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A Greenkeeper International service to show on which page companies' advertisements can be found. For further information about their products or service, simply use the free Reader Reply Service card to be found facing Page 42 in this month's issue.

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In today's difficult economic climate many people are finding they have to be careful how they spend their money.

Indeed, many companies are very careful how they spend their advertising budgets and which publications they choose to use.

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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

JULY 1991



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GREENKEEPER

International

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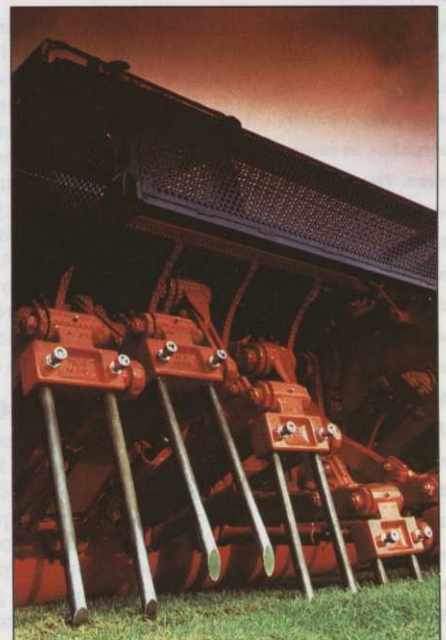
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The Clubhouse at Royal Birkdale and Austria's Gut Altentann: championship courses in focus



Flying Divots

An appreciation of what is not always appreciated

■ The Health & Safety Executive have disclosed plans to allow magistrates to dramatically increase maximum penalties for breaches in safety rules. The tenfold increase, from £2,000 to £20,000 per offence gives a clear signal to magistrates that offences should be dealt with firmly. Unlimited penalties are still available to the HSE in the Crown Court and such prosecutions have increased four times in the last three years. In addition, the HSE plan to increase the number of inspectors and will have the largest field force since 1982 by the end of 1991. Average fines under the Health & Safety at Work Act have doubled since 1988 to £877, the new increase coming as the result of extensive lobbying.

Perils of pesticide poisoning

■ A report on a Lancaster University study gives some cause for alarm to those within our industry regarding pesticide poisoning. According to their findings, cases of pesticide poisoning by those affected by organophosphate pesticides, eg: those often used to control insects, weeds or fungi, could be much higher than suspected for one simple reason – 'Victims have had no success in reporting to the official agencies, with many victims just too ill to report to a baffling system'. Calling the system 'a failure', the study highlights the need to be adequately protected, totally aware of substances used, strictly adhere to the instructions issued for use, and keep immaculate records of ALL chemicals used. Ignorance of these basics can seriously damage your health. Above all, DEMAND protection at all times. It is your right.

Wonders into tragedies

■ Over the fax today came a snippet too good to miss, originating from the pen of Peter McMaugh, Director of the Turfgrass Institute in Sydney, Australia: "Golf has almost become two distinct sports, one a spectator sport and the other a participant sport. The spectacle – the circus – the amphitheatre – the combatants – the commentators – trying to make it unique, all geared towards the spectacle of golf rather than the participant and all because of the advertising dollar, resting on TV ratings.

"And yet golf, of all sports, is both the ultimate in individualistic isolation and the most intense of competitions. All too often we are prepared to spend countless dollars on the few for TV and neglect the many enjoying the game in the fresh air.

"Budgets of \$16-20 million are not uncommon for new courses in Australia. 'Good' has become synonymous with outlandish or spectacular in the journalists' vocabulary. Commentators rush to pour adulation on companies who are technical miscreants – if not charlatans. Today's wonders become tomorrow's tragedies.

"The golf world seems to be full of spivs of two kinds – first the pro inspired by arrogance and second the technocrat inspired by ignorance – but both of whom can create masterpieces out of nothing in five minutes, one costing a fortune and the other saving it, and both leaving work behind in repairs for the next 20 years.

"I'll finish with the comment one designer made recently:

'Our main concern is to give the client the golf course he deserves'.

"I'll leave you to think about that."

