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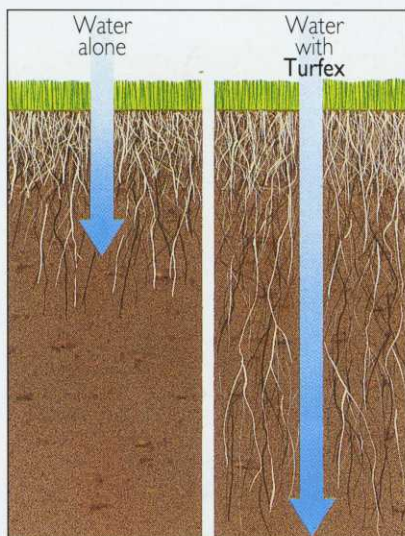
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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association
MARCH 1992



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GREENKEEPER

International

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The beauty of the Emerald isle, captured in this picture of Straffon GC Photograph: Irish Tourist Board



The BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition and Seminar Programme is now recognised as the industry's most significant indoor event. Contact Debbie Savage on 03473 581 for a BTME 1993 Information Pack and find out how your company can take part.

Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund

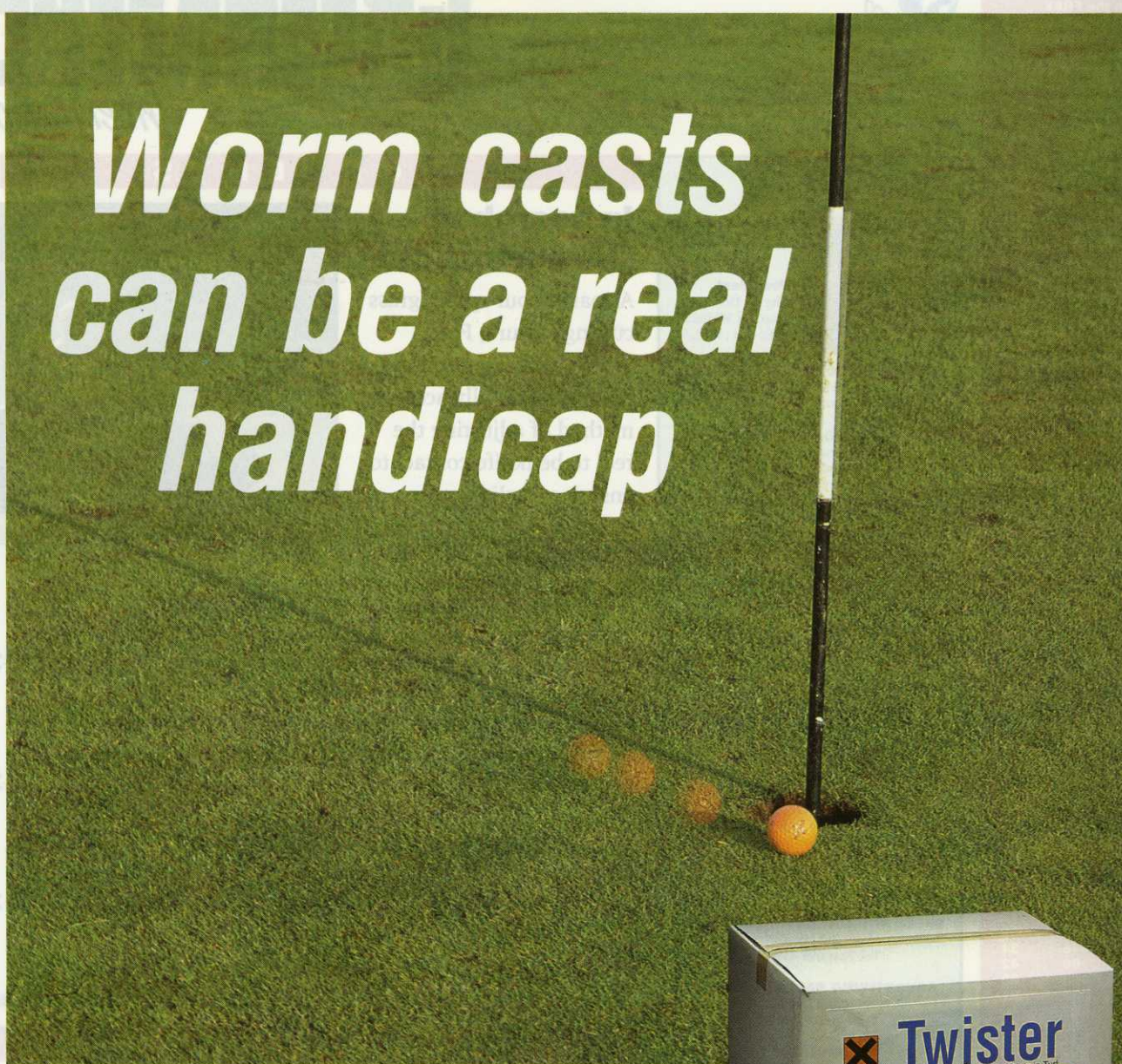
Launched by Viscount Whitelaw at BTME 1992, the Fund provides the key to the future for greenkeeper, golf club and game. Individuals and companies can join either the Golden Key or Silver Key Circles. For details, contact BIGGA on 03473 581.

