrigation application should be relaxed to exert the necessary stress, to reduce the competitive ability of the shallower rooted annual meadow-grass. As the fine grass component of the turf increases, greater stress can be exerted as the water requirement of the turf naturally decreases.

Proper irrigation is ultimately powerful in the restoration of fine turf surfaces. We use it to favour the strengths of the deep-rooted fine

grasses and exploit the weaknesses of the shallow rooted annual meadow-grass. Managing irrigation correctly, will restore the dominance of the fine grasses and provide golf surfaces commensurate with the heritage of our game.

The level to which irrigation is applied, is of course the main challenge. This will reduce as we optimise delivery and maximise water penetration. In this day and age it is critical that applied water is fully utilised by the sward and not wasted. How much or how little do we apply? Well this is the \$64,000 question. I do not believe this can be taught in a classroom. Every site is different, every green is different and every square metre of turf is different. Trying to measure these differences empirically and come up with a "one size fits all solution" is fatuous. Trying to implement this approach will in all likelihood lead to further decline in turf standards. There is no doubt effective irrigation delivery, is an art not a science. However, there is one over riding principle - water should only be applied to keep the turf alive and the surface uniform - nothing else!

Successful irrigation management can only be achieved by the correct deduction of the greenkeeper. There is no replacement for a good man with a sound knowledge of his site. The head man should know far better than any computer or tensiometer how much water is needed to keep the turf alive, to facilitate agronomic improvement and to optimise playing quality. If we are going to restore the fine grass content of our greens the golfers must trust the judgement of the greenkeeper.

Irrigation application is not just about pressing the button on the automatic system. This approach will generally lead to agronomic deterioration. We must create a healthy dry surface rather than a lush and vibrant one. To help with this we must ensure the water we applied can penetrate into the ground. This is aided with the use of wetting agents combined with regular aeration. What is more, many clubs have great success with water injection aeration using the Hydroject. Not only does this aerate the soils but it also supplies water to the deeper rooted grasses giving them a greater competitive edge over the shallower rooted annual meadow-grass.

The irrigation systems of today are great and sophisticated tools but they are a disaster waiting to happen in the wrong hands. There have been too many wrong hands operating over the last forty years hence the decline of the fine grasses on our courses. We have a duty to correct this and re-establish the link between the grass upon which we play the game and the game itself. Our golfing heritage largely depends on correct irrigation.



The Hydroject has the combined effect of aerating the soil and delivering water to the deeper-rooted fine grasses

Food For Thought

- How to approach fertilising for the finer grasses.

Henry Bechelet, STRI Turfgrass Agronomist.



It's not what you think

In these times of healthy debate, chew on this thought...

...You don't have to starve your turf to favour the development of the finer grasses.

Fertilising to favour the finer grasses is more about not over-fertilising than adopting a starvation strategy. The aim of this article is to get you formulating your fertiliser programme with the needs of the finer grasses in mind. With a predominance of the bents and fescues, we achieve better quality surfaces throughout the year.

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

The problem is that too much fertiliser forces you to rely on intensive verticutting and aggressive mowing to prepare firm, fast and true playing surfaces. Hollow tining and deep scarification, become necessary to get rid of the deeper thatch. It is this incessant damage that the finer grasses can't stand. Such an aggressive method of preparing putting surfaces, will inevitably require additional fertiliser applications to ensure that the turf recovers from the onslaught. It is constant disturbance coupled with high productivity that brings annual meadow grass dominance.

Hollow tining and deep scarification become necessary to get rid of the deeper thatch. It is this incessant damage that the finer grasses can't stand.

THIS IS IT

We try to minimise fertiliser inputs to reduce the need for disturbance. A more settled and less intensively managed environment will give the bents and fescues a fighting chance. A less disturbed environment will also take some stress to allow you to weaken the annual meadow grass. Let me tell you about fertilising golf greens, to favour the finer grasses.

STEP BACK AND THINK

When greenkeeping, our single objective is to create playing surfaces of the highest possible quality. If that means we want to favour a predominance of the finer grasses, we will have to set the correct environment. Ultimately, this should involve minimising the level of disturbance, which is why we reduce fertiliser inputs. We then impart controlled beneficial stress at some point during the summer to pressurise the annual meadow grass at a time of overseeding, to let the finer grasses take advantage. We impart this stress with

We generally try to keep irrigation inputs to a minimum to prevent thatch accumulation but we only use it to actually lever stress for a short period.

judicious irrigation rather than fertiliser because it is easier to control. We generally try to keep irrigation inputs to a minimum to prevent thatch accumulation but we only use it to actually lever stress for a short period. This will serve to weaken the annual meadow grass before the new seedlings emerge. Too much stress for too long weakens all the grass species and golf greens are too busy to be weak. See "Changing The Nature of Your Greens" on www.stri.co.uk for more detail.

JUST ENOUGH

So, we want to minimise fertiliser inputs to reduce the need for incessant aggressive treatments. Minimal (some would say "optimal") means producing just enough growth for the surface to be prepared and be able to withstand play without deteriorating. The desired level of growth will vary depending on what we need to achieve at different times of the year. For example, during spring we will need to generate a certain level of growth to bring recovery from winter wear and to allow the early season preparations to take place. During the summer, once we have set-

Essentially, you should only apply what is necessary and no more

up our surfaces, we would want to keep growth quiet to reduce the need for any further aggressive treatments. Into autumn we must ensure that the turf is strong enough to withstand and recover from the end of season renovations prior to the onset winter dormancy. When

minimising your fertiliser inputs concentrate on finesse and timing. The old boys used to feed by hand, to allow localised areas to be missed-out or receive extra nutrient depending on the turf condition - now that is finesse! Essentially, you should only apply what is necessary and no more.

NITROGEN

In terms of nitrogen input, for soil-based greens the Danish experience finds 5 - 7 g/m² N per annum to be sufficient. You should aim to apply as little as necessary so you don't have to verticut too often through the summer. Be careful when weaning greens off a high-N approach because there may be an adverse reaction in the form of disease attack. Just take it steady and trust your judgement, that's all.

In most cases the main source of nitrogen should be ammonium sulphate for its acidifying effect. The finer grasses can tolerate a pH below 5.5 whereas the annual meadow-grass cannot. Nutrient availability and microbial activity are factors here but not in this article. Generally, lowering the pH is a way of selecting-out annual meadow-grass. Sulphate of ammonia should represent roughly 75% of the total nitrogen.

The remaining nitrogen can be balanced up with lesser amounts of dried blood for prolonged release or urea-based liquids during the summer months. Don't use too much organic nitrogen as this will promote disease

...You don't have to starve your turf to favour the development of the finer grasses.

prone lush growth and don't be fooled into using nitrates for the same reason. Disease equals disturbance and plays into the hands of annual meadow-grass. Just try to minimise nitrogen inputs, to reduce the need for disturbance.

Fescues will flourish in a high pH but annual meadow grass dominance can only be avoided with the influence of an overriding environmental stress, such as raised salinity or droughting. Liming generally plays into the hands of the weeds, worms and diseases.

PHOSPHATE

The results of research on the effect of phosphate applications on fine turf quality, have actually been inconsistent. Incessant phosphate fertiliser applications undoubtedly encourage the development of annual meadow-grass but at lower levels the relationship is not so clear-cut. Regular phosphate applications will create an ideal turf base for seed germination to the advantage of the annual meadow grass. Just don't lose your head about phosphates and remember that they are not usually necessary to favour the bents and fescues. It is my feeling that the famous rabbit urine scorch tale should have been interpreted as scorch disturbance laced with urea fertiliser to encourage annual meadow-grass invasion rather than as being the direct effect of high phosphate levels.

POTASSIUM

Potassium is more mobile and might well need supplementing on sandier soils. Potassium certainly has benefits in terms of drought and disease tolerance but don't hang all your hopes on it. Monitor potash levels on an annual basis if there is any doubt. Just remember that favouring the finer grasses is all about managing minimal disturbance.



Scorch disturbance laced with urea encourages annual meadow-grass invasion

KEEP IT SIMPLE

So, what does this mean in terms of your fertiliser programme? As an example you could kick off growth in spring with an application of lawn sand. This should be applied with the onset of spring growth and will generate recovery from winter wear. An application of 8:0:0 or 8:0:6 fertiliser could then be made when strong spring growth is established. This growth will allow the early season preparations to take place. Using sulphate of ammonia based feeds during the spring will discourage annual meadow grass from invading gaps within the sward by lowering the surface pH. Liquid feeds can then be applied occasionally during the summer months, to sustain healthy rather than lush growth. Seaweed soil conditioners may be tank mixed in with liquid feeds if it is felt that they have a beneficial effect. Finish off in the autumn with an application of a turf hardener type product (2-0-2 or 3-0-3 plus Fe or similar) to strengthen growth and harden the sward against disease attack. The rate of applications should be as little as necessary. Your fertiliser programme should be focused on controlling growth so you don't need to employ consistently aggressive surface preparation techniques.

SURFACE PREPARATIONS

So, how do we prepare surfaces without incessant verticutting or employing ever-lower heights of cut? Apply heavy top dressings with spring growth to firm and true-up the surfaces. A certain amount of verticutting will be necessary at this time but don't be unduly aggressive or too frequent. Once the surfaces are prepared we should then be aiming to let them be. We maintain our firm, true and smooth surfaces without undue growth by brushing, with light in-season top dressings, rolling, maintaining sensible heights of cut and employing isolated light verticutting if necessary.

Regular top dressing has the added benefit of keeping the turf base sandy and unattractive for annual meadow-grass seed germination.

LESS IS MORE

If you want to fertilise for the finer grasses, you should be thinking in terms of minimising the need for aggressive surface treatments. You will need strong growth to prepare your surfaces in spring but from then on try to let them go to nature. Your job is to find the minimum growth level possible for you to be able to sustain quality surfaces without incessant verticutting. Ask your fertiliser supplier to concentrate on this when making recommendations based on soil analysis results.

The finer grasses are tender souls that don't like incessant rough treatment but they can withstand stress. Remember, at no point do we withhold fertiliser to exert stress. We exert stress on the annual meadow grass for a limited period in summer, by controlled droughting in conjunction with overseeding to give new seedlings a chance to take hold. Be patient and stick to your principles and the finer grasses will come.

Get this thought into your head...

...Aggressive greenkeeping is the death of the finer grasses.

Kapeesh?

THE DISTURBANCE THEORY ROADSHOW

Richard, Alistair and Henry are aiming to conduct The Disturbance Theory seminars this autumn. Please contact info@stri.co.uk to express an interest or find out further information.

Technical Reflections

Dr Mike Canaway retires as the Chairman of the GTC Technical Committee.

In September 1999 Mike chaired the first Technical Committee meeting of the GTC.

The GTC Board felt it was time to establish a committee of technical experts to assist the two full-time staff in the GTC office as the Board were "not experts in turf maintenance". The Board representatives had direct access to the funding bodies and thought it far more acceptable to have recommendations brought forward for funding by a technical committee.



His term in office has seen much progress in the sector, with fellow committee members he has supported David Golding, the GTC's Education Director, to ensure greenkeepers and the golf club employers have a range of qualifications and training programmes, including an apprenticeship - which is the envy of many industries.

David, in thanking Mike for his support over the years, cannot speak too highly of how Mike has been an excellent ambassador for the GTC, at meetings, conferences and exhibitions throughout the country.

"I will miss Mike's encouragement, as at times when the work involves working within Government systems and departments it is easy to think we are "banging our heads against a brick wall" but Mike has always believed in what we set out to establish back in 1999," said David.

I will leave Mike to summarise his experiences with the GTC and also give his views on what the future should hold for the sector through the GTC.

Mike reflects as follows.

When I first joined the industry with STRI in 1974 the then Director, John Escritt, insisted that all new staff attended the week-long training courses that STRI held for greenkeepers and groundsmen. Shortly afterwards the new recruit, if competent, had to teach part of the course relevant to their particular expertise. In my case this was the part concerned with structure and identification of grasses, as I had originally graduated in Botany and had some years experience in agricultural grasslands and plant surveying, for the then Nature Conservancy.

I was thus introduced to greenkeepers training at an early stage. Even on the first training course I was struck by the greenkeepers' thirst for knowledge, compared with some of the other course participants who had been "sent" by their (often Local Authority) employers. Of course not all conformed to this accolade but it is still the case that some of those attendees on the early STRI training courses subsequently went on to become Head Greenkeepers at prestigious clubs and in some cases Chairmen of BIGGA.

Following the formation of BIGGA from the previous greenkeeping associations, Neil Thomas' first office was at STRI, before that space was outgrown. David Golding was the first Education Officer before the GTC was split off by the governing bodies to separate the employers' (i.e. clubs) training responsibilities from those of the employees (i.e. greenkeepers) when David Golding became the GTC's first Education Director.

Fast forwarding to when I was Chief Executive of the STRI, I received a letter from David requesting that STRI nominate a delegate to the new Technical Committee. In view of the long involvement by STRI in greenkeepers' training and my own personal - albeit limited - involvement in it, I replied that I would serve on the Committee. I was subsequently invited to act as Chairman. Early in the proceedings I advised members of the committee that we were "in it for the long haul" since previous experience suggested that the wheels of Government and governing bodies, turned slowly and indeed, this led to some frustration among members that we were not progressing quickly enough.

The purpose of the Technical Committee is to assist the Education Director in pursuing the GTC's role as the lead body for greenkeepers' training. To this end our first task was to develop a business plan for the GTC to clarify its goals and objectives, and then to implement, monitor and update the plan as events unfolded. In addition the committee was to develop ideas for special projects to be funded over and above the core operations.

So what has been achieved since 1999? I would first preface my remarks by saying that a lot of the work of the GTC goes on behind the scenes, fighting for the recognition of greenkeeping as an identifiable sector, with its own training needs. There is no doubt that were it not for the work of the GTC, in the education system, greenkeeper training would be subsumed into general amenity horticulture, with a sports turf option. Probably the most important achievement has been the progress made in

flexible learning systems and, in particular, the development of work-based training.

