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Official publication of the  
British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association  
**MAY 1993**

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Golf Greenkeepers Association

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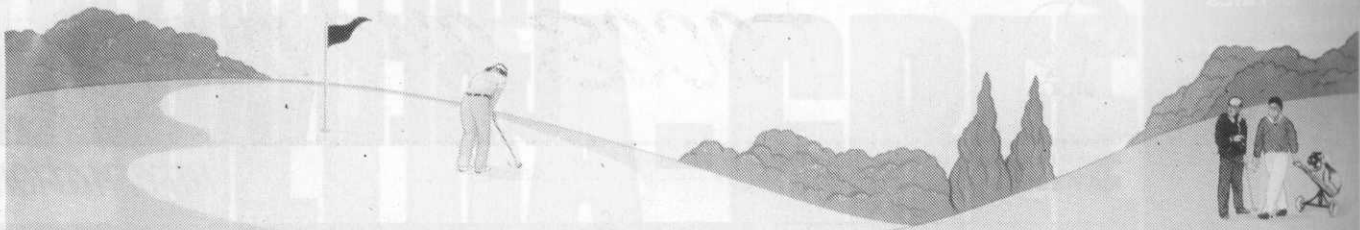
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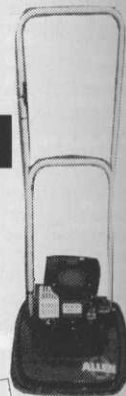
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# Faces and places



■ Rolawn (Turf Growers) Ltd of Elvington, York, have appointed Terry Ryan as sales and marketing director with responsibility for expanding and formulating a new programme of sales and marketing initiatives – in accordance with the company's focused plans for the future.

Mr Ryan was previously general sales manager, having joined the company in November 1992.

■ The National Turfgrass Council is following up its successful Workshop last November on good environmental management with three further Workshops round the country on the same theme. They will be at Reaseheath on 5 May; Sparsholt on 18 May; and Oaklands on 20 May. They will cover the new Health and Safety 'six-pack', the NRA guidance on protection of groundwater, and BS 7750 on Environmental Management, as well as more familiar subjects such as COSHH, FEPA and the Environmental Protection Act. Jon Allbutt will speak, supported by specialists from the NRA, HSE and Environmental Health Departments. The fee, £55 + VAT, covers the information pack and all documentation, lunch and refreshments, and the Workshop report to be sent later. The Workshops are for club secretaries, greenkeepers, contractors, and anyone concerned with caring for sports turf or amenity grass areas. Details – Tel: John Shildrick 0535 273188.



■ Recognising the importance of operator training, Hayter's have appointed Robin Blackford as technical support manager to develop this side of their business. Hayter's operator training will now be given to all end users including overseas distributors, local authorities and golf course managers. Robin brings with him 21 years' experience as a lecturer in agricultural engineering at Rycote Wood College, Oxford. For the last six years he was contracted to carry out all Beaver service training. Now in his new role with Hayter's, Robin's main responsibility is to give technical support to all product lines. His is a new staff appointment and he will operate nationwide.



■ Nigel Prestwich has joined Agriland Ltd as sales manager for the North of England. He started in December last, shortly after completing a two year greenkeeping and management contract with the Havighorst GC. in Germany. Nigel is not only a skilled greenkeeper but also a proven sales executive, having represented Joseph Metcalfe Ltd for seven years before leaving for Germany in 1990.

Agriland's M.D., Roger West, told Greenkeeper International how delighted he was to have on board a sales manager with hands-on experience of greenkeeping and golf club management: "With the market getting more and more sophisticated it is becoming increasingly important to employ reps who are familiar with the responsibilities and problems that face greenkeepers in their day-to-day work."

■ Head greenkeepers have been appointed for both the oldest and the newest courses at St Andrews Links. Taking on one of the top greenkeeping jobs in the world, Andrew 'Eddie' Adams has been promoted to head greenkeeper for the 600 year old Old Course, while Roderick Barron moves up to be responsible for the newest 18 hole course at St Andrews, the Straththyrum – scheduled to open later this year.