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■ Sam Hagen, course manager at the Vale G&CC in Worcestershire, tells me that the Midlands Pro/Am will be staged there on July 27th-30th, over what is probably Europe's longest new course at 7,940 yards.

Open just one year and seeded with Penncross, it is Sam's idea to invite young greenkeepers, especially those with experience gained working with Penncross (perhaps on the continent?) to join the Club as working/paid guests for a period of 4-5 months leading up to the tournament. Interested? Call him on 0386 82545 (home) or 0386 82427 (office).



■ The new chairman of the British Lawnmower Manufacturers Federation is Barry Abson of Atco-Qualcast Ltd. Barry has worked for Atco and Qualcast for nearly 20 years and became a director in 1977, having qualified in production engineering before moving into management in the late '60s. Full members of BLMF include

Atco, Black & Decker, Flymo, Hayters, and Ransomes Consumer. Together they claim to manufacture at least 90% of lawnmowers sold in the UK market.

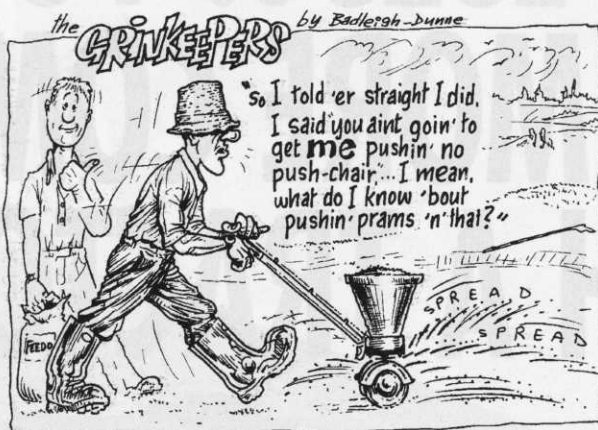
■ Congratulations to Arne van Amerongen, Holland's greenkeeping ambassador and 1991 ICI Greenkeeper of the Year finalist, on his appointment as course manager to the Syke Golf Club, an 18 hole parkland course in Germany. He tells me that staging the German Open is a distinct possibility at Syke in three years time. Arne will maintain a high profile in Britain, for he is continuing to attend the Cheshire College of Agriculture under the expert tutelage of Dennis Mortram.

■ Avoncrop Amenity Products continue their penetration in the market with two new staff appointments. John Palfrey becomes Technical Sales Manager responsible for technical back-up and the marketing of new and existing products in the south, with Brian Stephens appointed as Technical Sales Regional Manager for Bucks, Berks and Oxon, Wilts, west Surrey and Hampshire.



■ Bringing 'new blood' and enthusiasm to an area of business regarded by the Company as vitally important, Bruce Morton has been appointed sales executive, Heron Power Products, to cover the south, south east and East Anglia and to work through a specialist dealer network for Echo and Suzuki power products.

