

Greenkeepers in vulnerable locations will be aware of the problems that security, or lack of it, can bring. Housing the sophisticated and expensive machinery necessary to maintain today's golf courses should be a concern to us all. Greg Preston explains how system-built structures can provide greenkeepers with a secure store and workshop, with many added functional advantages.

Historically the greenkeeper's shed has been purposely constructed far away from the clubhouse and, ironically, its isolated location is now increasingly a contributory cause of theft and vandalism. As golf clubs are faced with the escalating costs of machine, equipment and materials replacement; building damage and higher insurance premiums, what can be done to minimise these disruptive effects?

Clearly there can be no absolute guarantee of totally eliminating the problem but careful consideration at building design stage can legislate against the 'remoteness factor' to the satisfaction of members and greenkeepers and without offending local authorities. The greenkeeping staff must be able to service all parts of the course effectively from a building that is accessible, functional and enhances working conditions.

Such is the flexibility of today's system building, that the greenkeeper can actually benefit considerably from improved space utilisation, leading to even greater efficiency and control. Whether a new building is under review, or an existing structure scheduled for upgrading or replacement, it is sensible to invite the system-building manufacturer to visit the site to survey the existing facilities, establish the club's short and long term aspirations and assess the proposed site.

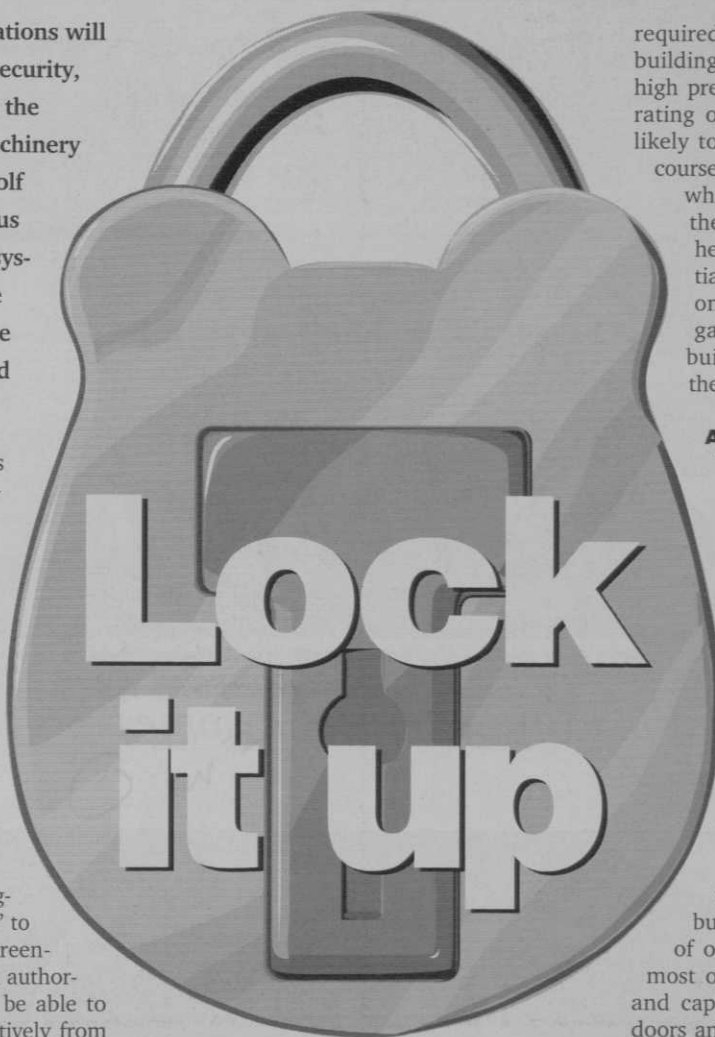
The initial survey and proposal should focus on such aspects as:

- access to meet the needs of vehicles and storage
- provisions for external storage of fuel, top dressing and fertilisers
- provisions for machinery washdown
- organisation of internal space to achieve maximum security, safety and operational efficiency
- passive and active security
- the building programme and timescale
- the building structure and any customised requirements.

Personnel access doors are available in a variety of materials and finishes, including:

1. Timber
2. Lightweight steel
3. Simple plate steel
4. Sophisticated security doors

The first two would require supplementary alarms to be fitted whereas three and four, although more expensive, are likely to obviate the need for additional security measures. The



skill is in balancing aesthetics and function with total construction costs. For vehicle entry, the roller shutter door, for example, provides excellent accessibility and is the best and simplest door for internal locking, without any visible means of entry. It has a proven track record of reliability and, being big, heavy and noisy to operate, will put off the average intruder. Windows should be as small as possible; high level; lockable; double-glazed – preferably with laminated glass and without visible hinges or fixings.

In particularly high-risk areas, an external, protective steel grille should be incorporated which also acts as a visible deterrent. Not all segregated areas actually require lighting from windows and this fact should be taken into account at design stage.