Since leaving school, Eddie (24) has worked his way up the ladder at St Andrews Links. Born and brought up in the town, he started his career as an apprentice greenkeeper



Eddie Adams, left and Roddy Barron on the 17th Green on the Old Course at St Andrews

and in addition to on-the-job training, he has attended a full range of greenkeeping courses at Elmwood College – all of which he passed with distinction. In his new role, Eddie will be responsible for the quality of presentation of the Old Course, as well as for leading his team in preparing it for the 1995 Open Championship.

Roderick Barron (37) has worked on the St Andrews' courses since leaving school in the town 19 years ago. His training at the Links has been complemented by several courses at Elmwood College. He has worked on all four 18 hole courses at St Andrews and taken part in the preparation of the Old Course for three Open Championships. His new task is to continue work on the programme for bringing the Straththyrum Course into play later this summer and to maintain it in excellent condition in the future.

Both Eddie and Roddy will work under links supervisor Walter Woods.

■ During 1992 the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association took its latest step towards self-regulated quality improvement. It started a procedure for the monitoring, by its independent secretary, of members' quotations and specifications, to ensure that they provide the basic information which a client needs in order to understand the essentials of his irrigation system. The headings of this basic information are listed in the first section of 'Your Guide to the BTLIA'. \*

One round of random monitoring has almost been completed, and the process will continue regularly in future. As a result of non-compliance with the monitoring procedure, Quality Irrigation is no longer a member of the Association. \* Free from BTLIA, Tel 0535 273188.



■ Stan Hardwick, head greenkeeper at North Cliff, Scarborough, is a man who knows better than most the difficulties that were prevalent in the industry 100 years or more ago. Not that he's an 'ancient' himself, but his hobby is collecting old greens mowers from bygone days. Pride of his collection is a beautiful and still working 'Patent Chain Automaton' by Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, dated 1884.

■ Jon Allbutt's latest News and Information leaflet for spring and summer, packed with typical 'Allbutian' common sense, is now available. In discussing the contents with your editor, Jon spotted a not so deliberate mistake and has impressed upon me that old sprayers will have to be replaced by 1996, not 1966 as the copy suggests! Free copy by calling 0959 575575 (phone and fax).



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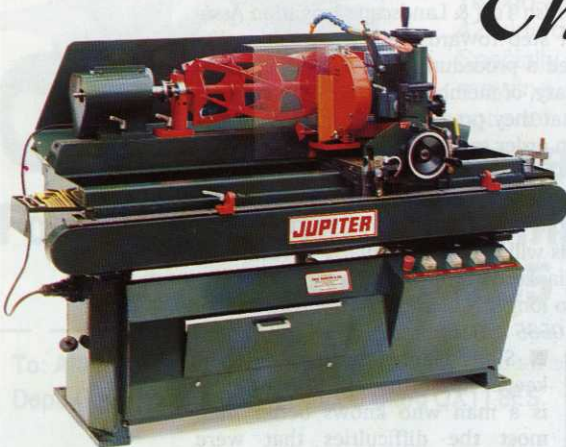
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# BIGGA's quiet man takes control



The current 'in' joke amongst members of the board of management, indeed amongst all those involved in the management of BIGGA in all of its multifarious activities, is the one concerning the outgoing chairman, who goes from being high profile Mr Roy Kates to that of yesterday's man, the *who d'ya mean Mr Roy Who?* Roy Kates has delighted in 'milking' this joke for all it's worth, after all it's only meant in fun and is of his making. That stated, it is a fact that the feeling of deflation following a year of hyper activity can affect different people in different ways, some taking it more in their stride than others.

John Crawford, our new 1993 chairman, will I know forgive me if I describe him as 'the quiet man' of BIGGA, for on first acquaintance he appears the very essence of intensity, a 'still waters run deep' type. Those who take the time to dig a little deeper, however, will find that he hides behind a streak of wicked humour which surfaces on numerous occasions. Having watched him and listened to his often caustic wit over the past year or two, I predict that whilst John Crawford may well begin his year of office as the quiet one he'll surprise us all, for like those illustrious and high profile chairmen in whose footsteps he follows, he'll come through as being anything but a John Who?