■ Steve Marnoch, one of the new 'young tigers' of golf course architecture and most recently Project Manager, Golf Course Construction Developments whilst being retained by



■ The stork has been working busily in greenkeeping circles, with the delivery of a new daughter (and sleepless nights!) for Jim and Debbie Russell of Lingfield Park. Moving slightly further up the M1 to mid-Anglia, Andrew and Ann Kennett of Knebworth welcomed Elizabeth Helen into the world. Congratulations to both sets of parents.

the Casey Group as manager of their golf course construction division, is to take up the mantle of full time architecture under his own banner - Steve Marnoch Golf Course Architecture. He expects to gain entry as an Associate of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects in April.



■ Michael Portsmouth has been appointed the new Parts Division Manager, Kubota UK Ltd, and will be responsible for the complete parts operation, which includes purchasing, inventory control, despatch and credit control, together with trading terms and conditions. Prior to joining Kubota, Mike held senior posts in the parts

and service departments at GD Mountfield and Technamotor UK Ltd.

Here's your Open invitation

The 121st Open Championship will be held at Muirfield Golf Club, home of the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, from July 16th-19th 1992, with course manager Chris Wittle in control of course preparation.

As is usual, members of BIGGA will form a Greenkeeping Support Team and those wishing to be considered for this should forward their names and addresses to HQ as soon as possible.

Preference will be given to those who will be free for a period which begins on Wednesday evening of July 15th and finishing on Sunday evening of July 19th, with priority being given to those who have formed part of the Support Team in previous years.

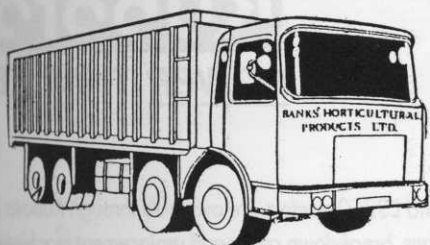
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George Malcolm talks to David White
about his year as BIGGA Chairman

“What can I say, David, I’ve quite simply had a fantastic year!” Thus began my conversation at BTME with George Malcolm, BIGGA’s Chairman during the past year.

“Look around you, see for yourself the success of this one event alone, look at the way our members have rallied to support our aim – simply to be the best indoor trade show in the industry – multiply this one achievement by ten and you have my year in a nutshell, a totally satisfying and rewarding experience. I well remember talking to you 12 months ago, of my hopes and aspirations – and of my apprehensions – and can now sit back comfortably and relax, knowing that I received all the support for which I had hoped.

