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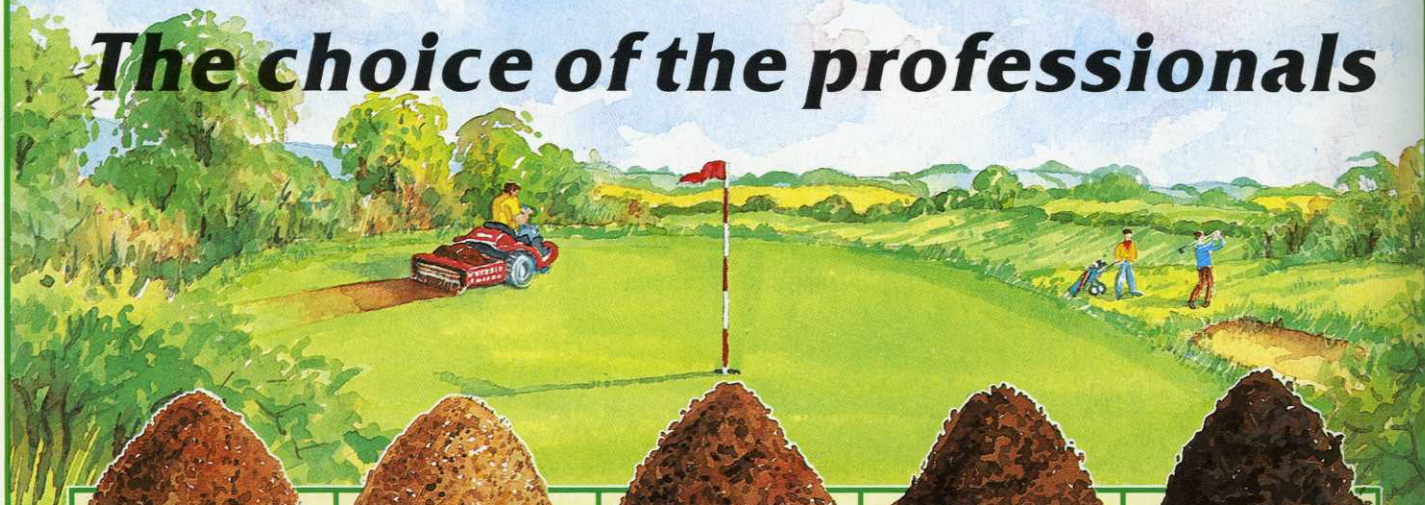
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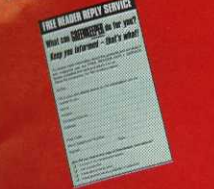
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Official publication of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association
SEPTEMBER 1992



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GREENKEEPER

International

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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 the Golden Key Circle and Silver Key Circle. For details, contact BIGGA on 03473 581.

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BIGGA Turf Management
Exhibition and Seminar
Programme 1993

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Anyone who took a good look at the previous BIGGA Turf Management Exhibitions knows that this annual event is certainly an eyeful.

New equipment, the latest products, service updates, familiar faces and some new ones made BIGGA President Viscount Whitelaw, who opened the exhibition, proudly proclaim that "greenkeeping has come of age".



And for 1993, there's even more to watch out for. Space bookings are already up on this time last year for the record-breaking 1992 exhibition.

With all the names you'd expect plus a few surprises, you'll certainly be wide-eyed at the choice and variety of what's on offer at Britain's premier indoor event for the fine turf industry.



Bookings for stands from all sectors of the industry will continue to be accepted right up until the last minute, depending on space limitations. But to make sure of the best positions, you need to act quickly. Why wait until January to squeeze in your stand when this week you can plump for a prime site?

Debbie Savage has all the details of how BTME can provide you with a window of opportunity. Call Debbie on 03473 581.



A very special VIP guest will open the 1993 BTME. More details soon, but make a note of the dates in your diary - this will be an event you won't want to miss!

