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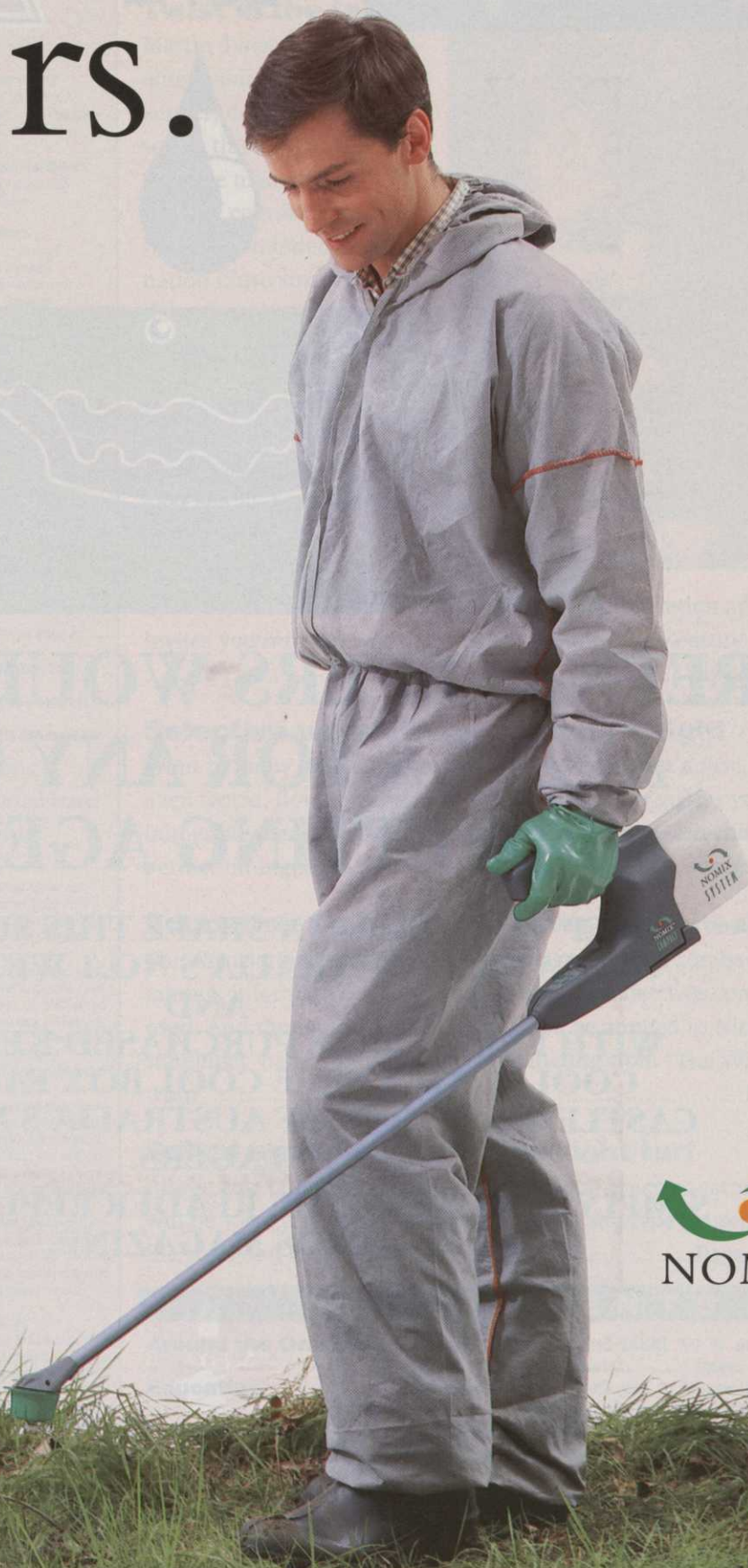
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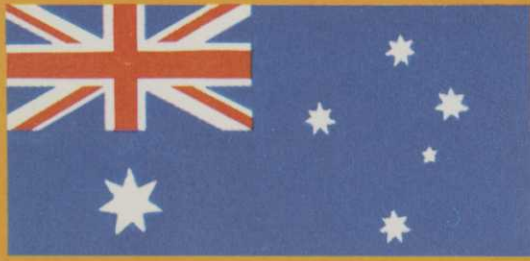
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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