In the old days, knowledge was passed from experienced Head Greenkeepers to new entrants. Work-based training is merely a formalisation of this process, with the achievement of a qualification (NVQ or SVQ) at the end, to show that the trainee now has the necessary skills to work as a greenkeeper in the case of level 2, or as a supervisor in the case of level 3. One of the major projects in this area for the committee, and for me in particular as Chief Editor, was the development of standard learning materials for NVQ levels 2 and 3. Working with authors from across the industry - expert in their own fields - each level took about a year to produce, level 2 being issued in 2003 and level 3 in 2004. This meant that for the first time the Colleges, or other training providers, were all training to the same syllabus. At present, the GTC is working closely with LANTRA to use the materials to create an on-line learning platform so that greenkeepers can have access to the learning materials, regardless of location.

A further result has been the closer collaboration between the GTC and BIGGA through the Technical Committee in several areas. The committee provides informal comment and guidance on new BIGGA training initiatives where appropriate, has provided financial support to the learning experience at Harrogate Week, and jointly funded the BIGGA careers' DVD. In the other direction, the BIGGA representatives on the committee have provided valuable support and experience to the GTC.

In addition to the above, the Technical Committee has overseen the production of a Health and Safety wall chart in use at many golf clubs showing the competency of staff to use different items of equipment. It has

initiated visits to Colleges to interview, staff and student, to monitor delivery of training. It has developed the in-house publication 'On Course' which is sent to all golf clubs to promote awareness of greenkeeper training and the GTC, and it has overseen the continued development of assessor and coaching training for senior greenkeepers.

It has been a great pleasure to work with the greenkeepers and other industry representatives on the committee, in serving the needs of greenkeepers training.

I was thus introduced to greenkeepers training at an early stage. Even on the first training course I was struck by the greenkeepers' thirst for knowledge compared with some of the other course participants who had been "sent" by their (often Local Authority) employers.

My reason for standing down is quite simply that all the organisations that make up the GTC, have mechanisms to ensure that Chairmen of committees do not go on too long and I feel that it is time to do so and I will continue with the editing and other consultancy work for the industry as required.

Present Technical Committee members include: Nick Bisset,

Educational Expert and Chairman Designate; David Leach MG, BIGGA; Tony Mears, GTC Internal Verifier and longest serving member; Dr Gordon McKillop, STRI Chief Executive; Ken Richardson, BIGGA Education Director and Deputy Chief Executive, and co-opted, Jeff Bates, NPTC External Verifier.

All of the above, as well as former members: Kerran Daly, John Davis, Paddy Holohan and Iain Ritchie, deserve my thanks for all the time and effort that they contributed during my time as Chairman. I am sure Nick Bisset will make a fine successor as Chairman and I wish him, David, the rest of the committee and the GTC, all the best for the future.



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Groundcare

In the Shed

Greenkeeper International brings you 'In the Shed', a puzzle page to keep you entertained when the weather forces you in or for when times are slow.

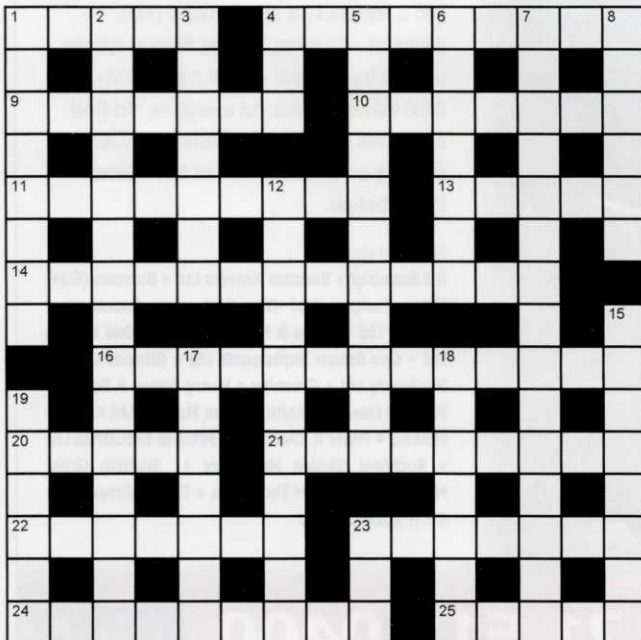
CROSSWORD - Compiled by Anax

ACROSS

- 1 Amusement, hilarity (5)
- 4 Any activity whose completion is very easy (4,5)
- 9 Force produced by differences in pressure (7)
- 10 Without invitation (7)
- 11 Weed with heads of small yellow flowers (9)
- 13 Golfer's favourite hole? Exactly! (2,3)
- 14 Batsman brought in tactically towards of close of play (5-8)
- 16 Related orally - in Latin, viva voce (2,4,2,5)
- 20 Centre; courage (5)
- 21 Name given to any inhabitant of the US & parts of Europe (9)
- 22 Type of easily peeled small orange (7)
- 23 Stone pillar, typically shaped as a dagger (7)
- 24 Person who takes on a professional role temporarily (9)
- 25 Type of mint herb (5)

DOWN

- 1 Hatred of women (8)
- 2 Strategic UK colony on southern tip of Spain (4,2,9)
- 3 Meshed protection for locks? (4-3)
- 4 Family group (3)
- 5 Betray (6-5)
- 6 Large open-air building, usually for sports (7)
- 7 Factor whose importance is not obvious (7,8)
- 8 Make small, restless movements (6)
- 12 Bird also called kestrel (7,4)
- 15 American Indian people, also called Iroquois (8)
- 17 Diving attire (7)
- 18 US actress, name given to type of life jacket (3,4)
- 19 Purgative medicine, also old term for doctor (6)
- 23 Rowing implement (3)



ANAGRAM

Identify these early entrants for the 2006 Open Championship.

CHAPEL MILE LAMB MORE COIL GEM IN TON

QUICK 'NINE HOLE' QUIZ

1. Which two teams competed in the final of the 2002 World Cup, and what was the score?
2. Paul Casey squandered a large lead in the final of the British Masters at The de Vere Belfry but who came through to win?
3. Who scored his team's second and decisive try in the Heineken Cup final at the Millennium Stadium?
4. The Scotland football team won some silverware for the first time in a while when they lifted the Kirin Cup last month. Name the other two teams in the competition.
5. Name the player signed by Chelsea from Bayern Munich on £130,000 per week.
6. Which horse won this year's Grand National?
7. Who won the last Open Championship to be held at Royal Liverpool GC?
8. Who is the Minister for Sport?
9. Can you name the three rowers who helped Steve Redgrave to his fifth Gold Medal in the coxless four, at Sydney in 2000?

SUDOKU

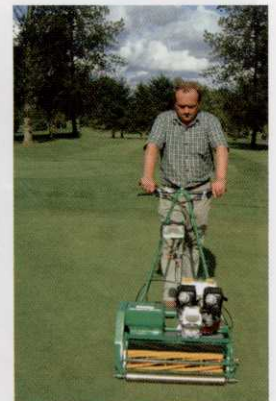
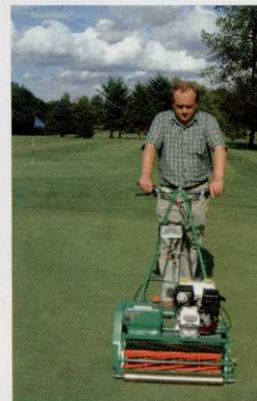
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

	3	6	2	8				9
5	9							
			6			3	7	
		1				5		7
	5			1			4	
8	9					1		
	1	7			2			
							2	4
3				9	4	7	1	

Supplied by www.dailysudoku.com

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Look closely at the pictures below and try and spot the difference between them. You should be able to spot six!



ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES ARE SHOWN ON PAGE 52

Jack of all trades or master of none?

James de Havilland meets up with Head Greenkeeper Ian Upton, to look at how attachments can turn his brushcutter into a multi-use piece of equipment.

Systems that use a brushcutter power unit to drive attachments, including a power pruner, hedge trimmer or sweeper brush are not new. Take up among professional operators, however, is not as strong as it could be, there are those who suggest 'systems' based tools are compromised. Here we see if that has any foundation in practice.



Ian Upton, Head Greenkeeper at Rye Hill Golf Club in Oxfordshire. An existing STIHL CombiSystem user, he suggests the available CombiTools work well and make full use of a single power unit. "Why buy a dedicated brushcutter when a CombiSystem is so much more versatile?"

Ian Upton, Head Greenkeeper at Rye Hill Golf Club in Oxfordshire, is an established STIHL CombiSystem user. Currently operating a 27cc two-stroke STIHL power unit with the company's CombiTool grass trimmer line/polycut blade head, power pruner and hedge trimmer attachments, he already appreciates the system's versatility. So, when it came to trying the latest CombiEngine power units and CombiTool attachments for Greenkeeper International, he was a natural choice.

STIHL submitted two power units for his appraisal, the established 2-stroke 0.95kW 25.4cc KM 85 R and the all-new 1.4kW 36.6cc 4-MIX KM 130 R.

For those not familiar with STIHL

power units, the 'R' element in the name indicates that a loop, as opposed to 'cow horn'/bike handle, is fitted. A loop handle is more versatile on a CombiSystem as it enables the power head to be operated with the full range of CombiTool attachments, such as a hedge trimmer or pruner, but 'cow horns' can be specified for use with a grass trimmer, metal blade or scrubcutter.

Of the two power units submitted for this appraisal, it is the new 4-MIX head that will arguably be of most interest. In simple terms, the engine is a four-stroke, that uses a standard 50:1 petrol/oil mix for lubrication. This does away with the need for an oil sump, allows the power unit to run at any angle, just like a 2-stroke and cuts out the need for sump oil level checks and changes.

As existing 4-stroke power unit operators know, a key advantage of a 4- over a 2-stroke is improved fuel economy. The main impact of this is not so much reduced

operating costs but the ability to make one tank of fuel last longer. Although those who welcome refuelling as a chance to have a break will no doubt see, this extended period between, fills as a two edged sword, the 4-MIX system is also said to offer other advantages, not least being noise levels.

Ian Upton picked out the supplied 4-MIX engine to put this to the test. In work, the 4-MIX KM 130 R certainly sounds very different to the 2-stroke KM 85 R - the high pitched buzz of the 2-stroke versus lower beating thrum of the 4-MIX. No, that is not an over helpful description, but Ian suggested the 4-MIX sound does not travel as aggressively as its 2-stroke sibling and it proved far less penetrating through his ear defenders too.

So point one on sound goes to the 4-MIX. But what about pick up and power? "I have to say that power-wise I would not really be able to notice much difference between the 4-MIX and the 2-stroke power units I am used to", says Ian. "The KM 130 R was certainly not wanting for power with any of the attachments tried, it did a good job with the line trimmer head, where a high line speed is important and it did not pass high levels of vibration back in use either."

In fact what impressed Ian most about the 4-MIX was its ability to behave pretty much like a 2-stroke, with the added bonus of less noxious fumes. But it does have one disadvantage. Compare the weights of the 2-stroke KM 85 R and 4-MIX KM 130 R and the latter does feel heavier, this is borne out by the specifications. A 4-MIX tends to be around 0.5kg heavier than its nearest equivalent 2-stroke alternative. But in this case, the KM 130 R is a more powerful power unit, so the extra weight is easy to excuse.

"I have to say it is difficult to separate the two power units in terms of actual operational advantage", added Ian.



A selection of the CombiTools, and two CombiEngines, were put through their paces at Rye Hill. The build quality of each item was first class, each item snapping into place quickly and easily

Jack of all trades or master of none?

"Price wise, the 4-MIX motor is about £40 more expensive, but it has a higher displacement and develops more power. It is the power unit I would choose in a straight head to head comparison."

The CombiTool attachments are identical for every power unit, so the only other decision is which of the eleven to choose.

As an aside, STIHL has developed its range of 2-stroke oil formulations to include those that closely match the demands of 4-MIX units. In outline, the company continues to offer a standard 50:1 mix. Carrying a red marker dye, this formulation is recommended for all 2-stroke power units and will be OK to use with a 4-MIX. A new HP Super 50:1 alternative, however, has just been introduced with enhanced properties to suit the 4-MIX system.

Equally suitable for all 2-stroke engines, HP Super offers improved lubricity and is claimed to burn with even less combustion residue than the existing oil. It carries a green marker dye to distinguish it from the standard 50:1 oil. A further alternative is BioPlus, a bio-degradable version of the standard 2-stroke oil.

In the picture captions, Ian Upton gives his opinion of the latest CombiTools. He was unfamiliar with the scrub cutter and the adjustable long-reach hedge trimmer is a new design. The line mowing head tested also featured the latest easy feed system.

STIHL CombiSystem Technical Specification:

STIHL CombiEngine	KM 85 R	KM 130 R
Engine type:	STIHL two-stroke	STIHL 4-MIX
Displacement:	25.4cc	36.6 cc
Power Output:	0.95 kW / 1.3 HP	1.4kW / 1.9 HP
Weight:	4.0 kg *	4.6 kg *
Handle design:	Loop **	Loop **
Standard equipment:	Carrying harness Protective glasses	Carrying harness Protective glasses
Length to coupling sleeve:	89cm	92cm
Price £ ex VAT (RRP):	331.91	370.21

*Weight without fuel

**Bike/'cow horn' handle model also available

STIHL CombiTools	Price £ (Ex VAT)
AC-KM AutoCut line head	109.79
MB-KM Metal Blade	97.87
BF-KM Pick tine cultivator	127.66
FCS-KM Edge trimmer (straight shaft)	177.88
KW-KM Power sweeper	262.98
KB-KM Bristle brush	161.70
HL-KM 135o adjustable hedge cutter	203.40
FH-KM Scrubcutter	191.49
HT-KM Pole pruner	148.94
HT-KM Pole pruner extension	67.23

STIHL website: www.stihl.co.uk
Freephone: 0800 137574 quoting GKI

STIHL CombiSystem - a product of evolution

STIHL introduced the concept of an outdoor multi-tool almost fifty years ago, adding a choice of attachments to fit one of its forestry chainsaws. This enabled one power unit to drive a range of outdoor tools. The concept evolved further in the late nineties with the introduction of a clearing saw series where the head could be replaced with a hedge trimmer, pruner or light cultivator. The idea was further developed to produce the 'splitting shaft' concept of the CombiSystem in 2000. The various attachments connect without the need for tools and the system now includes a choice of eleven CombiTools.