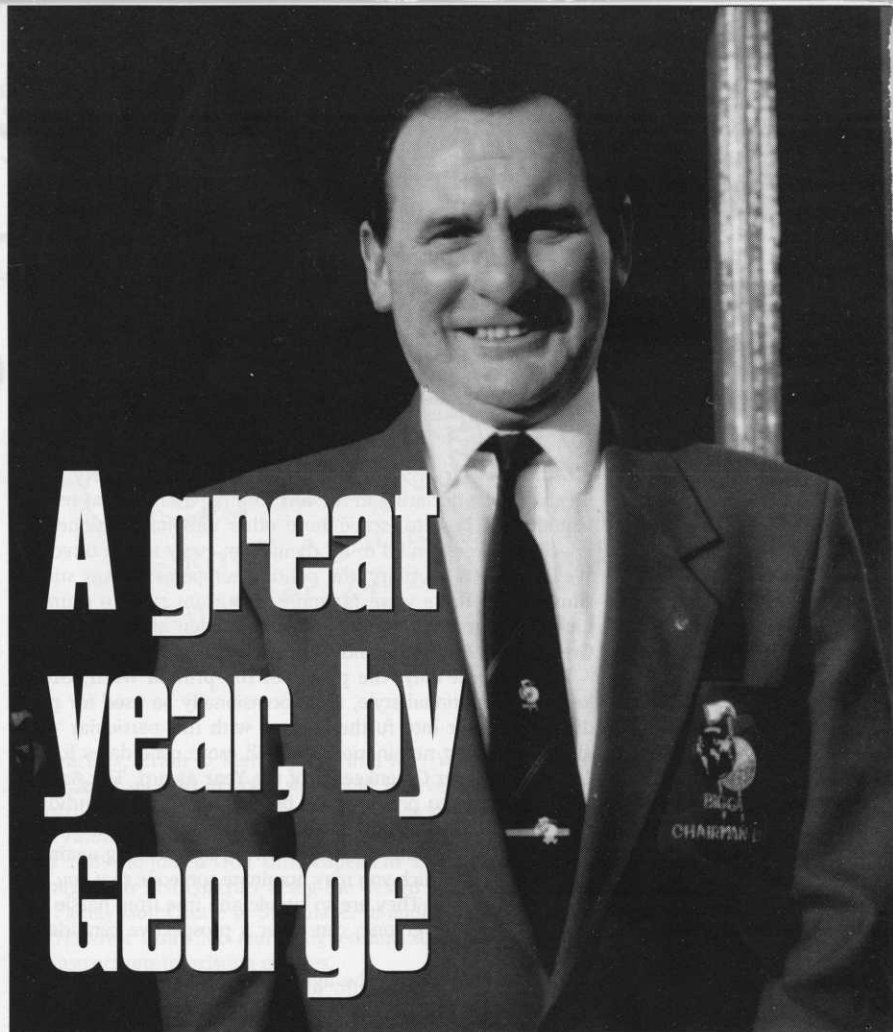
“If I were to single out any one body for praise it would have to be my own Club, Middlesbrough Golf Club, for their totally unselfish support and encouragement. Without that, nothing like as much could have been done during my term of office – so I’ll be back to Middlesbrough in 1992 to try and reward them equally, including my selflessly devoted greenkeeping team, for they’re great guys, every one!

“Do you remember my sales pitch last year, my principal goal? This was one calling for members to bring in new blood and swell the ranks. Well, it seems my words didn’t go entirely unnoticed, for our membership has certainly grown over the past 12 months – and I’ve achieved a 200% goal by bringing in two new members personally. This is an aim we *must* continue to promote, for there is no doubt that the strength of this or any other organisation is in numbers – the point being that our collective voice is increasingly heard and reacted to in no uncertain fashion.

“You ask me if I’ve achieved all I set out to do 12 months ago, and in truth I do believe I have. I’ve tried for a high profile, attending every possible function to which I was invited, and I only missed one event over the whole period – a big disappointment at not being at The Belfry to cheer the BIGGA team to victory in the Kubota Challenge. As it happened, the team managed a ‘whitewash’ and I shared in their pride of achievement, but I do wish I could have been there in person, just to rally the team!

“It’s not been a pressurised year at all, thanks to a bonny team behind me on the Board of Management, and I can do no more than repeat my plea of 12 months past, which is for every member to ‘wave the flag and bring new incumbents into our midst’. I still believe that the package BIGGA provides is the bargain of the century!

“Although we cannot achieve the membership numbers of our American cousins, simply because of their obvious larger geographic areas and population, we are actually pulling in more greenkeepers per Club, county or region than those of the USA and the percentage total of greenkeepers in BIGGA is far greater than that of the GCSAA, which is no mean feat! That stated, I’ll not be content until



we have a total 100% membership, with *every* greenkeeper in the land proud to be a BIGGA member.

“To younger greenkeepers, I can say that their increasingly rosy future undoubtedly lies in further education, and I urge them not to let a further day go by without enrolling in some form of higher education programme or other. The choice is limitless, with our own Master Greenkeeper Certificate and management courses high on the list of attractive possibilities. I’m also really excited about the probability of greater numbers entering the ICI Greenkeeper of the Year awards and I’m busy encouraging greenkeepers I know to put forward a fellow greenkeeper that they secretly admire and whose expertise is worthy of recognition.

“Now I’m looking forward to handing over to Roy Kates in April, though I shall certainly miss the heady feeling, the elation of being in the driving seat for a whole year and it will perhaps be a week or two before I come down to earth! In conclusion, I still maintain that openness has been the saviour of my year, with folks who had something important to say taking the right course in saying it to the right people at the right time. It is something that Roy will no doubt want to encourage and nurture. This has been the most wonderful year of my life and I wouldn’t have missed it for the world!”