MAY 1991



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GREENKEEPER

International

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COVER PICTURE:

All smiles from Martin Twist, ambitious and determined young head greenkeeper at Hillside

Important tax benefits for BIGGA members

The Inland Revenue has published its updated list of "professional bodies and learned societies" whose members may claim tax relief on the cost of subscriptions. The Daily Telegraph reports that new entrants to the list whose activities are so vital they deserve subsidy, include the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association.

Members are reminded that the Association is now recognised as an approved body under Section 201 Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988. Should any member experience difficulty in obtaining a deduction for their subscription, they should refer their local tax inspector to the updated list and can additionally quote reference SAPP1644/47/1989.

Rapid take-up of stands for '92 Exhibition

Plans are now under way for the 1992 BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition to be held in Harrogate from 22 - 24 January.

Already, half of the exhibiting companies from 1991 have pledged a firm commitment for next year. Applications for stands are also arriving all the time from companies, keen to use the success of the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition for the first time.

An exciting Seminar Programme is being prepared, which will begin on Monday Jan-

uary 20, with two-day Workshop Sessions, followed by a general Seminar Programme during the course of the exhibition itself.

The first meeting of the 1992 steering committee, which consists of representatives from exhibiting companies, will take place this month. A report will follow in next month's issue.

More details of the 1992 exhibition from Debbie Savage at BIGGA HQ, telephone 03473 581/2.



David Royle

It is with great sadness that we learned of the sudden, untimely death of David Royle, Ransomes Northern Area Sales Manager. David was well known to many BIGGA members, especially for his involvement at the Association's National Golf Tournament, where he always assisted with the scoring. David made many friends in the industry and was particularly admired for his loyalty to Ransomes, liking nothing better than discussing machinery with greenkeepers and listening to constructive comment. It earned him huge respect wherever he went. A great supporter of the Association, David will be sorely missed and our thoughts are with Susan, his wife, and his family at this sad time.

David Golding

● Pictured: David Royle (right) presenting the Ransomes Prize to David Murtagh at Ganton GC at the 1990 National Tournament.

The BIGGA Code of Ethics – a reminder

As a reminder, the Code is as follows and members pledge themselves to:

1. Set standards of personal conduct which will enhance the stature of the profession of golf course management.
2. At all times carry out their duties and responsibilities in such a manner as to reflect favourably on the profession and Association.
3. Seek to use every opportunity to broaden their professional expertise for both self-improvement and the good of the profession.
4. Follow, as a basic tenet, sound business and turf management principles in exercising the responsibilities of my post.
5. Observe the highest standards of personal integrity in their relationship with fellow greenkeepers as well as other associated individuals and at all times, as far as they are able, assist fellow greenkeepers.
6. Pursue job advancement only where vacancies arise

and not at the expense of a fellow greenkeeper and abstain from any action, comment or communication not founded on truth which is likely to harm the professional reputation or practice of another greenkeeper.

7. Give endorsements of any kind only upon satisfactory personal experiences of the item identified.
8. Refrain from encouraging or accepting considerations of any value which might be deemed an inducement to find favour for a particular party or influence decisions in relation to that party and at all times avoid any exploitation of my Association, Industry or Profession.
9. Support at every opportunity the Association, its Regions and Sections in seeking to improve the public understanding and recognition of the profession of golf course management.
10. Report to the Association any evidence likely to be in violation of this Code of Ethics.

THE BIGGA PERSONAL PENSION PLAN

BIGGA is pleased to announce that with immediate effect, the minimum premium for the BIGGA Personal Pension Plan is reduced to only £15 per month for all greenkeepers. So now you can take full advantage of the tremendous benefits that the plan offers for a lower monthly outlay.