Who, then, is this man of quiet countenance? Certainly he's a modest man who admits to a dislike of tape recorders, of being interviewed. His fellow board members will nevertheless aver to his having made a distinct mark in BIGGA affairs, a stand up, speak up and shut up sort of fellow who thinks carefully before committing his thoughts for public consumption, but one who has positive views and ideas that are his alone, never a 'yes' man.

John, true Scot and archetypal canny Fifer, began his greenkeeping career in his native county, joining Aberdour GC at the age of eighteen as a humble assistant under the eagle eye of John Robb, the now retired head greenkeeper whose name is always spoken with reverence and one who still remains active in local BIGGA affairs. John is quick to declare his true allegiance by stating that it is to John Robb that he owes everything, ever his mentor and a trusted friend.

Came the time to put John Robb's teaching into practice, John, still a youngster of just 22, moved to Glenrothes GC to take up his first head greenkeeper's post, an enviable one as Glenrothes, designed by Hugh Middleton, was still under construction with only the very basic shaping completed. There can be no finer way of gaining expertise than in such a hands-on situation and John enjoyed some six years of working in local authority golf, sorry when local government reorganisation – essentially the establishment of a Parks Department which engulfed the previous golf-only set-up – caused him to re-think his future. Such experience meant not only controlling the destiny of a golf course but also hiring his own staff. On reflecting that situation, he declared that by so doing he became the youngest member of his own team, often mistakenly identified by salesmen as the boy!

A brief sortie across the English border followed when John joined Chorlton-cum-Hardy as their head greenkeeper, hired over the current head man, though it was brief indeed

– just two years – as it proved to be a period of tension, a 'them and us' situation at the time that was not altogether palatable and he returned to Scotland, joining the Lanarkshire course of Airdrie, as keeper of the green and the pro shop. This was not such an uncommon situation as it may now seem, as income derived from the shop helped supplement the greenkeepers package, though John found this side of the work less palatable and it also meant a seven day week, every week. I suppose it speaks volumes for the man that despite such enforced commercial activities he stayed for over three years and only moved when the lure of returning to his native Fife, to Dunfermline GC, came about through chasing an advert in the trade press.

A light sparkles in John's eyes when he recalls Dunfermline. He took over from Bob Winton, a fine man who was suffering from a debilitating disease which subsequently took his life. The course, quite understandably, was a mite neglected. The job offered the very challenge for which John had been searching and he was to remain there for 15 years, during which time he was to ably demonstrate not only his skills as a greenkeeper but his mettle as a course builder. Elsewhere it is written that John is a modest chap, and I must say that I had almost to drag the story of John's nine-holer from him. With the help of a local farmer, Wag Allen, who had served both as club captain and green convenor, John set about constructing a nine hole junior course which to this day is seen as a great success and, equally important, is a splendid money spinner for the club.

If Dunfermline was a great challenge, there can be few more challenging than course management of Hagsgs Castle, and it was to this established high profile club that John came in 1990, taking over the mantle from Chris Kennedy, who had nipped across the border to take over the reins of Wentworth's championship arena. John has not attempted to become a surrogate Chris Kennedy, for that would be impossible and not his style anyway. What he has done, and seen to be highly successful in so doing, is to continue to provide excellent playing surfaces, making his philosophy one of 'good golf for every occasion, 365 days a year.' I've talked to Hagsgs members and though some found Chris's departure hard to accept, at first perhaps even a mite resentful at the thought of having to accept a perceived interloper, to a man they now declare that John is making great strides and, to quote one perceptive observer, 'is doing a bloody fine job'.

On the Association front, John has been around since SIGGA times, as a beginner at Aberdour, as one who helped form the Central section in 1981 (with valuable support from John Souter), as a committee member in 1982, later to become chairman and secretary and later still elected in 1988 as board representative for Scotland. He was vice to Harry Diamond's chair until Harry retired in '92 and now is chairman of the Scottish region.

