



## 'If there is one trick worth repeating, it is to leave plenty of grass cover going into winter'

Plans are afoot to build an irrigation lake and work will commence this winter. This will be topped-up from the borehole and thus provide a buffer or reservoir. Though it will serve both courses, this is a separate undertaking rather than being part of the new construction. Digging it will be a problem, for with limestone below; anything over six feet in depth will need Semtex explosives rather than a digger – so it will probably end up being large and fairly shallow”.

The new course is certainly high, wide and handsome, but there remains one insuperable problem: lack of soil depth. Minchinhampton has a top soil cover of just 3”-4” and is brashy (gritty and abrasive) by nature. Growth is further impoverished by virtue of the high pH value and drought on this -indeed any- hilltop site can be a constant worry. Gazing upon the course in late July, at a time when rain had fallen abundantly over several days and where fairways looked green and lush, one could be forgiven for overlooking that this was an area bleached near white by sun and lack of moisture just a month previously. The recuperative power of

grass remains one of nature’s miracles.

Talking of his upcoming autumn maintenance programme, Paul began by stating: “if there is one trick worth repeating, it is to leave plenty of grass cover going into winter. The greens have never been cut below 3/16” and there is no thatch at all – anywhere. This is largely down to the nature of the soil. In addition, groomers on greens mowers take care of any lateral growth”.

Moving into autumn sees the beginning of a well-established maintenance programme which is based around regular aeration. Assuming the ground is not too dry, Paul will begin the onset of winter and the slow-down of growth by both solid tining on fairways and making a single pass with a Varicore hollow corer on all greens and tees. Two weeks are written into the schedule for this activity and the Vari-core will be set at 3” spacings and core to a depth of five inches. There can be no aeration of green surrounded, for the brush is too close to the surface, further compounded by irrigation pipes that also are too close (sometimes as near as 3”) to allow such luxuries.

Coring completed, the greens will be dressed with a seaweed/meal supplement, overseeded with a fescue mix and finally top dressed with an 80%-20% dressing. In addition, some four fairways are dressed each year with a sand/peat mix, essentially to aid in gradually improving the depth of the growing medium. Uncommonly, a problem peculiar to Minchinhampton greens is the original construction material. This comprises a very angular grit mixed with local top-soil and has an impacting effect which severs roots when



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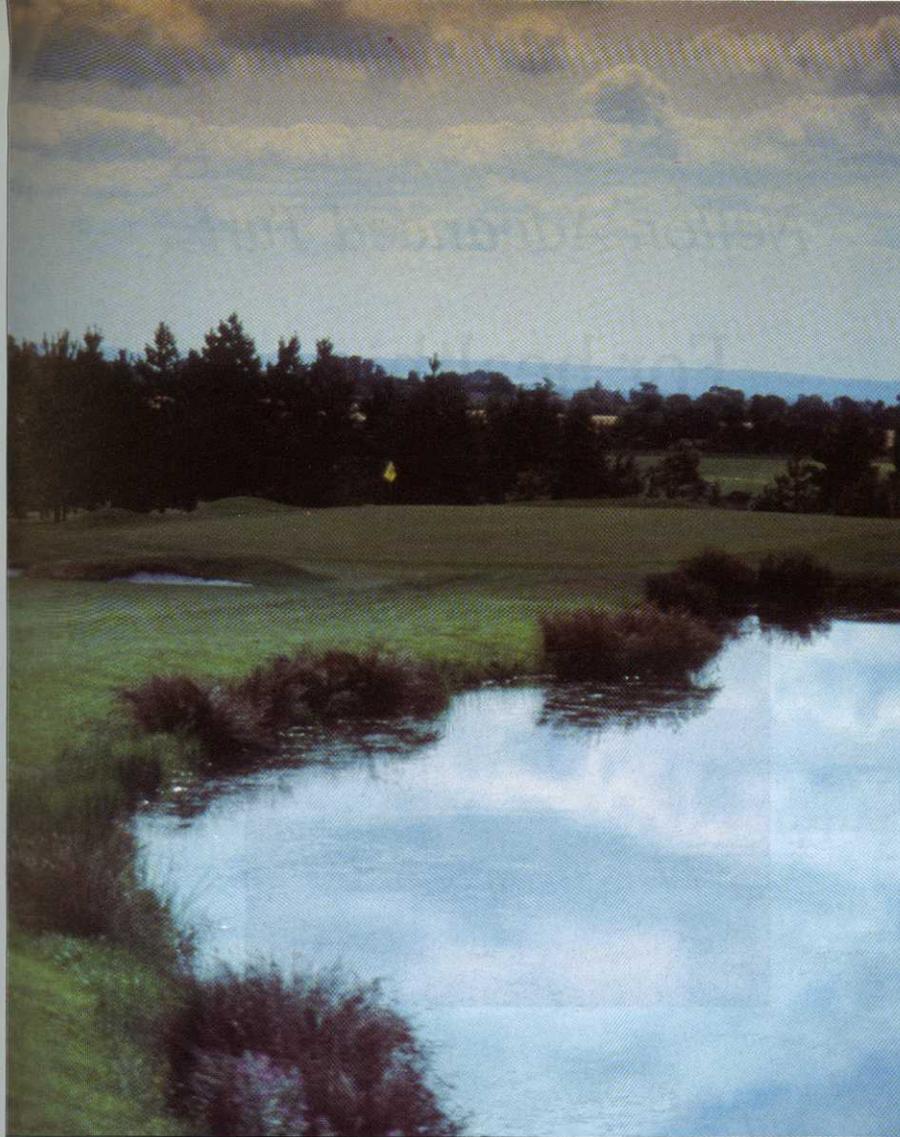
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**'Trees abound on the course, planned and planted in light copses in order that they might both encourage and protect each other in the poor soil'**