A cleaner, quicker process

A predictable building programme is assured because, using dry construction, the project will not be delayed through poor weather conditions. Compared with traditional wet construction there are no unsightly piles of bricks, sand and cement. There is minimum disruption and inconvenience to members during the construction period and the completed structure will blend harmoniously with its environment – an important consideration for members and the local authority planning department.

Strong, solid and secure

A major deterrent in the battle against theft and vandalism prevention is a structure that looks solid and secure. This will of itself cause the potential intruder to think about the effort

required and the risks of breaking into the building. A steel framework clad in tough, high precast concrete wall units and incorporating other visible security features is very likely to dissuade the would-be offender. Of course it is not simply the professional thief who is responsible for the upsurge in theft and damage. Unfortunately in heavy residential areas, there are potential problems with children who venture onto courses for either opportunistic gain or sheer devilment. The isolated building is perceived as fair game to them.

Active and passive security

The greenkeepers building can be protected with active security measures which embrace intruder lights and an audible alarm system linked with either the clubhouse or security company. However, it is sadly the case that the remoteness of the building can mean the damage is done before anyone can respond. This further reinforces the importance of the building having passive security from the first day it is handed over.

The more progressive system build manufacturers will accommodate all the appropriate security features in their design solution and offer the building owner and operator a number of other benefits. The best advice is the most obvious. Start with a secure building and capitalism on this position with secure doors and windows. By assessing key areas of the building, design decisions can be taken at the outset which optimise door and window type and position. Being the daily working and entry point of the building and offering a 'soft target', every effort should be made to keep doors to the minimum.

Requiring virtually zero maintenance, the more high performance system building will be clean, functional with the capability to offer the greenkeeping staff office, toilet, shower and mess-room facilities. Additionally the building fabric should of itself reduce the risk of fire and control the spread of flame but normal fire precautions should also be taken in the event of a fire starting inside or outside the building.

One further word of advice. Having made the commitment to a secure building, it is important to plan and organise internal and external space for that building. COSHH and The Health and Safety Executive ask that separate facilities be provided for:

- Hazardous storage
- Equipment/Workshop
- People

At the initial survey stage, therefore, time should be spent discussing the orderly and regulated division of all internal space to cover among other items fertiliser and chemical storage; plant and vehicle garaging; workshop facilities; parts stores; oil storage; flags and other course furniture. Thus it may be seen that system building can be a quick, cost effective, practical and secure solution to the greenkeepers storage and workshop needs. Close inspection of its many aesthetic and functional benefits may serve to underline just why.

■ The author, Greg Preston, is a system-building expert with Enterprise Buildings Limited.

If it's Wednesday, this must be Belgium...

DAVID WHITE travels Europe with Ransomes

We're cruising the Autobahn, Germany's main artery, my life in Andrew's hands, speedo flickering 90. Low-flying Merc's, Beamer's and Porsches zoom past so swiftly we might almost be standing still, the impression given that 90 is snail-pace slow. It's not unlike the M25 on Friday afternoon, but speeded up like an old Mack Sennett cops and robbers movie! Returning from a five day, four country invasion, a fact-finding jaunt for me and just another routine week of selling for Andrew Sunaway, who is the international sales manager for Ransomes, we are trying to make the Dutch ferry before nightfall – and he is quizzing me.

'How did your interviews go', he asks, 'what line will you take with your story on Belgium, how will you describe your impressions of Denmark, will you include that guy we had dinner with last night in your story, wasn't he fantastic?'. Come off it, Andrew, don't ask me such things, I can rarely visualise a story until I've agonised over it, won't recognise the end until I get there.

Well okay, let's first look at Belgium, which, if my memory serves me, was on Wednesday? It's a country that holds good memories for me, having lived and raced there in the '60s. I'd forgotten how nifty Belgium could be, found myself floating in a reverie – it was always a good place to live and the natives are still as charming as ever.

Belgium, as I recall, is famous for Hercule Poirot, Django Reinhardt, Brussels lace, world-class racing cyclists, addictive chocolates and mind-destroying beer. However, I remember no nationalist banner-waving or claims to fame where golf was concerned. Right, it's established I know nothing of golf in Belgium, but it doesn't matter, Danny Verbeke will put me wise.

Danny Verbeke, urbane, perfect exponent of



Krist Calmeyn, head greenkeeper at Palingbeek: position invites respect and he gets it

the English tongue and – a bonus – the keenest of golfers, is one of three brothers. Their business, A Verbeke & Zonen N.V., is of the select few that have earned the Belgian Royal Warrant, seen throughout the country as a commitment to service above the norm. The Verbeke group, a diverse company employing about 100, is divided into three sectors, consumer; playground equipment and professional, with the professional side masterminded by Danny. The company was founded some 89 years ago by grandfather Verbeke, the old man forging the Belgian link with Ransomes as long ago as World War One, thus making their combined business connection the longest established in all of Europe. They distribute Ransomes professional machinery throughout the whole of Belgium, Luxembourg and parts of northern France. Outside of North America, they are Ransomes' largest distributors.