A job for Moaner

■ An advert placed by Tees Valley Tourism for a £150 a month 'part time moaner or professional complainer' drew a response that astonished the county tourist board for Cleveland. The job – visiting hotels, guest houses and restaurants – was one of making life as difficult as possible for management. Someone should have told TVT that a humble postcard on almost any golf club notice board would have brought instant response... from the hordes of part-timers who enjoy directing their complaints and moans at the poor greenkeeper.

Golden divot for Alex

■ How good it was to see Seve Ballesteros back in winning form at the PGA Championship at Wentworth, and to see the Burma Road in such sparkling condition. My 'golden' divot goes to Alex Hay, a stout supporter of the greenkeeping cause, for heaping praise over the TV waves on course manager Chris Kennedy, and in bringing to the attention of countless millions the plight of all greenkeepers over the past two seasons. Whilst Alex gains the coveted 'gold', Peter Alliss loses Brownie points by daring to suggest that the West Course could use some re-bunkering and that he would love the job! The ghost of Harry Colt must be writhing at his audacity.

Old journals wanted

■ Now a plea for your help. Over the years I've attempted to build up a library of golf and golf greenkeeping techniques. The STRI Journals are invaluable sources of reference and I am looking for copies from all eras. I've some from the thirties, (first published 1930) practically nothing from the forties, ditto fifties. Market prices gladly paid and all issues considered. Call 0323 891291 or drop a line. Show me that advertising works!

Seve shows his mettle

■ Seve's renaissance continues apace with yet another great win – two in one week no less – at Woburn in The British Masters. Earning the equivalent of a greenkeeper's weekly pay over the past five outings each time he hit the ball – about £215 a shot – he also merits a 'golden' divot for kindly words spoken on Neil Whitaker's preparation of the Duke's course. This was no generous winner's lip service either, but well deserved in his describing the course as 'one of the best in Britain'.

Couplets of wisdom

■ Groundsman, greenkeeper... who are they
Without them both you'd rarely play
On grounds and pitches well prepared
From knowledge most would wish they shared
Too hard, too soft, too fast, too slow
But would you like to have a go?
Like Hell you would, so on your bike
You wouldn't know just when to spike
To scarify, to slit or trim
So leave the job all up to him
And when you're sitting round the table
Only speak if you are able
To do the job as he can do
You wouldn't really have a clue...
– submitted by Tony Howard, Maxwell Hart Ltd.

Divots

by Badleigh-Dunne



Who and what are moving on and moving in, in the greenkeeping industry

FACES & PLACES



■ Four members of the staff of SISIS Equipment Ltd complete 25 years service with the Company in 1991. Pictured are Lynn Hilton; George Hobbs; Dennis Bayley and Eric Burgess with directors R A Hargreaves; J W Hargreaves and A Harrison, plus production manager J D Arnold, who himself completed 25 years in 1989. The total service of these eight amounts to 206 years – an enviable record!

■ Kevin Munt is leaving John Jacobs Golf Associates to join Kajima Engineering Europe, as Manager of their Golf Course Management division. Links with Jacobs will however continue, for the current Colne Valley development at Denham, owned by Kajima, is a John Jacobs design. Given the acclaim this layout has received, no doubt other designs for Kajima will follow from the Jacobs stable.



■ Robin Greaves is moving from Bristol and Clifton GC to the Burhill Golf Centre, Thornbury, where a full length 18 plus 18 par three and 20 bay range will open in '92 on a pay and play basis. Robin has been in greenkeeping since school and was at Cotswold Hills GC before moving to Bristol and Clifton GC some 12 years ago, assuming the head greenkeeper role in 1985.

■ Vion (Buster) Lewer has secured a long deserved promotion, moving from Wells GC to take on the Erlestoke Sands course at Devizes, Wiltshire. This course, designed by Adrian Stiff of Western Golf Developments, will open in May '92 and at 6500 yards par 71 has already generated sufficient interest for the Wiltshire Golf Union to apply for their championships to be held there in 1995.



■ Mike Eddington and Andrew Robinson of Sports Turf Services were welcome visitors to Charterhouse Turf Machinery recently, the occasion being receipt of the Charterhouse Dealer of The Year Award, presented annually to the dealer with the best sales of the year. Last year's winners, Risborough Turf Supplies, worked hard to repeat their 1990 success but were pipped at the post by the Edinburgh-based Sports Turf Services.

Pictured, from left, David Jenkins, Mike Eddington, Andrew Robinson, Philip Threadgold.

