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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

OCTOBER 1991



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GREENKEEPER

International

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All God's creatures... but earth worms are often quite simply a pest, especially when casting in winter. The STRI's expert, Roger Evans, offers some timely comments in the light of recent environmental legislation.Page 31

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COVER PICTURE:

Telford Jarvis clutches the trophy which spells his success as winner of the Iseki Championship

Sorry case of foot in mouth

A leading American golfer turned golf course architect is reported to have sent one of his experts to report on the building and maintenance of a course in Scotland. His report concluded 'and if you follow my instructions you will have the best greens in England'... exit red-faced to the Sassenach border!

■ **Perhaps as compensation** for not being selected to represent the USA in the Ryder Cup, big boomer John Daly is selected to join Payne Stewart, Curtis Strange and Daly's own hero, Jack Nicklaus, in the four-man Skins Game for \$540,000 on December 1st at La Quinta. Strange has won nearly half a million dollars in the past two years in these 'knock-out' events, where the winner takes the lion's share. Daly ranks number one in driving distance on the PGA Tour with a 287 yard average!

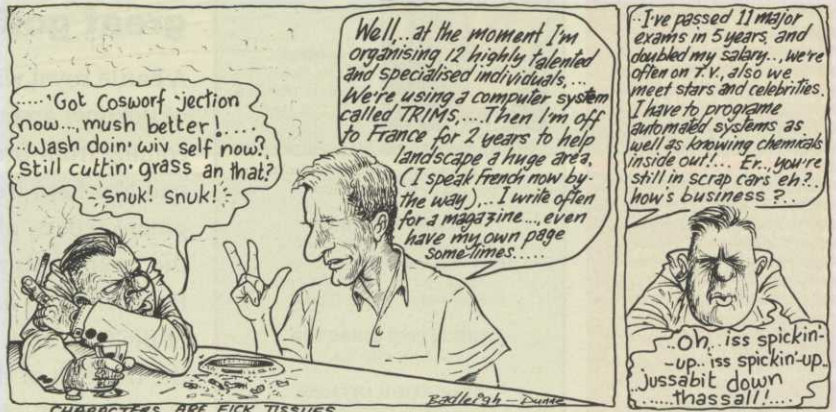
■ **Confused** by the many and varied pronunciations of the word 'Iseki', your editor sought out Iseki managing director, Mr T Shinoto, at the recent pre-IOG demo given by Lodge-way at Shuttleworth Aerodrome. Mr Shinoto assured me that to be correct one should say "EEE sek EEE". That's it. No more eye's please!

■ **What's in a name?** Tony Turner of Turner World Mowers and World Mowers Ltd is more than slightly miffed at the interlocutory injunction sought by Bomford Turner Ltd, restraining Tony Turner from using the name 'Turner World Mowers' or 'Turner' as part of his trading style in relation to the business of professional mowers.

It has been and is being made clear for obvious commercial reasons that Turner World Mowers is a new company, neither of which is in any way connected with Bomford Turner Ltd or its parent company Elswick plc. The proceedings are being strongly contested.

■ **Winner of the 'Ryder' limerick** competition, from a selection of several and including many that missed the 'Ryder' connection completely, being rhymes rather than limericks, came this from Ross Mable, a third year apprentice greenkeeper at Prestonfield Golf Club in Edinburgh:

Said Bernie 'my team for The Ryder
Will make the Yanks eyes open wider,
We must keep The Cup
In order to sup
A celebratory flagon of cider'.



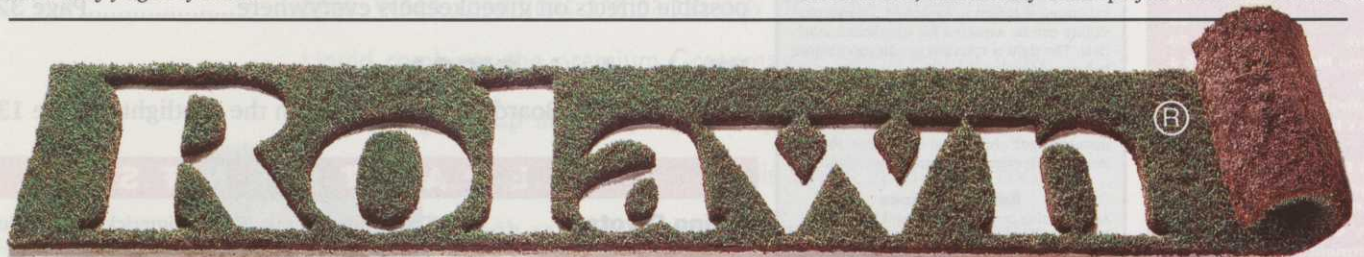
■ **Tim Fell, managing director of Tillers Turf, tells of amusement at the IOG Show, when a jack-the-lad came on stand and demanded: "ere gunvor, can you guarantee this 'ere turf?"**
"Certainly sir", Tim whimsically replied.
"I can guarantee that if it is not watered, nurtured and fertilised, loved and cared for, it will die!"
"Shouldn't 'ave said that, boss", came his mate's retort,
"e's in the turf market for 'is 18 new greens!"