A world class exhibition... the highest calibre education seminars... all at BTME, January 20-22, Harrogate.



For more details or a copy of the comprehensive BTME Information Pack, contact Debbie Savage on 03473 581 or request one by fax on 03473 8864. The BTME is organised by the British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO6 2NF.



■ Greenkeeper International is pleased to learn that the ever-cheerful Andy Cole has rejoined the STRI advisory staff as an agronomist, serving an area South of the Midlands and extending toward the Home Counties.

Andy, recently turfgrass lecturer at Warwickshire College, will be amongst the first of STRI's regionalised personnel, a policy of regionalisation being a recent STRI commitment.



■ Martin Galvin, formerly at East Sussex National and well known as one of David Blackmur's award winning turfgrass students at Plumpton College, has crossed the Irish Sea to take up his first head greenkeeping post at the new Botha GC in Cork. The recently completed course was designed jointly by Peter McEvoy, the Amateur Champion of 1977/78, and Christy O'Connor Jnr, the current British Masters Champion.

Martin Galvin was a popular finalist in the 1989 TORO/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year awards.

■ Jimmy Richardson has been busy combing the grapevine, telling of a gaggle of promotions and movements in the North-East: Russ Black makes a promotional move from Ponteland to Westerhope, becoming their new head greenkeeper, John Rippon, latterly assistant at Whickham also takes promotion to Birtley GC, again as head greenkeeper. Internal promotion comes to Malcolm Latham, who has earned his spurs by moving from assistant to head greenkeeper at Hexham GC. Two other moves are Derek Cruddas, latterly head man at Birtley, who goes to Garesfield GC as head greenkeeper; and Craig Parkinson, assistant at Tyne-side GC, who has moved to Ponteland GC – good luck to them all!

■ David Norton, who as an assistant greenkeeper at Beverly and East Riding won the 1990 TORO/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year award, has pulled off something of a coup in gaining the post of head greenkeeper at The Belfry, site of the 1993 Ryder Cup. David rang me and sounded overjoyed at the thought of working with course manager, Derek Ganning MBE, and in being launched on a major event from the very start. His first exposure to 'the big one' is the staging at The Belfry this month of the English Open. We all wish him well.



■ Kubota (UK) Ltd. has appointed Tony Fajak as engine sales co-ordinator. Based at the company's Thame headquarters in Oxfordshire he will be responsible for handling all engine specification and sales enquiries and will provide administrative and information support to the sales team.

Prior to joining Kubota, Tony worked both in the engine sales sector and in the hire industry.

■ Anthony Davies, course manager at Prestbury GC and winner of the 1990 ICI Greenkeeper of the Year award, has been involved in an unfortunate motor accident which I understand gave him a nasty blow on the head. Also travelling in the car were Anthony's wife and youngster, his wife receiving superficial though painful injuries. Anthony is out of hospital now and is on the mend, albeit slowly. We at Greenkeeper International send him our best wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

■ The chairman of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects, Joan Dudok Van Heel, has brought it to my attention that the golf course at Nunspeet in Holland, the

subject of my personal criticism in the July issue of Greenkeeper International, was not designed by any member of the BIGCA. In truth, I never for a moment believed that it was.



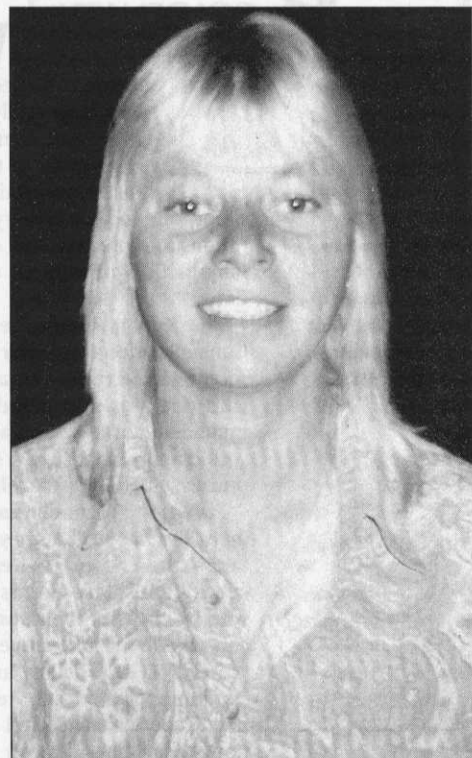
■ Chris Mardon, course manager at Kent's West Malling GC., is now wearing an altogether different bonnet, that of

