



Ask a farmer what to do, then do the opposite, says JIM ARTHUR

# Lasting legacy of LIME

There is no better (or worse) example of the lasting legacy of lime than on an old abandoned tennis court turned into a lawn where the lining out was originally done with a lime-wash. Twenty years after such old courts had last seen a forehand smash or genteel lob the old lines can still be seen, narrow strips of dark green lush grass black with worm casts and covered in weeds contrasting with the old wiry turf. Of course if such lush, worm-ridden weedy turf is what you want, lime away with gay abandon! But surely we are agreed most grass sports are best played on fine wiry turf, which may not be bright green but is certainly worm and weed-free.

The problems of greenkeeping can so often be laid at the feet of farmers or agricultural advisers. Printed at the top of any report or feasibility study carried out by such 'specialists' should be the old greenkeeping adage "Ask a farmer what to do about greenkeeping, listen carefully and then go and do the exact opposite"! This is totally logical because 'grass' to a farmer means exactly the opposite of what it does to greenkeepers. Many of our problems in this direction stem from farmers on green committees in the periods after two World Wars, trying to equate the success they had on their farms from liming and feeding with managing their golf courses.

Good greenkeepers hate lime. It builds up fertility, encourages earthworms (now so difficult to eliminate but still so capable of creating soft, muddy, weedy turf) and favours our old enemy annual meadow grass, not to mention creating very poor surface drainage.

It is nearly a century since the first paper was written on the benefits of acidifying heavy soils by the use of acidic reacting fertilisers, viz sulphates of ammonia and iron and the harmful effects of lime. This was by Dr Murray in South Africa in 1904, anticipating the research work done in the States at Rhode Island, set up in 1890, which was the first greenkeeping research station. It was this paper and those which followed which generated so much enthusiasm here in the 1920s for the acid theory, and certainly, on heavier soils, acidification eliminated weeds, reduced earthworm casting, improved drainage and encouraged finer grasses, notably the acid-tolerant *Agrostis* family (bent grasses).

It was on this theory that RB Dawson as a young and inexperienced Rothamsted soil chemist pinned his faith in the early thirties after he was appointed as first Director of the Research Station at Bingley in 1929. Sadly – and especially sadly for him and his reputation – the theory was grossly abused in practice. On the principle that if one bottle does you good, two will do you better, ammonia and iron were applied with gay abandon, irrespective of soil type, climatic conditions and, above all, back-up irrigation facilities. Six and more dressings a year, at rates only marginally below those at which post-application scorching would be inevitable, were applied to links greens with at best primitive irrigation, if any. This brought the pH down with a run from 7.5 and 5.0 and below.

Initially highly successful control of broad-leafed rosette weeds and earthworm casting was followed by disastrous drought damage in the mid thirties, as the acidity burnt up the moisture-retaining humus. Dawson lost heart, panicked and changed back to NPK fertilisers and the inevitable annual meadow grass filled in the bare areas. We are still suffering from this in the turf quality on some of our *Poa annua* dominated links.

Ever since, there has been guarded and strictly qualified acknowledgment that acidity can produce fine wiry turf. So it does, on heavier soils, where the natural grass species is *Agrostis*, but on light sandy soils, where fine grasses are found, such acidification discourages the alkaline-loving fescues and where the turf thins out, annual meadow grass rather than *Agrostis* tends to take over.

Today, there is much less talk of manipulating the pH figure, which frankly can be summarised by saying that the ideal pH is the one you have got. "If it ain't broke, don't try to mend it" is a very sound philosophy. If one is favoured by desirable species being dominant, do not try to upset the soil conditions that encourage this desirable state. Even where undesirable lush species are dominant, think hard before acidifying (or liming). There may well be other factors: traffic and resultant compaction; over-watering or a legacy of grass over-feeding, which are responsible.

Liming acid turf because it is not sufficiently vigorous or even green is not the answer. Even less so is the use of alkaline fertilisers such as nitro-chalk. Liming bent turf without phosphates will assuredly result in a severe attack of the fungal disease Take all Patch, formerly *Ophiobolus*, now *Gaeumannomyces graminis*, for which we now have no legally permitted fungicidal cure, (even the illegal cures involving mercurial fungicides, practised by those with access to stocks of old fungicide, have now stopped as the material runs out).