■ Martin Townsend has been appointed Regional Technical Sales Manager, Avoncrop Amenity Products, this following a brief but successful spell with Monro Amenity Care. Martin has skills which have spanned several sports, including an apprenticeship at Lords, head groundsman at Eastway Multi-Sports Centre and head greenkeeper at Bishops Stortford GC. Apart from obvious practical skills, Martin has an academic background that includes C&G Phase I and II in Greenkeeping and Sportsground Management and the IOG National Technical Certificate.

■ A weary stork was sighted over Ashburnham GC recently, lugging the 8lbs 13ozs that is David Michael, a son of Ashburnham's Mike and Pam Wilson. The best wishes of BIGGA's South Wales section goes to them all.



■ Bert Cross wrote that Martin Twist, Hillside's head greenkeeper featured recently in Greenkeeper International, was married on May 25th to Anne-Marie. In wishing them good fortune from the NW Committee, Bert couldn't resist telling me that Martin had declared his golf clubs off limits but took fishing rods on honeymoon instead. My guess is that Anne-Marie is probably the best catch he'll ever make!

■ We'll call it the Charnwood merry-go-round, for the transfer list in the East Midlands, supplied by Gordon Mitchell, revealed that Tim Allard moved to Charnwood from Longcliffe GC and Steven Tolley moved from Charnwood to Longcliffe. Also away from Charnwood to Oxton GC is Charlotte Skirrow, with Nick Danvers moving from Scraftoft GC to join the hard-working team at Leicester under Bill Hewetts. In Gordon's words, good luck to you all and may the grass grow greener on the other side of the fence.



■ Andrew Chamberlain has been appointed national sales manager by Bark Products, his special responsibilities including major accounts and commissioned agents.

■ If Charnwood is the merry-go-round, what adjective can be conjured up to describe the goings-on in North Scotland? The dictionary suggests circumfluous, (flowing all around) which aptly fits Gordon Moir's latest epistle of changes vis:

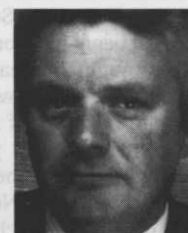
Kerry Park to Rothes after being out of greenkeeping for six months, Martin Cameron returning from Germany to be head greenkeeper at Buckpool, Derek Green starting as head greenkeeper at Huntly, with Alan Strachan moving from Montrose to Royal Dornoch as first assistant. Meanwhile... Maurice Rodgers has moved up from Biggar to Fraserburgh as first assistant, Iain Elliot has left Keith for Austria, whilst an un-named gentleman has moved from Orkney to Keith, leaving Orkney seeking a head greenkeeper. There's more... John Littlejohn has moved from Newmacher after completing his apprenticeship, to be first assistant at the John Souter complex at Tullybannoch, near Comrie. All this activity leads me to think there must be something in the Scottish water. Good fortune to you all, gentlemen.

■ The 18 hole par 72 parkland course at Hintlesham Hall, near Ipswich, designed by Hawtree, is due to open later this year with a feature that promises to be quite something. A unique Edwardian-style clubhouse is currently under construction and will complement one of England's finest historic hotels. Full marks to the developers for such foresight, especially when many Clubs consider razing their own delightful clubhouses to the ground in favour of so-called modern structures which often turn into architectural nightmares.

■ Doubts as to the readiness of The Ocean Course for the Ryder Cup may be instantly dispelled, for Kiawah Island's 'magnificent work of art', opened for regular play on May 24th for up to 100 players a day. Players reported being spellbound by its character. Playing 7371 yards from the tiger tees, the course features 12 holes directly along the Atlantic Ocean and has a distinctly Scottish links flavour that should suit our team admirably. Surprisingly, considering the huge investment, cost of play is not exorbitant, with fees of \$100 (about £55) including cart rental and unlimited practice balls quoted.



■ Peter Jefford, MD of Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd., has appointed his wife Margaret (pictured) to assist in promotions and exhibitions. Margaret's wealth of experience in sales and marketing will benefit Rufford's dramatic expansion in the sports and leisure industry. The quality of Rufford's range is well known and to further enhance this,



Michael McDonnell (pictured) has been appointed as head of production and quality control. Commenting, Peter Jefford said 'This is just reward for Michael, who has been with Rufford's from its conception, his vast experience in quarry operations and his dedication to detail will be a great asset'.