West Malling's 1992 club captain. Not that he has deserted his greenkeeping duties for a single moment, for Kent's cognocenti tell me that despite horrific water bans 'imposed' upon that county and its golf courses, West Malling is held as an impressive example of good husbandry. Commented one observer, 'West Malling? It's a bloomin' picture!'.

■ Ian McMillan, course manager for Hankley Common GC, is pictured below explaining finer points of conserving heathland through stripping and replanting heather turf to experts who attended the recent 'Heathland Conference 1992'. The conference brought together heathland managers and scientists from as far afield as Aberdeen and the Netherlands. Delegates were also informed of other techniques used by Hankley Common GC to conserve this internationally important habitat, including the collection of heather seed for re-seeding through use of a Litamisa.

Hankley Common GC has recently been included within the Thursley, Hankley and Frensham Commons SSSI, due to the high quality of its lowland heathland – the habitat now described in a new English Nature poster as Surrey's last wilderness. Further information on conservation of heathland and other habitats on golf courses may be found in the English Nature publication 'On Course Conservation', available by post from English Nature, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1, price £7.50.

• Photograph by Nick Baxter/Surrey County Council.



■ Colin Geddes, latterly at Hanbury Manor and now operating as an independent consultant under the CPG Associates banner, rang to broadcast the good news concerning one of our lady members, Tracy Ruane of Wortley.

Tracy, pictured, hit the headlines in Leeds newspapers recently by gaining promotion to head greenkeeper – yes, head greenkeeper – at Oulton Hall Golf Course, an 18 hole facility designed by Dave Thomas, with a further nine scheduled to open in 1993. This must be something of a coup for the likeable lass, who began her greenkeeping career as an apprentice with Leeds City Council some 12 years ago, progressing via the Temple Newsum and Gotts Park courses and gaining C&G Horticulture Stages I-III and C&G Management Stage IV along the way. Without wishing to start an avalanche of replies, I am curious – is Tracy the first female head greenkeeper in the country?

Brian's



DAVID WHITE
talks to another
supporter of
**BIGGA's Education
and Development
Fund, Kubota's
BRIAN HURTLEY**

When I first began to write about greenkeepers and greenkeeping my attention was inexorably drawn to the activities of Kubota UK Limited by a clever marketing ploy known as the Kubota Challenge. This, I was constantly reminded, was *the* match play team event, one in which every golfing greenkeeper nursed aspirations to represent their Association, playing over the world famous Belfry Brabazon course, site of Ryder Cup inspirations.

The Kubota Challenge was the inspiration of Sporting Concepts director, Peter McEvoy, though undoubtedly it soon became the personal darling of Brian Hurtley, Kubota UK's vice president and director. It was he who recognised immediately the potential for bringing together those who would appreciate Kubota's innovative machinery and sing its praises, albeit in a soft-sell situation.

First, quite naturally, came the greenkeepers: the practical men who know what they want and can recommend what is best – the end users. Next, those who have the power to specify and place orders, the golf club secretaries. Those who by virtue of their position in the higher echelons of golf can talk about innovative machinery are represented in the guise of EGU officials; and those who raise funds for the common good of golf are represented by the Golf Foundation. Kubota are involved additionally with the Golf Foundation – providing a tractor as a major prize – and huge sums

of money are raised for the Foundation by clubs around the country. It is a smart concept and identifies the company through charitable sporting links.