A confusing factor is that pure sand, as opposed to sand/soil/humus greens, need lime plus complete fertilisers etc. and this inevitably encourages annual meadow grass and disease.

One answer to Take all Patch is to increase phosphates, but this causes *Poa annua* to take over. Acidification can sometimes reverse the ill-effects of liming and reduce the disease, but all too often the long suffering turf does not know whether it is punched, bored or hem-stitched and reacts accordingly. One classic way to deal cheaply with worm casting and lushness of heavy alkaline soils due to past liming, practiced for 60 years, is to use powder sulphur which slowly oxidises to sulphuric acid and produces an acid soil. The problem is that there is no way in which soil analyses can determine how much sulphur to apply. Excessive rates, while initially showing dramatic improvement, eventually produce so low a pH that grass dies, leaving only moss. Too little has no effect. The only way is to put down trials at say 1-4 ozs. sq. yard and wait 6-9 months before assessing the optimum rate. Beware of uneven application – or overlapping – so easy with a material notoriously difficult to spread evenly. Of course, if you do overlap, you can always lightly lime the scarred strip!

This sulphur treatment may be our only way to eliminate earthworms now that our masters in Brussels have banned the use of virtually all vermicides. Before long, I expect to hear that they propose banning golf on the grounds that it is a dangerous sport. Everyone at each and every level in golf should be well aware that the EC are planning regulations which will control every aspect, both of building new courses and maintaining existing ones. When the rules are made, it will avail nothing to protest – we must guide the rule-makers, who could quite easily lay down laws as to the ideal pH and even the grasses to be used! You can be sure, on their present track record, that they will get it wrong!

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It is no secret that the most popular speakers at seminars and conferences are our own greenkeeper members. However, not many members have the confidence or the presentation skills to be able to share their experiences.

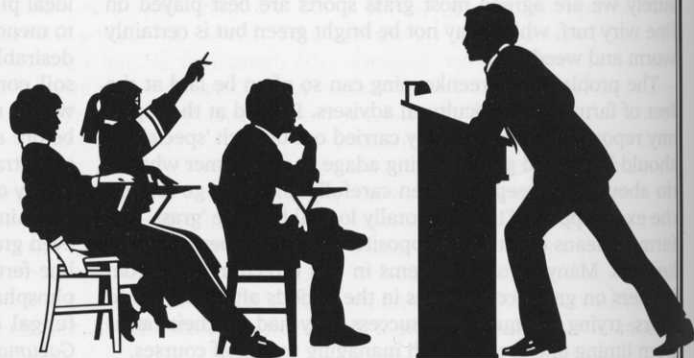
The Association, through its new *Education and Development Fund*, is arranging two-day courses at Aldwark Manor for members willing to gain the necessary confidence and technique.

All you have to do is agree a subject with Education Officer David Golding, and following the training course, we pilot the presentations at Section meetings, prior to national platforms.

Please consider the offer to be trained by the Association and if you wish to discuss the proposed course, contact David at headquarters on 03473 581/2.

In the future the Association would like to develop a "bank" of speakers who could be used on the various platforms around the country, to pass on their particular skill or experience.

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# Personal protective equipment

An update on the new proposed regulations by JON ALLBUTT

Since 1974 the Health and Safety at Work Act placed a general duty on the employer to provide a safe working environment for the employee, this including the provision for protective clothing where it was considered necessary. In general the minimum clothing is provided, although we tended to accept the manufacturer/suppliers opinion as to it's suitability rather than ask for a detailed specification. In situations where special protection is needed, eg. in dusty conditions or using chemicals, the equipment is often woefully inadequate.

The COSHH Regulations require that a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment of the risk to employees' health is carried out before a job involving the use of hazardous substances is carried out. If correctly carried out the risk assessment should deal with avoiding the risk by changing work practices or changing the substance used. The use of personal protective equipment is considered to be a 'last resort' after all other factors have been considered.