The Verbeke company, I learned, is in a unique position, for they have over 200 dealers – it seems as though every village in Belgium offers something from their huge product range. Whether golf orientated or not, these dealers are the eyes and ears of the par-

ent company: nothing escapes them and every new business opportunity is followed up with swift efficiency. In addition Verbeke have their own retail stores, thus enjoying a network that is hard to fault. With offices in northern France and Belgium serving the professional division, and with a sales force of six to cover an area not dissimilar to Wales, they can reach every client (and get back) in the same day – three hours at most to the farthest point.

Danny explained there are just 56 golf courses in Belgium and Verbeke's are in

contact with every one, plus all five located in Luxembourg and 25 more in northern France. The company lay claim to a giant share of the total Belgian golf market – between 66% and 75% – and without elaborating, I fancy the company's trading rule, that every end user of capital equipment purchased must be given a thorough course of instruction, has a lot to do with it. Be they operator or mechanic, they come automatically to be trained by Verbeke's own professional service manager – which gives users a closer feeling for the machinery and instils into them an affection for their charges. It is altogether a praiseworthy philosophy, and it works! Twelve such courses are held each winter, all hugely popular with the greenkeeping fraternity.

Professionalism, however, is not confined to the sale and servicing of machinery alone, as I discovered when Danny took me to one of Belgium's newest golf courses, the G&CC de Palingbeek, open just one year. At this club, as indeed at most others, Danny Verbeke is simply a good friend. As like as not when he visits, the fat cats will gather for luncheon: president, green chairman, captain, head greenkeeper and D J Verbeke. A little wine, a little food –



War graves at Palingbeek: final resting place for several hundred British soldiers. Inset: a German World War I pillbox, now a feature of the golf course



between them the world can so easily be set to rights.

The Belgians have yet to adopt the pomposity of golf, prevalent elsewhere and especially so in nearby France, as a snob game. Golf in Belgium is still a 'young game' (only ten clubs were instituted between 1888 and 1939) and the greater proportion (39 clubs) were built in the '80s and '90s, Belgians simply get on with the job of being golfers, without the lunacy of 'crass class'. As an example, Krist Calmeyn, Palingbeek's head greenkeeper, is fully integrated, with all relevant decisions on purchasing or policy being made through his guiding the committee, rather than by his being guiding by them. Democratically, any questions the green chairman cares to pose are provided in writing before any meeting, likewise if Krist has questions, they also are put in writing before such a meeting takes place. Krist is as much at home inside the clubhouse as the president, he invites respect, and gets it. Incidentally, Palingbeek's delightful president, Carl Vanbiervliet, is a non-golfer, elected (though he has numerous other qualities), specifically for this reason – to ensure that golfing techno-babble forms no part of his domain.

The G&CC de Palingbeek, near Ypres, is an evocative place reeking of history, located upon a Great War battlefield that echoed once to the sound of exploding shells, of men dying and of too much blood spilled by too many unsung heroes. Excavated, the course revealed remnants of cannon and mortar (some still primed) and there are still reminders of the futility of war for all to see, here an old German pill box that is now a course hazard, there an overgrown track cut deep by gun carriage wheels. It is peaceful now, though lest any should forget, a military cemetery lies hard by the ninth green, a Union Jack flying to remind of the countless thousands who perished...

What of Palingbeek as a golf course, a test of mettle? Well, its designer, 72 years old Harold Baker, has used the land imaginatively without shifting huge quantities of earth, making it no



Danny Verbeke

'...it seems as though every village in Belgium offers something from their huge product range'

push-over. It looks natural and belies its youth. Though I personally don't much care for water features, the natural lakes (not excavated) at holes 3, 10, 16 and 18 serve to enhance rather than inhibit – and of course they're valuable sources of irrigation water. The fairways flow nicely and the greens still show a goodly percentage of the Pennlinks sown some two years back. Krist is fortunate in having a stable of fine modern equipment – unsurprisingly, predominantly Ransomes – and he has an empathy for the machinery which suggests Verbeke's have worked their magic.

It's interesting to note that many of Belgium's new courses have been built on traditional lines, natural enough – almost typically British – yet with a high predominance of American method: countless pure sand greens sown with Penncross or Pennlinks. Time will tell, but I doubt that too much Penncross will survive more than a few years – and what of the high cost of maintaining such strains?