Norman Exley wins a runner-up 'double' with a cheeky rhyme (not a limerick) which accompanied his five entries:

Enclosed are some odes
Which I have 'composed'
To enter your limerick test.
They'll not be as good
As you think they should
But you'll say "never mind, did his best".



■ **He called it keenness...** though Bob Lupton, The Northern section secretary, wrote with tongue in cheek to report of an incident when one of his staff, ever anxious to get working, drove a tractor and trailer through the closed doors of the machinery shed. The resultant demolition, pictured above, was worthy of steeplejack Fred Dibner himself!



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

■ Playing in the Kent County Championships over 27 holes at Cherry Lodge GC (S.S.S. 75) on September 9th, 'young' Peter Biscoe won the KGU Senior Title. Peter, who works at Cray Valley GC and plays at both this course and Eltham Warren GC, has seen his handicap tumble by two shots over the past month by dint of some "out of his boots" play, his winning score at Cherry Lodge being 109.5 off a handicap of eleven.

■ Construction is well underway for the relocation of Eaton Park GC, Cheshire, on land given to the Club by the Duke of Westminster, who owned both the previous land and the new acreage as part of his Grosvenor Estate. The work is in the capable hands of Brian D Pierson Contractors Ltd.

■ Linda Bottomley, managing director of Mowing Machine Maintenance Ltd, will henceforth be known as Linda Adams, having married Karl Adams at Rotherham just a week or so ago. We join with all friends and colleagues at MMM and parent company Ransomes in wishing them joy and happiness in their life together.



■ More Ransomes news heralds the appointment of John Kerridge, Chairman and Chief Executive of Fisons, as Deputy Chairman of Ransomes plc, the parent company of Ransomes Sims & Jefferies. He has been a non-executive director of Ransomes for seven years.

■ News from Gordon Moir tells of the retirement of Willie Milton, head greenkeeper, Downfield GC, having been at Downfield since the course was constructed in the 1950s. Willie was a stalwart member of the North Scotland section, being chairman, secretary and treasurer at various times. In joining with the section in wishing him a long and happy retirement, we also offer his successor, Ian Menzies, our hearty congratulations.



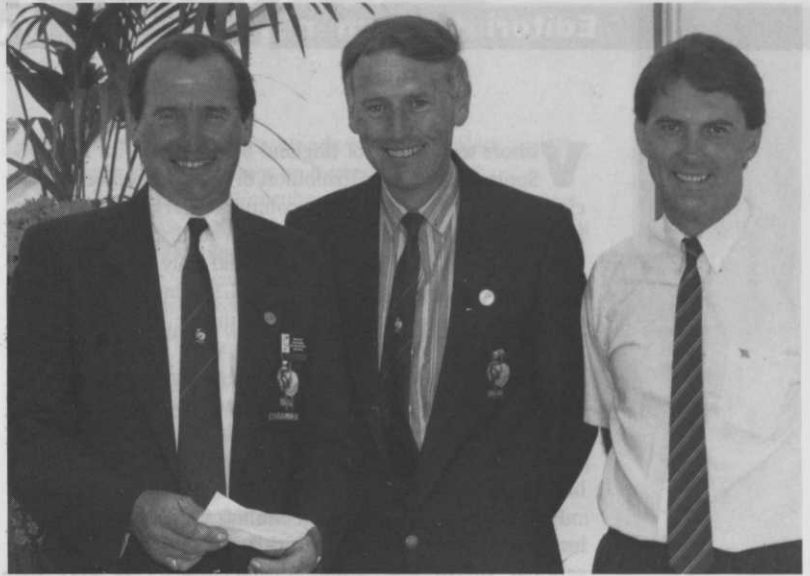
■ Clive Carter, formerly with Turfand Ltd., is now nicely established in what many see as a niche tailor-made for his talents, that of UK Sales for Turfmech Machinery Ltd of Great Haywood, Staffordshire.