pressure is applied. This results in turf that is prone to shallow rooting, quickly effected by drought and prone to wear more than most. Many greens are of the upturned saucer variety: high in the middle and shedding towards the outer perimeter. These can effect irrigation, with run-off a constant worry. They can also effect less than 100% perfect golf shots – an apparently fine shot often finding a greenside bunker – and there are some members who view such saucer shapes as bordering on the unfair. Perhaps, one feels, there may be a reasoned case for some uplifting in the future?

Trees abound on the course, planned and planted in tight copses in order that they might both encourage and protect each other in the poor soil. The time has come to thin such plantations and it is apparent that in some places some species have struggled to grow at all. Trees always struggle on hilltop sites and Minchinhampton is no exception. Paul plans to do some selective culling during the winter and to further encourage further growth of the more healthy specimens by feeding with a proprietary slow-release. He is loath to upset nature's balance and feels that concentration on native species will bring the greatest rewards, though it must be observed that Scots Pines appear to have gained the upper hand.

The course is maintained by just six staff, one a full time mechanic, and the machinery stable is adequate rather than overly high-tec. The plan is to hold off from any machinery replacements until the second 18 holes are on stream. Then the current machinery – or some of it – will be utilised on the fresh, almost certainly stony and undoubtedly inhospitable acres, safe in the knowledge that brand-new tracks hammer the living daylight out of machinery. That stated, the Club have always believed that money spent on the course is money well spent and are equally adamant that maintenance should be left to the absolute discretion of the course manager – they practice great wisdom in hiring a professional and leaving him to it – would that more might follow the same rationale.

Paul reports directly to the green chairman via the secretary and thence to the Club chairman. He will sit in on green committee meetings, which mercifully meet just twice yearly. It speaks for efficiency that the last meeting expired after just 57 minutes! "Bet-