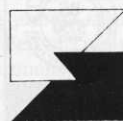
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Hidden benefits of nominations for ICI Premier Greenkeeper

In the February issue I promised freedom from 'party politics', whilst declaring in the forthcoming months that readers would find it hard to escape those 'other' national electioneering issues that were bound to hit them from every media direction. Well, that was February, the political temperature was still on simmer and there were far more important tubs to thump – including our own highly successful Golden and Silver Circle Greenkeeper Education and Development Fund.

Be that as it may, the power of the printed word, Greenkeeper International style, must occasionally be used for prodding the reader into further action, with this particular 'prod' aimed at urging nominations for still more candidates for the 1992 ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Award. The Association is seeking to promote the biggest number of candidates ever in 1992, so to begin this column, I propose to run my own 'party political' for this admirable award by outlining again the simple rules by which you may nominate someone that you may know and admire. They are so simple and free from hassle that anyone, indeed everyone, can enter a prospective candidate – and they should!

All that is needed is the agreement of your choice of head greenkeeper or course manager, someone whose management and playing conditions you admire, to complete all stages of the Award, including a course assessment by an established judge. The course itself doesn't have to be a championship layout, indeed it could be the most humble little nine-hole tucked away from all but local admiration. Having played many such delicious nine-hole courses, especially in Scotland, I can vouch for the particular charm and superb conditions of such gems, often achieved on peppercorn budgets by totally dedicated greenkeepers who are, quite simply, unsung heroes.

Another point to remember is that any member can nominate

a head greenkeeper for the ICI Premier Greenkeeper Award, including those members in the trade, from the educational sector, or even a green committee chairman or Club secretary. Most important of all is that we want to hear from our members and we want to hear now! On a more commercial tack, such a nomination can look awfully impressive on a job application, recognising as it does that here is a greenkeeper who does an exceptional job. *Please fill in the pre-paid card contained within the pages of this issue – let's hear it for those untold numbers of unsung heroes!*

Turning now to other matters, I was disturbed to learn from Paul Copsey, Kent's prolific scribe, of yet another example of 'sharks about' infiltration, this time into the very midst of professional greenkeeping circles by a member of the PGA. Apparently, one such PGA pro has formed his own management company and has circulated Clubs in the south, proposing that his company should manage their entire course and clubhouse, lock, stock and barrel, installing a full complement of 'personally' selected staff – pro, greenkeeping, bar and catering etc., and using equipment owned or leased by the management company – all at a fixed fee. One can only shudder at the long term implications of such a 'business', spawned no doubt by the unfortunate introduction of local authority competitive tendering, for as Paul was at pains to point out, such deals usually see costs pared to a minimum by cutting staff, wages and course budgets, with the inevitable result being the lowering of standards and morale.

Paul went on to say that the PGA have been notified of this matter and propose taking measures to restrict the offender's plans. One wonders how powerful on matters of discipline the PGA really are, thus we can only hope they have the teeth to bite – and bite hard!

DAVID WHITE

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NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The BIGGA Annual General Meeting will be held on

Wednesday 8 April 1992 at 2.30pm

in The Royal York Hotel, York (immediately adjacent to the Railway Station)

– NEIL THOMAS, Executive Director

Copies of the audited accounts will be available from Section Secretaries during the four weeks prior to the Meeting



BIGGA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Barry Cooper is the well known son of a well known father: nationally acknowledged drainage expert, Turner Cooper, who invented the first trenchless drainage machine back in 1954 and authored the definitive book "Practical Land Drainage" in 1965.

Following a spell in the RAF until 1955, Barry rejecting a place at Nottingham University in order to take over the family drainage business, a career he is still actively involved in, though now as managing director of his own drainage contracting business. After some 36 years experience in the drainage industry, Barry spends most of his time working in a consultancy capacity.