Problems? Krist indicates there are not too many yet, though rabbits are a real pest and the surrounding woodlands (a nature conserve) are just too huge to encircle with wire netting – they shoot and trap and numbers are being contained. For agronomic advice he calls the BASF advisory service – which is indepen-

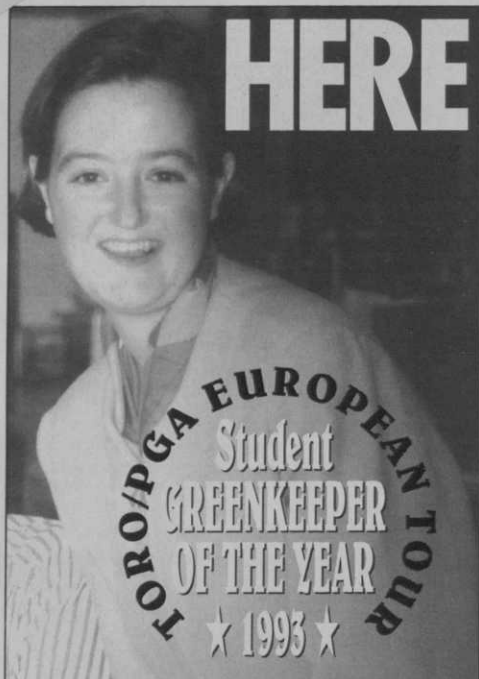
dent of the parent company – though we both chuckle when I ask him which fertilisers he uses. 'Can't you guess', he replies.

The Belgian Greenkeepers Association is small but flourishing, Krist attends most meetings and they entertain speakers from Belgium, France, Holland and, occasionally, Britain. Belgian greenkeepers are, it seems, teaching each other and are at their best when bouncing ideas back and forth: problem shared equals problem halved – or even solved.

Is it so different from Britain? Well the democracy factor is refreshing and is something from which we all might learn. The original 14 industrialists who conceived the idea for a country club at Ypres – the nearest before was 40 kilometres away – have certainly got the act rolling along prettily. Such is Palingbeek's attraction that the Belgian PGA plan soon to establish Palingbeek as their headquarters. The golf offered is of a high standard whilst the club's culinary standards are of such quality that 'Golf & Gastronomie' mini-breaks are hugely popular. If all else failed (and it is unlikely so to do), glorious food will always get my vote.

Machinery in the Palingbeek stable

- 1- Cushman Turf Truckster
- 1- Top dresser
- 1- Quick aerator
- 1- Ransomes Super Certes
- 1- Ransomes 1800 D
- 1- Ransomes 213 D
- 1- Ransomes GT Greens Classic
- 1- Ransomes GT Champion
- 1- Super Rake
- 1- Mataway + overseeder
- 1- J R Sodcutter
- 1- Greensaire GA 30
- 1- MF tractor
- 1- Kubota tractor
- 1- Vertidrain



HERE COMES THE BRIDIE!

Bridie Redican came out tops in an exciting final, as David White reports

elling regional pre-selection panel consisting of Debbie Savage, BIGGA's education officer, Huw Parry, education chairman, and a senior official from Lely (UK) Limited. Thus to have reached even the final eight this year was, I suspect, as exacting as it had been in previous years to make the final three!

And why Bridie Redican? From the moment I set eyes on the CV of this charming young lady greenkeeper, I knew she would be my 'banker', as near a 'cert' as anyone could be. Lest readers accuse me of showing favouritism, let me assure them that I had no say in the choosing process, keeping well away 'till the deed was signed and sealed.

Bridie Redican, 25, is as Irish as a Leprechaun, with a career pedigree that is tailor-made for such an occasion. If you doubt me, turn back to the wee profile which appeared in October. From a career which began at Horticultural College in County Louth, on completion of her studies Bridie took off for America, immediately falling for the 'golf game' and landing a job as a pro-shop assistant. To recognise so soon the direction in which she wanted

to go was in itself something of a miracle, and to land a job upon her return to Ireland at a Robert Trent Jones course under development, albeit as an assistant gardener rather than greenkeeper, was another feather in her cap.

Sadly the project came to a grinding halt, but not to be outdone, Bridie took off again, on this occasion to Australia, landing a job at Lake Karryup Country Club, and as a greenkeeper proper to boot! Neil Adams, the head greenkeeper there, secured her a second job, at Burswood in Perth, and from there, having gained still more valuable experience, she returned again to the Emerald Isle.

Did I mention the luck of the Irish? Well for a while it deserted our heroine, but after six months of searching Bridie landed a plum job, at the Jack Nicklaus designed Mount Juliet no less, first as an equipment operator, now an assistant greenkeeper, working under the wonderful guidance of Aidan O'Hara, himself something of a wizard with turfgrass.

Her career continues apace, for this year she's been part of the team preparing Mount Juliet for the Carrolls Irish Open, even though

Call it the luck of the Irish, a case of kissing the Blarney Stone if you like, but to this seasoned observer at least, there was never any doubt that Bridie Redican would come out on top in the latest – and most exciting by a mile – Toro/PGA European Tour Student Greenkeeper of the Year award ceremonies.

Why exciting? Well, for the first time ever the eight (in previous years 13) finalists had been selected (from an original field of 31) not only by their respective college lecturers, but also by subjecting themselves further to a gru-

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Pictured left: Bridie with Toro Irrigation's Mark Gunter, left and Lely's Graham Dale; pictured right, the runners-up: Jonathon Oldknow and, far right, Richard Andrews



charm at the University of Massachusetts, where she'll be spending six weeks as Toro's honoured guest.