The CombiSystem is available with four different CombiEngines and the eleven CombiTools. These include a choice of hedge trimmers, a pruner, cultivator and lawn edger, a grass trimmer, brushcutter, scrubcutter, powered sweeper and bristle brush.

Top Tip:

Extend the life of nylon cutting line and thermoplastic blades

Soak nylon line and 'plastic' blades in water for 48 hours before use. This will help restore them to factory fresh suppleness, which in turn will reduce sudden breakage in service.



Fitting new line into the AC-KM Mowing head is an absolute doddle. Cut off a length of new line, and feed each end into the line outlets on the head. Wind in the line via the knurled base winder, cutting it either with a knife or letting the guard mounted line shear do the job for you



The 4-MIX KM130 R CombiEngine produces a different noise to its 2-stroke alternatives, the sound tending not to travel as far. Fumes appear to be less noxious too. The only penalty is the unit is a bit heavier, but there is nothing wrong with power and torque



FH-KM Scrub cutter is both shorter and stronger than the hedge trimmer, but boasts the same adjustment system. A metal base-plate makes it suitable for trimming growth at ground-level without the 'scatter' of a grass trimmer and the wide blade spacing allows coarse material to be trimmed. "I think this tool would be useful for clearing material, such as reeds, from around ponds and lakes. This also could be used to edge bunkers. It looks pretty tough too"



The rubber paddles of the KW-KM Power sweep have the advantage of not getting blocked when working with wet material. "The sweeping power of this unit, and the brush, is good and the tools are easy to operate"



A green marker dye distinguishes the HP Super 50:1 ratio 4-MIX optimised oil from the standard red marked alternative. BioPlus variant is bio-degradable

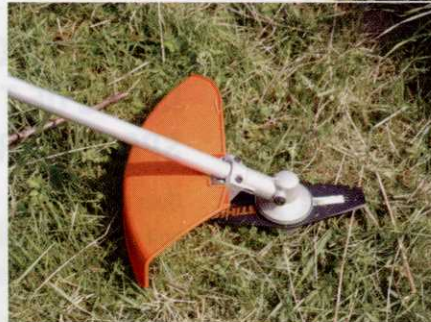


The latest HL-KM adjustable twin-blade Hedge trimmer has several advantages over the earlier design. Adjustable through an expanded 135°, it can be adjusted to trim the top of a hedge, and can be operated in a range of positions. It also stores 'folded'. "A really useful tool. It makes trimming the top of hedges and bushes quick and easy. The range of adjustment is a real plus"

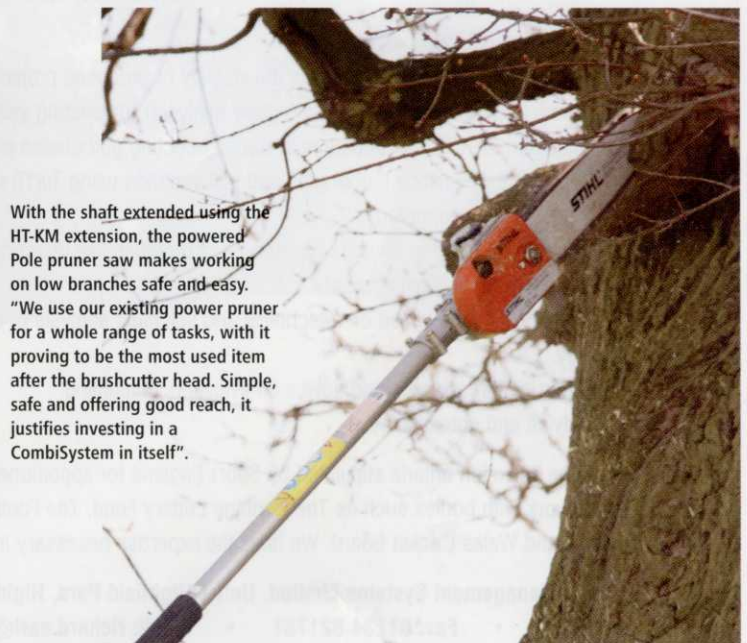
Fitted with easy to refill AutoCut C line head, the AC-KM Mowing unit boasts a small guard. This makes it easy to see the area that is being cut and the head could be fitted with 3 pivoting thermoplastic 'polycut' blades if preferred. It's every bit as good as a dedicated unit. "What I really liked was the easy system to feed in new line. Winding line into a conventional head now seems a real chore!"



Designed predominantly as a Lawn edger, the FCB-KM unit was put to the task of trimming a bunker edge. It did a good job where the sand and grass were nearly level, but the Scrub cutter, or indeed manual edging shears, would be better for deep edges. "The jury is out on the value of this tool for bunker edging. I think it needs a bit of experience to get the best from too"



Grass cutting head, MB-KM, is the tool to select when using a brushcutter blade. STIHL offers a range of blade designs, including the twin blade pictured. In work, this left a clean cut, the cleared material appearing fair less mulched. "Normally we would use a star pattern blade, but the twin blade worked really well in long grass, leaving material that would be easier to rake up. Good guard"



With the shaft extended using the HT-KM extension, the powered Pole pruner saw makes working on low branches safe and easy. "We use our existing power pruner for a whole range of tasks, with it proving to be the most used item after the brushcutter head. Simple, safe and offering good reach, it justifies investing in a CombiSystem in itself".

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Area Report	The	The	The	The	The	The	The	The	The	The	The	The
Surface	Comp	Shp	Len	Label	Area	Perim	Area	Perim	Area	Perim	Area	Perim
100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



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TurfTrax

Ground Management Systems

TURFTRAX GROUND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS LIMITED IS ONE OF THE COUNTRIES LEADING INDEPENDENT SPORTSTURF CONSULTANCY SPECIALISTS.

Over the last eight years, our scientists have developed and refined a number of unique golf course construction and remediation technologies as well as providing the most detailed soil surveys available anywhere in the industry.

TurfTrax offers a wide range of services to support golf and sports clubs and local authorities, including the design and supervision of construction or remediation projects.

Specifically, TurfTrax offers:

- Research and feasibility studies to examine the viability of proposed projects.
- Diagnostic services (soil scanning and laboratory analysis) for existing installations to determine drainage status and identify the fundamental issues affecting golf course playing surface performance.
- Detailed assessment of surface topography and soil variation using TurfTrax's unique state-of-the-art scanning and RTK GPS technology.
- Remediation plans for existing courses based on a comprehensive understanding of factors influencing the condition of each individual course.
- Design of new installations based on a technical and scientific analysis of topography, indigenous soils and hydrology.
- The design of irrigation systems and advice on irrigation scheduling.
- Agronomy advice and consultancy.



TurfTrax meets the selection criteria stipulated by Sport England for appointment as Soils and Turfgrass Consultant Engineers. TurfTrax are also recognized and work with bodies such as The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Football Foundation, The Football Association, The Sports Council for Wales and The England and Wales Cricket Board. We have the expertise necessary in order to achieve the requisite Performance Quality Standards (PQS).

TurfTrax Ground Management Systems Limited, Unit 1 Highfield Parc, Highfield Road, Oakley, Bedfordshire MK43 7TA
Tel: 01234 821750 • Fax: 01234 821751 • Email: richard.earl@turftrax.com • www.turftraxgms.com

Serious About Surveying

Peter Lloyd outlines the advances being made by Korec, in golf course surveying.

Having supplied Land Surveying equipment for golf course surveys, for over 20 years, Korec, have seen a significant increase in the demand for golf course surveying equipment. This has coincided with the advancement in technology and productivity of the latest surveying instrumentation and GPS.

To explain why there has been an increase, we must first understand the reasons why a golf course would need a survey and what they would do with the data afterwards.

The most obvious need for a survey is when major alterations are planned and the golf course architect requires survey information, to undertake the design work in CAD. Until recently, a Surveyor and a Survey Assistant, using a Total Station, would have carried out this labour intensive task, of comprehensive topographical surveys. Typically 500 points for each hole would be surveyed to produce a detailed contoured plan of the course.

A much simpler and less detailed survey is required for smaller design projects, like drainage and irrigation improvements; a new course planner; or simply to measure all the play areas to provide accurate area measurements, for calculating fertilizer and pesticide application rates - minimising the usage of these expensive products.

The introduction of Robotic Total Stations and GPS Receivers (Global Positioning System) over recent years, have revolutionised how golf course surveys are carried out. Both these types of equipment can be operated by one person, which significantly increases the efficiency of the surveyor, while maintaining the same survey accuracy.

Robotic Total Stations, offer the benefits of traditional surveying equipment but provide the option for one person operation, either at the detail pole - where the surveyor can clearly identify different features - or at the instrument - when taking reflectorless measurements to remote features - for example: the far side of a lake.

The new Trimble® S6 Total Station, is the third generation of Robotic Total Station from Trimble and offers fantastic features ideal for golf course surveying including: one person operation; MagDrive technology for breathtaking speed; reflectorless measurements to 300m and a graphical data capture system.

Professional RTK GPS receivers, work to an accuracy of 10mm and can measure several points per second - providing the surveyor with unprecedented performance. GPS is used by one person - at the detail pole, or mounted on a buggy - for a rapid collection of data.

The new Trimble® R8 GNSS System, is an integrated GPS receiver and antenna in a small rugged housing, which also offers fantastic features ideal for golf course surveying including: one person operation; Trimble R-Track technology to support all GPS signals; pole or buggy mounted and a graphical data capture system.

Both the Robotic Total Station and RTK GPS technologies, can be used in construction for setting out and checking the new golf course design, directly from the architects CAD drawings into the graphical survey system - this significantly increases the speed and accuracy of the setting out process.

Using this new technology, will not only significantly reduce the time required to survey the golf course but also reduce to a minimum, any disruption to golf play during the survey process.

For large construction and earth moving projects - like building a new golf course - Machine Control systems, can be used on heavy earthmoving plant, for example: dozers and graders. Using extremely rugged GPS receivers, these systems can automatically move the blade of the machine as it is driven to form the 3 dimensional surface of the new golf course design, without the need for pegging out.



fastMAP Greenkeeper Handheld GPS

The new Trimble® GCS900 Grade Control System, is an automatic control system for dozers, that puts design surfaces and grades inside the cab, using GPS technology. The user is then able to follow simple light bar instructions on the graphical display and the need to set out the new surface is eliminated - speeding up the construction process.

After the existing topographical survey or the new construction work has been completed, the new golf course plan will be used by Course Managers and Greenkeepers but will become quickly out of date, as small changes and improvements to the golf course will continue.

Korec have recently launched fastMAP™ Greenkeeper, a new software and handheld GPS system, which allows greenkeeping staff to take ownership of their own golf course data, by measuring and updating the golf course plan themselves.

fastMAP™ Greenkeeper, provides the benefit of up to date and accurate area measurements, identifying the locations of buried drainage and irrigation pipes and recording the positions of any defects or problems on the course. It also allows others to relocate them later. fastMAP™ Greenkeeper, manages the storage of all other kinds of data on the plan, including: safety information; maintenance records; pin positions and hole measurements.

Korec offer a complete range of surveying and measurement solutions, for Golf Course Surveys, Construction and Maintenance. Further information is available from them, by calling: 0151 931 3161; faxing: 0151 931 5559 or visiting their website: www.korecgroup.com

John Oldfield shows just what can be achieved by a modern golf course survey.

Greenkeeping has always been a science, as well as an art - even in the 19th Century, when Old Tom Morris was advocating "saund, saund and mere saund!"

Today, the art still exists - knowing when and where to apply top dressing to optimise the condition of the greens; "tuning" the course to its optimum playability, just in time for the most important event of the year; planning winter activities to maximise future impact, while minimising day-to-day disruptions to the play of the course. Great greenkeepers have always instinctively known how to manage towards these goals.

Managing the advances in the science, however, have proved more difficult for many greenkeepers. As with the rest of the world, information overload has been hard to get to grips with, including, for greenkeeping, such matters as:

- The integration of numerous databases, for example: irrigation; drainage; pest control; mowing and rolling; restoration; budgeting and their seamless linkage to an accurate map of the course
- The ability to ensure that these databases can be updated, in an integrated manner, as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- The use of these databases to help with day-to-day problems as well as long term planning.

Answers to these problems are now emerging.

The latest state-of-the-art system, is based on the creation of a highly accurate (1-2 centimetre) three-dimensional model of the terrain and features of a golf course. This model then serves as a template, over or under which can be laid additional information, both historic (e.g. drainage systems) and future (e.g. annual course maintenance programmes).

MANAGE YOUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET PROPERLY

Information is the key to managing anything well and the golf course is no exception. In this regard, there is no such thing as "too much information".

Using the three D digital terrain model - which can be contoured at anything from ten centimetres to a meter or more - combined with the high resolution imagery, the management system can enable all course measurements to be undertaken, without the Head Greenkeeper leaving his desk. The model is accurate in three dimensions to +/-5cm. The amount of time this could save is immeasurable. (By measurement, we mean instant access to any linear measurement and area measurements such as: imperial, metric hectares, acres and even chains and furlongs if someone really wants it!).

OTHER PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Records need to be acquired and maintained, not just about the topography of the course but also a history of activity and its associated costs.

Therefore the Greenkeeper will require a range of applications including:

- Health and safety records of underground and over ground services
- Budgeting control and recording of key inputs (labour, materials, etc.)



- Management of daily and periodic tasks
- Environmental management
- Change planning and control
- Pin positioning systems
- Tournament / Event planning
- Course re-design proposals

In addition, the process allows for the creation of ancillary products and services of benefit to other departments of the club.