THE BIGGA MORTGAGE SERVICE

BIGGA is pleased to announce a new service for all members, which will make it easier for greenkeepers to secure the best mortgage offer when they are either buying a new house or refinancing the purchase of their existing property. The Association is well aware of the exceptional demands placed upon its members because of the nature of their work. Greenkeepers do not always have the time to explore all the mortgage possibilities available.

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

■ Sheffield's section scribe, Ian Collett, wrote to inform on a namesake, one Ian Whitehead of Hallamshire GC. who is now "a true Green keeper" upon marrying Hayley Green on March 16th. We join with friends in wishing them both great happiness together.

■ My grapevine 'spy', Gordon Moir, tells me that Alan Strachan of Montrose has been appointed Assistant Head Greenkeeper, Royal Dornoch GC, taking over from Kevin McGrath; who has moved to Austria. When the grapevine whispers, Gordon is sure to be listening. We wish both Alan and Kevin good fortune.

■ Another on-the-ball 'informer', Paul Worster, tells of the move from Wells GC of Cary Rawlings, who is joining his old boss Nigel Pring at the new golfing complex under construction at Collumpton. Having seen the site from a distance it looks both exciting and a huge challenge. Good luck to them both.

■ Bob Bennett, mentioned briefly in Faces & Places in March, spoke recently of establishing his Fine Turf Management Consultancy, LOGRO, following his return to Scotland from Sunningdale. Contracts are progressing very nicely, I'm told, with a neat twist in the tail being that Bob has been retained as consultant adviser to Sunningdale GC., responsible for technical liaison between the Club and Watermation Ltd in respect of the refurbishment of their irrigation system. In addition, LOGRO will continue to provide Sunningdale with consultancy advice during the interim period prior to Lawson Bingham's appointment as course manager.



■ SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd are delighted that Keith Morris has joined forces with them as Area Representative for Kent & Sussex. Keith comes from a farming background and has spent five years selling agricultural machinery. An ex-rugby player, married with 10 month old twins, his hobbies are cookery, photography, reading and, no doubt, infant care!

■ Supaturf Products Ltd have recently appointed a Sales & Marketing Officer, a position created in order that a student of Harper Adams Agricultural College, David Rodda, could join Supaturf for a 'year out' in industry as a fundamental part of his course. David, 21, is studying for his HND in Agricultural Marketing and Business Administration, and will be responsible in assisting the development and marketing of new Supaturf products during his year with the company.



■ Patrick Goldsworthy, a familiar figure to almost everyone in the golf industry and one whose impact has been considerable, is leaving his job as Training and Development Manager with ICI Professional Products to join the BAA (British Agrochemicals Association) as their Marketing Resources Manager. This appointment is an upward step for Patrick where his undoubted ability can now be used to

the benefit of the whole industry in providing a common platform and improve the general public's understanding of the industry and the benefits of the careful use of its products. That stated, Patrick assures us that the amenity sector, and the use of pesticides in public places, will remain close to his heart in his new position.



■ Mark Jenkins of Nailsea, Bristol, has been appointed Western Area Manager for MASPORT (UK) Ltd. Mark, previously with G D Mountfield and Dynamow Ltd, is already well known to many Masport dealers, especially in the South West.

■ Known as The Ipswich Initiative, the launch of The 1991 Ransomes Foundation Award for Young Technologist of

the Year took place recently with a cheque for £45,000 being handed to Borough officials and representatives of Suffolk 2000. The competition is intended to promote excellence in Design & Technology in schools and will give youngsters the spur of competition with the added knowledge that if they win, they receive a cash prize and their school will be able to buy more technological equipment. Projects will be displayed at an exhibition to be held in Ipswich on June 25th.



■ Karl Litten, pictured standing with Colin Snape, has accepted his first UK commission and is to design two championship 18 hole courses at the £30 million multi-sports complex at Leek Wootton near Warwick, which is being developed by The Golf Fund PLC. Commenting on Litten's appointment, Colin Snape, CEO of The

Golf Fund said: "Karl is, in my view, one of the best in the business and I am particularly impressed with his designs at the Emirates GC, Dubai and at Boca Raton, Florida."