■ The Joint Golf Course Committee, devoted to the R&A's discussion document 'The Way Forward', has cleared another hurdle by the appointment of Nick Park as Chairman of the Technical Panel.

This group will report to the JGCC and make recommendations about the creation of standards for golf course design, construction and maintenance. Nick Park is well known for his contributions to 'The Way Forward', the series of 'Golf Monthly' articles on 'The Management of British Golf Courses' and for his part in the most recent highly acclaimed book 'Real Golf'.



■ It was good to see Colin Geddes at the IOG, relaxed and looking like a fresh-faced teenager, and to learn that he has returned north to his native Yorkshire from the Jack Nicklaus II/Golden Bear Inc. designed Hanbury Manor G&CC, where he has been course manager since June 1989. Literally born on a golf course (was it Moortown?) and a greenkeeper all his life, Colin has covered the whole gamut of maintenance, from early traditional to the very latest Pennecross on USGA spec. Which Club will snap him up next, I wonder?



■ The news that St Andrews Links Trust has appointed BIGGA North Scotland Section Secretary, Gordon Moir, as head greenkeeper at the Eden is heralded by all who know this likeable young man. As an apprentice attending Elmwood College, where he won the St Andrews Links Trust Award for best third year student, he went on to become head man at Fraserburgh, a position he has held for 12 years. Married, with three children, Gordon is a keen golfer playing off 4 handicap. Recently he won the Fraserburgh Matchplay Champion (1990) and was Moray Open Champion in 1987. His contribution to the section is beyond measure and he will be sorely missed. To Gordon – better known as the Sherlock Holmes of Scotland – our most sincere good wishes.

■ Playing in the qualifying round of the British Amateur Championship at Ganton, Raymond Russell, a greenkeeper at Longniddry, pulled off the shot of a lifetime. The Scottish youth international drilled a six iron 200 yards at Ganton's 494 yard ninth for an albatross two! He finished with a one under 70 to lead the field.

■ Drawn at the IOG show from a barrel overflowing with would-be winners, BIGGA Chairman George Malcolm drew out just one name in thousands, the lucky greenkeeper who would fly to New Orleans to the GCSAA Conference and Show in 1992: John Atkins of Chestfield GC. As winner of this marvellous prize sponsored by Maxwell Hart, John will receive an expenses-paid trip to what is undoubtedly one of the world's most exciting venues. • Pictured, from left, George Malcolm, Neil Thomas and Maxwell Hart's Mike Ring.

A first for Ransomes

■ What better news to greet the autumn than that of Nigel Church's appointment as Ransomes' first ever Golf Sales Manager.

Nigel, a familiar figure to all who visit Ransomes for the 'grand tour', has many years of experience of the golf market and until recently headed the Ransomes Product Training Department. He's a 'grass roots' man (if he will forgive the pun), having been with the company since leaving school and has trodden the established path of sales demonstration and main dealership both at home and in Europe and the Far East before taking up his product training position.



Organisational smash and grab

Visitors to the East of England Showground for the IOG Sports and Leisure Exhibition in early September, especially those presented with complimentary passes, must have been dumbfounded – as I was – to discover that such ‘believed to be free’ entries were valid only as a means of partially reducing the cost of the IOG’s ‘admit by catalogue only’ remit. Those unfortunates unable to prove their favourite dealer actually loved them were being charged a hefty three quid to enter, with a high majority steaming with indignation at such piracy. It was, as one impecunious greenkeeper pointedly remarked, ‘a bit like being charged to enter Marks & Spencers in order to see if you might like to buy new underwear’.

If your own experience at Peterborough leaves you with less than sweet thoughts about this organisational smash and grab, consider the plight of yours truly. My saga began in early July, when both written and telephoned requests for forward information and press facilities were brushed aside with a brusque ‘please contact later’. Despite repeated telephone pleas over several weeks running up to the show, the first day found me outside the gate sans entry pass, sans press pass, sans information. I actually dared – thoroughly wicked soul that I am – to drive to the gate and was told to turn around and get out. I drove the full ten yards forward necessary to execute a 90 degree turn and promptly had my car searched: this in full view of the security guard making such demands! I was still outside the ground and only the intervention of Techturf’s Gordon Rolfe, who lent me an exhibitors pass, prevented yet another calamitous goof: I was finally in at last!