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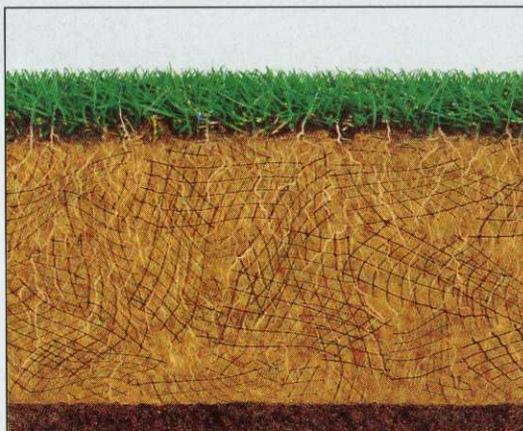
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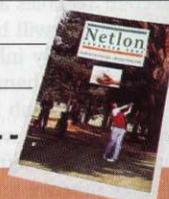
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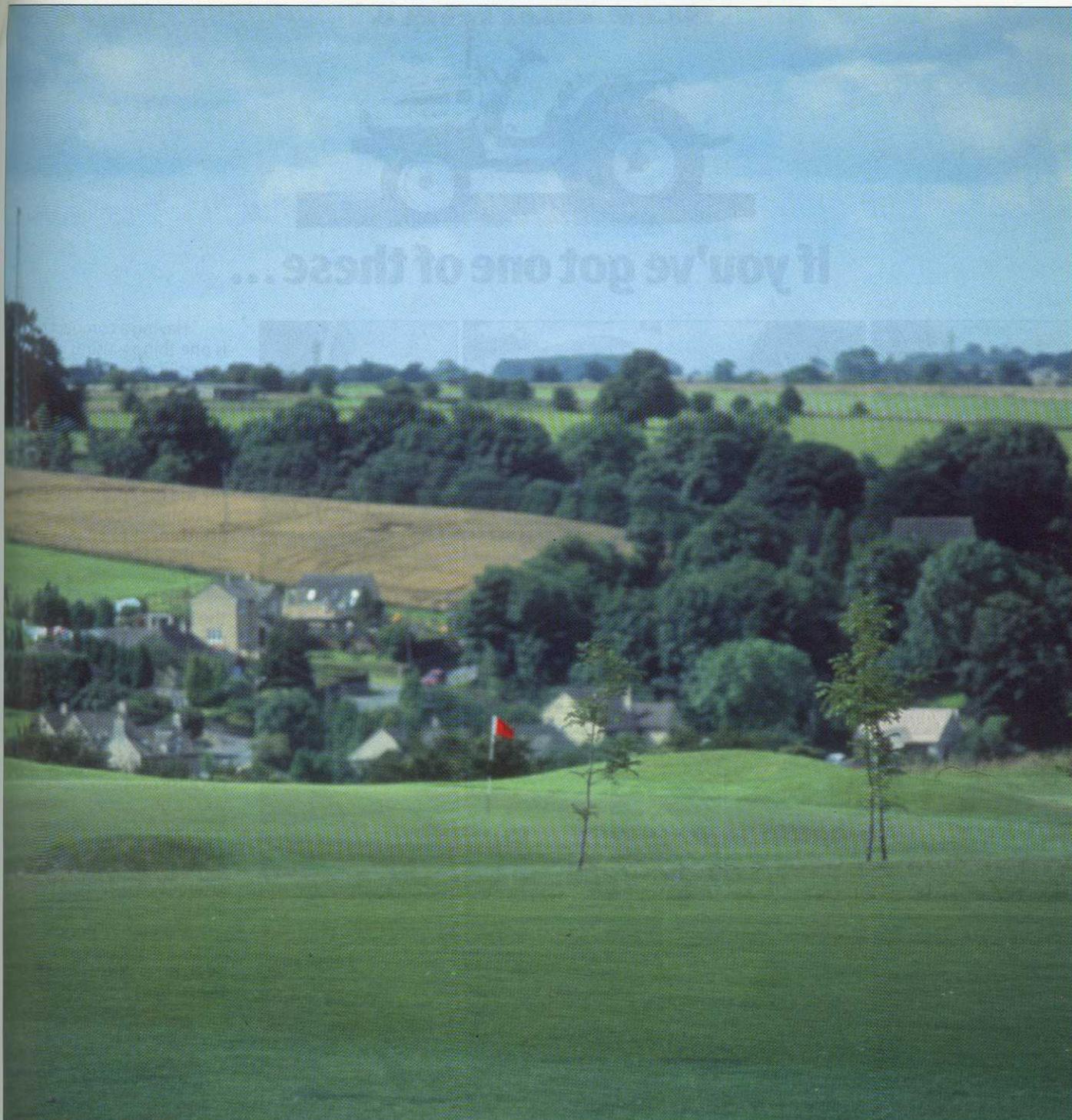
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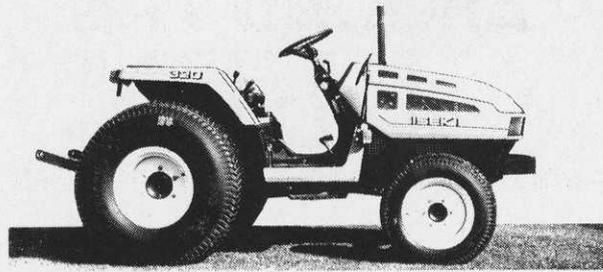