The Toro/PGA European Tour runners-up, mere males, nonetheless are worthy winners beyond doubt. Richard Andrews and Jonathon Oldknow, both 26, are living proof that it is possible to make a successful career change. Richard, for example, started in hotel management,

moved into retail sales, and though he told me he didn't wake up one morning announcing 'I want to be a golf course manager,' he did on many occasions say to himself, 'I don't want to be a retailer'. He is a grand golfer and once his decision, a radical one, had been made, he set about making it work, attending Oaklands College, gaining valuable work experience at Highgate GC, while once his first course of study was complete, also landing a job at Highgate GC under Derek Mason. Clearly, they knew a good man when they saw him!

For Jonathon also it was a case of knowing what he didn't want to do, less of knowing that greenkeeping would be the ultimate answer. He's been fortunate, having gained invaluable knowledge with Warwick Parks and Leisure of the many turfgrass situations akin to golf, yet essentially different, like bowling, tennis and cricket. Now he's an assistant greenkeeper at Coventry Hearsall, three years down the road to his next goal, that of managing a course of his own. Both Richard and Jonathon were at pains to impress upon me that they are in no hurry – both believing that there is nothing to substitute hard experience and time served, though both are sure that winning the award, two weeks with the PGA European Tour, will do their careers no harm at all. Like Bridie, they were fulsome in praise for their respective tutors.

Every finalist has it within him or her to be a star of tomorrow, with their colleges – and sponsors Toro Irrigation Limited, Lely (UK) Limited and the PGA European Tour – as mentors for a bountiful future. I take my hat off to them all.

the course itself is a mere stripling at just two years old, and she's been busying herself with intensive turfgrass studies at the Botanic Garden College, Dublin, taking Greenkeeping and Sports Turf Management. Of the future, there can be no doubt that this eminently talented young greenkeeper will become a role model for others of the fair sex who fancy their chances in a hitherto male-dominated profession – and you may be sure that she will make it to the very top of her profession, whilst wowing them all with her own brand of Irish



GREENS TURF, GLENEAGLES MONARCH'S GOLF COURSE. "THE FINEST TURF IN SCOTLAND." (Pic. courtesy Gleneagles Golf Developments)



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The role of the

GTC



GTC Education Unit staff, based at Aldwark Manor near York, are David Golding, Education Director and Sue Gudgeon, Administrative Officer

■ An update on the Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) Education Unit, in which David Golding, the unit's appointed education director, answers questions posed by David White.

David, many readers have asked that you explain the differences between the 'old' GTC and those of the new GTC Education Unit. To begin, how did the new unit 'come about' and who now makes the decisions?

DG: It is essentially about funding, and of a desire to see those funds directed with arrow-like accuracy toward the final goal. The recent development by the GTC to fund an education unit for golf greenkeeping proved finally that, from a period of 'marking time' due to lack of funds, a level of cash has at last been allocated which enables it to play a premier role in establishing national competence standards for the greenkeeping profession. Furthermore, and this is most important, the new unit represents both sides; the golf club and the greenkeeper.

And what of the committee, which in the past was accused of being unwieldy?

DG: A much more streamlined committee is now in force made up of representatives from the Royal & Ancient, the four Home Golf Unions and a nominated BIGGA member, who represents greenkeepers from the UK and Ireland.

Tell me about your own appointment.

DG: After working as the BIGGA education officer for four years the position with the GTC seemed a natural enough progression, akin to much of that which I had strived to achieve with BIGGA. Nevertheless, I was flattered by the offer and delighted to become the education director of the new unit. As you know, I was a working golf course manager myself, I understand the needs, aspirations and indeed fears of those in greenkeeping and I also know the thinking, their thinking, regarding 'education'. I identify with greenkeepers whole-heartedly.

What do you see as the major benefit, the raison d'être for the new unit?

DG: The major benefit is that it truly represents the greenkeeping profession, with no side issues whatsoever. This is proving especially invaluable with the current changes in education. For example, when an industry such as ours can be represented at meetings wearing two hats, those of employer (the club) and employee (the greenkeeper), there is a much greater acceptance of our 'united' voice. In addition we are spreading the 'gospel' directly into clubs, working with clubs in devising individually tailored training programmes. It doesn't cost the club a bean and is, I believe, another major breakthrough.

And what of NVQ's and SVQ's, how are things

mat which we believe will be accepted as the levels of skill required to acquire an NVQ at level two. In due time the manual will include supervisory and management sections, and these also must become the accepted criteria for levels three and four NVQ's and SVQ's.

So you've taken the first initiative, and the ball is in ILBAH's court, so to speak.