His lifetime interest in sport (he is a keen golfer, once playing to single figures but now 19 and rising!) and a chance meeting with the redoubtable Jim Arthur in the 1970s led him to become involved in golf course drainage consultancy work, a task he is well able to appreciate both from the playing and administrative side of golf, especially as he enters his second term as green chairman of his home course, Knebworth Golf Club, Leicester.

He lists amongst his clients such worthies as St Andrews Links, Turnberry, Royal Liverpool, The Belfry, Woodhall Spa and Alwoodly Golf Club. Barry's conference subject will be "Golf Course Drainage - Before and After Construction".



Bernard Findlay will be posing the question: "Can you build a Seaside Links - or is that Nature's job?" As one who trained and worked on three golf courses in the south east of England before departing to the northernmost tip of Northern Ireland in County Londonderry to become course manager of the 45 hole Portstewart Golf Club complex,

Bernard no doubt has some interesting views on working with linksland, for he has lived and worked at Portstewart for the past six years - during which time he counts amongst his achievements the development of new holes on the Portstewart course and the staging of the Northern Ireland Iseki qualifying event.



Laurence Pithie is Britain's highest profile head greenkeeper, being the recent recipient of the UK's first ever Master Greenkeeper Certificate, presented to him at BTME in January by the Association's President, Viscount Whitelaw. His career pattern is equally well known, taking him straight from school to the famous Bruntsfield Links, a course of studies

at Elmwood College and later to the head greenkeeping role at Moretonhall Golf Club, also in Edinburgh.

A further five years at Sandiway Golf Club in Cheshire was followed by a move south to his present position as course manager at the Minchinhampton Golf Club in Gloucester, a post he has held since 1981. He lives in nearby Tetbury with his wife Sandra and two children, aged six and ten.

On three occasions Laurence has visited the USA - twice as National Greenkeeper and Groundsman of the Year - and on one occasion presented a paper on turfgrass management to an American audience in Houston, Texas. When not on home ground, and sandwiched between his other interests of golf and badminton, he can be found visiting and photographing other courses and he now possesses a large collection of slides, books and literature relating to golf course management. His chosen subject will be "Golf Course Development - A Greenkeeper's Viewpoint".



Jonathan Gaunt, a keen 5 handicap golfer, graduated from Leeds Polytechnic in 1985 with a BA (Hons.) degree in Landscape Architecture, followed by a further Diploma in Landscape Architecture.

His first experience in the golf industry was as a humble labourer, working for course

NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, 27-29 March 1992

contractors, Brian D Pierson Ltd, in 1987. Working at 'grass roots' level set him in good stead and he eventually became a construction supervisor, working on courses such as The Jubilee at St Andrews and St George's Hill in Surrey.

In 1989 he joined Golf Landscapes Ltd as a design/contracts manager, his first contract being the design and construction of the Family Golf Centre in Stevenage. In addition he co-designed the Hanover Golf Club and designed and supervised numerous reconstructions to existing courses.

Autumn of 1990 saw him in business as a freelance golf course architect, his first design being the Magnolia Park Golf Club in Bucks, soon followed by Snipedales in Lincolnshire, both due to be built this year. In his first year he has seen the building of his 18 hole course at Elemore in Sunderland, 27 holes at Breinholtgard in Denmark, 27 holes at Farrington, Bristol and is currently supervising the construction of Sandmartins in Berkshire. Jonathan will discuss "Project Management - How Does It Compare To Normal Golf Course Construction Projects?"



Lindum Seeded Turf, the sponsor of BIGGA's 1992 Educational Conference along with their associates, is a company managed personally by members of the Fell family, with **Stephen Fell**, ARICS, MRAC, as Chief Executive Director responsible for production and management. Stephen will address the conference on a provocative subject "Course Aesthetics, Good, Bad or Indifferent." He is

concerned that in new course constructions, the most vital aspects essential for longevity without major problems are often neglected - or even ignored! Stephen Fell has vast commercial experience and worked for some time as a surveyor involved in land use and open cast reclamation for ADAS in Durham before qualifying as a Chartered Surveyor in 1977. In the past he has managed a farm in France, controlled the large farm and forest estate of Robin Leigh-Pemberton in Kent for nine years, and travelled extensively in the Antipodes, studying turf technology as a Nuffield Scholar both in Australia and the USA. As a practising conservationist Stephen is very concerned about the environment and would like to see architects putting as much thought into the environment of new courses as they do into design.