Amongst these are:

- High quality course guides, which can be easily updated
- Stunning aerial images of the course
- Hole x Hole tour for the clubs website
- Cards, placemats, t-shirts, etc. using images of the course
- Books of the club and course using our "Experience" brand
- Hand held PDA with GPS showing all distances to every feature and permits accurate shot recording.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Case 1

Hamish works for a Green Convener who is obsessed with bunkers. Two years ago he was sure he could save money, by eliminating 20% of those least in play, thus eliminating daily raking and annual maintenance. Last year he was convinced that new technology had made his course "obsolete" and he made Hamish build new bunkers at about 280 yards, at the corners of holes 2, 8 and 13. This year, his passion is depth. The bunker projects of the past two years, actually made the course play easier and several of the good club players and regular visitors made it known that they did not like the recent changes. The Convener wants to deepen several bunkers to make them more challenging but a growing segment of the membership wants to bring the course back to where it was in 2003.

Case 2

Mary has been working at Royal Prestige for 10 years. After working hard and graduating at the top of her class at Elmwood, she was promoted to Assistant Greenkeeper in 2005. In early 2006 her boss, Nigel, was killed in a tragic accident and Mary has taken on the role of Acting Course Manager. Her instructions seem to her to be "preserve the status quo" but Mary knows that RPGC has fallen behind the times and also that the Committee is actively recruiting for a higher profile replacement for Nigel. In her first week at the new job, Mary finds that RPGC's records are non-existent (Nigel kept them all in his head) the status of the course is declining (the County Association is dropping it this year from its rota), and three pieces of heavy equipment seem to have gone "missing."

These problems could be solved if...

In Case 1, Hamish had:

- A computer graphics tool to show the Greens Convenor and the entire Committee what the effect would be of any changes to bunkering or any other feature of the golf course - in terms of aesthetics, costs and playability.
- High-resolution graphics - which would show how the new deeper bunkers would actually look and play.

In Case 2, Mary had:

- Access to the data that Nigel had "kept in his head".
- A tool to compare how the course looks now, to how it looked in the past and might look in the future.
- Records of who had access to what equipment and when?

Managing a golf course is as much an art, as a science. However, if the science is neglected, the art can never blossom. OptimizeGolf is dedicated to providing the information to help courses blossom.

OptimizeGolf 2024

OptimizeGolf 2024

Richard Earl explains why the role of scanning for planning remediation, works for golf courses.

Routinely wet and sometimes unplayable areas, coupled with ineffective drainage installations, are a common scenario at many golf courses. This often results in a downward spiral of accelerated degeneration of turf condition and lost playing days, as greenkeepers are prevented from carrying out essential maintenance operations at the right time and under the right conditions.

An essential starting point to reversing this situation is to develop a thorough understanding of the underlying cause(s) of the problem. However, soil type and condition across a golf course can vary considerably. The traditional method for assessing this variability involves invasive removal and assessment of soil samples, at regular intervals across the course. This is destructive, time-consuming and expensive and so corners are often cut during the investigative process which can result in inappropriate remediation practices being specified and carried out.

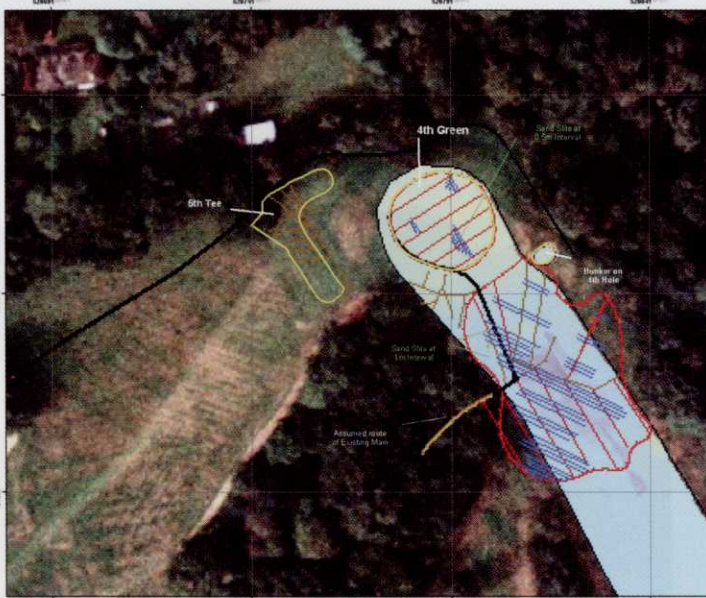
One way of addressing this is to use a "non-invasive, data-rich surrogate" to traditional soil samples procedures. In other words, to use a method of obtaining a lot of information about a large area of the course, which can be used to target more detailed, invasive investigations. TurfTrax have developed procedures for doing this, using Electro-magnetic induction (EMI). EMI of soil (measured in deciSiemens per metre) is predominately affected by clay content and water content.



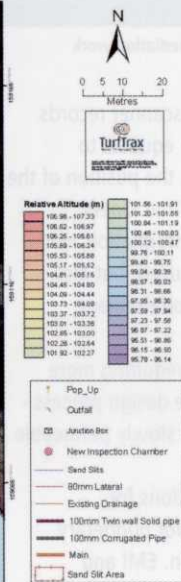
EMI scan



Topographical survey



Drainage design





Standing water on fairway



ATV towing the EMI scanner



Remediation work



A scanning device is towed behind a small ATV. The scanner records EMI at two depths (8" and 4') 5 times per second which equates to approximately 10,000 readings per hectare. In addition, the position of the vehicle is monitored using an accurate (+/- 1 cm) Real Time Kinetic Differential Global Positioning System (RTKDGPS). This information, not only enables accurate maps of soil variability to be produced, but also topography (slope), which is an essential element of good drainage design.

The EMI scans can be used to identify specific areas requiring more detailed investigation - to identify factors and inform the design process - for example: the presence of a water table; compaction; slowly permeable soil; nutrient status and pH.

The production of effective and sustainable specifications for remediation works, with the associated indicative costs for budgetary purposes, can only be derived using accurate information. EMI and topographic surveys can therefore, play an import role in underpinning this process, to ensure that investment is optimised.



Completed green

Practical Thatch Control

Marcus Oliver gives some practice advice in dealing with thatch.

Very few Greenkeepers will need much of an introduction to the effects of thatch. Greens that are soft and spongy in damp conditions and quickly dry out and scorch when it is dry, are immediate giveaways.

Such symptoms can be quickly analysed by taking soil profiles. Any build up of yellow-brown thatch interspersed with anaerobic black streaks will be immediately apparent, as will the characteristic sour smell that goes with it.

A widely accepted definition of thatch is: "a tightly intermingled layer of dead and living stems and roots that develops between the zone of green vegetation and the soil surface". As such, thatch starts to accumulate where the production of dead organic matter exceeds the rate at which it decomposes. Therefore, much can be done to prevent thatch accumulating by the use of sound greenkeeping practices.



Note how much easier it is to identify the thatch layer on larger soil profile

THATCH PREVENTION

Because the natural decomposition of thatch is accomplished by the activity of aerobic bacteria, an effective aeration programme is essential to keep those bacteria alive and active. Slit tining is favoured by many Greenkeepers, due to its non disruptive action which enables it to be used repeatedly through the season.

Much greater care must be given to the timing of hollow core aeration - this is not merely to choose a time that will least frustrate the members, but in particular to prevent opening up the surface to the invasion of weed grass seeds. To avoid getting a polka dotted invasion of dark green *Poa Annua* plants in the midst of your fine turf, make sure you don't hollow core when *Poa* is flowering.

Besides aeration, good drainage and the avoidance of over-watering and over-fertilisation, are the other main factors in preventing thatch build up.

TIME FOR ACTION!

So what if, for any number of reasons, you have inherited a deep thatch problem - what are the steps to curing it?

Step 1 - Analyse and Report

Analyse the extent of the thatch by taking soil profiles of all greens and any other problem areas. Show these or photos of them, to your management and members to get their support for the necessary remedial action. Let them know that the desired improvement in putting surface quality and firmness can only be achieved if you have their practical support for carrying out the following steps.

Step 2 - Reduce the Causes

Review your feeding programme and check with other Greenkeepers, whose greens you admire, what they are applying and at what rates. You may be surprised how little feed many of the best courses use.

Check your irrigation sprinklers are effectively positioned without excessive overlaps. Far better to hand water certain areas when necessary, than just to turn on more automatic irrigation everywhere.

Install additional drainage, both to the greens themselves - if this is needed and also to prevent flooding from water running onto greens from slopes above.

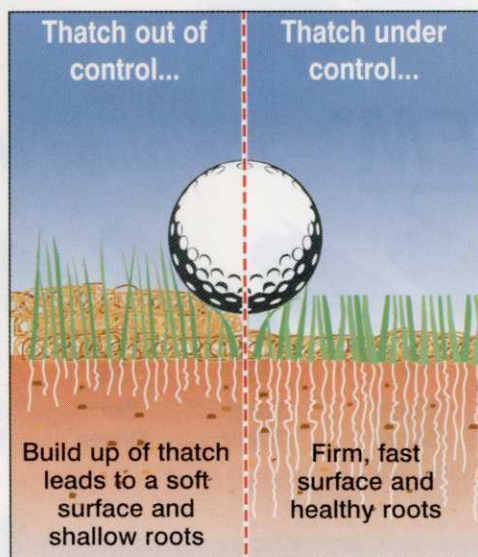
Avoid using topdressing mixtures with a high content of fine particles, which clog the surface and impede drainage.

Step 3 - Aerate Regularly

As mentioned earlier, a carefully executed programme of slitting and hollow core aeration, is one of the basic weapons in the battle against thatch. The important thing, especially with hollow coring, is to warn the members in advance as to what you are doing and why it is essential. Putting up copies of the poster "Aeration - what it is" (available from BIGGA) on the notice board and at the first tee, is a proactive step you can take towards gaining their understanding.

Step 4 - Verticutting and Scarifying

Once the underlying causes have been tackled, it is time to establish a programme of regular mechanical treatments to start reducing your thatch layer. These treatments are also the ideal accompaniment both before and after using the biological methods covered elsewhere in the feature. With a liquid product, your verticutting frequency can continue unaltered, but after applying a granular thatch remover, you should wait a fortnight before resuming verticutting.



Keeping thatch under control is vital for healthy turf and a fast true ball roll

THATCH...



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-OR YOUR MONEY BACK!**

Let's now look in more depth at these various mechanical methods, which have themselves been going through quite a revolution in recent years.

Probably the most significant development in greens maintenance, was the introduction of the worlds first ride-on greens triple mower by Jacobson in 1968. This was soon followed by "vertical mowing" or "verticutting" attachments which fitted in place of the standard mowing units. Thatch control was then a triplex operation, but was still barely able to keep up with the amount of thatch that the new automatic irrigation systems were starting to cause.

The most recent developments in this sequence were when in 1998 Thatch-Away introduced the worlds first verticutting units with tungsten tipped Fan-Force blades. This was followed in 2002 by the Supa-System, which was the world's first Interchangeable Cassette System for triple mowers. This now enabled genuine scarifying, as well as verticutting, to be carried out using a ride-on greens triple mower.

SO WHAT DO YOU USE AND WHEN?

Verticutters, continue to be the most widely used attachments and can be used virtually all season long at different working depths. Start at 1mm below surface level increasing this to 2mm, on a weekly basis once the grass is growing strongly. Reduce to monthly usage, in the height of summer and then increase again to weekly use in late summer and early autumn.

Scarifiers should only be used when there is strong growth in the late spring, late summer and early autumn. Never scarify (or verticut deeply) when *Poa Annua* is flowering. Typical working depth for scarifying is around 8-12mm and this has the two-fold effect of both removing a substantial amount of thatch and also allowing oxygen to penetrate the root zone, which further assists the decomposition of thatch.

Sarel Rolling and Deep Slicing to a depth of approximately 20mm, are two further treatments which are non disruptive of the playing surface, but which assist oxygen entering the root zone and therefore help promote the natural decomposition of thatch. Both pieces of equipment are now available as cassettes to fit the Supa-System, enabling these operations to be quickly carried out using a greens triple mower.

Step 5 - Topdressing

Topdressing is an important element in creating a free-draining surface, with capillary continuity to the root zone. This in turn, helps to provide an environment in which thatch decomposition can naturally occur. Effective brushing-in is vital, to fill coring holes and to avoid burying the thatch under deep layers of topdressing which can result in the development of anaerobic black layer.

Choose your topdressing material carefully, avoiding mixtures with a high concentration of fine particles which can lead to sealing of the surface. For USGA specification greens, the recommended objective is to maintain the root zone at 3% organic matter by weight by diluting the thatch with regular sand topdressing.



Modern tungsten bladed verticutters can remove vast amounts of thatch whilst leaving an immediately playable surface

CONCLUSION

To sum up the key elements of a successful thatch control program:

- Don't be complacent. Diligent soil profiling may reveal more thatch than you might imagine.
- Don't over feed or over water. These are two of the most common causes of thatch.
- Do aerate regularly
- Do verticut regularly. A little and often approach is by far the safest and can be highly effective in reducing thatch layers as deep as 3" down to an optimum level within a couple of seasons.
- Do scarify if you have a serious thatch problem but use discretion as to how deep you go and when you do it. Aim for periods of strong growth, to give a quick recovery and avoid times when *Poa Annua* is seeding.
- Do verticut deeply, or scarify, before using biological thatch control products, to enhance their effectiveness.
- Do keep a good supply of oxygen into the thatch zone by regular sarel rolling and deep slicing.
- Do topdress after scarifying and hollow coring but be certain to use a compatible, free draining material and to brush it in evenly.

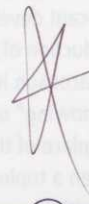
Marcus Oliver is Managing Director of Greentek Tel: 0113 267 7000.



Cassette mounted equipment has opened the way for most greenscare operations to be done using a greens triple mower

Bank on Microbes to Minimise your Thatch Account

Hugh Frost advises you look after the microbial population in your soil, so they will assist you with your thatch control.



The role of soil microbes (bacteria) in turf grass management is discussed, outlining why they should not be ignored and also how they can be managed to keep a thatch layer under control.

THE THATCH BANK

In some respects, the thatch layer in turf grass is like a current bank account. You need to keep the balance to a minimum, as you get no interest in letting it get too large - tying up resources in the wrong place. On the other hand, if it is too small, then you have no buffer against larger withdrawals from the system.