DG: Not only has the GTC taken the responsibility to set standards for greenkeeping qualifications, but it has also insisted (to ILBAH) that it must be consulted on the choice of locations where standards are assessed, and by whom. We see a danger of the NVQ and SVQ at level two in Amenity Horticulture (Greenkeeping Option) being awarded (or not, as the case may be), by assessors who have no knowledge or experience of fine turf. What is even worse, proper facilities are often lacking at these assessment centres and as a result the tests cannot be carried out in accordance with the set criteria.

Does this situation suggest a less than happy state of affairs, a case perhaps of having to 'go it alone'?

DG: I hope not, for with our reservations stated, the principle of vocational qualifications is something we support totally. Acknowledgement of skills, as opposed to examinations that give a pass or fail, must be welcomed by our profession. Furthermore, the offer by the GTC to set standards and to monitor them – by establishing a network of assessors and verifiers throughout the UK and Ireland – is something we believe is in line with the government's principles, that of an industry taking the lead in training and of acknowledging the skills of the workforce. Problems have arisen because the government has insisted on only a limited number of Lead Bodies being set up to represent all professions, leaving some specialist sections (such as greenkeeping), having to protect their own industry standards.

Turning to another matter, there was always pretty close liaison between the old GTC and the colleges, and though a great many did sterling work, some were – to put it bluntly – quite ghastly, blundering along and appearing totally out of touch with the realities of greenkeeping. What changes are envisaged?

DG: Another vitally important role of the GTC Unit is to monitor those training courses provided by a growing number of centres. One decision of the old GTC, one which became more and more acceptable by golf clubs and greenkeepers alike, was to send trainees to GTC 'approved' colleges. I know there are some excellent training establishments throughout the UK and Ireland, colleges where first rate courses are provided which complement the skills element of greenkeeping. The committee will continue a close liaison with them. In addition, we anticipate local colleges

progressing on that front?

DG: Never has there been a better example of an industry making a stand than with the introduction (into greenkeeping) of National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications. Our profession has been 'attached' to the Industry Lead Body for Amenity Horticulture (ILBAH), a body which was convened some two years ago to set standards for all of those industries allied to horticulture.

Apart from giving us yet another acronym (ILBAH) to remember, how has the 'attachment' helped?

DG: It soon became apparent to us that greenkeeping was the minnow in ILBAH's ocean and that greenkeepers were in danger of having NVQ standards inflicted upon them by folk with scant knowledge or experience of the fine turf sector. Only after being invited into ILBAH did a voice from the greenkeeping world begin to be heard. Today the battle continues, specifically to see standards for our industry accepted by the Lead Body.

How can this aim be achieved?

DG: The GTC has moved swiftly in trying to protect future golf course maintenance standards by producing The GTC Training Manual, which has the craft level skills detailed in a for-

The Last Word

Send your letters to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, 13 Firlie Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HL

'Them' and 'Us' concern

Having been a greenkeeper for some 25 years, working my way up through the ranks to course manager, I feel I must respond to the situation occurring in Holland at this time.

I am a BIGGA member and have been since the onset of the Association. Recently I received an invitation to attend the first BIGGA meeting in Holland but I chose to decline, fearing a situation arising of 'them' (the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association), and 'us' (BIGGA).

I recall being a member of BGGGA, at the time holding office as chairman for the Sussex section, when other members of the Association and myself were involved in the organisation of EIGGA and experiencing the 'them' and 'us' situation against SIGGA and finally, after many meetings, the formation of BIGGA.

If BIGGA is to grow in Holland, surely the correct procedure must be to involve NGA members at initial meetings, explaining the advantages of BIGGA membership to them, not an 'ego trip' for an elite few who are BIGGA members already.

**Lionel Harris, Course Manager,
Grevelinghout Golf Club, Holland**

Frederick ten Hage, BIGGA representative for the Netherlands, responds:

I understand Mr Harris's concern about developments taking place within BIGGA at the moment, especially as the Association is trying to expand the international side of greenkeeping matters. I would assume that working on this particular subject will have everyone's approval. This must be done in good harmony and understanding, i.e. beneficial to those most concerned.

Mr Harris's opinion of a 'them' and 'us' situation is absolutely unfounded and not of this time. It would have been more appropriate had he accepted our most serious invitation to join the meeting. Unfortunately he felt the need to decline, though I am sure that had he attended he would have concluded differently.

For this same reason he would not, I think, have found the need to close by speaking of an 'ego trip' for an elite few. This suggests some profound prejudicial points of view. An attitude of this kind will not contribute to the building of a sound platform, one from which we might start and maintain good relations between both associations. This is one of BIGGA's main targets for the future.

It is a vital and most necessary action to upgrade the profession of greenkeeping throughout the world. Furthermore, and to finish this reaction, may I suggest a referral to the BIGGA Holland column in 'Around The Green' of this issue.