## 'The course remains in the most expert of hands'



ter than two hours once a month" Paul wryly observed. I cannot resist relating an amusing end to my visit. Sitting in the bar alone after my meeting with Paul, I couldn't fail to overhear snippets of conversation. The talk, almost inevitably, was of 'when I was captain', or 'when I served on the green committee' etc. "Have you met the new greenkeeper?" one asked. "No", replied another, "but I bet he'll keep a low profile for a few months at least, I know I would". The talk centred around Paul and one wag observed that he (Paul) had thoroughly beaten a committee member at golf before being given the job! "He's following a tough act" was the consensus of opinion and I had to bite my tongue not to interject. I desperately wanted to urge them to seek out their new course manager, to grasp him warmly by the hand and thank him for continuing to provide the first rate playing surfaces they have come to expect. The good members of Minchinhampton may indeed rest easy: their course remains in the most expert of hands.

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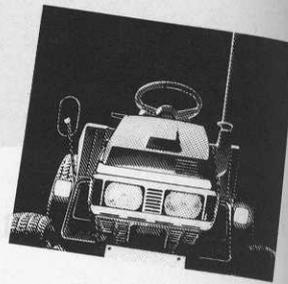
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# AROUND THE GREEN

## Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

*Will section reporters continue to note: Final copy date for inclusion in 'Around The Green' is one month prior to publication, i.e. copy for November with the editor by October 1st. Out of date material cannot be included.*

### SHEFFIELD

I am pleased to inform members that Rotherham GC have granted us permission to hold winter lectures at their Club. The dates are: Oct 1st '92, Nov 5th '92, Dec 3rd '92, Feb 4th '93, Mar 4th '93 and Apr 1st '93. Each lecture will, as before, begin at 2pm.

If any member has any thoughts or ideas on speakers or content, or who may help in arranging worthwhile material that will be of interest to others, please let me know. Tel: 0298-813374.

Education: There are two Northern Region seminars: Oct 14th at Askham Bryan College and Oct 16th at Reaseheath. Both are one day workshops and cover Toro irrigation (am) and Toro machinery (pm). Numbers limited to 40 at each venue. The cost is £15 to include meals. All bookings and money must be sent directly to Bob Lupton, 23 Hinchcliffe Ave., Baildon, W. Yorkshire. Tel: 0274 590463.

Competitions: The Annual Golf Tournament was held at Buxton High Peak GC on July 6. Forty competitors took part in the 27 hole competition, which was an excellent turn-out. Thanks must go to Barry Heaney for all the arrangements and organisation, also to Patrick Heaney and his staff for the superb presentation of the course. Thanks to Sandra, the clubhouse manageress, for looking after us and making us feel so welcome.

A big thank-you to the trade members – Brian Booth (Rigby Taylor), Peter Fell (Atkins), Steve Boroughs (Amenity Turf Supplies), for attending the event and also donating prizes. The most thanks of all must go to Buxton High Peak GC and their captain, Russ Metcalfe, for hosting the event. The captain played with us in the competition, attended the dinner and presented the prizes. His support for the competition and the greenkeepers was evident and very much appreciated by all.

Results: Low gross: Martin Scorthern (Wollaton Park), playing off plus one, had an excellent score of 107 to win the Scratch Trophy. Other results (all nett) 1st Robert Needham (Wortley GC) 92, 2nd Michael Crossland (Silkstone) 97, 3rd Steven Holmes (Notts GC) 99 (on back nine) 4th Ian Whitehead (Hallamshire GC) 99. Congratulations to all prize winners. I hope you will all support the event next year.