John Crawford the canny Fifer is on his way, set to make his mark as chairman of the board in his own inimitable style. You may be sure we shall hear much from this likeable character – perhaps finding a whole new audience for his acerbic wit in the speeches he will inevitably be called upon to perform – let's persuade him.

DAVID WHITE

## Time now for a little trumpet blowing.

In an international competition, Greenkeeper International has come second in the Best Magazine category for journals published ten or more times a year.

In a written appraisal, judges said: "This is an extremely lively and popular magazine which does a good job in informing a specialist readership about their business. A plethora of ads bring interest to the pages. This is a professionally produced publication which enjoys a lively letters page – always the classic sign of a well-read magazine."

The Editing for Industry Awards, organised by the British Association of Industrial Editors, is open to all corporate and in-house publications and receives entries from the UK, Europe, the United States and the Middle and Far East. It has a reputation for quality and sets particularly high standards.

Though our design and production editor, Tim Moat, is far too modest to take full credit, this is very much his triumph and we salute him.

**Milestones in the world** of inventions include the lead pencil (1812), the lawn mower (1832), the rubber band (1845) and the zipper (1891). Now a new invention that is set to make its inventor a millionaire is said to be taking the world by storm – advertising on the bottom of holes on golf greens! If you believe that only one good idea is necessary to make a mint, apparently Mr Ric Dark has hit the jackpot. As golfers bend to retrieve their Titleists, adverts implore from the depths of the cup – buy me, drink me, drive me. Dark's clients already include Cadillac and Coca Cola and talks are scheduled to take place soon between Dark and a Scottish group, with plans afoot to licence the introduction of golf hole advertising in the UK.

**A simple but eye-catching** fund raising idea using heart-shaped golf ball markers is being launched at golf clubs throughout the UK to raise money for heart research charity STRUTH. The heart-shaped ball markers, bearing the STRUTH logo, will be available in pro shops at all clubs supporting STRUTH's 'Heart of The Green Appeal', sponsored by Legal & General. Organisers of the Appeal are encouraging golfers to show their support for heart research by purchasing one of the ball markers and 'making a mark with their heart'. The suggested donation is 50p or three for £1.

Golf clubs are also being invited to organise simple competitions to support the Appeal anytime between 1 May and 30 September. The aim is to raise more than £150,000 for vital research into heart disease, the single most common cause of death in the UK today.

# Building



A new tee at Tyrells Wood

## DAVID BOOCOCK offers practical guidelines whether you're starting from scratch or just extending tee areas

**W**ith most jobs on a busy golf course, advance planning is essential to determine when, where and how the work is to be carried out and this is especially true of construction work. To decide your winter work in October is folly and unless you are fortunate in having a very free-draining course or excellent access and roads to the site, such action can be the first step towards a winter of frustration and discontent.

Unfortunately, most rebuilding or extension work on a golf course has to be timed for the end of the playing season. Where construction involves grading or machine handling fill material and topsoil, operations should commence in late September, early October at the latest. If that means altering arrangements for late played Medals, visiting parties etc., so be it, provided the planning steps were taken in time that presents no hardship.

Good access to the site is vital – there is no point hashing up tracks across fairway and rough, transporting materials and machinery, and then having to spend weeks on corrective work. If you do not have good access, consider getting the basic groundwork such as fill and topsoil spreading, completed during the summer when damage reaching the site can be minimised.

### SIZE

Think big, especially for tees at par three holes where, on a busy course, you may well require at least 400m<sup>2</sup>. Since short holes are often tight for space, particularly at the tee end, one large tee all at the same level is preferred. You cannot afford potentially usable area lost to internal banks. At par four's allow a good 150m<sup>2</sup> for medal tees and 100m<sup>2</sup> for the general teeing area on a members course where lots of competitive golf is played. Where the emphasis is on visitors and holiday makers these sizes may need reversing to cater for the heavier use on general tees. At these holes a ladies tee of around 80m<sup>2</sup> will suffice since there are usually fewer of them and almost invariably ladies are far kinder to tee surfaces than men.