Temporary staff are sometimes treated differently; the provision of protective boots, coats or specialised equipment is usually reserved for permanent staff only.

Two important draft documents have recently been published by the Health and Safety Executive to implement EC Directives. They will not only help our understanding of what exactly a temporary worker is; but they will also more clearly define the employer/employee duties with regard to the issuing and use of personal protective equipment. These draft documents will be issued as Regulations and Codes of Practice soon and will come fully into force later this year.

The proposals for 'Health and Safety (General Provisions) Regulations and Approved Code of Practice' is intended to implement EC Directives 89/391/EEC and 91/383/EEC. The latter Directive is specifically to "encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship". Article 2 sets the objectives of which (1) states "The purpose of this Directive is to ensure that temporary workers are afforded the same level of protection as that of other workers in the user undertaking and/or establishment". This statement makes clear that temporary staff will no longer be treated as the 'poor relation' in terms of health and safety at work. In fact this document also makes clear in Regulation 12 that temporary workers must be provided with the same information and training as permanent workers.

It is necessary to employ seasonal workers on golf courses and sports grounds to help out at peak times and these temporary workers carry out a variety of tasks, including the use of machinery. In future it will be necessary to make provision for their training and issuing of personal protective equipment.

The document: Personal Protective Equipment at Work, Proposals for Regulations and Guidance, is intended to implement EC Directive 89/656/EEC on the Minimum Health and Safety Requirements for the Use of Personal Protective Equipment at the Workplace. The proposed Regulations provide some useful definitions:

"Personal Protective Equipment" - means all equipment designed to be worn or held by a person at work to protect him against one or more risks, and any addition or accessory designed to meet this objective. "Risk" - any risk to the health or safety of a person and includes wet or extreme temperature, caused by adverse weather or otherwise.

The guidance for Regulation 6 states "Most PPE will be provided ➤"

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# Personal protective equipment

on a personal basis, some may be used by a number of people. There should therefore be arrangements for cleaning and disinfecting if necessary before PPE is reissued".

The employers duty is set out in Regulation 4 (1) – "Every employer shall provide suitable personal protective equipment to each of his employees who may be exposed to any risk while at work except where and to the extent that any such risk has been adequately controlled by other means which are equally or more effective".

Regulation 4 (3) states that the PPE shall not be suitable unless;

- (a) it is appropriate for the risk or risks involved and the conditions at the place where exposure to the risk may occur;
- (b) it takes account of ergonomic requirements and the state of health of the person or persons who may wear it;
- (c) it is capable of fitting the wearer correctly, if necessary after adjustments within the range for which it is designed;
- (d) so far as is practicable, it is effective to prevent or adequately control the risk or risks involved without leading to any increased risk (including circumstances where, whether because of the presence of more than one risk or otherwise, it is necessary to wear simultaneously more than one item of PPE).

The guidance to Regulation 4 refers to the use of PPE as a last resort. It explains that

steps should first be taken to prevent or control the risk at source by other means before deciding to issue PPE.

Regulation 5 (1) states "before choosing any PPE, an employer shall make an assessment to determine whether the PPE intended for use is suitable". As part of this assessment the employer should ensure that the information required to be supplied (Health and Safety at Work Act Section 6) by the manufacturer/supplier is available. This data will give the technical specification for the equipment and the relevant testing to indicate that it is 'suitable for the purpose'.

This year, in addition to any BSI kite mark and number, the manufacturer will indicate whether PPE meets EEC standards of quality by fixing the CE mark followed by the last two digits of the year it was fixed, eg. CE92.

The employee also has duties to wear the PPE, maintain it in good condition and report any defects as soon as they occur.

## What should the golf course manager do?

Take a fresh look at the golf course as a workplace and make a list of all the jobs that require PPE in any form. Discuss your findings with all concerned, as this may well reveal some areas hitherto not considered. Make a list of the PPE currently in use, ask the wearers for their opinions and ask the supplier for the Section 6 information to ensure that the equipment is 'suitable for the purpose', or otherwise!