Hightailing it to the press centre I was informed there were no press identification badges and no catalogues. Not one single writer had received a press badge and there were some pretty ugly rumblings taking place. How are we journalists to find our way around the maze, was the oft repeated question, don’t know and don’t much care seemingly the answer. I was shunted from office to office and stonewalled at every turn, a dog-eared, coffee-stained cata-

logue eventually being grudgingly produced together with a plea not to tell other journalists, otherwise ‘they’ll all want one’!

The point we were all trying to make was a simple one: a press badge is not likened to some star of kudos, rather it instantly identifies the wearer and prevents time-wasting at stands when seeking information. You’d be amazed at how quickly a sales manager will respond to such beacons and produce vital up to the minute data. With so much to see in a short time, the luxury of browsing is certainly not for the working scribe.

Perhaps the final unforgivable straw came following the presentation of the National Turfgrass Award to a deserving Peter Dury, longtime Sport and Landscape Development Officer with Notts County Council. A hundred or so people attended the ceremony, which took place near to closing time and took over an hour to complete. Imagine our surprise upon discovering we were locked in! I didn’t stop to see every last soul attempt to leave the site but the vision of men dressed in their Sunday best clambering onto upturned dustbins in order to shin over the lethal wire fencing was a sight to behold and I wish I’d had my camera, – though it was far from being funny at the time.

The 1991 IOG Show was an undoubted success and no doubt about it. But it was a success this year in spite of the IOG’s organisation, not because of it. What credit is due

must be meted out to the dedicated exhibitors who somehow manage to rise above adversity, with such resolution deserving an extra vote of praise in my books, rather than a metaphorical kick in the teeth.

We all know the IOG can do better, having seen their skills of organisation demonstrated to grand effect in the past. Together with my fellow journalists I’d like to know why it seemed to crumble apart this year, was it something we said? Perhaps the time is ripe for the IOG to look again at appointing professionals to do a professional job: the previous masterminding of such tasks by Dianne Mowat being seen as a touch of pure magic.

DAVID WHITE

‘a bit like being charged to enter Marks & Spencers in order to see if you might like to buy new underwear’

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Seminars: from wildlife to The Way Forward

SOUTH WEST AND WALES SEMINAR

November 6th is the date for the South West and Wales Region Seminar at Cannington College, the scene set fair for a highly entertaining and informative programme. Alan Mitchell will begin the proceedings with a paper on the wildlife found on a golf course, followed by Eric Shiel, Chairman of the Joint Golf Course Committee, who will discuss the implications of this new committee and their future plans in the light of 'The Way Forward' document.

Jim Arthur needs no introduction to Greenkeeper International readers and is sure to provide judicious words for both greenkeepers and educationalists alike, his address being followed by that of the equally renowned Jon Allbutt, who will present his research paper on 'The Safe Use of Pesticides'. Ample question time is promised and the whole event is sponsored by Modus T Systems. Call Gordon Child on 0803 844056 for further details.

MIDLANDS SEMINAR

The 4th Annual Regional Seminar is to be held on Wednesday November 20th at the Warwickshire College of Agriculture, Moreton Morell, Warwick. Midlands members are urged to make careful note of this date and make every effort to support the venture and thus make it a huge success. Speakers include:

- Neil Thomas, Executive Director of BIGGA, on 'BIGGA - Approaching the Crossroads?'
- David Senior, Technical Development Manager of Vitax Ltd, on 'Turf Diseases'.
- Barry F Cooper, Golf Course Drainage Consultant, on 'The Surveying and Drainage of a Golf Course'.
- Graeme Francis, Sales Manager for Turf Irrigation Services Ltd., on 'Irrigation'.
- Michael Boddy, Arboricultural and Forestry Consultant for George Walker and Sons of Leicester on 'The Care and Maintenance of Trees'.

Application forms and programmes have already been sent out to all members but if for some reason you may not have received yours - or if you are a non-member interested in attending - please contact Roger Willars on 0455 283053

Sponsor acceptance to date for either insertion of trade literature in folders or the Marler-Haley display panels are: Highmeres Lawnmower Services, Tillers Turf, Trelleborg Ltd, Western Farm Implements Ltd, Better Methods Ltd and Johnsons Seeds Ltd.