Executive director, Neil Thomas concludes, "The recent initiative of Frederick in calling a meeting of BIGGA members in Holland is to be welcomed. The meeting came about following discussions held during the European Forum at the BTME last January. I can assure Lionel that his points are well taken and BIGGA members in Holland will wish to work very closely with members of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association. It is our wish to see our fellow Associations in Europe flourishing and growing and BIGGA

remains ready to offer any practical assistance in their development which may be requested and which it is able to give. It is unfortunate that Lionel did not feel able to attend this initial meeting as I feel sure he would have come away reassured over his points of concern. Frederick will be reporting on developments in Holland during the European Forum at the 1994 BTME and I would hope that as many members of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association as possible will attend in order to cement the relationship of our Associations. I would also point out that we enjoy an excellent relationship with the Netherlands Golf Federation which has been instrumental in the setting up of the Netherlands Greenkeepers Association".

Beware 'man in a pub'

On a cold March morning one of the fleet of SISIS demonstration wagons, fully laden with new and demonstration machinery, was stolen from a secure parking location. Police were immediately alerted and facts were circulated via computer links throughout the country. Friends and relations were advised, dealers were acquainted, even competitors were given a smile or two when they were put in the picture. The insurers were given the news, to add to other disasters they have had to bear.

From April through to August, information was as scant as orders in the aforementioned competitors' books. The condition of golf courses from Amsterdam to 'Ammersmiff', from Manchester to Malaga was constantly reviewed, as improved putting surfaces might well have seen Interpol on full alert.

When a confirmed sighting was eventually made, however, it was much closer to home, South Lancashire in fact. The eagle eyes of a young rep. spotted a galaxy of the famous yellow machines at a new golf club, where such units had not been seen previously.

A call to head-office was swiftly passed to the SISIS regional manager. Nudge, nudge, wink, wink, speed limit observed (but only just) and every single unit was found, some still bearing the SISIS DEMO UNIT logos, not a solitary serial number obliterated. This is probably why the police, for once, believed the one about the man in the pub.

The moral, it seems, is to always say 'no' if someone in a pub offers you some SISIS machines. We've so many reps, friends, relations, in-laws, dealers, associates and contacts - why even our competitors are friendly! With so many ears to the ground thieves hardly stand a chance of avoiding discovery.

By the way, if anyone offers you a Leyland DAF painted in the famous yellow livery (though heaven only knows what colour it might be now), you could make a few people very happy by phoning SISIS, perhaps saving a little on your next insurance premium at the same time.

Lynn Hilton, SISIS Equipment (Macclesfield) Ltd., Macclesfield, Cheshire

PS. Incidentally, after nearly six months using the range, the club in question found it couldn't bear to part with the Multislit, Contraseeder and Powasped - so it bought them!

becoming assessment centres for NVQ's or SVQ's. The greatest benefit to greenkeeping is that these centres will provide the training for candidates and also carry out the assessments.

In the future there will be colleges established as Regional Training and Assessment Centres: offering courses and/or assessments for craft, supervisory and management levels, together with many more 'local' centres approved for just craft level training and/or assessments.

All greenkeeper training, we believe, should involve the use of The GTC Training Manual, and that it should be used not only as an individual's evidence collector but also as a record of achievement towards an NVQ or SVQ.

By now you will have gathered that there are major changes taking place which we intend to monitor very closely. The GTC is keen to develop a partnership between those who provide training and those in the greenkeeping profession. This is already evident, with leading colleges using trained and skillful course managers (and, in some cases, their deputies) as part-time trainers and/or assessors. This is a major initiative which has our full support.

Assessor qualifications will need to be achieved by GTC approved industry representatives, and help and guidance will be given, especially as the committee has no wish to burden a mere handful of industry assessors when their priority obviously is in the workplace. On that point, if any BIGGA member needs further information on how to become an assessor, I hope that he or she will call me.

Where does BIGGA fit in, what role will it now play?

DG: The GTC will be looking to BIGGA for continuance of their excellent role as training providers. In addition, of course, we anticipate working together in close co-operation and consultation on such things as conferences, seminars and management courses. The GTC will continue also to work with other training providers, such as the STRI, and with the greenkeeping associations in Northern Ireland and Eire.

In summary, it is the role of the GTC to set the standards of greenkeeping qualifications, to monitor those standards, and to work closely with those who provide the training, thus ensuring that first class training is always available. I believe the relationship we enjoy with the R&A and the Home Unions, with BIGGA and other greenkeeping associations and with those interested bodies such as the PGA European Tour, will ensure that standards of greenkeeping will improve and that the quality of our courses will continue to be maintained by a highly skilled and motivated workforce.

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Success once again for the greenkeepers means the Kubota Challenge Trophy returns to Aldwark Manor for the eighth time in nine years. But as David White reports, the tournament had its sticky moments...

The Kubota Challenge Trophy does not belong to the greenkeepers, certainly it is not the exclusive property of BIGGA as a God given right. No, it must be battled for year upon year. That stated, it will come as no surprise for readers of Greenkeeper International to learn that a selected team of eight BIGGA golfers have once again clasped the venerated Japanese vase to their chests, raising the old porcelain crock high, along with pride for their profession and for their undoubted prowess in the ultimate field of battle – match play golf.