Assess the work practices and see if the job could be done another way to reduce or eliminate the need to wear PPE without reducing efficiency.

Revise the Statement of Safety Policy to include any special provisions for the use of PPE generally; and make mention of any special provisions necessary eg. working in very dusty conditions, mixing top dressing or mowing in drought conditions.

Remember that it does not have to be a hazardous operation to require the use of PPE; remember too that the reappraisal of the use of PPE may have an impact on the COSHH Assessment. If Risk Assessments have yet to be carried out, do the two jobs together and do not hesitate to ask for expert assistance'.

● The author, Jon Allbutt, is an independent technical consultant to the leisure and amenity industry, best known to BIGGA members as a no-nonsense trainer and lecturer in pesticides and the Code of Practice.

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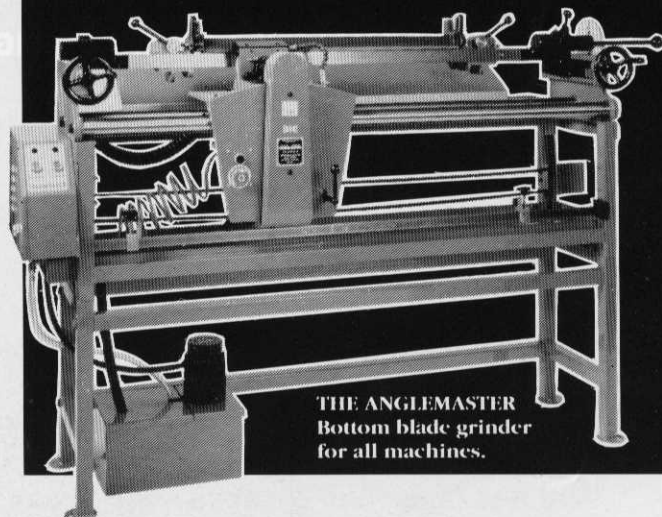
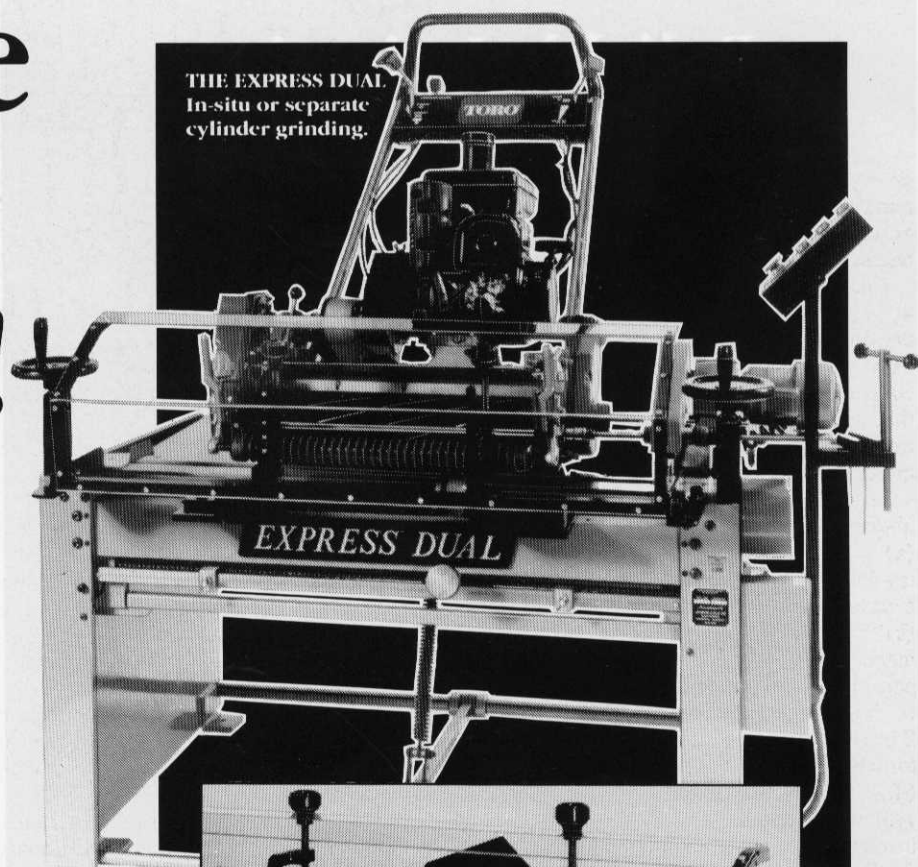
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## A Greenkeeper International tribute to supporters of the Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund.