■ Work has begun on the first new 18 hole course at St Andrews since 1914, with construction specialists Brian D Pierson Ltd anticipating main construction to be complete by the end of July. The new course, designed by Donald Steel and known as The Straththyrum, lies close to the Eden and will be the first visitors will see as they journey to the Home of Golf along the A91 leading into St. Andrews.

A brand-new championship course featuring the third longest hole in Europe - The par 72 Wellington at Belton Woods - opened for play on March 18th. The 18th hole on the course is 613 yards long, or, as the old caddie might say "three of them and two of those... and maybe one more"! A second 18 hole course - The Lancaster - is planned to open in June.

■ Kubota (UK) Ltd and Lackham College, Wiltshire, have reached a mutually beneficial arrangement which demonstrates the importance of links between education and industry. The arrangement will allow Lackham students access to a £145,000 fleet of Kubota tractors and machinery and will provide the company with a valuable SW base for its demonstration fleet.



Brian Hurlley, V.P., Kubota UK Ltd shows Peter Morris, Principal, Lackham College some machinery controls



■ Colin Hennah has been appointed South Western Regional Manager for Kubota (UK) Ltd. With over 14 years experience in the tractor industry Colin will be responsible for the management of Kubota's 23 strong S.W. dealership network, stretching from Worcestershire in the North to the Isle of Wight in the South and from South Wales in the West to West London in the East - a big patch!



■ Michael Thomas has been appointed Chief Engineer at Charterhouse Turf Machinery, a move from his previous job as design engineer. Before joining Charterhouse Michael spent 20 years with Fison's Scientific Division. Michael has wide technical experience ranging from stress and vibration analysis and precision mechanisms to research into new materials and metal forming techniques.

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An agronomist's view

It would seem an opportune moment to try and clarify what is meant by 'USGA spec sand greens', as extolled in the article on East Sussex National in the March issue of Greenkeeper International.

The claim is made that such greens "planted with Pennlinks bent grass CAN be a huge success in Britain". So they can, subject to certain conditions, one of which is that such U.S.-influenced courses are not built 'North of Watford'! Equally, which in fairness is fully acknowledged, their management is entirely different. If you have upwards of 40 greenkeeping staff; unlimited budgets; do not want to play winter golf (closing in January and February being a requirement to producing superb conditions in summer); and limit play to 500 rounds a week, then I accept it can be done – if only for a period – and the proof exists in Uckfield. I must admit that I have not seen the course completed – only when half the Sussex Wealden clay was being moved from A to B and back to A again, which is not good for construction costs or the retention of natural drainage on heavy land sites.

However I do feel that we need to bring a little perspective to the problem. Whether such vastly expensive projects will ever pay, or indeed meet a need, is arguable. What is not, is that such costs must be reflected in the cost of golf and clearly such courses do not in any way meet the needs (real, however exaggerated, in The Demand for Golf) of ordinary golfers.

Equally we need to take note of the advice and research which is available – to have the ability to learn from other peoples mistakes and expensively acquired experience.

Research carried out by the STRI and funded by the Royal and Ancient on pure sand greens and the use of Penncross (and allied strains), is clear and unambiguous and very much in line with Punch's advice to those about to get married!

In an article by three senior STRI staff (Amateur Golf, September 1990) one sentence sums it all up. "If the authors seem unduly pessimistic about the use of creeping bent grass (i.e. Penncross etc.) then this is justifiably so. We have seen too many greens in Britain which, seeded with bent grass appeared wonderful in their first few years but later degenerated to produce a very poor playing surface".

In no trials have creeping bent grasses outperformed especially the newer strains of browntop bents and they have incurable faults in Northern European temperate zone climatic conditions. They all become dormant in our not particularly cold but wet winters. This matters little if, as in Canada, no winter golf is played, with courses under several feet of snow, nor equally in Florida or Texas 'where there is no winter'. Here, with incessant and increasing winter play it is a fatal fault. Not all of us can close our courses for 2-3 months in winter. Fewer still can afford 36 greens to 18 fairways, playing to winter hardy greens from October to April and summer bent grass ones from May to September!