Go for width rather than length, especially on medal tees where competitive rules restrict movement of tee markers. In any case wide tees provide more opportunities for spreading wear and tear and less of the available space is lost as unusable area at the edges.

### POSITION

Siting tees within woodland or new plantations is a ploy quite often used by architects and beloved of green committees in their quest to lengthen and/or add interest at a golf hole. Because cutting down trees is such an emotive issue these days, regardless of the fact that trees, like grass, require planned management, the greatest failing is to remove too few of them to start with. Alternatively in a relatively new plantation, the happy planners completely fail to allow for the simple facts of life – trees grow!

When faced with this situation be bold, removing trees and saplings within at least 10m of the edge of the tee. Within plantations ensure that in front of the tee the cut back fans out either side to avoid in future years all damage occurring down the centre of the tee or close to one edge as golfers try to secure a good line out to the fairway.

### SHAPE

Golfers are conservative by nature and most moderate handicap players like a nice parallel sided shape which allows them to line up comfortably with fairway landing areas. A tee shape based on the traditional rectangle, with rounded corners to facilitate mowing with triples and easily mown slopes to embankments, serves very well.

There is no need for excessively elevated tees either, that only means large areas of bank which for the sake of appearance need to be kept tidily mown.

If the intelligent golfer is given a view of obvious hazards, sufficient to plan his second shot, it is surely unnecessary to be able to see the bottom of the pin from the nether reaches of a par five.



# new tees

## EXTENSIONS

If you are thinking of extending a tee by simply adding material at the front or side to match up with an existing area, the best advice is don't. Through the ravages of time and use, older tees are seldom truly level, straight away you have to compromise so that new joins old without risk of severe scalping. Sooner or later, and the emphasis is usually on sooner, the new addition will settle so the joint really starts to show and, of course, the difference in level immediately loses valuable tee space. That says nothing of the mis-match between bought in turf and the tired old sward on the existing tee, often no more than annual meadow-grass peppered with coarser tufts of perennial ryegrass. The best approach by far is to start completely from scratch, stripping topsoil and turf and incorporating any existing tee wholly into the new one.

## BEWARE OF GREEKS

These bearers of gifts are usually some well-meaning member of committee or club who as soon as they learn of new construction work have contacts (usually in the building trade) for supplies of topsoil cheap, or fill for free. The golden rule here is always to examine such offerings at the site and if there is the least doubt as to quality or consistency decline the offer with thanks. A builder's idea of 'good clean fill' usually turns out to be a mixture of subsoil clay liberally sprinkled with boulders.

To provide the basis for good tees we need clean, preferably free-draining material, containing no organic debris or large stones. On links the first choice has to be the native sand. On inland sites gravel or clean reasonably structured subsoil can be suitable. Where a considerable depth of make-up is required hard-core has a place but that place is at least 600mm below finished surface levels if conventional construction is intended, 300mm if a drainage carpet and emptying drains are to be provided. Coarse rubble will need blinding with finer material before finishing layers are applied to prevent settlement or infiltration by soil.

## FORMATION LEVELS

On fairways with a downhill slope it is in order to provide a slight fall of say 1 in 80 from back to front. Playing into an uphill slope, a grade on the tee surface from front to back is acceptable and helps to shed heavy rain as run-off. As long as the tee surface is smooth and uniform it matters little whether it is on an inclined plane or dead level. Naturally where ground contours permit, a level tee surface is preferred.

## DRAINAGE

It will always be necessary to provide effective catchwater drains around the foot of cut banks where cut and fill grading is necessary to establish suitable levels.

Most tees will be built a modest 230mm or so

above existing ground level, which in itself helps drainage. Given reasonably structured material and adequate subsoil cultivation, both along the length and across the width of the surface, to relieve excessive soil compaction created during building operations, that should suffice.