Of course this analogy only works so far, but essentially thatch accumulation has incomings and outgoings, the same as a current bank account and to attain a problem-free life, these components need to be kept in equilibrium.



So what are the contributing factors to thatch income and outgoings?

Thatch Income: Plant growth (particularly the heavily lignified plant components).

While thatch formation is generally attributed to excessive nutrient and water applications, perhaps in recent years too much emphasis has been paid to the total quantity of fertiliser and irrigation, rather than the types and timing of these two inputs.

Grass has to grow and it requires fertiliser to achieve the performance expected from a modern-day golf course. However, if fertilisers are applied too heavily, especially those that decrease pH, not only do they produce excessive plant growth, they can result in a reduction of soil microbial life. These soil microbes are both responsible for efficient uptake of plant nutrients and also play an integral part in plant residue breakdown, therefore thatch reduction.

Similarly, irrigation is obviously vital to high quality fine turf, though once again, if over applied can produce excessive growth. More importantly, poorly timed irrigation can cause the soil to stay in a continuous state of saturation which will block soil pores that take vital

oxygen to plants and microbes.

Any reduction in soil microbial activity will lead to a decrease in thatch breakdown.

Thatch Outgoings: Continuous microbial activity, assisted by regular aeration, will result in an infrequent need for thatch reduction remedies.

There are two categories of thatch reduction; preventative and curative. In the medium to long-term, preventative is easier and far more cost efficient. Therefore priorities should be:

1. Continuous preventative thatch formation by: Microbial activity (see below for advice)
2. Regular preventative thatch formation: Aeration and verticutting
3. Infrequent thatch curatives by: Mechanical removal & use of "thatch eater" products

PREVENTATIVE: Encouraging The Microbial Workforce

Golf course greens can be a sterile and unwelcoming environment for beneficial microbial life, though unfortunately it seems that the undesirable pathogens flourish all too easily. This is partially due to the fact that the beneficial microbes, which compete with these pathogens, have been neglected and unnecessarily lost by over application of a range of inputs which scour the soil profile of microbial life.

So, it is important to make sure that, even in an artificial plant growing environment such as a USGA spec golf green, there is a level of microbial activity that promotes the breakdown of decaying plant material. The process by which microbes are able to reduce the organic matter is by means of enzyme production and this process is largely determined by temperature, moisture and food availability. Therefore when soil temperatures are around 10+ °C, usually from mid-spring, this is when it is vital to seize the opportunity to encourage microbes to work on the thatch on your behalf, without any disruption to play.

The course of action that will be most beneficial to thatch control will be:

- Firstly, look after the microbes that already exist in the soil. This should be done by:
- a. Regular (and frequent) aeration of the root zone (to provide both oxygen and good drainage)
 - b. Avoid using fertiliser that will significantly decrease pH
 - c. Add a feed that will sustain microbial populations (see below for more details)
 - d. Verticut turf in the growing season (aerates and aids microbial action)

Secondly, take every opportunity to supplement microbial populations.

A fertiliser with an organic, rather than a mineral, base can be used to inoculate soils with short-term populations of microbes that cannot only assist in thatch breakdown but allow fertilisers to function more effectively.

Good quality biological fertilisers will not significantly alter the organic matter profile of a rooting zone. This is because they contain organic

nutrients that are readily available to the grass plants and do not utilise slowly degradable organic matter, which would disrupt the root zone profiles. To this organic base of fertiliser can be added extra microbes, which will both make the nutrient content of the fertiliser more available and slowly convert existing decaying plants to new plant food.

Should thatch already be a problem, then a curative course of action should be:

1. Identify and start to remedy the cause(s) of the problem (usually too little aeration, low microbial life)
2. When appropriate, remove thatch by mechanical means, using scarification
3. Apply curative products that will speed up the microbial action on the thatch layer (see below)

CURATIVE: Rapid Microbial Digestion and other practices

While scarification is commonly carried out and is highly beneficial where it can be practiced, greenkeepers are naturally attracted by products that seek to work on the breakdown of thatch. Generally speaking these products are granular in nature and work in a similar fashion to microbially-enhanced fertilisers. However, while some will only feed existing populations of microbes already in the soil, others will provide greater benefit by adding higher concentrations of microbes. This latter category of highly concentrated products, which significantly speed up thatch degradation, are most effective and well formulated liquid products that can provide an even more rapid action.

To cure the problem of thatch it is important that any "thatch-eater" product produces a high microbial enzyme action, if it is able to get straight to the heart of the problem. Although a microbial fertiliser will



keep the income of thatch to a minimum, to create significant outgoings from an existing thatch bank, a far greater intensity of digestion is required.

A liquid product will penetrate the top of the turf and get into the dark recesses of the thatch within seconds of application. If this liquid then contains, not only the high quantity of microbes required for rapid action but also enzymes themselves, the product will

start to work immediately. Of course the liquid formulation has the additional benefit of providing the moisture that microbes require, without the risk of over-irrigating granular products into the sward.

CONCLUSIONS

- Prevent incoming thatch by promoting conditions beneficial to microbial soil activities
- Fully utilise all mechanical aeration practices to enhance natural thatch breakdown
- Apply microbial amendments in either preventative or curative forms as appropriate

If you generate and enhance your own microbial population, this will keep your thatch bank account in a lean and healthy condition, which will pay dividends in the future.

*Hugh Frost, UK Technical Manager, Novozymes Biologicals.
Tel: 01789 290906.*

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Can you beat these?



Don't forget the closing date for the BIGGA Photographic Competition is June 30 2006 so hurry and get your entries in!

THE FIRST DROUGHT ORDERS FOR 11 YEARS HAVE BEEN ISSUED IN THE SOUTH EAST. HOW WILL THIS AFFECT OUR GOLF COURSES?

With the onset of drought conditions, irrigation restrictions imposed by the Environment Agency, look set to add to the woes of greenkeepers this season. JDIH (Water & Environment) Ltd is concerned that greens and fairways will suffer unless steps are taken to offset the reductions in water abstraction.

As the drought impact spreads and deepens, the Environment Agency can impose cutbacks on spray irrigation, leading to problems at key growth stages resulting in lower quality overall.

James Dodds, Managing Director of JDIH (Water & Environment) Ltd, urges greenkeepers to liaise with their local Environment Agency office, to help minimise the impact of the abstraction reductions. He adds: "Early discussions will help greenkeepers and course management, to plan their water requirements over the next few critical weeks and months. Only by good planning now will problems be minimised in the future".

There are some situations where water usage is not classed as spray irrigation, but it is important that groundstaff understand exactly how their situation relates to the Spray Irrigation (Definition Order) 1992, to ensure that they don't come into conflict with the Environment Agency.

EMERGENCY VARIATION OF LICENCES FOR SPRAY IRRIGATION

Under Section 57 of the Water Resources Act 1991, in the case of an "Exceptional shortage of rain" the Environment Agency has the power to:

- Impose a temporary reduction on the quantity authorised in a licence for abstraction, for the purpose of spray irrigation - this has the potential to directly affect golf courses, driving ranges and putting greens.
- Restrictions on abstractions from surface waters are likely to be commonplace during a drought, however, restrictions cannot be imposed on groundwater abstractions, unless an abstraction is thought by the Environment Agency, to be having an effect on the flow, level or volume of a surface water feature, such as: a stream, river, pond or wetland.

The Act requires restrictions to be imposed evenly - specific uses of water cannot be taken in isolation, or specific users targeted in isolation.

There are a number of situations where water usage is not classed as spray irrigation, by virtue of the Spray Irrigation (Definition order) 1992:

- Where the water is mixed with substances to protect plants against pests, disease and weeds, or quality additives / growth regulators / nutrients / manure or dung - provided the apparatus is moveable.
- Irrigation is carried out undercover where the plants have no access to water falling as rain.

- Irrigation of plants grown in pots / containers in the open where they are unable to take moisture from the soil.
- Irrigation of land in the immediate vicinity of cloches for the purpose of securing a supply of moisture to the plants growing within.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ABSTRACTORS

These powers affect spray irrigators - such as golf courses. This only applies to irrigators who abstract water for direct use. It does not apply to irrigators who abstract water during the winter, to be stored in reservoirs for subsequent use in the summer.

JDIH (Water and Environment) understands, that the Environment Agency will seek to gain voluntary reductions in abstraction quantity rather than to impose reductions. For instance in some areas, the Environment Agency has already spoken to some growers and has obtained agreements with them as to how a drought will be managed.

In other areas, the Agency has encouraged night time irrigation where appropriate, to reduce losses of abstracted water through evaporation. In order to get voluntary restrictions the Agency will need to negotiate or discuss arrangements with a representative body. In the last main drought this proved the impetus for setting up "Abstractor Groups", which have continued to provide support and liaison for abstractors within an area.

If no such group exists in your area, then we strongly recommend that you discuss your abstraction with your local Environment Agency office - especially if you are in one of the sensitive areas (Southern, Thames, Anglian).

If the drought continues and river flows are low next autumn and winter, then abstraction for winter filling of reservoirs may be at risk in certain areas, particularly where baseflow to streams is low, due to low groundwater levels. Winter fill abstractors should monitor the situation and, if possible, reduce the amount of water used this summer.

What are your thoughts on how the drought might affect our golf courses? Write to me, Melissa Toombs, at: Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Airedale, York YO61 1UF, or email me at: melissa@bigga.co.uk

Look out for more information on the affects of the drought next month.



News from the Chief Executive

By the time you read this I shall have been on holiday and I must say I am looking forward to escaping from the Northern, if not the English, weather. It seems odd that we have a drought order in place in the South of England and yet travel 200 miles north and we are all growing webbed feet!

May has been a month of meetings for me, having had two discussions with the R&A; a talk to Northern Section of the AGCS; a talk with Kerran Daly to Chairmen of Green at an EGU conference; a meeting with BIGGA Section Secretaries in Scotland and finally a meeting of the BIGGA/AGCS Health and Safety Group.

The R&A are keen to promote their website, www.bestcourseforgolf.org, and the principles contained therein. They urge golf clubs not only to register but also to complete the checklist. I encourage anyone who has not visited the site to do so. The debate on sustainability continues long after the Seminar at Harrogate Week and the R&A feels that the event was so successful, that they have agreed to fund further educational opportunities on this theme at Harrogate Week 2007 - details will appear in the Continue to Learn brochure in due course and in Greenkeeper International.

In our discussions, we identified the need to get a clear message on the issues involved to golfers, golf club committees and in many instances, the general public. It is simply not enough to 'win over' Course Managers and their staff without them having the FULL support of their club.

During our conversation the R&A confirmed that it would be withdrawing its annual grant to the Association after this year, however, I was advised that there was still funding available for special projects that warranted support. It is now up to the Association to identify these and put forward an appropriate bid. The R&A continue to be very supportive of the work undertaken by both BIGGA and the GTC, however, they wish to divert more funding into aiding the development of golf overseas excluding areas already involving the USGA.

In April I wrote to the R&A requesting them to consider free admission at the Open Championship for Greenkeeper members of BIGGA. This was received with some reservation and a final decision will be taken at the next meeting of the Championship Committee in June. Keep your fingers crossed that this will be approved - if initially only for a practice day.

I was pleased to be invited to give presentations to members of the AGCS and at the EGU conference, and I feel that this reflects the developing working relationship between our organisations. The Health and Safety group, an initiative of the AGCS, met with industry consultants to explain the work undertaken so far and the aims and aspirations of BIGGA and the AGCS in this regard. Our proposals for an industry accepted Standard Health and Safety Management System, were well received and we were promised full support from those in attendance. The target date for availability is Harrogate Week 2007 but an awful lot of work must take place before then. A basis of the scheme has been drafted and work has started on producing Risk Assessments for both golf course and associated facilities, and the clubhouse. It is our intention to make the final product available over the internet, at a significant financial discount to members of either the AGCS and BIGGA. The final costings will need to be decided in due course.

Finally, I hope that the BIGGA Support Team for the BMW Championship at Wentworth enjoyed good weather and needed sun tan lotion instead of squeegees!

John Pemberton



Central

With a very dry, cold spring, it has been a slow start to the year, in complete contrast to happenings around the Section. There has been a huge amount of movement within the area and without mentioning everyone by name - good luck to all those moving on, our best wishes go with you. To those new to the Section, welcome.

Congratulations to Mark Laing and his staff, at Aberdour GC, who despite the tough conditions, turned out a very well presented test of golf, for the Section Spring Outing. The best scratch of the day was by David Simpson, from Crieff GC, who carded a one over par 68. Best nett was by Stuart Pearson, from Aberdour GC, who carded a nett 63 (70 - 7). The Stewarts Quaich (best two from the same course) was won by Stuart Pearson and Paul Armour. More news, pictures and other scores can be read on our website (see below). Many thanks must also go to the Scottish patrons for their continued support within the Section.

The Scottish National Tournament will take place at Leven Links on June 22. I'm sure you will all do your best to attend and ensure the Section is well represented. Forms can be obtained from Peter Boyd (0141 616 3440).

As part of their studies, HND students from Elmwood College held a seminar in March, at St Andrews Bay Golf & Leisure resort, for over 50 greenkeepers and golf club officials.

The theme for the day was expectations of the modern golfer, with an underlying question - 'Can we still produce high quality golf courses to a demanding public in conjunction with sustainable management practices and a workable business plan?' Speakers for the day were George Brown, Course Manager from Westin Turnberry Hotel, Golf & Leisure resort; Graeme McDowall, Golf Professional; David Roy, General Manager, Crail Golfing Society, and Paul Miller, from Elmwood College. The presentations were encouragingly optimistic and the debate that followed raised some interesting questions, based mostly upon communication.

Another first for the Section was the "going live" of our very own website - www.biggacentralsection.org.uk. Please take a look and contribute as you feel necessary to ensure that it becomes an essential tool for the local greenkeeper. Please note that the first Wednesday of every month we intend holding a free seminar evening at Elmwood GC, with a selection of speakers invited to address topics of your choice and the opportunity for some much needed communication and refreshment afterwards.