It is however in the obvious misinterpretation of the term 'USGA spec sand greens' that correction and education is closely needed. Strictly the description should be USGA Green Section Specification, which as is specifically and

pointedly emphasised does NOT mean pure sand but a sand/soil mix. Such greens are designed to produce a perched water table, retaining a controlled amount of water. Unsurprisingly, this is not acceptable in the hot arid zones of the Southern States of America, nor in other near-tropical conditions, where the sheer volume of water required to keep grass alive and cool means maximum conductivity and thus pure sand construction. This is of course totally irrelevant to UK conditions and in fairness East Sussex National greens are sand/peat.

What I must emphasise is that pure sand greens, depending on intensive NPK fertiliser treatment as there is no buffer to retain water or plant nutrients, inevitably revert to *Poa annua* and unless limed are quickly destroyed by *Ophiobolus* ring disease. This does not happen in, for example, Southern Arizona, because the summer heat kills any other grasses than the sown (heat tolerant) ones.

What must be understood is that the term USGA Green Section Specification is only one aspect of building underdrained greens. I know of no reputable new construction where greens are not built on stone drainage carpets, but few if any are really 'USGA spec'. I have been specifying such under-drainage for over 25 years. Equally the root zone over the carpet must have a high conductivity rate but it must also have a buffer to retain plant food and moisture. The ideal mix is one of what, for want of a clearer description, we must call fen soil. – (not a monopoly of any one firm!) – which is a humus-rich sandy soil containing not more than 5% clay/silt – with an appropriate proportion of a very carefully specified sand. It has many physical advantages over a sand/peat mix.

The use of local top soil for this root zone is virtually always out of the question. Even if the sub-soil is sandy, the depth of suitable top soil is so shallow that acres have to be stripped to provide the 9" – 10" of root zone. Furthermore such 'borrow' pits have to be restored and it is cheaper to buy in, especially where there is a guarantee of consistent quality. It is worth while noting that the greens on even the new sixth course at St. Andrews, (the Strathtyrum) being built to my specification, are on stone car-

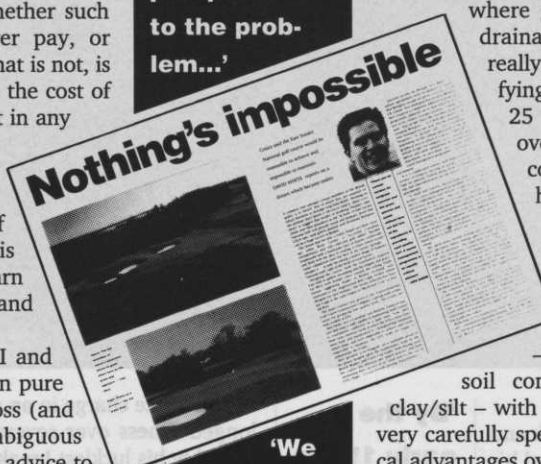
pets.

The 'USGA spec' advises 4" of 4 mm gravel, with a suitable blinding layer. Such a shallow depth is totally impracticable, demanding hand work, and precludes speedy and therefore cheaper construction with mechanisation, as the gravel merely sinks onto the sub-base. Another major error perpetrated last year with disastrous results is to use a geotextile membrane, which quickly clogs and seals, instead of a compatible blinding layer, e.g. 4 mm gravel over 150 mm of 40 mm clean stone.

Writing with the assurance which comes from having been involved in the building of over 2500 golf greens, none of which when built as specified has ever given problems and many being over 25 years old, I can assure you this method works and is totally relevant to UK (and Northern European) conditions.



'I do feel we need to bring a little perspective to the problem...'



'We need to take note of the advice and research which is available...'

● The author, Jim Arthur, is known world-wide as the consultant agronomist who, in 1971, became consultant to the R. & A. Championship Committee, a position he held until his retirement from active practice in 1988. He has long been a champion of the greenkeeper, a person he believes is underestimated in the booming golf industry.