For larger expanses of tee, particularly at par three's and where natural subsoil or the fill used in construction is unlikely to drain adequately, provision for effective pipe drainage is essential. Top quality installations will require drainage carpets, emptying drains and suitably free-draining sand/soil mixtures and, of course, provision of pop-ups for summer upkeep.

## PREPARATION

Many potentially excellent tees have been spoilt by inadequate preparation or haste to finish a job off which has dragged on through much of the winter. The first essential is to get the base firm in order to minimise settlement and also to get it reasonably level. Ensure that at least 200mm firmed depth of sandy loam topsoil or equivalent is provided.

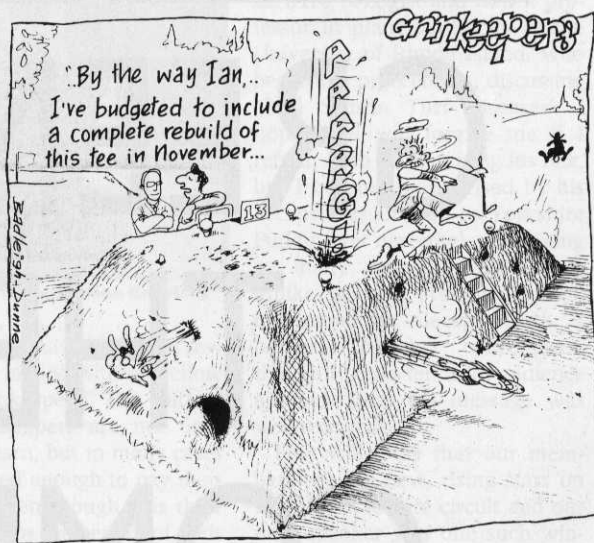
The next operations make for success or failure, and here ground conditions and the workability of the soil are crucial. In view of that and the fact that so much tee construction goes ahead in, at best, marginal conditions during autumn and winter, it is surprising that more efforts are not made to keep soil dry both in the stockpile and once it has been backspread on site.

After returning topsoil and carrying out any subsoil cultivation that is required, set up corner and intermediate pegs to represent finished surface levels. Heel and rake the soil bed at least twice in opposite directions, working to a tightly stretched line between the pegs. Reasonably dry, friable soil is essential for this process and covering it with polythene in wet weather can help enormously. Do not be tempted to put down a layer of sand on a wet surface in order to achieve a level top which you can work on. Turf will root poorly into such material, its vigour is affected and the sward will be extremely drought prone. Sand can help in this situation, but have patience and wait until it can be effectively worked into the top 25mm or so of the soil.

Correct any deficit of lime or major nutrients and it helps, particularly on sandy constructions, to work in one of the seaweed-based materials.

## ESTABLISHMENT

Where the new tee is a separate entity, con-



struction during the drier summer months has much to be said for it. That gives you the option of cheap establishment by seeding, preferably during August, your own choice of grass cultivars and the stronger establishment and subsequent growth which results from seeding direct into the growing medium. The down side is that you will not be playing for 12 to 18 months unless you are blessed with a mild autumn and very favourable climate.

Most of us have to make do with turfing. Attempts to save and re-use existing tee turf are often a failure and at best you end up with distinct differences in the sward which can take years to blend. Where the old turf is predominantly ryegrass and annual meadow-grass, discard it and start afresh.

There is a wide selection of commercial seedling turf available and the stronger and more mature that product is the better it will cope with the harsh realities of its new existence on a tee. Get the new turf off to a good start with adequate amounts of fertiliser, up to two or three dressings during the first growing season. Avoid over-close cutting and ensure by early top dressing that you correct any minor irregularities in the surface.

## CONCLUSIONS

The start points to any tee construction programme are usually easily identified. Getting the first and last tees in good shape must have priority. An immaculate first tee provides that all important first impression of the course and gets the golfer away in the right state of mind. Bring him home with a first class 18th hole and he will be back for more. Providing user satisfaction is what it is all about, whether it be club members or visitors.

■ The author, David Boocock, is a senior agronomist with the Sports Turf Research Institute.





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