SOUTH EAST SEMINAR

The South East Region will hold their Seminar at Merrist Wood College on Wednesday November 6th, with speakers including:

- Dr David Riley, ICI Ecologist, on 'The Development of Modern Pesticides'.
- Philip Baldock, Assistant Course Manager, Hankley Common GC, on 'Practical Conservation Within Golf Courses'.

- Dr Rob McGibbon, Heathlands Wildlife Project, on 'The Importance of Golf Courses on Surrey Heathland'.
- A talk by an Ecology Consultant.
- Jack McMillan, Golf Course Management Consultant, on 'European Golf Development'.
- Neil Thomas, Executive Director of BIGGA, on 'BIGGA - Approaching The Crossroads?'

Also in attendance will be BIGGA Chairman, George Malcolm.

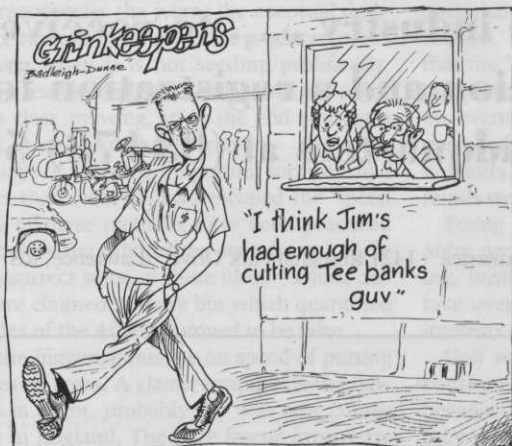
The cost of the seminar is £17.50 which includes morning coffee, conference luncheon and afternoon tea. Tickets may be obtained from Phil Baldock, The Bungalow, Hankley Common GC, Tilford, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2DD., or from Clive Osgood, c/o Walton Heath GC, Tadworth; Surrey.

Further detailed information may also be obtained from Norman Exley, the S E Regional Administrator (telephone: 09274 24737) or from all section secretaries.

First meeting for Joint Golf Course Committee

The first meeting of the new Joint Golf Course Committee Greenkeeper Training and Recruitment Panel took place on September 16th in Manchester, the full panel consisting of the following elected officers:

- Bob McLaren - Past President of the Scottish Golf Union, member of the Scottish Golf Course Committee, Chairman of the Greenkeeper Training Committee, Chairman of the JGCC Greenkeeper Training and Recruitment Panel, member of the R&A Committee of Four on 'The Way Forward'.
- Ray Burniston - Secretary of The Association of Golf Club Secretaries.
- Peter Dutton - Past President of The English Golf Union, member English Golf Union Golf Course Committee.
- Joe Furlong - Golfing Union of Ireland, President of Royal Tara Golf Club, member Greenkeeper Training Committee.
- David Golding - Education Officer, BIGGA, member Greenkeeper Training Committee. Ex-working greenkeeper.
- John Harris - Chairman of Green for seven years at Hankley Common Golf Club. Contributor to The Way Forward'.
- Bruce Jamieson - Director of Agronomy, PGA European Tour. Ex working greenkeeper.
- John Millen - Ex Head Greenkeeper, Canterbury Golf Club, now developer and Golf Course Manager, Weald of Kent Golf Club. Member BIGGA Board of Management and member of BIGGA master greenkeeper Advisory Board.
- Chris Nolan - Secretary Irish Greenkeepers Association, member of Greenkeeper Training Committee.
- Neil Thomas - Executive Director, BIGGA. General Administrator to Greenkeeper Training Committee.



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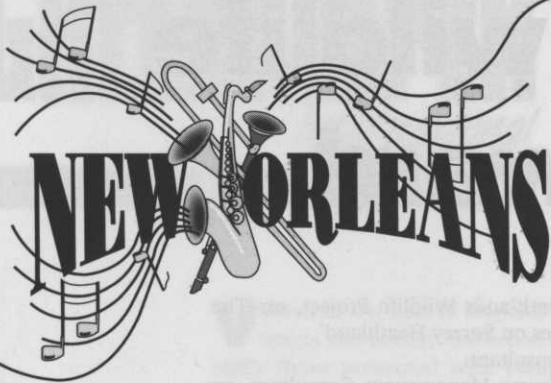
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Golf Course Superintendents Association of America 1421 Research Park Drive Lawrence, KS 66049-3859

The quick and the dead

Few fads have done more harm to our golf greens than the senseless chase after speed on putting surfaces, triggered off at the start of each year by what has become known as the 'Augusta Syndrome'.

