



## Scotts Victorious at Villa

Aston Villa's Head Groundsman Jonathan Calderwood says that his Scotts iTurf programme keeps Villa Park's 98% sand pitch in top condition.

"We have great results from Scotts products and excellent technical back-up from Mark Rayner, our key account manager," says Jonathan, who oversees a team of 10 ground staff – three at Villa Park and seven at the training ground, which comprises 14 pitches.

Four of them are built to a similar high sand-based specification as the main stadium pitch.

One is an exact replica of the Villa Park pitch, complete with full Desso system, and the ground staff team mirror the treatments of the stadium surface to achieve similar results.

Even though it has none of the shade problems of Villa Park, it has identical rootzone and drainage.

"The problem with our main pitch is that water just goes straight through it," Jonathan explained.

"We put around 60 tonnes of sand on it every year which makes it even more free-draining. We have a fertiliser programme that works very well for us because it is very difficult to keep grass growing well on pure sand - we use the pop-up sprinklers constantly."

"From September to March we use a moving system of UV lights rigs which makes the pitch even drier, but does keep the grass growing," said Jonathan, who was recently voted 'Groundsman's Groundsman of the Year'.



## Aerators in Demand

Long Ashton Golf Club has taken delivery of its third Wiedenmann Terra Spike deep aerator in six years.

Course Manager, Jim Braithwaite, has just welcomed the latest Terra Spike GXi6

The club has earned a first class reputation for its consistently high standard of greens and fairways and pro-active approach to preparation and maintenance.

In 2003, the club bought a Wiedenmann XP 160 specifically to deep tine the course. Six months later it was the first purchaser anywhere in the UK of Wiedenmann's Terra Spike XF, the ultra-fast aerator which revolutionised the speed of deep tine aeration.

"We have had no problems at all with either our XP, or our XF. We've used them systematically to cover the course quickly and efficiently; the XP using its deeper tines on the fairways and the soil-based greens and the XF has been used everywhere," said Jim.

Noticeably in the last year heavier and prolonged rainfall has affected some of Long Ashton's clay-based greens; two of which – the 8th and 15th - have just had new drainage installed.

After discussions with grounds care sales specialist, TH White at Knockdown, a deal has struck to part exchange the five year old XF for a GXi6.

## New Role for Wembley Man

ServiceMaster Ltd has appointed former Wembley Head Groundsman Steve Welch to manage its TruGreen lawn care franchise network.

As TruGreen Network Manager Steve is tasked with helping to grow and develop the professional lawn care business further.

He comments; "I've

joined TruGreen at a really exciting time. Having made a name within the industry as a leading provider of domestic lawn care we now feel confident that we can provide an equally impressive service to other markets.

My background in the sports world will obviously be a benefit to me here in



terms of technical expertise and I am looking forward to the challenge of helping the business explore new fields."



## RJ in force at Luton Hoo



Luton Hoo Hotel Golf & Spa is maintained with a selection of Ransomes Jacobsen equipment supplied by local dealer, Ernest Doe and Sons. Facilities at the five star resort include an 18-hole golf course, a magnificent spa and over 1000 acres of parkland and gardens created by Capability Brown. The Head Greenkeeper, Avon Bridges, oversaw the grow-in phase and the course opening in the spring of 2008.

He manages a team of five greenkeeping staff, but there are no bunkers on the course due to the Grade 1 listed status of the estate, making maintenance slightly less demanding. However, there is more rough than normal and it encroaches close to the greens, requiring precision placement of approach shots. To manage the rough, the greenkeeping team use a Jacobsen AR522 rotary mower.

Sittingbourne's Central Park greyhound Stadium Manager, Andy Chetram, has taken delivery of a new Massey Ferguson 1547 compact tractor.

Towing a Sisis Quadraplay frame equipped with loosening tines, grooming rake and levelling blade, the 46hp tractor helps remove paw prints from the previous race while simultaneously smoothing and firming the surface to provide the optimum conditions.

Every seven to 10 days, Andy uses the tractor with a power harrow to break up surface compaction and hard spots. A further regular task for the tractor is guiding a specialist grading blade around the track to maintain the camber necessary to help racing dogs negotiate safely the long bends at the end of each straight.

## Massey on track



## First Bobcat at Willmar Hire

Kidderminster-based Willmar Hire has bought the first Bobcat E32 mini-excavator in the UK. The 3.2 tonne E32 conventional tail swing mini-excavator is a completely new generation machine.

Formerly an agricultural engineering company, Willmar Hire has been hiring out plant for more than 18 years. Today, the company splits its activities between plant hire and groundworks. The hire fleet at Willmar Hire includes excavators, dumpers and a 453 skid-steer loader from Bobcat.

"We have always been impressed with the performance of excavators from Bobcat. We saw the E32 for the first time at this year's SED exhibition and I am really pleased with what it has added to our fleet of excavators," said Mark Godsall, Managing Director of Willmar Hire.

"The E32 offers so much power for its size and, as we've purchased the longer digging arm version, this gives users extra digging depth for work on structures such as septic tanks, which are a bit deeper."