Euan Grant

East

May 1 has arrived, with a cold and extremely dry April behind us and no growth being the general complaint amongst members of the Section. The usual window of false spring just never materialised, so let us hope more favourable conditions suitable to achieving fine surfaces are just around the corner.

The Spring outing was held at Dunbar Golf Club on Tuesday, April 25 (who got the date wrong? I hear you chorus). On behalf of the Section I would like to thank the Club Captain, Douglas Armstrong, for granting us courtesy of the course; Tom in catering for presenting an excellent meal, which included choices for both main courses and dessert; Bob, Susan and Alison for tending the bar and the pro shop for supplying the pre game pies. A big thank you must also go to Graeme Wood and his team for presenting the course in excellent condition.

The results are as follows: Best Scratch. Dean Muir 72; Category 1. 1. Stuart Greenwood 75; 2. 1. Steven Russell 75; 1. 2. Ryan McCulloch 75; Category 2. 2. David Coull 76; Veterans. Graeme Wood 80; Nearest the Pin. Mike Dennis; Trade. Ian Lauder 75; Best New Member. Cohn McArthur 75; Best Nett. Steven Lamb.

At the end of the day, we had a total of 40 in attendance, including four new members: Colin McArthur, Grant Moran, Graham Davidson and Steven Lamb - who enjoyed the golf, played in sunny but windy conditions.

A final thank you must go to the trade for providing raffle prizes, Stewart Crawford for selling the tickets, and last but by no means least Jimmy Neilson for checking all the returned scores.

A young man on the move this month is Sean McLean, a former apprentice greenkeeper at Craigmillar Park in Edinburgh. He has gained a work placement at Rochester, scene of the infamous Ryder Cup, through the Ohio State University Scheme.

Until next month.

Mike Dooner

Northern

There are five new members to report this month: Matthew Smith, Apprentice Greenkeeper at Peterculter GC; Harry Rae, Greenkeeper at Gairloch GC; Ian White, Greenkeeper at Gairloch GC; Edward Ralph, Course Manager at Gairloch GC and Blair Middleton, Apprentice Greenkeeper at Fortrose GC.

The weather has improved in recent weeks, which will mean plenty of cutting and presentation tasks for all greenkeepers, to keep the members happy, for a short time at least.

The new practice facilities at Murcar GC are now completed and look very good. The greens and surrounds were turfed and have resulted in a quality facility for all their members. On a light hearted note, one of the greenkeepers at Murcar, Ryan Pederson, sent a text message to his girlfriend Debbie one day telling her that he loved her very much but sent it to the Club Captain, Derek Mortimer, instead. Derek returned the text telling him he liked Ryan but drew the line at any love between them ever developing.

Skibo will have hosted the Northern Open by the time you've read this. I am sure Gary Gruber and his team will have had the course in excellent order for this event. This is early for a Pro event in the North of Scotland but I'm sure Gary will have risen to the challenge and produce quality surfaces as always for this event.

I spoke to Bob Mackay, at Aviemore, and he was saying his opening of the course has been delayed from early May until late June. I'm sure Bob is quite happy about that, as it will give him more growing time on all areas of the course. From all accounts, this course is a beauty and will be well worth playing in the future, knowing Bob it will be in superb condition at all times.

The Spring Outing was held at Montrose Links on May 11. The course was in very good condition throughout and was enjoyed by all who played on the day. Thanks go to Richard Cutler and his team for all their hard work and also the catering and bar staff who looked after us in the clubhouse.

Results: Longest Drive. Class 1 Bradley Wood, Class 2 Ben Brooks, Class 3 Steven Simpson; Nearest the Pin. Raymond Warrender; Sweep. 1. David Duggan, 2. Jim McCormack, 3. Gary Tough, 4. Roy Donald; Guest Winner. Graeme Leslie. Trade Winner. Shaun Reilly; Committee Winner. Hugh Mclatchie; Veterans Trophy. 1. Hugh Mclatchie, 2. Roy Donald; Class 3 Nett. 1. David Duggan, 2. Hugh Mclatchie, 3. Andrew Nixon; Class 2 Nett. 1. Roy Donald, 2. Richard Cutler, 3. Richard Pirie; Class 1 Nett. 1. Jim McCormack, 2. Kevin Fowler, 3. Mark Maclean; Scratch Trophy. 1. Gary Tough, 2. George Paterson.

That's about it for this month folks, keep up the good work and if you have any news about the trade give me a shout on grassman351aol.com.

Cheers.

Robert Patterson

NORTHERN REGION

North East

April 27 was the day we had our annual Spring competition at Prudhoe GC. It's been a while since we have played there and what a pleasure it was, the golf course was in excellent nick, considering the slow cold spring we are having, as you will see by the leading scores.

Thanks to Head Greenkeeper, George Gainford and his small workforce for giving us an enjoyable day on his course, though it looks short on the card its still a good test, with a little local knowledge needed. The weather was tremendous but I'm not putting that down to George, I think that was down to me praying for a fine day.

Other thanks go to: the committee of Prudhoe for giving us the courtesy and also to the Steward, Jim Mulholland and his staff for giving us the best meals we have had for a long time. In fact, a lot of the players said it was the best meal we have ever had.

Donations were provided by the following companies: Shorts of Whitburn; Aitkens Turf Care; Border Sports Turf and Greenlay, who have given the Section a considerable donation to help towards prizes and anything else we may need this year. Before I forget, thanks to Terry Charlton for providing us with his postal service.

New members in Section are as follows: C. Lumley, Roseberry Grange GC and A. Smith, Prudhoe GC.

Best Nett B Wilson, Stocksfield GC, 77-9-66; Gross A Ingles, Newcastle Utd GC, 71; Nett M Harvey, Wearside GC, 91-24-67; J Storey, Alnmouth GC, 75-6-69; R Black, Westerhope GC, 76-7-69; G Morgan, Crook GC, 76-6-70.

On October 25 we will be having a 18 hole competition at Tyneside GC, to be followed by our Annual General Meeting 2006. Members will be notified and by the way we do have a lot of vacancies for the committee.

Jimmy Richardson

Northern

I have been told this month to start with a word of warning for all of you taking part in President's Day at Northcliffe GC on June 14. The warning is that President Dennis Cockburn is back from injury! After a few weeks off, with a twisted nerve in his shoulder, Dennis is back playing and the rumours are that he has splashed out a whole £5 on a new Slammer driver and is feeling very confident of a victory at Northcliffe.

Other news this month, the date has finally been set for the Invitation Day Tournament at Scarcroft GC - Wednesday, August 23. Anybody wanting to put their name down for this tournament please get in touch as soon as possible and don't forget to invite an official of your club as a guest.

If anybody has any news or gossip regarding the section then please get in touch and we can maybe fill a few more lines up in this report next month.

Adam Speight



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Charterhouse

North West

The spring tournament was held at West Lancs GC on April 20. The winners were as follows: Best Nett. J. Ellisson; Best Gross. P. McFerron; Vet's prize. D McEvoy; Guest prize. Gary Potter; Nearest the Pin. P. McFerron; Longest Drive. P. McFerron.

Many thanks to Nick Gray and Bathgates, for sponsoring of the Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive.

The North West Section Committee would also like to thank: West Lancs for their kind hospitality; the catering staff for the lovely meal and also John and his staff for the wonderful condition of the course. It was a pleasure to play on. Although the weather was very kind to us, a member of the club was heard to say, "it was playing like a pussycat".

Next up is the summer tournament, to be held at Morecambe GC on June 15. This is another great golf course and well worth playing. To play in it you must send a cheque for £20, payable to BIGGA North West Section. The address to send your cheque to is: Bill Merritt, The Lodge, Beacon Park GC, Beacon Lane, Dalton, Wigan, WN8 7RU.

As always if anyone has any news or just needs a little bit of advice, please contact the Secretary, Bert Cross, on 0151 724 5412 or myself on 0151 289 4625. If you are on the worldwide web my e-mail address is jsheehan@blueyonder.co.uk.

Chris Sheehan

Sheffield

Firstly, I would just like to apologise for the lack of notes in the last few months.

On March 23, we had a very special day in the Sheffield Section, which was a talk given by none other than Peter Alliss (the voice of golf). The day consisted of lunch and then Peter's talk. Our thanks go to Bernhard and Co, for sponsoring the event and their staff: Steve Nixon, Richard Kerrigan and Gina Putnam.

Peter had his ankle in plaster and was on crutches due to an accident he had in Scotland the month before. His daughter Sara chauffeured him to the event, which was much appreciated.

After we had all enjoyed our lunch, for which I would like to thank the catering staff at Rotherham GC, Peter began his talk. Peter spoke about his involvement within the game of golf, throughout the world. It was in the usual Peter Alliss style of humour, very dry and funny and he had us all in stitches most of the time! (even at one stage putting Paul Docherty in his place). Nice try Paul, better luck next time! Peter talked about golf courses all over the world and his life as a professional. He then answered questions from the floor and was very interesting and funny as usual.

I would like, on behalf of the Sheffield Section and everyone present, to thank Peter Alliss for giving up his time and with his injury, still making the effort to come and talk, it was very much appreciated by everyone.

I would also like to thank Rotherham Golf Club for letting us use their facilities once again. Finally, while on the thank you's, I would just like to thank Gordon Brammah for all his hard work in arranging this event.

It was very well supported by our membership with over 80 people in attendance, so hopefully this will continue at future events.

Just to remind you of up coming golf events: Sheffield Section vs Northern Section, July 5, Bradley Hall GC; Annual competition - July 10, Serlby Park GC, 1pm tee off time.

Any news please contact me on 07793111845 or jv.lax@tesco.net.

John Lax

MIDLAND REGION

BB&O

"Summertime and the living is easy, fish are jumping and the cotton is high." And so the song goes!

I can hear you all singing away, strimming and cutting around bunkers, over the hills, near and far, as the summer growth kicks in. I apologise for not providing a report last month. As usual, I push the deadline button with Scott the Editor to the limit every month in the hope that my journalistic talents will scoop the biggest story in the history of the BB&O but, this time I got caught short over the Easter

period.

If anyone has any Section news or would like to put their views across to the masses, you only have to phone or e-mail to get your point across and I will be happy to put it in the magazine.

The annual Rigby Taylor Matchplay knockout will now be underway and your host, Gareth Acteson, is on hand to organise results of the first round, which will be published in next month's edition.

Last year's champions, the Goring gang from the Streatley area, will be defending their title and in true Mexican style, their sombrero hats just might need a trim this year.

Bob the Builder, are you out there? Have you built the house yet? Wishing you the best from the Section.

The village of Flackwell Heath in Buckinghamshire, situated high on a ridge between High Wycombe and Maidenhead was famous, decades ago, for its cherry orchards, but now they have all gone. Today there is a busy shopping centre, several pubs and restaurants and not forgetting the guitar shop and of course the venue for the Spring Tournament Flackwell Heath GC.

Established in 1904 this challenging course was a true test asking for a combination of accuracy and power as you wind your way to the bottom end of the heath, through beautiful established beech woodlands, a whole load of hills to climb and an abundance of interesting drives, to negotiate the well kept fairways. Local knowledge proved the key to winning, as our host, Dean Jones, showed by managing a 71 best nett.

1. Dean Jones; 2. Jim Howard; 3. Colin Wilson; 4. Carl Small; 5. Matt Smith. Overall winner of the Tacit Claret Jug was Rob Surgey, Wycombe Height GC, with a best gross 73 and nett 71 after beating Dean on countback.

Longest drive went to Casanova Wilson and Nearest the Pin to Matt Smith with R. Landells, managing the longest walk. Gareth Acteson won the trade and guest prize.

An EGM was held and Frank Booth was elected as the new treasurer for the Section.

A fantastic day was had by all, many thanks to Flackwell Heath G.C for their courtesy and to General Manager, Ian Hulley and Steward, Richard Chalmers who ensured our first event for 2006 was a success. Thanks also to Dean Jones and his staff for preparing the course to a first class standard, appreciated by all who played this blindingly good and interesting course.

Thank you to our sponsors: Tim Webb, from Tacit, and all the other trade who provided for the raffle table, which included: Gem, Rigby Taylor, Sherrif, John Deere and Scotts.

The next event is almost upon us and will be the Gem Rose Bowl to be held at Burnham Beeches GC, on July 5. Have a great summer.

Mark Day

mark@day.fm

East of England

The season is well under way now and we started with a bang. The first competition of the year was held at Sandilands GC. Our sincere thanks go to Mike Ladd and his staff, the course was in excellent condition, made even better by the large turnout. Well done everybody for making the effort. Our thanks also go to Rigby Taylor for sponsoring the day. The prize table was fantastic - TV & DVD player for first prize. Not bad, eh boys?

The results are as follows: 1. Nigel Broadwith, Nett 71; 2. Vince Gilroy, Nett 72; 3. Les Howkins, Nett 73; 4. Adi Kitchenon, Nett 73; 5. Rob Welford, Nett 74; Nearest the Pin. Steve Beverley; Trade Prize. Ian Collett

By the time this goes to print we will have played the world famous (infamous) PMGC. Results will follow next month.

Allan Walker

Midland

You'll be pleased that this month's notes shall be purely factual, as I am with the Grim Reaper while compiling.

On Friday, March 28, we held our spring tournament at Bridgenorth GC. The course was fantastically presented by Mr M. Jones and his very fine team. I bet that the wonderful sunshine on the day cost a packet Martin! Our greatest of thanks to you all, superbly done. The results of the day: Best gross. A. Jones; Nett; 1. E. Stant; 2. S. Mucklow (both of whom qualify for free entry to the National Championship);

3. C. Roberts; 4. A. Jones; 5. R. Hayhurst; Best Trade. A. Cornes; Nearest the Pin. P. Woodham; Longest Drive. A. Jones.

Our greatest of thanks to the main sponsor of the day, the old wag J. Mullins/Vitax. Also thanks to N. Tyler/Alpha Amenity and to R. Page/Turner Ground Care Machinery, for the drinks and chocolate bars around the course. Without question, our greatest of thanks to Bridgenorth for affording us such a wonderful and generous day.