What is even more important, perhaps, is that BIGGA's golfing representatives have won the Kubota Challenge six times in nine years, a wonderful way in which our Association may blow its own public relations trumpet!

Those in greenkeeping know Kubota as the manufacturer of tractors; implements; attachments for golf course maintenance, and of many OEM Kubota petrol and diesel engines that power other makers machinery under separate trademarks. This is an important part of the company's British activity but there is much more, including construction machinery; excavators; pumps, generators and the like. World-wide the company are involved in pipeline for the supply and water industries; irrigation supply systems; vending machines and home utilities, to name but a few.

The subject of this sketch, Brian Hurtley, may well have become a pilot, for he had a yearning to fly and in 1948 joined the RAF with that goal in mind. Disappointingly for him his timing was a year or two adrift, for the authorities decided that navigators were in greater demand and his aspirations were thwarted. Aircraft navigation, he decided, was not his forte and he returned to civilian life and the continuation of his former career in the civil service.

Born of an Australian father, Brian had long aspired to travel to the Antipodes and an opportunity arose for him to transfer into the New Zealand public service. Cutting a long

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Challenge

story short, it was whilst studying for further accountancy qualifications that a grand chance presented itself – he was offered ‘double the pay’ to join the man who was training him! Brian recalled how his departure from the NZ Treasury Department was viewed with dismay and of his being summoned before the Prime Minister of New Zealand to explain his impending departure! For a young man searching for identity and new horizons it was a daunting moment, but he followed his convictions and became an accountant with JC Hutton, one of New Zealand’s largest meat packing concerns.

There was always a nagging doubt that accountancy – the desk-bound life – was not for him and soon the nag became a conviction: he had to get out and work under the beautiful blue skies, to feel free and unhampered.

What followed was a spell of various carefree tasks: stevedore; tobacco picker; painter; general handyman et cetera – indeed almost anything that brought in cash. Brian declares that he had then a need to get something out of his system and the desire to travel was uppermost. He signed on as a steward aboard ship, sailed around the North and South Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji, and spent many glorious voyages working alongside folk of many nationalities. “I found I could communicate well with all of my fellow workers”, he told me, “irrespective of race. This has stood me in good stead in my understanding of and working with people of different cultures – the Japanese, for example”.

Family bereavement caused Brian to return to the UK and in 1955 he joined Massey-Ferguson. His earlier skills acquired in matters financial were used to good effect and eventually he became General Financial Forecasting Manager, Massey-Ferguson Ltd, bringing together their annual business plans.

Further progress followed when he joined M-F’s main distributor – Eastern Tractors – as financial director. Through this, Brian became involved on the product side more and was charged eventually with the task of travelling to Africa, ostensibly to set up a subsidiary company and sell second-hand tractors in The Gambia, a developing nation. Though the idea was to sell larger M-F tractors, the need soon identified was not for leviathans, rather for compact tractors of the Kubota type. Brian’s skill in putting together a package of tractor; trailer; plough, harrow and so on – essentially based on Kubota’s compact range – proved successful with young Africans, who found the ease of operating such equipment to their liking. More important, their work was basic by western standards, often small paddy field operations, and the Kubota range proved a huge mechanical step-up from oxen or hand ploughs.

Brian’s task in The Gambia was never intended to be permanent and he travelled back and forth every three months to oversee the whole operation – transportation; distribution; dealer networks; hiring; training and ensuring an adequate spares network was in place and operating smoothly. As events transpired, Eastern Tractors were taken over by the Cowie Group and there was no place for a duplication of directors – Brian included – and thus came the necessity for him to seek new opportunities.