When lucky breaks came his way, Martin Twist seized them with both hands. But it has taken more than good luck to become Hillside Golf Club's Head Greenkeeper as JOHN NELSON discovers

Martin Twist, Head Greenkeeper at Hillside Golf Club, is the man in charge of the course over which the first ever European Amateur Championship is to be held in 1992 and which has been selected as a qualifying course for The Open at Royal Birkdale. In addition, successful competitors in the ISEKI-BIGGA Championships will be exposed to its charms when their Grand Final is held there on September 12th.

These events are in good hands. Indeed, the choice of Hillside owes more than a little to Martin's skills and experience. He has set out a course which provides a first rate test of links golf, creating a course which looks the part, looking good and inviting.

Still only 26 years old, Martin is no stranger to the big event, which hold no terrors for him. He already has the 1989 Amateur Championship under his belt and was a member of the greenkeeping team which prepared the course for the 1982 PGA Championship held at Hillside.

How come so young a man has been entrusted with such responsibilities? It's quite a story – and it's still unfolding. He had his lucky breaks – which he seized with both hands – but there's much more to it than just that.

Martin is Southport born and bred. He comes from a family with a background of market gardening, landscaping, beautifying gardens, growing flowers and shrubs. Before leaving school Martin knew he wanted a job outdoors, preferably doing something like his father. A school friend told him he was joining the greenkeeping staff at Southport & Ainsdale as a trainee on the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) and Martin joined him.

This was how it all started. He found he liked the work and there and then decided to make greenkeeping his life and his career. But he didn't want to just be one of the boys. Oh no, Martin wanted to be a master of his craft and reach the top of his profession. He wanted to make it to the top!

He wanted to run his own show. This meant becoming a head greenkeeper – at a top Club, and also meant becoming appropriately qualified through training, certification and experience. So he started the three year City & Guilds Course in Greenkeeping, stuck at it and passed, but didn't stop there, preferring to continue for a further year to study Greenkeeping Management. He passed.

During this time his YTS traineeship came to an end, causing him to look for a permanent job, and one came available at Hillside – across the railway track from Southport & Ainsdale. This was a job as a member of the greenkeeping staff and it was 1981. He now had his foot on the first rung of the ladder, playing his part as a member of the Hillside team for four years – 1981 to 1985. During this time he contributed to and became familiar with the way in which courses are prepared to hold championships – the '82 PGA Championship at Hillside and the '83 Open at Royal Birkdale – for there was, and continues to be, close rapport between the two greenkeeping teams.

In 1985 he got his first break. The assistant head greenkeeper, Stuart McCall, left to run his own show at Eastham Lodge on the Wirral. Martin succeeded him. It turned out to be a triple lucky break. First, he understudied a first rate head greenkeeper – George Lloyd. Second, he was called



'By the early 1980s it was clear that a golf boom was in prospect and Hillside was determined to be in its vanguard'

Pictured above: Martin Twist, right, with First Assistant and colleague Antony Bailey.

Photographs by ALAN BIRCH

upon to take charge in an acting capacity due to George's prolonged illness over several months in 1986/87. Third, and arguably his luckiest break, he came on the scene at the right time.

By the early 1980s it was clear that a golf boom was in prospect and Hillside was determined to be in its vanguard. This meant having a first rate course and therefore appropriate finance was made available. The green committee, under the direction of Ken Seward, instituted systematic review, a programme of planned maintenance and regular replacement of appropriate greenkeeping equipment. One of Seward's colleagues was David Rose, who succeeded him as chairman in 1986. Like Seward, Rose was equally dedicated to the use of modern methods in course management and authorised the introduction of a computerised irrigation control system for both fairways and greens – and was in office when Martin became acting head greenkeeper.

It fell to Martin's lot to prepare the course for The Amateur Championship in 1986 and, judging by the compliments received, he did it very successfully. During this period he also gained valuable experience in handling staff and putting some of his own ideas into practice. For example he believed that bunkers should look classy as well as fulfilling their purpose – acting as a hazard – as one of the ways to defend the playing character of the course as a test of golf.

He became convinced of the importance of a golf course looking inviting – aesthetically pleasing – from tee to green. He realised this meant a tidy golf course and that this depended on attention to detail. It mattered how a golf course looked and appeared – to golfers. Above all, he came