David Boothby is another of Lindum's associates making a presentation at Cirencester, better known to many as Toro's Sales Manager. Thirty three year old David has been in the trade since 1978, beginning in parts sales, progressing through general sales in a Toro dealership to that of distributorship with Lely (UK) Ltd since their acquisition of the franchise in 1983. For a further seven years David worked in the south west providing support to dealers before moving to Cambridgeshire in May 1990 to take up his present sales management position. In common with Stephen Fell of Lindum Turf, David sees some pretty dire examples of mismanagement in the field of new golf course constructions, particularly in the machinery sector, and will address on the subject of "Machinery - The Right Equipment for a Successful Finish."



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Golf's increasing popularity has brought a big demand for new courses; and the market has responded with some 1,400 planning applications to satisfy public need. But are the *right* courses being built?

LAURENCE PITHIE examines the facts

A few years have passed since an advisory panel to the R&A published the document 'Demand For Golf', stating the need to provide another 700 or so courses over the next decade. With some 1,400 planning applications currently being lodged with local authorities, it appears the initial target will be reached well before the end of the century. However, this does not necessarily auger well for the future since there are not enough qualified architects, contractors or greenkeepers available to design, construct and maintain them to the desired standard.

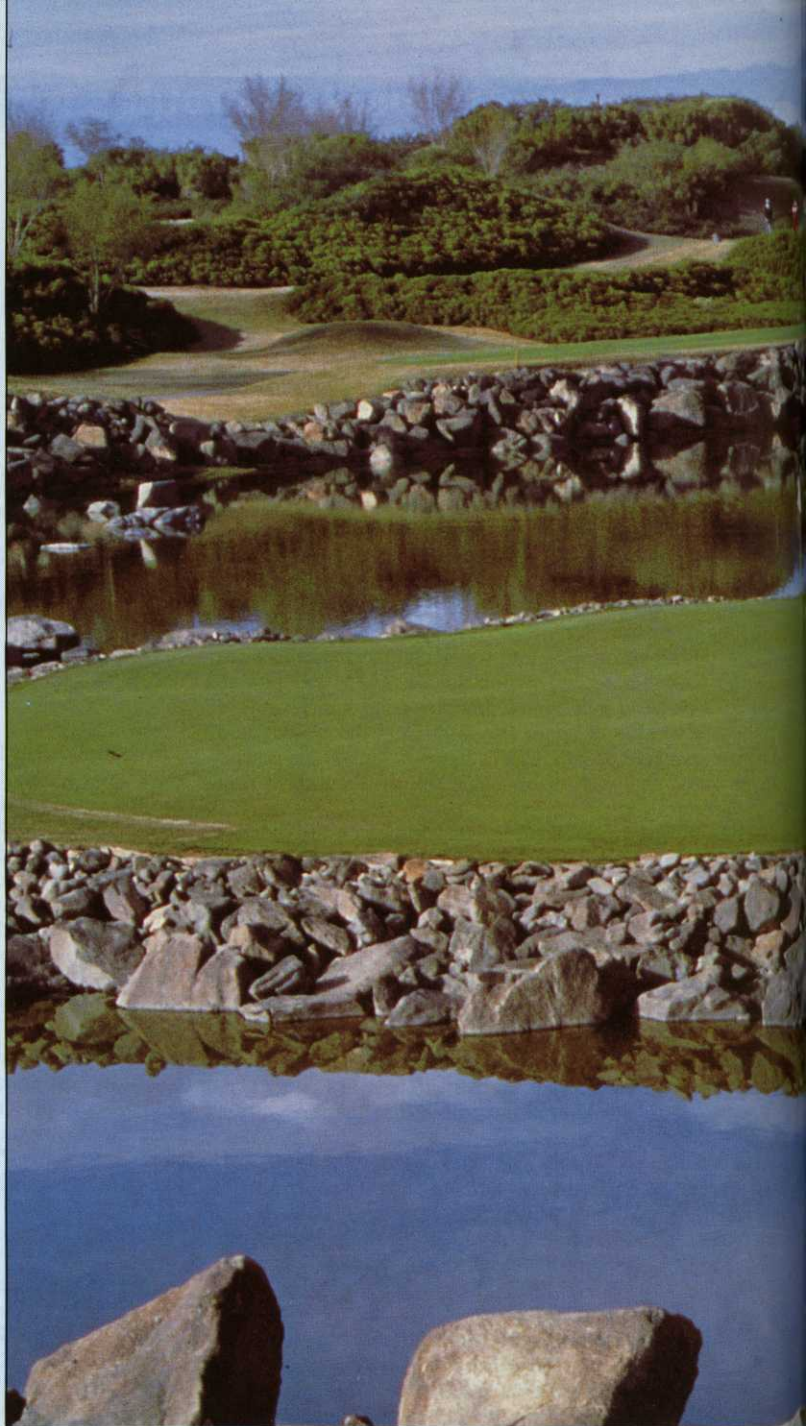
Whether or not the R&A's assessment is accurate is perhaps irrelevant. What is important is that the right type of course is provided, one that is developed in a professional manner and at a price which can be reflected in acceptable future playing costs. This article examines the current situation and asks: 'Are these new courses meeting current demand?'