In life it isn’t always a case of being in the right place at the right time, but if you’ve the right background – an in-depth knowledge of distribution coupled with a financial background -wheels will run more smoothly. Approached in 1980 by Kubota’s UK managing director, Brian joined the company and quickly utilised his expertise in establishing a sound dealer network – he knew from past experience what proved attractive to dealers; how to set up training programmes, how to motivate a powerful sales force. He was



Brian Hurtle – one of BIGGA’s most ardent supporters

instrumental in recognising untapped potential, in perhaps turning Kubota’s attention in the UK away from the traditional agricultural use of tractors and moving toward the fine turf industry. Now some thirteen successful years down the road, Brian points proudly to the fact that there are dealers clamouring to get a piece of the action.

If all this seems too simplistic, it is merely because limited space cannot permit a blow by blow account of Brian’s success story. That stated, the casual visitor to the Thame headquarters of Kubota cannot fail but be impressed by the sheer efficiency of Brian’s operation. Everything is squeaky clean, computers abound on almost every desk, the place a quiet nerve-centre for a hugely successful marketing and distribution operation. Following Kubota’s own creed ‘Technology for the Needs of Tomorrow’ is the ambition of everyone at Kubota – and they are realising this goal.

This short portrait would be incomplete without reference to the BIGGA/Kubota connection. Brian is one of BIGGA’s most ardent supporters, his company fully endorsing this support in a practical way. Such endorsement has come by financially assisting – from the very onset of our greenkeeper training ideology – the management programmes run at Aldwark Manor. The Kubota Challenge has always been seen as a promotion in which greenkeepers play a major role and Brian, having over nine years known and negotiated with BGGGA, SIGGA and EIGGA, records his pleasure at the coming together of these various factions in forming BIGGA – highly respected, very professional, and enhancing the status of greenkeepers everywhere.

One disappointment – he wishes that all greenkeepers were members of our organisation and suggests that perhaps overall strength will come through powerful regions and by those prepared to give freely of their time for the common good.

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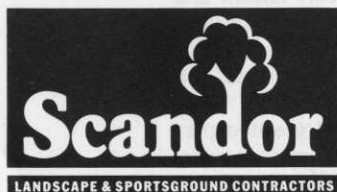
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Environmental health officers: 'armed' and ready for crackdowns



by JON ALLBUTT

From April this year the responsibility for enforcing the Pesticides Regulations passed to the environmental health officer for the local authority.

Environmental health officers (EHOs) have just completed the excellent Open Learning Course for FEPA (available from HMSO, price £16) and are now 'armed' and ready to do battle! This new responsibility is added to their other duties to enforce the Health and Safety at Work Act; The COSHH Regulations and of course the Environmental Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations. Your local inspector is now able to take a broad look at the workplace with his enforcer's eye; so what will he be looking for with his FEPA/pesticides hat on?

The inspection is going to be 'by the book' as most EHOs will not have much experience of the use of pesticides on the golf course. They are likely to take a more severe view of even small points than the HSE Agriculture Inspector and have powers to issue Improvement Notices giving a number of days (usually 30) to carry out the improvements or else!

Because the Regulations place a duty upon the employer to protect staff and the environment from any hazards arising out of the application of pesticides, it would be wise for the employer to have a formally written policy setting out the club's position. The inspector on reading this will be in no doubt that the club accepts its responsibilities and has taken steps to meet them. The policy will set out how the club intends to meet the main requirements of the Regulations, these being set out in the Code of Practice for the use of Approved Pesticides (copies from David Golding at BIGGA HQ, for £12 inc. p+p).

The inspector will want to see details of the training and certification of staff, which should include office copies of the certificates and details of the training carried out. If the training and testing was carried out more than three years ago, there should be details of revision courses carried out or proposed. Just having certificates is not enough: staff must be kept up to date on the many changes that are taking place in product labelling, application techniques, etc.

The storage of pesticides is important. The inspector will want to see the store, the inventory, spill clean-up procedures, empty container storage and disposal arrangements. There are changes in approvals for some pesticides: some are being withdrawn (simazine and atrazine 1992/3), others are being discontinued. Make sure that all the products in store are up to date and approved.