On the topic of golf, this year's Scotts Doubles event, was drawn at Bridgenorth. Please remember that the home team is to contact the away team giving three different dates throughout three separate weeks.

To simplify and reduce costs to both the Section and yourselves regarding postage to and fro, start times or who you are playing in a golf event we/G. Cunningham have set up an email shot list. Anyone wishing to be included on such must email Gary your email address to: Cunningham.su@btinternet.com. Please remember that your address will only be used for the above and never to action commercial promotions.

Our next event is to be held at Oxley Park, July 5 at 2pm. Please get your entries in to Gary as soon as possible.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to welcome five new members to our Section: M. Morris; D. J. Fisher; A. J. Thurman; S. Scott and J. Moverley.

I look forward to reporting on the exploits of K. Booth's charity walk, next month.

Education - IOSH Managing Safely

This training is been offered to BIGGA members by New Grange Training. The Midlands Section has secured a reduced price. Details have outlined as follows:

Commences Thursday, June 15, and then on June 29, Thursday, July 6 and final day on Thursday, July 13, at Becketts Conference Centre just off J3 of the M42. If these dates do not suit, we intend to run the course during October, at Gay Hill GC. Cost is £325 including; IOSH fees, IOSH manual/notes, lunch and refreshments. (Normally £495 + £30 IOSH Fees). All prices are excluding VAT.

This internationally recognised practical health and safety qualification, is aimed at Managers, Team Leaders, Supervisors, HR/Personnel/Office/Quality Managers from any type of organisation who have to be aware of health and safety responsibilities. The courses aim to provide these staff with the knowledge and skills they require in their specific workplace. An IOSH Managing Safely course, will give them an excellent practical grounding in health and safety and on successful completion they will be awarded with an IOSH Managing Safely Certificate - (our current pass rate is 100%).

IOSH is Europe's leading professional body for health and safety practitioners and these highly successful courses are practical, certificated and are delivered to over 60,00 people each year. Contact us to receive detailed course information, on 01562 632143.

NewGrange Training and Services Ltd, having recently completed the course, can highly recommend taking this training to further your organisations H & S policy and systems. If you wish to discuss training, please contact Paul Woodham on 07880 734197 or email paul@ghg.org.uk.

Sean McDade

SOUTH EAST

London

Hello to everyone, hope you had a great Easter. I hope we were not the only ones waiting for the growing season to really get underway - at last we are and the courses are looking superb. I have some news on our tournaments, they start at Sandy Lodge GC on May 8. First tee is from 11am. I know that doesn't give you much time but please try to come along, we will have a great day and our Chairman, Rob Phillips, will have the course in tip top condition. The next two events are at Stockley Park GC, and Porters Park GC. I'm waiting for dates to be confirmed and will let you know as soon as possible. Some other news from the area, congratulations to Gary Butler from Hendon on the birth of his baby girl - mother and daughter doing fine. Hello and thank you to Ben Burnham, deputy from South Herts GC for fixing our Kubota - see Ben your name is in the magazine! If you have any news for the Around the Green section please give me a call on 07818 410333.

Matt Plested

Surrey

Thursday, May 4, the warmest day of the year so far, 26°C and all golf club members are praying the sun is here to stay for the summer. (In the South East, all BIGGA members are also on their knees but their prayers are for rain to fill the reservoirs and an end to the drought orders). This weekend, some rain is forecast, so let's hope for a sensible summer of warm days to keep the golfers happy and less critical and wet nights to keep the greenkeepers stress level below the suicidal.

Due to retirement at the end of March, is a man who needs little introduction. His voice you will recognise well before you see him and his GT golf swing on the tee, (which nobody has yet witnessed), will go down in history. Paul Weston, the Jacques Cousteau of greenkeeping, had his retirement golf day at the Drift GC, where he has drained the impossible for the last 30 years. His friends were there to celebrate with him, the weather was very kind and some 60 guests teed off in his honour, on a course he has cared for and been a member of, since being demobbed from the United Dairies all those years ago.

Paul, we had a wonderful day, as we are sure you and Doreen did and we look forward to seeing you at all Surrey Section sporting events. Remember, there is always a place in our new Surrey football eleven if you want it! In the meantime, enjoy the lawnmower and keep well.

Tony Gavin, Course Manager at Surrey Downs GC and his wife, Samantha, celebrated the birth of their son Brady Thomas (8lb 12ozs) on March 9. We wish much happiness to Ian Jennings, Head Greenkeeper at Wimbledon Common GC, his wife June and their new son Alfie (8lb 2ozs), who was born on March 6. Both boys have already had their names put down for the Surrey football team in 2024. We can only hope that by then, Ian Sellers will have hung up his boots for good and John Ross has done something else with his whistle.

Gareth Roberts, has again this year played a most important part in the organisation and running of a charity golf day at Hankley Common GC, in aid of autistic children. The event which took place on March 15 was blessed with warm, dry weather and raised around £11,000. Well done Gareth, I look forward to competing next year with the Dream team.

Surrey Sections second golf event of 2006 took place on Monday, May 8 at Woking GC, with some 52 members playing on a course carefully prepared by Jon Day and his team. The National Qualifier was indeed a competition not to be missed and although the day started with pouring rain, this had stopped by mid morning. Mike (but I played so well yesterday) Kirkham, Kevin (where did I put my sombrero) Day and yours truly, Brian (duck) Willmott made a magnificent threeball and Kevin, with some expert tuition from myself and Mike, played well under his handicap. Woking is a really attractive golf course, with many water hazards - both ditches and carp stocked ponds, once played it is a course you will want to return to again and again. The competition was sponsored by Amenity Technology and the prizes were presented by Ian (Volley) Sellers. The prize winners were: Best gross score. Wayne Sewell (68); Best net. Kevin Day (64), Andy Gatland (66); Longest Drive. Chris Lomas; Nearest the Pin. Ken Harding; Longest walk. Jon Day.

Although this was a stroke play competition, Dave Serles and Tony Brennan scored Stableford and won a bottle of wine and a smack.

Anthony (Kojak) Freeman, our beloved Chairman, reminded us that in future only those members who have returned their entry forms with a cheque, will be eligible to play in future competitions.

One final comment with regard to dress etiquette on golf days, please make sure you remember to bring your tie with you. Mike Kirkham did not and although the tie the club loaned him matched his eyes it clashed terribly with his shoes.

Brian Willmott

Kent

In true British style I shall begin this month's report with weather issues.

As I sit here enjoying a few drinks in the warm summer sunshine in the Costa Del Kent it's all too easy to forget about the dreary, never-ending winter we all endured not so long ago. Indeed, the major talking point now, especially in Kent, is the impending water crisis and how we shall all be reduced to quivering wrecks when the water companies pull the plug on our supplies.

It would be very interesting to hear what, if any, contingency plans your clubs have put in place for such an eventuality. The consequences of a total irrigation ban are too frightening to contemplate. Please let us know your views via the website address at the end of this report.

On a lighter note, Kent Section had our first golf day recently at the beautiful



Peter Boyd
SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND
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Peter Larter
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Littlestone GC. It was a real honour to be given the opportunity to play a course where strong, traditional values are upheld and nostalgia is everywhere around the links. A new record turnout for any of our golfing events travelled to the perfect setting provided by this historic club. Conspicuous by his absence was our Chairman, Kev Morris, whose wife was poorly on the day and didn't let him out. The course played superbly and was a credit to Malcolm Grand and his team of greenkeepers, the new tees were perfect, the greens were like lightening and if you hit the fairways, the ball bounced for miles into the typically snaggy rough. For most of the front nine we were playing downwind but as we turned to start, the back nine the sea breezes really started to blow making the course even more tricky! Thanks to Richard Hill and John Shaw Machinery, for providing a halfway barbeque, although no amount of food and beer could get my game going! Unfortunately, my golfing exploits on the day were not noteworthy enough for this report but playing on such hallowed turf certainly is.

Results were as follows: 1. Craig Wretham, Stonelees Golf Centre, 33 pts; 2. Malloy Parks, Littlestone, 32 pts; 3. Russell Bain, Chislehurst, 30 pts; 4. Paul Larsen, Royal St. Georges, 30 pts; 5. Malcolm Grand, Littlestone, 30 pts.

The Secretary of Littlestone, Charles Moorhouse, dined with us and in a short speech, he made before our meal, he acknowledged the work that greenkeepers carry out nationwide to promote their individual clubs. We thank him and his superb club for their hospitality.

It was great to see so many new faces at Littlestone, please remember you and your colleagues are always welcome at any of our events. Full up to date fixtures and news can be accessed at our website: www.kentgreenkeepers.co.uk.

Finally, I would just like to add one more thing: COME ON ENGLAND! (I presume you're talking about the association football tournament which is taking place this month, Editor)

Until next time.

Rob Holland

Essex

It is one of the biggest accolades a man can receive - being asked to be best man at a friend's wedding. When organising the stag weekend, a precise and military style operation is required. Herding ten culturally aware, big arsed hairy men around Girona in Spain, is a liability. Three nights, two rounds of golf at top venues and San Miguel morning, noon and night have taken their toll. I have returned from the beer drinkers' equivalent of the London Marathon and am feeling every moment my 34 years of age. But still, one day's rest (which is not enough) and off to the first Essex Section golf day of the year.

The spring meeting at Ilford Golf Club, sponsored by Sheriff Amenity, was a cracking day out. A big thank you to Graham Paul for his continued support on our golf days. The weather was definitely on our side and I must say, even hotter than that which I had endured in Spain. Having never played Ilford before but knowing its exact location, my thoughts were of the motorway and the London Liverpool Street line. After only a few moments on the course my ill-conceived pre-conceptions were proven false. It was a well manicured course with some very attractive features. Well done to Sam and the team on presenting the course in such a marvellous fashion. I even enjoyed the wrist wrenching rough. A thank you is also in order to Ilford Golf Club for hosting the day.

Down on the first tee, Clare, from Vitax, kindly gave up some of her time to volunteer filling the starter's position for a few hours. Well done Clare. A big thank you!

The overall winner deservedly triumphed on the day with 42 pts off of a handicap of 6, well done Nick Gates, of Theydon Bois G.C. Nice arrows!

The category I winners were: 1. Tony Barker; 2. Bradley Adams; 3. Anthony Kirwan. Category II: 1. Craig Campbell; 2. Don Clark; 3. Andy McCreddie

Nearest the Pin for category I went to Jim Dillway and Roy Spong won the category II prize.

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The trade prize was won by Mick Fance, of Scotts and the Guest prize was won by Brain Arscott.

A wonderful spread was organised by the club and enjoyed by the golfers before the prizes were handed out and the raffle took place. Thanks, for all the generous donations for the raffle, go to: Avoncrop, Vitax, Rigby Taylor, Scotts, Tacit and Tuckwells.

Now then, Sam Cook, a word of advice, after you have forgotten your towel and need to borrow one, it is advisable not to use the one belonging to the Club Secretary momentarily before he, himself wishes to take a shower. Laughing audibly from the changing rooms as the Secretary asks around outside for his missing towel is definitely not in the 'How to influence and make friends' manual. By the way cheers for finishing off the raffle for me.

Langdon Hills GC, National qualifier up next on June 29. Remember to get those forms in early to avoid disappointment.

PS. Craig, yes you know who you are! No 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' style handicaps on that day.

Until next month, be good!

Richard Williams



South West

I downloaded our weather station the other day - or rather the Scotts iTurf uMETOS Tabular Recording Device, to give it its proper name and after a couple of sticky moments, when it looked like the batteries had gone flat and all the data was lost, it linked with the computer's infra-red port and downloaded 300 days of weather records. Within seconds, I had average temperatures, wind speed in metres per second, transpiration rates, sunlight hours, models for Brown Patch, Pythium Blight, and heaven knows what else, but when it came to precipitation - nothing showed. I was just at the point of cursing out loud, as rainfall is the really interesting bit, when I realised that actually, it had recorded rainfall but there was next to nothing showing. You had to look really hard to find it. (Just stop and think for a moment, when did you last get soaked on a machine?) A farmer pal of mine near Cirencester has boreholes on his land, which are used by the Environment Agency to monitor local groundwater levels. His boreholes are 19 metres (or over 40 feet) below their normal level right now. There's never been a better time to start stitching fescue and bent into those greens. Certainly, on the golf course, having got our spring renovation work over with early, we were then hit with the cold late spring and then by several hundred-thousand leatherjackets. I might send in the photos I took the day after we reluctantly applied Chlorpifyros - I actually had to draft an emergency notice, apologising for the number of grubs lying on the surface, breathing their last. We had been aware that we had had "a few" grubs in the greens for a little while, but eventually, you could clearly see them eating their way down the Graden lines. That's nature for you.

No such problems over at Chipping Sodbury for the Greenkeeper(Guest tournament back in April. The course was very well presented, particularly in light of the difficult conditions, by Clive, John, Tim, and the team and the section were made to feel really welcome. Our very sincere thanks to the whole club and all their staff.

The results were: 1. S. O'Connell & D. Halling-Brown, Mendip, 48 pts; 2. John Keenghan & Bob Williams, Chipping Sodbury, 45 pts; 3. Nobby Knight & Mike Durant, unattached, 45 pts.

Thanks to our Patronage Partners for the prizes and to Sue Malone, from Tower Chemicals, for supporting the day. Thanks are also due to Chris Sealey for stepping into the breach and helping with organising the Section Days while Nobby gets his business up and running.

Back at Minch, the back-nine bunker renovation project is now complete. We turfed during the only remotely wet period of the spring - laying some 3000 square metres of turf (all small rolls on pretty steep banks) in a week. By the end of the week, having rotated my staff so that no-one actually walked out, I realised that I was completely knackered. Oh to be 30-something again (or even 40-something would do). I had literally turfed myself into the ground. What we would have done without the New Holland TS100 tractor, now resplendent on turf tyres, I don't know.