ATV

Singing in terrain... climb anything, go anywhere vehicles make their mark on the golf course



All-Terrain Vehicles

They're glamorous wee beasts, conjuring in the mind a vision of Moto-Cross and airborne scramblers flying 50 feet into the air. It's true these versatile, go anywhere, do anything, little vehicles were spawned directly from the sport of motorcycling, but their rapid development has seen them used in situations as diverse as polishing the aisles in Marks & Spencer or rounding up stray animals at a safari park, together with increased use on golf courses, be they wet or dry, flat or hilly.

Prompted by the impropionate amount of interest shown in ATVs at the Landscape Industries Show, and the ear to ear grins on the faces of those who took demo rides, Greenkeeper International, in the cloak and dagger guise of your roving editor, quizzed greenkeepers at the show and quickly discovered that in most cases All Terrain is translated as Rough Terrain. So successful have the ad. campaigns been in promoting the vehicles' ability to climb mountains that the day-in-day-out workhorse character is often overlooked. Further, in later asking the question of several renowned head greenkeepers: "What do you look for in an ATV?", we were surprised by the wide variance of answers.

Steve Suttle, at North Foreland GC in Kent, felt that his course, on chalk downland with gentle sloping terrain, drained so well that he had no need for an ATV, although he resisted using tractors unless absolutely necessary and used three turf trucksters for maintenance work and as runabouts. Avoiding compaction is high on his priority list and if an ATV miraculously appeared, he would insist on low flotation tyres.



Rough busters

Pictured, clockwise from top, the Suzuki LT-F4WDX King Quad; the Kawasaki Mule 1000 with Logic rotary mower; the Polaris Big Boss 6x6 six wheel drive; the Kawasaki KLF 300B



→ The research experience of David Berry, at Bury GC in Lancashire, prompted by the envious news that his Club secretary has earmarked such a purchase was, in his own words, 'an eye opener'. Admitting he didn't know much about them, his 'wants' list now includes: low centre of gravity; seating for two; load-carrying hydraulic dump box; anti-roll bar with optional cab; low-flo tyres; PTO and tow-bar; implement attachment; a steering wheel and regular layout pedals; four wheel drive and a diesel engine. The use of 4WD is, he insists, an essential in view of the steep slopes at Bury and he believes that both excess pressure and stress is put upon the suspension of his present runabout. Conscious of the large bag/electric trolley syndrome, he is aiming to set a good example by using a light, turf-friendly ATV whenever possible.

Stewart Melville already uses an ATV on his hillside course of Lothianburn, near Edinburgh, tackling hills that are near vertical. Sheep roam on the course and he finds them a troublesome intrusion on what he describes as a labour-intensive layout. 4WD he sees as an essential, as are very sound brakes. He is also cost conscious and thinks diesel is a must. Three questions to be answered, were he to replace his current model, would be: 1) Will it have the capacity to do what I want and will it cope with the hillside?; 2) What is the quality of service, in particular is the maintenance agreement a sound one?; 3) Is it cost effective? His critical buying decision would not rest on price alone however, for in his experience short time savings can result in long term costs in repairs and lost man-hours, an important point.



Terratrak TT 80 by Inter-Drain

Finally we asked Ray



Yamaha Pro-Hauler with trailer

Day, of Saunton GC in Devon, for his views and once again the compaction problem loomed large. For him 4WD is a must, as are low-flo tyres and a diesel engine. He likes the idea of a pick-up type body with drop sides and a tailgate and would welcome a fixture to accommodate an irrigation hose reel, and a bolt-on bench vice. A wide wheel axis and a short wheel base, giving good stability on undulating ground, is equally important and extras such as PTO, three-point linkage and possibly a winch to haul hydro drive machines aboard would be highly desirable. He thinks that such a versatile machine would be expensive but would be a lot more vehicle than a mere run-around.

The world of LOGIC, who specialise in ATV accessories, solve most of these 'must-have' needs and manufacturers themselves are constantly looking at new ways to add to what is already accepted as a machine of unique versatility. Cost, in the writer's opinion, is not something that should prevent serious consideration when the need for a highly manoeuvrable work machine is next mooted.