Number 2: ROGER MOSSOP and DAVE SIDDON,

ICI Professional Products



Mention ICI to the layman and he might be forgiven for thinking that this conglomerate, for that is what it is, with all that enormity and strength in the world of commerce and industry conjures up, is an unapproachable, remote superpower. Useful; yes, fantastic products; yes, market leaders undoubtedly and innovators unquestionably. But that stated, the man in the street thinks of ICI in terms of BIG business, of the share market and of being more in keeping with the boardroom and of those who move in the mysterious corridors of power. Dare to put that same suggestion to a greenkeeper, however, and the likely come-back will be an entirely different, humanised story.

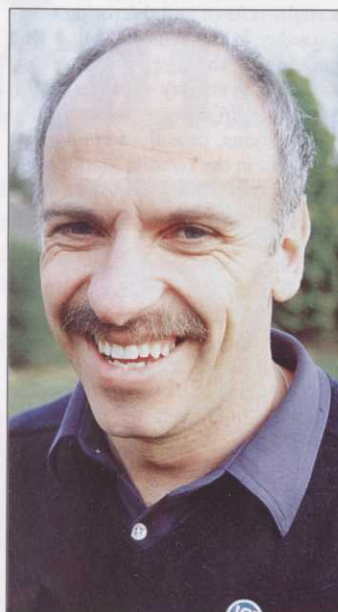
To the greenkeeper, ICI – or, more specifically, ICI Professional Products – represents a close and caring organisation with the turf manager and his interests very much at heart. Granted, the company is in business to make a profit, as indeed is every company save those few which are propped-up by governments, but with this particular section of ICI's empire, the feeling one gets when talking to the team at Professional Products is of genuine involvement with the folks at grass roots level.

Of course, ICI means different things to different people. To the golfing greenkeeper it means the BIGGA National Tournament, now in its second year of sponsorship by ICI Professional Products and increasingly the most prestigious event in which to compete. To the thriving young academic greenkeeper it means a crack at becoming ICI Greenkeeper of the Year. Ask Anthony Davies and David Whitaker, the victors of '91 and '92, what this represents and they will tell you that being crowned ICI Greenkeeper of the Year has changed their lives. To every greenkeeper it represents professionalism and technical superiority in the fine turf care product market.

To find out more about ICI Professional Products, of its relatively short history within the parent company and of those who mastermind the operation, I met up with Roger Mossop, marketing manager, and David (Dave to his friends) Siddon, national sales manager, at Walton Heath Golf Club and prepared to



Roger Mossop



Dave Siddon

# FACE TO FACE WITH THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT

quiz them.

Did I say that ICI was a giant? Our particular 'giant' comprises just ten people – managers, area sales managers and office personnel – based at Fernhurst in Surrey though blanketing the country through a network of distributors. Professional Products began life as a separate entity, launched at Windsor in '83, primarily as the recognition for sports amenity specialisation took hold. ICI had some wizard products

which had hitherto been serviced to greenkeepers by ICI's agrochemical or garden product divisions. With nationwide acclamation of ICI's then new growth retardant Paclobutrol, the stage was set for a specialist group – ICI Professional Products – to market these and other products and provide the vitally important technical back-up so essential to the fine turf industry.