This machine carried the heavy pallets of turf literally right onto the job. You can reach the turf in the right place at just the right height without any double handling. Awesome. We have a valuable addition to our greenkeeping team in the form of Sarah Allcock, who has the lofty job title of Greenkeeper\ Ecology Coordinator. Sarah has a degree in Biological Science from Swansea University, races ocean-going yachts in her spare time and has taken a keen interest in the ecology of the golf course. Joining at a very busy time she is getting the hang of ride-on greens equipment, while completely overhauling our ecology programmes.

Never underestimate the importance of an expert (or so Sarah keeps telling me!). Hopefully, by the time this hits the shelves, the spring weather will have picked up, we'll all be enjoying warm rain at night and bright sunny days. We're looking forward to the Gloucestershire County Championships at the end of May, South West Counties week in June and the Open round in July. Then I'm looking forward to two weeks in Italy. Happy Greenkeeping.

Paul Worster. paulw@mgcnew.co.uk 01453 837355.

South Coast

Firstly, apologies for the lack of Section notes last month but the phone remained silent and there was no news to relay to you. We have, at last, seen some rain and how we needed it! It's been a very difficult winter and an even more difficult start to the season so surely things can only get better for us.

We have had two excellent Section visits since my last report. Our first one was to Eco composting depot, where Sales Manager, Andy Hill, showed us the large scale composting process with some very applicable end products. We were also shown around the turf production unit before being supplied with an excellent lunch. Many thanks to Eco and Andy Hill, it was a great shame more people didn't attend.

Our second visit was to Remedy Oak GC where Project Manager, Trevor Smith and Course Manager, Robert Hogarth showed us around the course, explaining the process of bringing the design concept to reality. We had a great turn out and learned much about the creeping bentgrass, that has established so well on the greens. Lunch was provided by Toro's Mark Winder. A great day was had by all. Many thanks to Trevor, Robert and Alan Magee, for showing us around and answering the many questions.

The draw has now been made for the Jim Fry pairs. Please ensure all matches are played promptly and that you phone all match results through to Phil Wentworth. Good luck to you all!

April saw our first golf day of the year, it was a very special day for the section, as it was the playing of the Colin White memorial trophy at Wellow GC. A great field of over 50 assembled to pay tribute to "Chalks" and hopefully win a place through to the national tournament. Our sponsors on the day were Avoncrop and Vitax and as usual Joe Crawley was on hand to ensure that everyone started off on time. Joe really is the South coasts Mr Starter, he does a fantastic job and is always treated to an array of different opening shots, which I'm sure makes the job all the more interesting. Joe is busy decorating the nursery after the fantastic news that he will become a proud father in October, we wish him and his lovely wife all the best.

The tournament was a 27 hole Stableford and Colin's mum and brother were present to give out the prizes to the winners who were:

Division 1. 1. Scott Taylor, 64pts; 2. Dave King 63pts; Division 2. 1. Spencer Haines, 64pts; 2. James Pouden, 60pts; Division 3 - 1. George Cooper, 65pts; 2. Peter Handfod, 57pts; Longest Drive. Colin Pardie; Nearest the Pin. Dave King.

A huge thank you to Wellow GC for their superb hospitality. Graham Bungay and his team must be congratulated on producing a first class course, there wasn't a blade of grass out of place.

Many thanks to the stewards, along with all the catering and bar staff who looked after us so well and gave us a feast to remember.

Chris Sturgess, as always came up trumps in organising the day and we are extremely thankful for all his hard work in making our golf days such enjoyable ones.

To our sponsors, Avoncrop and Vitax, a massive thank you for a truly superb prize table. We really appreciate all you do for our Section.

I am currently looking for some talented footballers to play for the Section in a match against the Surrey Section. The date and venue are yet to be confirmed but interested players, please contact me.

Robin Wilcox, of Canford Magna GC, is helping in an Oxfam collection of used postage stamps. He would be really grateful if you could send all your used postage stamps to him and help raise money for this excellent charity. Stamps should be sent

to: Robin Wilcox, 108 Windham Road, Bournemouth BH1 4RD. Many thanks!

Our next golf day is at The Army Golf Club on July 12. It's an invitation day and all entries along with a cheque for £21 per person, made payable to BIGGA south coast should be sent to: Chris Sturgess, 31 Bay Road, Sholing SO19 8EZ.

Until next month.
Alex McCombie

Devon & Cornwall

How many times have we heard members make a comment on the course, "Where are all the Greenkeeping staff? Why aren't they on the course working?" The fact is with the clocks going forward the majority of the course work has been completed before the golfers arrive, but having said that, there is always an exception to the rules. At the Lanhydrock GC, near Bodmin, in Cornwall, one of the Greenstaff was mowing the 12th fairway when to his surprise the machine bounced viciously. Luckily he had the foresight to put his foot down on the pedal, then stop and look around, to his horror he found a large hole, 5ft x 4ft and 25ft deep. Surprise, surprise, he had just driven over an old mine shaft. I had a conversation with Martin Morgan, the Head Greenkeeper and apparently in the old days they mined copper and tin in the area and the mine is called Treoil. Martin informed me that some wonderful suggestions have come from the members on how to rectify the problems - wishing well and another bunker to mention a couple. Who said Greenkeeping was boring?

I know that Brian Summers, the Course Manager, at Carlyon Bay GC, near St Austell has had the same experience on his course in the past. Who mentioned health and safety?

Congratulations to Justin Austin, ex Head Greenkeeper at Windwhistle GC, near Chard, in Somerset, who is on the move. He has procured the Course Manager's position at Trethorne GC, at Launceston, in Cornwall. We wish you all the best. Justin is the Vice Chairman of our Section.

As I write this report the weather is an excellent 22°C, with bright blue skies, although dropping considerably at night, down to 5 degrees. Long may it continue.

Have a good month, in fact, a good year.
Donovan O Hunt, Events Co-ordinator.

NORTHERN IRELAND

I would like to apologise for the lack of notes over the last few months.

Our Section organised a visit to Malone GC, in Belfast, in early April, to view Course Manager, Mike Norman's Woodland Management Project.

Mike received useful advice and support from his local biodiversity officer with Belfast City Council, the RSPB and Wildlife Trust. The work has involved the removal of Lauriel and Rhododendron Ponticum, from under mature deciduous woodland. We viewed the resultant re-generation of tree species and wildflowers. Mike and his staff have also introduced large numbers of bird boxes, to assist the breeding of wildfowl and woodland bird species. He intends to control the local grey squirrel population, as this area of Belfast is one of the few remaining habitats of the red squirrel, in Northern Ireland. We would like to thank Malone and Mike Norman for accommodating our visit.

Our first golf day of the year took place on April 27 at Rockmount GC, near Carryduff. Robert Patterson and family, have created and developed an outstanding golf course, complemented with a clubhouse, restaurant and quality food, which could best be described as five star.

Results were: 1. Ken Henderson, Allen Park GC, 37pts; 2. Gary Murphy Silverwood GC, 34 pts; 3. Eamonn Crawford, Royal Co Down GC, 33 pts; 4. Gerry Bruen, Kilkeel GC, 33pts; Visitors' Prize. Robert Patterson, Rockmount GC, 32 pts; Nearest the Pin. Gary Murphy, Silverwood GC; Longest Drive. Eamonn Crawford R C D.

Our next golf day will be at Downpatrick GC on Tuesday, May 30 with a 1pm tee time.

I would like to welcome three new members this month: Trevor Andrews, James Patterson and William McCann from Dunmurray Golf Club.

Well, that's all my news for this month. I hope to see you all at Downpatrick later this month.
Francis Henderson

SECTION NOTES INFORMATION

In order to improve the sending and receiving of Section Notes, where possible can all future notes be emailed to melissa@bigga.co.uk by no later than the 5th of the month prior to publication please.

Word limit for Section notes: 500-600.

You will receive an email back to confirm receipt of your notes. If you do not receive this confirmation please get in touch with BIGGA HQ.

In the Shed ANSWERS

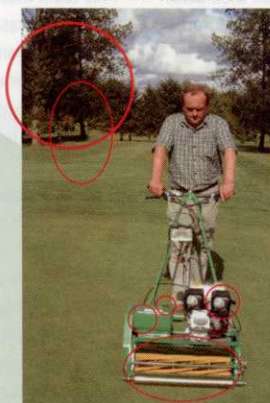
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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



ANAGRAM

CHAPEL MILE LAMB - Michael Campbell
MORE COIL GEM IN TON - Colin Montgomerie

A QUICK NINE HOLES

- Germany and Brazil. 2-0 to Brazil
- Johan Edfors
- Peter Stringer
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- Michael Ballack
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- Roberto de Vicenzo
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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

April 2005; Augusta Syndrome; Thornhill GC; Difficult Areas Part 2; Turf Tonics; BIGGA Delegation; Fescue Grass

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Chairman's Column



Under Pressure

This year's late spring, has caused Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, up and down the country and within Europe many a sleepless night. The pressure today of completing essential maintenance programmes, such as, hollow coring earlier and earlier in the year, has added to the problem. There was a time when spring renovation, meant spring but today many Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, have to complete tasks such as hollow coring before the start of April, to fit within the ever increasing fixture list. This is ok when spring comes early!



Now on top of that, the first drought order since 1995 has been granted which means a ban on non-essential use of water. Under the six-month order, Sutton and East Surrey Water companies can ban mains water irrigation, to golf clubs, parks and sports grounds. A few sports clubs and turf growers had objected to a non-essential water ban, but their appeals were turned down.

Clubs with their own water supply, will also be effected, as the media circus moves into full swing highlighting recreational water use, side by side with the poor record water companies have in reducing leakage, not forgetting the large profits they record.

The general public will see golf courses being watered and not consider if the water is from the mains or from the clubs own water source.

Again I hear of excellent Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers, turning their backs on course management due to the stress caused by the weather, members and animals but it was still a big surprise to me, when told of a recent strew pole of 20 students studying NVQ level two. Not one of those students felt that they were potential Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers. We have to ask the question, why? Is it that they see the effects of stress on their managers or the fact that promotion usually leads to moving out of their local area, an area they may have lived in all their lives. I know that this can be the case in the south west of England but our brothers and sisters north of the border seem to cope very well.

I am sure that every Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, has at some point suffered periods of stress at work but I believe that the continued education and networking, our association can deliver, is the key to helping members over their problems.

At Burnham and Berrow, we have a major rabbit problem and we have tried most things to reduce the damage those little furry darlings cause. This year I presented a paper on Burnham & Berrow at the

Canadian Conference, in Vancouver, mentioning those furry darlings and received a great joke via email from Canada, referring to afterlife, the golf course and rabbits. It certainly brightened up my day proving networking does work.

Champion of BIGGA

This month I have chosen a man whom I have known for many years, Bill Mitchell, of Perranporth Golf Club Cornwall. Billy has put more into greenkeeping and the education of trainees, than anyone I personally know and without being paid a penny. In fact, he has been out of pocket more times than I can remember, as he has purchased educational books to loan trainees to help them gain important knowledge without receiving them back after the trainee has achieved his/her goals. I am sure, if each and every trainee returned the books borrowed from Billy he would donate them to his favoured college or our library at BIGGA HOUSE. On my return to the Devon and Cornwall Section, back in the mid 80s, I met Billy for the first time and have gained a great friendship since, which has stood the test of time. He has always supported BIGGA 100%, giving his time to both his Section and Region. With Billy being so passionate about our Association there has been times when his views differed to others but Billy would always use the Association's democratic procedure to voice his objections and after due process would abide with the democratic decision.

Richard Whyman
Chairman



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FREE LEGAL HELPLINE

Access 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for you and your family (living at the same address). Advice on employment matters, health and safety issues, consumer rights and any other legal matter. Medical costs and expenses should personal injury be sustained in an accident and Legal expenses up to £50,000 per annum. Call 0800 068 1893 For Greenkeeper Members Only.

FREE PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Cover for time off work due to an accident at home, work or even on holiday as well as one off payments dependent on the type of injury. Call 01277 251000 and ask for Ira Mullish For Greenkeeper Members Only.

FREE MEMBERS HANDBOOK

A free yearly copy of this indispensable tool, enabling members to track down professional help and keep contact with contemporaries.

FREE FIELD GUIDES

A set of field guides is available to every member on request. This handy guide is produced in an easy to use format and is an aid to course identification. Call 01347 833800.

FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

A monthly copy of the Association's award winning magazine delivered free to your door, keeping you up to date with all that's new in the industry.

BIGGA LIBRARY

The BIGGA Library boasts over 650 books available to borrow for up to six weeks. The only cost is that of returning the book to HQ.

BIGGA REFUND OF FEES SCHEME

Members may apply for an 80% refund of education and training fees up to a maximum of £350. Conditions apply. Call 01347 833800 for an application form.

BIGGA REGIONAL TRAINING

BIGGA provide quality education and training courses at a minimum cost thanks to the support of Golden and Silver Key Members who contribute to the Education and Development Fund. Call 01347 833800.

DISCOUNTED WORKWEAR

BIGGA have teamed up with ARCO, the leading supplier of workwear, safety clothing and maintenance products to offer members 20%* discount off a choice of goods. Call 01482 611773.

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CAR LEASING

Driving a brand new car couldn't be easier. Bigga has teamed up with Lex FreeChoice to offer an exclusive scheme which allows you and your family members to drive the car you've always wanted at a price you can afford. Call 0800 419 930 and quote BIGGA.

CAR RENTAL

BIGGA have enrolled in National's Affinity Leisure Programme that offers members exclusive rates on car and van hire in the UK and on international car hire in over 80 countries. Ring 0870 191 6950 and quote A099084 for UK Car hire, A099085 for UK Van Hire and 8573290 for International Car Hire.

INSURANCE QUOTATION SERVICE

A quotation service is available to members on a wide range of insurance products. Call 01603 828255 and quote UniBG0306.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

When you join you are automatically given membership of one of the 27 sections around the country. As an active member you can attend golf days and other social events on a regular basis enabling you to network amongst others in the industry. Look at the 'Around the Green' section for contact details.

BIGGA WEBSITE - www.bigga.org.uk

Exclusive access to the Members area of the website. Interact with other greenkeepers on the bulletin board or check out the latest recruitment vacancies in the industry. For Greenkeepers and Student Members only.

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Growing success