At Kiawah Island in '91 American supporters wore gimme-caps proclaiming the legend 'The Ryder Cup belongs in the USA', and as a thought for 1994, as the trophy is returned to Aldwark Manor yet again – for the eighth time in nine years – there must now be a good case for our next team to bear the legend on their head-gear, "The Kubota Trophy belongs in BIGGA's hands!". By way of additional praise, this time from twice Amateur Champion Peter McEvoy, undoubtedly one of Britain's finest ever players, came the opinion: 'their (the greenkeepers') continued success comes as no surprise, and may be easily put down to both preparation and dedication.'

Before revealing the bones of BIGGA's success, let me first express a huge vote of thanks to Belfry course manager, Derek Ganning, on behalf of all Kubota players. The Brabazon periphery (and indeed parts of some fairways) had been ravaged by Ryder Cup crowds, transport and grandstands, whilst huge chunks of the adjacent Derby course resembled scenes from the Ardenne battlefields. There was mud, mud, and still more mud, a nightmare for Derek's team. Mud notwithstanding, the course was also taking a pasting from the heavens and it would not have surprised us to see the course closed. 'Not so', declared Derek, 'these games must go on, we'll close tomorrow'...and so they did. Full credit too, for the remarkable condition of all eighteen greens, together with remarkable drainage. Derek, give your team a bonus!

I suspect that meeting the greenkeepers in battle is enough to frighten many a team into losing before a blow is struck, thus it is to the credit of the Golf Club Secretaries that in the semi-finals they took us down the wire, indeed gave us a moment or two of apprehension before succumbing to a 4 – 3 defeat, with one halved match.

Thus in the final, Greenkeepers versus the English Golf Union, there was no feeling of invincibility in the greenkeeping camp, the pot had still to be won, the match needing to be played through incessant rain. To say the least, it was nasty, but when the going gets tough... the tough et cetera, et cetera.

First away, George Paterson (1) waged a monster battle against ex International Les



VICTORY in the MUD



The winning team of greenkeepers with the Kubota Challenge Trophy. Top, The Belfry's tenth hole, showing flooding near the lay-up zone and mess left behind from the Ryder Cup

Walker (1), declared later by George to have 'a good old head on him.' Their game dinged, square at the turn, George one down at fifteen, square again at sixteen. The seventeenth halved, their game went the full five pennyworth, finally falling Walker's way when he rolled in a single monster putt (was it really only 20 feet, it looked even longer) to claim a one hole victory. Some matches were one-sided, and Aled Hughes (4) found Brian Evans (3) a smidgen off form, defeating him seven and five, whilst 'never down' John Mitchell (7), our hero, scored the sweetest of victories by annihilating Peter Wilson (6) to the tune of eight and six! More was to follow, with Mr Steadiness, Mike Hughes (4), scoring a deserved and well fought two and one victory over David Hood (6), whilst George Brown (4), ever the 'banker' in these circumstances, won what he described as 'a tough match' by three and two against John Brew (5). Interestingly, another competition was also being staged by Oracle, and at their declared 'longest drive' hole, George Brown thumped his ball some 44 yards past their winners mark!

Spare a moment now to cheer for Huw Morgan (7), who came from being three down with five to play to halve his match against that wily old bird, Brian Lewis (7) – great stuff Huw, especially recovering from dormy one

down to snatch a rattling good half – share also in the disappointment of Chris Yeaman (12), who fell to Tony Everett (9) by three and one, though not without giving of his very best. Chris was certainly the semi's hero, coming from four down with five to play to halve his match, which took us into the final! Can't win 'em all, they say. What can I say about Roger Willers (15)? His performance in the semi's (five down after five) was not of the usual Willers' standard and I suspect he gave himself a thorough talking to before meeting Maurice Hutchins (10) in all that rain. His victory (five up after six) was the sweeter for being least expected, and we applauded his three and two as though he'd sunk the winning putt for the Ryder Cup.

Last year we thanked our good friend Brian Hurtley, Vice President and Director, Kubota GB Ltd, for the wonder of this fabulous event – real golf, proper golf, man to man combat that makes the spine tingle. We thanked him again this year, reminding him that the Kubota Trophy remains in very safe hands indeed – and that we'll not part with it without a struggle!

Results: The Greenkeepers defeated the English Golf Union by five matches to two, plus one match halved. In third place was the Golf Foundation, who defeated the Golf Club Secretaries by a single point.

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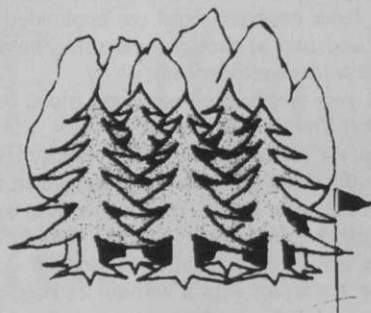
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