Not even the phase of soft boggy greens as a result of often unrecognised over-watering and over-feeding a decade ago was as reprehensible, in that it was the result of bad greenkeeping and not a direct cause of a consciously applied bad policy.

The scene was set – as have so many of our greenkeeping problems – by the Professional Tour. With Stimpometers akimbo they demanded from committees and greenkeepers faster and faster greens and got them – but at what cost! Set the mowers down – and then set them down further still. Fit 'tournament' bottom blades and shave the greens – never mind the results.

Of course if the soonest you are going to see those poor suffering greens again is a full year away, (and often much longer) one can readily adopt a philosophical attitude to the inevitable aftermath.

The debacle at this year's Open may yet serve a purpose in showing players and spectators alike the rather too embarrassingly premature results of excessively close mowing, which all too often does not show until long after the television cameras have departed.

It is assumed that golfers want fast greens – though I am not too sure that this is inevitably true, as too many of today's new entrants seem to prefer soft holding greens to firm fast putting surfaces. Nevertheless the professionals certainly demand them.

Undoubtedly, shaving greens down to the bone will speed them up, but if this savage treatment is prolonged for more than a few days, let alone weeks, then the finer leaved species are the first to thin out and die. One famous Surrey golf course renowned in the 1970s for having greens which were yellow, stagnant thatchy bogs "smelling like a sewage farm", managed by a consistently sensible policy to restore a respectable proportion of the finer grasses in the next decade. Then suddenly, back they went to annual meadow grass, (no thatch because aeration was maintained), with the addition of dead dry patches instead. The reason was easy to identify but impossible to correct, because those in the driving seat wanted fast greens and the edict went out to mow at one eighth from April to October. Despite forecasts of the inevitable results, this policy was not amended.

It must be stressed beyond argument, that persistently shaving greens to one eighth will eventually kill them. There simply is not enough food production through the shaved-off leaves to keep the roots going.

The poorer the grass species the worse the eventual damage. Our old 'friend' annual meadow grass produces much slower surfaces, even when it is not seeding prolifically, than the finer leaved fescues and bents, but these are much more susceptible to close mowing, so in the end you get a double-dose, slower as well as damaged greens.

There are other ways of speeding up putting surfaces than dropping the blades that seem to have escaped the 'speed kings' notice. Many of these methods have been practiced for years, decades before the Stimpometer was dreamt of. In my view we must resurrect some of these ideas – whilst dismissing those that are claimed to work but which quantified research on both sides of the Atlantic proved to be false.

Needless to say, the biggest influence on speed of putting surface is the species of grass. A classic example is the new course at Mill Ride in Ascot, probably the best new course built in this decade in England, The pure fescue greens are

mown at heights just above a quarter inch, with Stimpometer readings – I can confirm – around nine feet. It is all too symptomatic of the great divide that separates golf on either side of the Atlantic that a visiting American golf course architect (renowned for his obsession with water features, bumps and tortuous designs) who came to see the course, took one look at the first green and said "Good heavens (or words to that effect), you've got pure fescue greens – what on earth do you want them for?" He got told!

If you doubt my word, take advantage of a limited offer to play the course (subject only to production of a handicap certificate) for the ridiculously low fee of £15 per round – (but ring 0344 886777 first) – and enjoy the luxury of a millionaires course which brilliant design, first class construction and inspired greenkeeping has created out of what had been mainly flat polo fields. But of course if you don't have pure fescue greens, it is no good talking about their advantages.

How then can we speed up greens without mowing them to destruction? Certainly regular verticutting and grooming will add 12 inches to the Stimpometer reading, though brushing has proved to have no effect. Despite traditional belief, sanding has no significant effect either, even at almost ridiculously intensive application levels, e.g. 28 light and 5 heavy sandings over two years on bent greens (University of Pennsylvania) even when combined with deep verticutting and shallow aeration.

Although rain can slow down greens (and even dew, if not switched as a normal routine), within sensible limits the drying out of greens by severely limiting irrigation did not significantly speed them up.