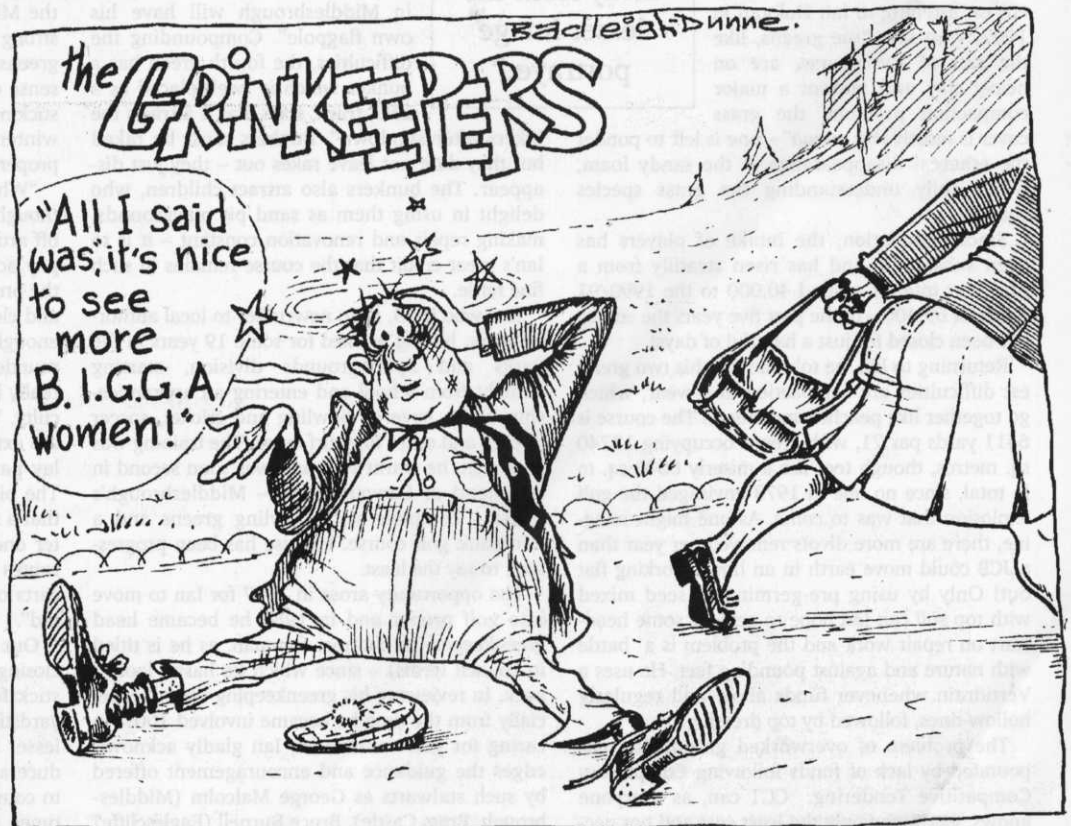
The pesticides applicators will be inspected and the inspector will look at the general condition of the sprayers: are they clean; do they look clean; are there any worn or chafed hoses, is there a clean water tank for rinsing of containers and operators to

wash after mixing a batch of pesticide out on the course.

The pesticide application records are important too. The Code of Practice has a suggested format for a record of pesticides application. The records must be kept for at least three years and may be important for health monitoring if staff have been using organ-phosphorous or carbamate chemicals.

The issuing and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will also be looked at. The new PPE Regulations (to be published shortly) will form a part of inspection. The first question to be answered is whether the PPE is 'suitable for the purpose'. Are there data sheets showing the equipment has been tested and is suitable for protection against the pesticides in use. Is the equipment clean, in good condition and stored separately from other clothing where it can dry? If respirators (RPE) are in use, they must have the correct filter fitted, they must be stored in a sealed bag and be in a clean condition. Many respirators are supplied with dust filters as standard, so when buying respirators it is wise to tell the supplier what they will be used for and make sure they are supplied with data sheets showing that they are suitable.