Dave Siddon was one of the earliest pioneers, joining Keith Cleverly

in bringing the new infant forward and increasing the total workforce by 100% – from one pioneer to two! Keith had moved from ICI Agricultural and Dave joined him from ICI Garden Products, both men hell-bent on making the world take notice of this new company – and succeeding! The pioneering over, Keith was soon to move to another division, presumably to wave his magic wand in a different direction, and his place was taken by Roger Mossop, again an ICI agricultural specialist, whose task was to be marketing manager. If there is one note of sadness to the success of Professional Products it came when Keith Cleverly died shortly after, cut down in his prime by a brain tumour and cheated from seeing the triumph that was to come.

Roger Mossop had all the right credentials to take him to the top: college educated with an agriculture and forestry base, thence to Harper Adams in Shropshire to take a National Diploma in Agriculture and finally to University College, Bangor, to gain a BSc Honours degree in Agriculture with Agricultural Economics. Straight from university to ICI, he joined ICI Agrochemicals in '72, following the technical sales path from trainee to senior rep. (in East Yorkshire) before becoming an area sales manager in '84, training others in the art of professional selling and achieving all that was set before him. Above all, Roger possesses that impish sense of humour so essential in any marketing operation, coupled with an encyclopaedic knowledge of his chosen industry – the perfect passport. He's a keen sportsman, having captained his rugby team at Harper Adams and been capped for University College. He plays an aggressive game of squash, works out regularly in the company gymnasium, plays golf (claiming to be at an embryonic stage, though as Dave pointedly remarked, he's a real mean performer when battling against him!) and has a deep interest in motor cycle racing. He carries this latter interest full circle by spending time in restoring a favourite 1950s classic – a BSA Bantam De Luxe!

Dave Siddon was quick to point out that Roger is the perfect 'sounding board', the essential deep thinker who can and does evaluate the brilliant ideas from the impracti-



# 'The formation of BIGGA was music to our ears... it was the best thing that could have happened'

cal, the ideal partner in what is undoubtedly a doubles match. If one was to draw a comparison in sport, they act together like a perfect golfing foursomes partnership, playing shot and countershot.

Both men have inordinate pride in their company, pointedly so with the high esteem in which Professional Products is held in the industry. "This is not something that just happens", Dave said; "we are ever conscious in our desire to achieve the highest standards throughout: products, packaging, people, service and distribution. We've a worldwide reputation to live up to and nothing is ever left to chance". We touched on the importance of environmental awareness, Roger making the point that with this issue uppermost in their minds (and government legislation aside) this has always been a vital issue for ICI. Interestingly, the cost of achieving, indeed going beyond, mere environmental acceptance is the highest single expense in producing all ICI products.

Like Roger, Dave Siddon has a long career with ICI as his professional background, some 17 years in total, which from the very beginning has been deeply entrenched in sales.

He began as an ICI Garden Products rep., joined Professional Products in '84 as territory manager in the North and has been national sales manager since '88. He's a positive power-house at both work and play, having been an active rugby and football player, remaining an active cricketer and recently qualifying as a rugby referee and refereeing every Saturday in the season! If that isn't enough, at the age of 41 he runs five miles every day - further still on Sundays - in training for marathon competitions, proudly pointing to a highlight in the London Marathon in '89 when he finished with a storming time of 3 hours 30 minutes! On top of all this Dave plays golf to a 14 handicap, encourages his wife Jane to join him in marathon training, encourages both his sons to further honours in rugby (both have been capped for Bedfordshire), and crams into a day what many people would consider tough work for a week. He can make a mere mortal like me feel tired just talking about his average day, beginning at 6am and ending only when the work of managing a national sales force and 17 distributors is done!