King off the Road

Suzuki - the pioneers in Four Wheel Drive ATV's

	SUZUKI LT-F4WDX	HONDA TRX 300 FM	YAMAHA YFM 350 4WD	KAWASAKI KLF 4x4
4WD CAPABLE	✓	✓	✓	✓
2WD CAPABLE	✓	✗	✗	✗
15 SPEED TRANSMISSION	✓	✗	✗	✗
HIGH/MED/LOW REDUCTION BOX	✓	✗	✗	✗
INDEPENDENT FRONT SUSPENSION	✓	✓	✓	✓
INDEPENDENT REAR SUSPENSION	✓	✗	✗	✗
FRONT DIFF LOCK IN/OUT CAPABLE	✓	✗	✗	✗
HYDRAULIC BRAKES	✓	✓	✓	✓
SHAFT DRIVE	✓	✓	✓	✓
210mm MIN. GROUND CLEARANCE	✓	✗	✗	✓
SPEEDO STD EQUIPMENT	✓	✗	✗	✓

The new Suzuki LT-F4WDX is strictly in a class of its own. The proven Four Wheel Drive engine is now bigger, more powerful and offers improved low and mid range torque capabilities.

The four wheel drive system on the King Quad has three drive modes - 2WD, 4WD and 4WD with front differential lock, plus the added benefit of a handy reverse gear.

Three speed secondary transmission guarantees a gear for almost any use - high, low and super low - covering a range of fifteen speeds.

With the widest track width of any 4 wheel ATV available, oil damped shock absorbers (with pre-load adjustment), and the many other features of the

King Quad, you can be sure of being first in the field.

**King
Quad**



First in the field

SUZUKI

Send to Heron Suzuki Plc, Enquiry Centre, Unit 16, Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Road, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3PB or call 0425 470354

Please send LT range brochure Applicant must be 18 years or over

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel. No. _____

Occupation _____

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GI.7.91

Safety First. Wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing, slow down on unfamiliar terrain or when visibility is reduced. Read owner's manual carefully.

Back to the



Penncross/
USGA Spec.



THE GREAT DEBATE

Rather as predicted, the continuing interest in the USGA Specification for constructing greens continues – perhaps even gathers pace. Following Consultant Agronomist Jim Arthur's thought-provoking views in our May issue, and to maintain editorial impartiality, we now publish two further views on a subject with legs; it'll run and run...

From Gordon Jaaback:

It is obvious from Jim Arthur's article that there is still much controversy and apprehension over the merits and use of the USGA Specification. As an agronomist just four years in Britain I am loath to query his wealth of experience in this country – yet none of us in the technical, commercial or practical world of turfgrass can override sound scientific fact seen in the correct context.

Today, with the rise in professional sport and the added boost through the media, the demands on high quality grassed surfaces are much greater than ever before. Wear is heavier and consequent compaction on them is more severe. Furthermore, as Jim Arthur maintains, play is extended or often concentrated – particularly golf, rugby and football – into a winter season which differs markedly with the harsh extremes in the North American continent, where snow cover or continual freezing prevents play and enforces a period of dormancy. Yet this in itself should not prejudice the use of USGA Specification in Britain.

It is not my theory that is offered – it is the basics of turfgrass science, soil physics and hydrology, which should be the foundation of any turfgrass programme.

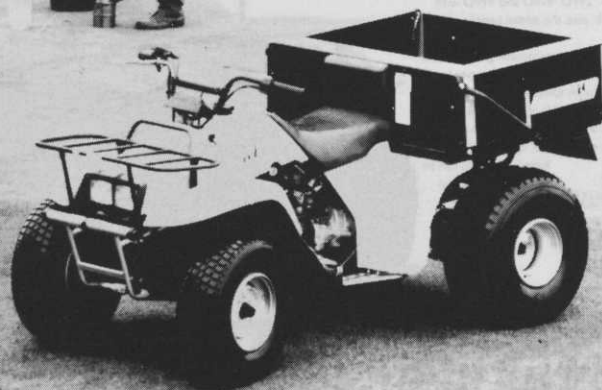
On the matter of USGA Green Section golf greens:

1: I am sure Jim Arthur acknowledges that the specification has no relevance to the choice of grass species – it was developed to overcome physical problems in golf greens and is based on scientific data on the movement of water in soils and their physical properties. The main concerns were compaction, poor internal drainage and the need to get the landing ball to 'bite'. Since these problems occur everywhere the game is played, the specification will have an application in every location.