However, the one treatment which improved speed above all others – save shaving – albeit of a temporary nature, was rolling. This has been known for almost all this century. Who of my generation has not, years ago, seen a hand machine with a box full of sand and the blades raised taken over greens, partly to give the striped effect and partly to speed up putting surfaces. Since deep aeration is now simple, practicable and effective, any bad effects can be corrected before they show and the finer grasses survive to provide better conditions for yet another day!

However, matters will not improve until the demand is altered. That demand comes from the Tour and those who ape them and must be resisted. Greenkeepers and agronomists alike must ensure that sound greenkeeping methods designed to give 365 days a year golf prevail. With present developments, including the Tour being represented on both the Educational and Technical Panels advising the R&A's Joint Golf Course Committee, I am not optimistic, especially as I am told it was at the R&A's request. In fact, any day now I expect to hear proposals that the Tour – with its 'experienced agronomists' – should take over courses from greenkeepers for six weeks before an event to ensure perfection and that this should be extended to R&A Championships as well as their own tournaments. Firm denials that this is the last thing on their minds would worry me more than silence!

Young professionals are being instructed in greenkeeping. Soon perhaps to be added will be catering and book-keeping, business management and administration so they can take over from the stewards and the secretary – all in the interests of televised golf. Or am I being unkind?

Golf was and is essentially an amateur game and only constant vigilance will stop the professional take-over, because to give them credit the pros at least know where they want to go and do not lack leadership.



'It must be stressed beyond argument, that persistently shaving greens to one eighth will eventually kill them. There is simply not enough food production through the shaved-off leaves to keep the roots going'

■ In reply to David White's by-line (page 22, August) on the origins of golf, I have to say that if golf is a Dutch game then I am a Dutchman, and the first *Homo erectus* that ever scampered across the savannah in a loin-cloth was the inventor of the Olympic Games.

The truth, however, is that the game of golf as we know it developed in Scotland and no Dutch historian can deny that. I would also suggest that it is quite fruitless to employ words such as 'early Dutch golf' – the Dutch game in the period referred to was called *Kolven* and while it undoubtedly contributed to the development of golf, it was not golf. In fact its closest modern relative in my opinion is croquet, and one doesn't hear too many Dutchmen singing the praises of that game.

It always amuses me that those who would belittle the Scottish contribution to golf simply let their minds sail across the water and take root in Dutch soil. Why on earth do they stop there? Were the Dutch the only people ever to put a stick to a ball in bygone days? Chimpanzees have been known to wallop a stone with a stick – are they golfers? Maybe that's why golf makes monkeys of us all. I rest my case.

MAURICE GRAY
Aberdeen


It was bound to happen, the sore nerve having been touched... but I am unrepentant and still claim – with proven historic records on the side of reason and truth and dispelling folklore – that the game of golf (irrespective of its foreign title of Colf – the long game – and Kolf – the short game (still played in Holland) – or even 'Goff', the original Scottish derivative taken and developed from its Dutch ancestry) originated in the Low Countries. I would never, as Mr Gray implies, belittle the Scottish contribution to the game's development but would recommend the reading of EARLY GOLF, the historic work by Steven van Hengel, a member of the R&A and a true golfing Sherlock

*Holmes who made research his life's work. After having read his book, Mr Gray and other doubters will find it difficult to believe that golf – yes, golf – originated in Scotland. Incidentally, the game referred to by Mr Gray, correctly *Het kolven*, never existed in the 'imagined' form in which it was first described in Victorian fantasy. Summarising, golf was originally a Dutch game imported to Scotland. No longer exclusively Dutch or Scottish, it is now truly Universal. – Editor.*

■ Following the publication of your article (July pages 22-26) on the workings of the PGA European Tour, I write to further clarify some of the points made therein.

There are many courses on the European Tour that have *Poa annua* greens and even though these are less than perfect in the winter months, the Tour professionals find that well prepared *Poa annua* greens often give a very respectable putting surface during the summer. The article seemed to imply that the Tour regularly recommends the killing of *Poa annua* greens by Methyl Bromide gassing. I must stress that this is not the case. May I also stress that this method of cleansing greens by gassing can be very dangerous and should only be carried out by experts.

Finally I would like to clarify and expand upon the role of Richard Stillwell, who manages to successfully run his own independent International Turf Consultancy business whilst



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