Turning to the BIGGA connection, I learned that Professional Products

had sought involvement from the very start, indeed even in the days of EIGGA, BGGGA and the like they had been active in supporting the greenkeeping cause. The formation of BIGGA was, to quote Roger, "music to our ears". At last we could see fragmentalised groups united and it was the best thing that could have happened". From the earliest days of Harrogate, when they sponsored the seminar programmes, BIGGA and Professional Products have sat comfortably in each others pockets, each gaining from the other in terms of exposure to the men that matter - the greenkeepers of Britain. Apart from their initiative in national promotions - Greenkeeper of the Year and the National Tournament - they are active at sectional level and see this as an important way of reaching the groundswell of greenkeeper activity. Offering an opinion, Dave says: "We are committed to a strong association and see an essential part of our activity as the marketing of greenkeepers. To put it more succinctly, the PGA European Tour market themselves well but would be nothing without the courses on which

tour events are played - this I see as the greenkeepers' ace card. BIGGA must aim to market this ace card in the most vigorous fashion, to seek a greater share in the fortunes if you like, for they are out there to be grabbed, though in the hands of professional golf in the main - it is an absolute strength upon which to grow even further and even quicker. Greenkeepers, through BIGGA, must market themselves in order to get a stronger foot hold in the world scene". To take from an old and wise saying, Dave further suggests that greenkeepers should heed the call to 'ask not what your association can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your association'.

If one was to summarise ICI Professional Products it would be to see it as a tightly knit team. When you talk to an area sales manager you are talking to a team, when you make a 'phone call to Fernhurst you are talking to a team, pose a technical question and the team moves swiftly into action. See them at national level and the team spirit is startlingly apparent. The essential teamsters are Dave Siddon and Roger Mossop!

**BIGGA's Education and Development Fund continues to be boosted by new donations.**

Hambro Legal Protection Ltd, who provide legal protection services for the Association and its members, are the latest company to support the Fund with a donation of £250. In expressing BIGGA's appreciation for their donation, Neil Thomas, Executive Director, said: "I am particularly delighted that Hambro, a company with whom we work closely, have made this contribution. Such donations give an impetus to the new Fund and I hope many more companies, groups and individuals will add their financial support and so enhance the educational and training opportunities which can be made available for greenkeepers."

Readers of Greenkeeper International will be aware that Colin Gregory has recently moved from Iseki Ltd to become Managing Director of Hardi Ltd. The company has now joined the Golden Key Circle and in a ceremony which saw the presentation of a cheque - as pictured on this month's front cover - Colin Gregory expressed his enthusiasm for the new Fund: "Hardi Ltd is fully supportive of all that BIGGA is doing to advance greenkeeper education and training," he said. "I am sure the Education and Development Fund will have a major impact in channelling the resources of the game and the industry into a central fund which will enable training resources to be provided, courses to be established and scholarship awards funded. Membership of the Golden and Silver Key Circles is an excellent way for companies to support greenkeeper education."


A real friend and supporter of greenkeepers and all things greenkeeping is Jim Fry, pictured, President of the South Coast Section. Jim seems to be present at all major BIGGA events and was recently spotted at the GCSAA Conference and Show as a member of the BIGGA party. Over the years his contribution to his section has been both substantial and much appreciated. Jim has an infectious sense of humour and is always ready to give unobtrusive advice and guidance when requested. Neil Thomas comments: "I am particularly pleased to record that Jim has become the first individual Member of the Golden Key Circle and on behalf of the Association I would wish to express our great appreciation to him for his generous support of the new Fund."





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## ■ Entering discussion 'beyond argument' ■ Height of common sense

■ May I address Mr Gray (February letters) through your columns, thus?

In your letter in Greenkeeper International you felt that you must enter the fray. I am glad you did, because apathy is one of the greatest enemies of greenkeeping and I am sure you are sincere in your beliefs.

I am equally sure that people like Jim Arthur, who by the way clearly states his view 'beyond argument', in his October article, Steve Isaac of the STRI, Jack McMillan and even Neil Whitaker of Woburn (see February issue), are also sincere in their beliefs; in fact Neil Whitaker's experiences seem to contradict yours entirely. Anyway, the pace of any putting surface is a personal interpretation and comes second, in my opinion, to smoothness.

Your comments on cutting height are interesting and the first part I agree with entirely. On the second, I note you say that your surfaces are firm but not solid and unyielding. Therefore my point on accuracy still stands. As you seem to use a ruler and straight edge, you obviously do not put much emphasis on accuracy. I use a height of cut setter which is both very simple to use, and very accurate. My staff regularly set all three Paladins and all three units on each of our two Jacobsen GreenKing triplex mowers, to an accuracy of 1/10mm.