From its early origins in the 15th century and indeed for the next 400 years, golf was a game enjoyed only by the affluent members of society and mainly limited to the east coast of Scotland. Since the costs of hand made clubs and balls were prohibitive, the game remained an exclusive pastime until the invention of the 'guttie' ball around 1850. The spread of the railway network and the much publicised matches between the Dunn's and the Morris's also had a significant influence on golf's advancement.

Since the late 19th century golf has enjoyed various surges in popularity, as well as periods of decline brought about by two world wars and economic depression. The phenomenal rise in golf's popularity in the USA and the advent of TV coverage during the early '60s brought a resurgence of interest to our shores, which was further enhanced by the arrival of celebrities such as Palmer and Nicklaus. In fact it was Nicklaus who did much to encourage more American professionals to play in The Open Championship, despite its then 'sagging' fortunes, and for this the R&A are eternally grateful. The emergence of European players and the effect of Ryder Cup victories, along with increased leisure time, has led to a dramatic rise in the game's popularity. People from all walks of life are eager to tread new ground and, subsequently, golf is currently being played by well over a million people, with many more attending driving ranges and pitch and putt courses, making it a multi-million pound industry.

To many observers, it would appear that the game is in a healthy state. Most private Clubs have long membership waiting lists and public courses are played from dawn till dusk, often with players sleeping in cars overnight in order to reserve a tee time later in the day. The reality is that many wishing to take up the game can neither apply to join or play at a private Club, as they do not have a handicap. Public courses are few in number and it is tiresome obtaining a tee time booking, especially in the more populated regions. It is this dilemma which the R&A recognised, leading to the conclusion that many new courses were required.

At first glance the solution appears relatively simple. Since agriculture is proving less profitable due to EC quotas and falling grain prices, many farmers can sell off surplus land to enterprising developers or indeed finance course construction themselves. A recent survey indicated a vast untapped market ready to take up the game, so it would appear that



Supply

'The days when enthusiasts met to discuss forming a golf Club and creating their own course are probably gone forever'

turning fields into fairways was as safe a bet as initial investment in electricity shares. A number of local councils have been practically deluged with planning applications, but are not quite as sympathetically inclined as previously, especially where many applications had proven to be 'back-door' approaches to building hotels, housing, conference centres and the like. Proposed new ventures are now met with tighter controls, with the question of golf's environmental impact one of paramount importance for planning committees to consider.

The days when a group of enthusiasts met in a local inn to discuss the forming a golf Club and creating their own course on nearby land are probably gone forever. The majority of new ventures are either 'pay as you play' - often quite expensive and with little or no private membership - or exclusive American-style country Clubs offering a range of five star facilities. In some areas there appears to be a