If a club has made a good start by implementing a policy, has good storage arrangements, has trained staff and good equipment and is keeping good records, the inspector will be much less likely to go into print on what improvements he requires. But if no effort has been made then beware, the inspector will not be amused and may well add a lot of improvement items under health and safety legislation as well.



It's all work and all play

DAVID WHITE catches up with IAN HOLORAN, head greenkeeper at one of Britain's busiest municipal courses



The Open Championship was properly a time for jubilation and cheering from golfers throughout the land. As Britain's highest profile annual golfing event, we wouldn't expect or want it any other way. One group of greenkeeping professionals, however, did not necessarily cheer, rather they prepared themselves for a guaranteed onslaught from tyros who, having witnessed Messrs Faldo and Cook in full flow on TV, instantly wanted to emulate the posturings of the professionals. I refer, of course, to those whose job it is to care for the needs of the multitude of would-be golfers who literally invade public courses in their thousands following The Open.

This information is straight from the horse's mouth, or more specifically from the lips of Ian Holoran, the talented and infinitely patient head greenkeeper at one of Britain's busiest council run courses, the 69,000 rounds per annum (and rising) Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Course, a facility with almost uninterrupted bookings every seven minutes, dawn to dusk.

The decision to build a 'golf for all' municipal course was taken in 1965, a move regarded at the time as somewhat speculative. Progress toward construction was a case of dragging feet, but work finally commenced in 1973 over some 120 acres of land farmed by the local council, land which produced wheat and turnips to the very end of its arable life. The council worked to a design prepared by golf course architect J Hamilton Stutt, though the firm had no part, advisory or otherwise, in the construction, this being carried out by local authority staff under the direction of the assistant parks manager. In hindsight it may now be assumed that written specifications were at best a hit and miss affair, but the course nevertheless has stood the test of time and constant bombardment.

It is interesting to note that in 1976 the soil was described by a senior council official (also a farmer) as free draining 'sandy loam' and that grasses selected were 'essentially of the fine-leaved variety'. The recommendation before opening was to apply lime so that the grass could be 'thickened-up' and that a head greenkeeper be appointed as soon as possible. An interest in statements nearly 20 years old sharpens on listening to Ian Holoran in 1992, who says "the greens, like the rest of the course, are on heavy clay and present a major compaction problem, the grass cover is mostly *Poa annua*" – one is left to ponder the ethereal disappearance of the sandy loam, whilst fully understanding the grass species change!

Since completion, the intake of players has been substantial and has risen steadily from a first year total of around 40,000 to the 1990/91 figure of 69,400 – in the past five years the course has been closed for just a handful of days!

Returning to Ian, he told me that his two greatest difficulties are compaction and wear, which go together like peaches and cream. The course is 6411 yards par 71, with greens occupying 13740 sq. metres, though tees are a miserly 6040 sq. m in total, since no one in 1973 envisaged the golf explosion that was to come. As one might imagine, there are more divots removed per year than a JCB could move earth in an hour, working flat out! Only by using pre-germinated seed mixed with top soil can Ian hope to achieve some head-start on repair work and the problem is a battle with nature and against pounding feet. He uses a Vertidrain whenever funds allow and regularly hollow-tines, followed by top dressing.

The problem of overworked ground is compounded by lack of funds following Compulsory Competitive Tendering. CCT can, as everyone knows, guarantee only the least cost and not necessarily

the best quality or value for money. To give credit though, Middlesbrough certainly are giving value, having won the CCT contract after specifying that all leisure facility provisions be under one tender, which made bidding by private companies difficult if not impossible. CCT in a nutshell states that tenders must be competitive and show a profit – a tall order. That stated, once the contract is won the inflexible restraints of fixed costings must be strictly adhered to, creating tight belts all round and making for a leaner and meaner set-up.