Please 'phone me with news of happenings so that I can inform our members eg. job changes; marriages; retirements etc. Or drop me a line at Stoneyford, Chapel-En-Le-Frith, Stockport, Cheshire. Tel: 0298 813374.



JANE RYAN

### SURREY

Following Nick Faldo's Open Championship victory, another notable English win occurred at Reigate Heath GC on July 28th. Having lost the annual England v Scotland match over the previous three years, England hit back to thrash the Scots by 3-2 with one halved match, this to regain the trophy! Thanks to Reigate Heath GC for granting us courtesy and to Derek Walder for the impressive condition of this fine course.

Another notable performance recently to hand was that of Jim Hunter, who recorded a nett 61 at Chelmsford in the Iseki Regional Finals.

Following the success of our three lectures last winter, your committee are currently making arrangements for a repeat performance. Full details will appear next month, but if any members can offer lecture facilities, or wish to make a presentation themselves at a future winter lecture, please contact a member of the committee.

The committee are also considering running a mini-bus (or coach) to the BTME show at Harrogate in January. We plan to travel to Harrogate early one morning, stop overnight, and return the following evening. The section will cover the cost of transport. Once again, it is essential that interested parties make prompt contact with a committee member.

Finally, following a recent magazine report about a current greenkeeper who also enjoys the unusual position of club captain, it has been brought to my attention that Mick Connors also enjoyed this privilege, having been club captain at The Drift in the mid eighties.

Forthcoming fixtures: Sept 24th – Parkers Salver at Surbiton GC. Oct 29th – Autumn Tournament at Worplesdon GC. Please send entries ASAP as places are limited.

ROGER TYDEMAN

### NORTH WEST

Unlike our cricketing cousins, rain did not stop play on Thursday July 9th when we held our Summer Meeting at Worsley GC. Howard McAddey and his staff had prepared this well-established course to perfection and although the weather was not on its best behaviour, the course most definitely was! I would like to thank Worsley GC for allowing us the courtesy of the course and the caterers for a splendid meal. Thanks also to Rufford Top Dress and ICI for helping to swell the prize table. The winners were: 1st T Manning 80-10=70. 2nd J Pearson 84-13=71. 3rd P Thomas 89-18=71. 4th J Farimond 74-3=71. 5th C Sheehan 85-14=71 6th W Merritt 80-9=71.

The last golf fixture for 1992 will be the Autumn Tournament at Dunham Forest GC on Thursday Oct 8th. The cost will be £12 and all entries must be in by Oct 2nd to allow catering arrangements to be made. Tee times will be allocated upon registration and all enquiries

should be addressed to Paul Pearse, 1 Swan Close, Poynton, Stockport SK12 1HX. Paul's 'phone number is 0625 859258. Proper dress is essential and entrants must also bring their membership cards with them.

On Friday Oct 16th a workshop day will be presented by TORO at Reaseheath College of Agriculture. Maximum numbers will be set at 40, so get your name in early – first come, first served! The programme is split into two sections: Irrigation am, Machinery pm. The cost is just £15, which includes coffee and lunch. All bookings/enquiries to Bob Lupton, 23 Hinchcliffe Ave., Baildon, Shipley, W. Yorks. BD17 6QY. Be sure to enclose a cheque for £15.

BERT CROSS

### SOUTH WEST

Paul Godwin of Tracy Park 'spreadeagled' the field at the recent section Summer Championship. Played at the prestigious Cotswold Hills Golf Club, venue of this years' Gloucestershire County Championship, Paul shot an excellent one under par round of 69 gross, which from his five handicap was good enough to win the tournament by five shots. This was Pauls' first win in a section event, all the more deserved following his recovery from a recent illness.

Overall Winner: P. Godwin (Tracy Park) 69-5 =64. Division 1. 1st. P. Thorn (Tracy Park) 74 -4 =70. 2nd. P. Worster (Minchinhampton) 75 -3 =72.