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grass roots

2: Initial research by Dr Marvin Fergusson on behalf of the USGA confirmed the minimum criterion for essential rootzone properties, namely permeability, water retention, porosity and bulk density. Hence a laboratory evaluation should be a requirement prior to the selection of the rootzone mixture. Whether sand/peat, pure sand or the 'fen' soil recommended by Jim Arthur for the rootzone mixture, it must meet the criterion prescribed.

3: Contrary to Jim Arthur's viewpoint, water demands by turf grasses in tropical countries do not warrant different rootzone specifications. Warm season grasses have adapted to the greater heat stress and provided the rootzone has the tested minimum water retention capacity it will retain adequate water – the water amount further increased due to the 'perching' phenomena. It is not copious watering that is then required – it is frequent light syringing that is of real benefit in such instances. There are instruments available that can be helpful in monitoring minimum watering needs.

4: Grass will germinate well on most soils including pure sand, even in the UK – the absence of organic matter at the onset is not a vital issue – and the difficulties during establishment can be overcome by frequent light irrigation, covering with inexpensive clear plastic sheeting or mulching during the critical germination period.

5: It is essentially the finer fractions of clay and silt that give the rootzone medium its inherent water retention capacity (referred to as 'buffer' in the article). The considerable organic matter produced by the grass plant also drastically reduces the permeability in the green and contributes markedly to the increase in water retention.

6: As stated by Jim Arthur, a good drainage installation is a prerequisite. While he maintains a preference for 40mm stone (a 100mm layer of 6-10mm stone has proved adequate in most situations in the UK and overseas and can be adequately spread with a small tracking machine) there may be reasons for its use, but research work into the use of filtering materials concludes that the overlying medium should not have an average particle size of more than 5-7 times smaller than the underlying medium. This would apply to the rootzone material overlying the filter or 'blinding' layer as well.

7: Certainly there is scepticism over the success of creeping bentgrass in this country. However, authorities in the breeding of the improved strains maintain that with good management and care it will survive well here. Where management is lacking or soil conditions are unsuitable – and either one or both are generally responsible – it will suffer, but by the nature of its stoloniferous growth, if properly cared for it can be as aggressive as any improved strains of bent grass or fescue. In the past three years Collingtree and East Sussex National have shown that maintenance of good swards are possible and so surely it cannot be condemned for all situations.

Greenkeeper International fully confirms the need for a scientific approach to growing high quality turfgrass and yet so many Clubs follow an established programme with little or no flexibility and virtually no foresight in meeting the problems that can be expected before they arise. If the greenkeeper is motivated he can soon learn from the wide

range of published research data which is freely available.

● *The writer, Gordon Jaaback, BSc Agric., is a member of the American Society of Agronomy and the British Society of Soil Science.*

From Chris Nicholson:

May I comment on Jim Arthur's article of May last, based on my experiences in Australia, where I have spent the past two years constructing sand based greens and maintaining them with much loving care.

I can confirm that such greens sown with Penncross are not the sort that can be maintained on a 'normal' small to medium Club budget, rather they demand intensive maintenance, linked with chemical warfare, a first-rate irrigation system, a vast stable of equipment – most of which is foreign to British greenkeepers – and a fully trained and motivated staff of 20 or more. In addition it helps to have a fully equipped workshop and a resident mechanic on site.

A great many courses have had pure sand greens sown with Penncross put into use by constructors/specifiers and are then maintained like an average course in the UK. A few seasons later the Penncross is nowhere to be seen – more the result of lack of know-how and low budgets than the Australian weather.

Those entering into this kind of construction without fully understanding the high cost of maintenance do so at their peril.

I think that golf course consultants are often to blame for the mistakes that have and continue to be made. Some have never worked on a golf course, let alone constructed one, and when they tell a farmer that they can design and construct a course with greens sown with Penncross that will be just like Augusta, they conjure up in the farmer's mind a vision of an Augusta at Nether Wapping or some such place. Failing to explain the high cost of maintenance is nothing short of criminal.