To achieve success, each job is described, ie. 'golf tee/replace all divots' and dimensions are carefully measured. Times and frequencies are scheduled, targets are set and these must be achieved! In the case of greens and tees cutting, this often means dodging the golfers and flitting hither and yon, wherever a gap appears.

Another problem, perhaps more common to municipal courses than their private counterparts, is vandalism. As Ian pointed out, the Middlesbrough course is surrounded by a housing estate and a school, a breeding ground for spoilers.

Despite the employment of course rangers they lose flags and poles almost daily – in Ian's words, "I think by the end of 1992 every kid in Middlesbrough will have his own flagpole". Compounding the difficulties, the fourth green has a bunker which is "well placed as a BMX track, such that it attracts the bikers after sundown". Bunkers must be raked but they dare not leave rakes out – they just disappear. The bunkers also attract children, who delight in using them as sand pit playgrounds, making repair and renovation constant – it is to Ian's great credit that the course remains in such fine fettle.

Ian, who is 35, is no newcomer to local authority work, having worked for some 19 years in the Parks and Sportsgrounds division, starting straight from school and entering an apprenticeship which covered bowling and cricket, soccer pitches and other fine turf areas. The training was thorough, he learnt well and was soon second in command at Stewarts Park – Middlesbrough's finest – complete with bowling greens and a miniature golf course. His rise has been progressive, to say the least.

The opportunity arose in 1987 for Ian to move into golf proper and in 1989 he became head greenkeeper (or contract foreman, as he is titled in council terms) – since which he hasn't looked back. In reviewing his greenkeeping career, especially from the time he became involved 100% in caring for golf course turf, Ian gladly acknowledges the guidance and encouragement offered by such stalwarts as George Malcolm (Middlesbrough, Brass Castle), Bruce Burnell (Eaglescliffe)

and Roger Shaw (Brancepeth Castle). At the onset he was modest enough to admit that he had things to learn and these men from BIGGA or BGGGA as it was then, were beacons on which to steer his particular ship.

Listening to him now it is apparent that he is not only a man of knowledge properly acquired in the field, but a deep thinker who analyses every question thoroughly before answering – you can sense his mental gears slipping into over-drive. He's been the proud chairman in the Northern region for some two years, having progressed from early committee work to regional rep. and thence to vice-chairman. He believes fervently in putting back more than he has taken from the profession and is a vigorous campaigner for the BIGGA cause.

Above all, Ian is proud. Proud of his course, for he believes that at £6 for a mid-week round it represents fine value for money, proud of his dedicated team, especially second-in-command, stalwart John Coles and proud of the standards he sets. He took up golf on entering 'the profession' and plays twice a week over Middlesbrough and campaigns his 13 handicap in BIGGA section events whenever time allows – locals tell me he's a hard man to beat!

He's always looking for new ways to improve the Middlesbrough course and has some pretty strong views on winter golf. "None of my winter greens are 'temporary' in the sometimes accepted sense of just close cutting an adjacent patch and sticking a flag in", he declared. "I prepare proper winter greens year round and they play like proper greens".

"What about winter tees", I asked. Again a thoughtful pause – "People just don't like playing off artificial tees, which is surprising as they happily accept them at driving range bays. I believe the problem is one of acceptance of a proper base and clean material, one that is big enough, clean enough and sound enough: not a filthy pad surrounded by a sea of mud – manufacturers should really be applying themselves to solving this difficulty. We do our best with limited space and we are extending tees wherever possible and plan to lay paths with wood chip or similar materials. The biggest problem is getting golfers to accept that a summer route cannot necessarily be a winter one. Believe it or not, we stake and wire off routes and yet still see golfers lifting their pull-carts over what is an unbelievably difficult hazard".

Our talk was constantly of standards, and in closing Ian had this to say – "If there is a yardstick for municipal golf – and it's certainly my yardstick – it is that we must get away from the lesser image portrayed and seek always to produce a standard that will have them clamouring to come back for more" – No doubt about it, the times, they are a changin'.

'We must get away from the lesser image portrayed'