Division 2. 1st C. Sealey (Chippenham) 96 -26 =70 2nd P. Baynton (Long Ashton) 98 -26 =72.

Thanks to Cotswold Hills GC, particularly the Club staff, and to Club captain Keith Loosemore, who gave so much to the evening. Thanks also to sponsors: County Mowers, Toro, Roffey Bros., Avoncrop, Sisis, Rigby Taylor and I.C.I. We are indebted to you all.



PAUL WORSTER

Ransomes have made a generous offer of transport to and from their factory for a guided tour of those machines we all love so dearly (most of the time), Keep your diaries free!

### MID ANGLIA

Bedfordshire Golf Club was the venue for our Summer Competition on July 7th (Ladies Day!), a 36 hole medal which attracted 28 greenkeepers and 2 trade members. One of the trade members, Mick Franklin of Boughton Loam (a member of The Bedfordshire), posted the best score of the day, but could not win the prize. Well done anyway, Mick!

Alan Grew (Berkhamsted) won the day with a 65/67 =132. In second place was Dave Piggot (Leighton Buzzard) with 66/67 =133. Third place was won by Paris Rainer (Woburn), with 68/66 =134. Fourth was Gary Boulton (Berkhamsted) with 65/71 =136. Fifth = 51

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With the pressure still very much on the purse strings at most golf clubs, versatility is a key factor when considering the best machine for all-round course cleaning and maintenance requirements. Manufacturers have recognised this need and are now offering uprated equipment and additional attachments to extend the year-round work capabilities of their machines.

Amazon's Groundkeeper, acknowledged for its flail mowing and litter, leaf and grass collecting abilities, can now be fitted with a new narrow-profile scarifying blade for improved treatment of thatch on fine turf areas. The

2mm blades, which are reversible, can be used on their own or in conjunction with the mowing flails. Groundkeeper models are available for compact and larger tractors and there is a high-tip version for those needing to cart refuse away by trailer or pick-up.

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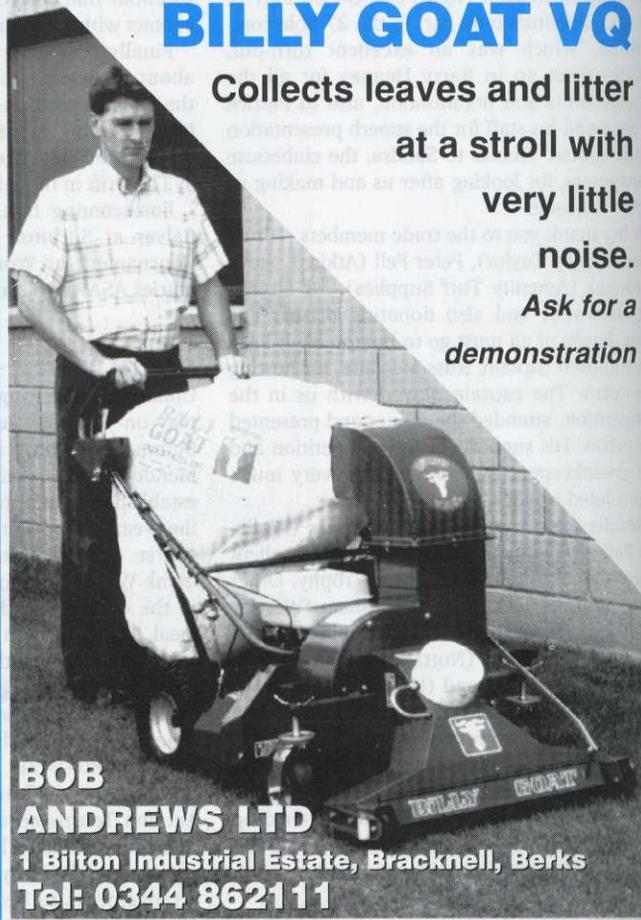
A compact tractor version of the long-established Sisis Litamisa, known appropriately as the Litamina, gives greenkeepers the ability to sweep and collect much nearer to putting areas than before, due to its narrower working width and 50% lower weight.

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