Whilst on the subject of golf courses, many hundreds of which await planning consent as I write, it seems every farmer who owns a JCB wants to build a course these days. 'Old Ted', who once played on the local pitch & putt, will act as consultant during construction and the farm labourer of some 30 years standing, who has a rusting Flymo in the shed, will be the greenkeeper! Like the rest of the proper greenkeeping fraternity, my advice would be 'stick to farming' and let the real experts deal with golf courses.

● *The writer, Chris Nicholson, is the new course manager at Pinner Hill Golf Club.*

Footnote: Dr James Beard, speaking recently at a seminar given to British golf course architects, suggested that the USGA spec, whilst meeting most of the known criteria for rootzone properties, has resulted in US lawsuits being brought upon architects and substantial settlements have been paid. With full blessing from the USGA he is currently writing a bulletin which modifies the spec somewhat and this will be known as the Texas Specification. In the interim, he suggests that their 1973 specification, or that appearing in his own manual, more accurately meets the desired specification, the 1989 specification having had the rootzone collar eliminated from the design. The Texas Specification will be published in the autumn.



'I think that golf course consultants are often to blame... when they tell a farmer that they can design and construct a course with greens sown with Penncross... they conjure up a vision of an Augusta at Nether Wapping'

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Editorial Comment

Garbage of the so-called 'expert'

Nothing is more likely to cause an editorial apoplexy attack than the appearance in print of garbage camouflaged as expert opinion. Thus, along with countless others, I took exception to comments appearing in a turf magazine recently, made by a supposedly learned man – an 'agricultural consultant' no less – who took it upon himself to declare that "the art seems to have gone out of greenkeeping" and that, "at the heart of the matter, even 'basic' knowledge is lacking in greenkeepers". This vitriolic offensive continued with his questioning whether the 'right' training courses exist, and ended with his 'original-and-oh-so-clever' idea that he sees a need for a recognised British national qualification and a co-ordinated group of advisers to organise greenkeeper training.

Where has this man been living? Has he never heard of 'The Way Forward'? Is he really blind to the multitudes of specialised colleges throughout the British Isles, busily and effectively training young greenkeepers in the art and craft of an honourable profession?

Is he, I wonder, even remotely conscious that hundreds of students pass into their chosen career each year with City and Guilds, Scotvec, B.Tech N.D.'s or even higher qualifications in Sports Turf Management or Turf Science, their training placing emphasis on understanding soil characteristics, drainage, irrigation and construction, the building and maintenance of greens, tees and bunkers, the control and care of a wide variety of sophisticated machinery, the skills and technical knowledge necessary to ensure that pesticides and fertilisers are safely and accurately applied?

As if his assault on British greenkeeping isn't enough, this ardent four times a week golfer thinks it would be a good idea to have golfers subscribe to a "good greenkeepers' society". Step forward for National Health eye test Mister know-it-all, your reading is clearly not what it might be. Far from being incensed, perhaps we should pity one so completely untouched by the publicity machine, and so blind to the realities of maintaining standards in the game he purports to care so passionately about.

I'm prepared to bet our radical anti-hero has never heard of the R&A's Joint Golf Course Committee, which brings together the very best minds, the policy shapers, bent on ensuring a sound future for all our golf courses. The Home Unions, the Sports Turf Research Institute and our own British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association are, I'll lay money on it, total mysteries to our critic. Taken a step further, I'll wager he's oblivious to the huge problems caused by cantering herds of society golfers and probably thinks over-play is a kinky form of bedroom game. Compaction? Ah, yes, you can almost hear him say, isn't that some sort of new record disc?

If there is one faint glimmer of hope, it is that he 'suspects' (only suspects, mind you) training courses are there, but that Club committees fail to recognise the benefits good training can have. Yes sir, fine training courses are there in great profusion and yes, the committee think-tanks do very often fail to see how training will benefit their course. The sadness is that it is often left to greenkeepers themselves – by any standard not over-paid – to finance their own academic advancement. It is to their great credit that so many of them do.

This man's real worry, however, is that at all levels – players, officials and greenkeepers – he thinks there's a lot of rubbish talked about how to improve golf courses. If we accept the premise that two out of three isn't bad, and thus delete the greenkeeper from his 'rubbish' list, we can nevertheless see still more toro manure added to the pile, this time from one 'expert' who ought to know better.

DAVID WHITE