Even with 20/20 vision your method is inherently inaccurate and prone to operator error.

As far as your third point goes, all recent (say the last ten years), STRI research and trials suggest that fescues thin out when mowing heights drop much below 5mm for any extended period of time. Concerning winter cutting, I cannot agree more, and never raise the mowing height to more than 6mm.

Finally I prefer to work with millimetres, as I feel the sooner we accept the metric scale, the less painful it will be in the long run. I do not, by the way, object to you or anyone else using sixteenths, as long as you stick to this unit, and do not jump about between eighths, quarters, halves, thirty secondths, and even sixty fourths!

I like to learn about greenkeeping techniques, and enjoy nothing more than a good chin wag with a fellow greenkeeper. I have learnt a great deal from such face to face discussions. I do, however, change my mind if I find that I am wrong. Do you?

PN BERTINSHAW

Head Greenkeeper, Royal Norwich Golf Club

■ I find it necessary to reply to the letter of Mr D Gray (February issue) with particular reference to greens mowing heights, if only to voice

some well-proven common sense on behalf of those professionals in our business who seek to restore, by way of a corrective programme, or maintain the quality in the turf which the game of golf inherently requires but which is still so sadly lacking up and down the country.

Surely Mr Gray cannot be seriously suggesting that the large number of S-L-O-W greens he has experienced is a direct result of normal summer mowing heights (ie. 3/16"). No, surely he must agree that the basic reasons for said slow greens lie elsewhere, in all probability with the dominance of well fed and watered *Poa annua* in a poorer state of health than his own, being mown at 3/16" possibly only three or four times per week! Mr Gray is well aware that well managed fescue/bent greens do not require drastic mowing measures to produce fast, true, firm surfaces for any class of player.

He is also aware of alternative interim measures should greater speed of roll be deemed necessary, infinitely better indeed than the severely detrimental effects of close mowing on a fine fescue population in particular, a widely accepted fact especially when combined with the abrasive effects of wear and tear from the intensity of play consistent with the majority of courses nowadays.

Mr Gray's diagnosis here is plainly incorrect and the very fact that he is mowing at 1/8", sometimes, it appears, even lower, and twice a day at that, is indicative of a sward lacking certainly in fine fescues and which may contain a percentage of bent species interspersed with a dominance of *Poa annua* and perhaps some patches of Yorkshire Fog. I am assuming here, of course, that the head greenkeepers on the courses under Mr Gray's control do indeed carry out this severe mowing regime. They may however make their own adjustments to any formal programme and hence protect and maintain fine species present.

He may well have firm greens but his mowing heights inform us that although, yes, he has attained a thatch free turf, possibly well drained, he has gone no further towards true quality nor cannot with such close mowing practices. He has taken what has been seen as the "easy" way to fulfil a requirement or trend, the quest for speed, to the detriment of the finer species and consequently the production of all year round quality surfaces, at the same time forsaking the correct turf resilience so important for surface ball reaction so typical of fescue/ bent turf.

Jeff Perris's statement comes to mind here when he said "it is unfair to condemn the men with *Poa annua* greens when you know that one of the main contributory factors is the pressure from members to mow too closely," and here we have a turf manager willingly carrying out such practices! Interestingly, Mr Gray does not mention grass species or relevant percentages present or indeed any overseeding programme for the golf courses under his control, although he does mention the case of the bowling greens which are closed for half the year.

This point is significant, as is the fact that Mr Gray still found it necessary to oversee his bowling greens for the past three years in the autumn despite the fact as he states, "The bowling greens still retained the high percentage of fine grasses found at the start of the season", following his close mowing regime. This obvious contradiction begs the question, why then the seemingly needless expense of overseeding? If this does not represent a serious indictment of faulty mowing practices, I don't know what does!

Why put whatever fine turf species you may have (or have recently sown) on golf greens under unnecessary physiological stress? Mr Gray must be aware of the adverse effects of extremely close mowing on plant rooting capability particularly at prime periods such as late



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