

# NEW PRODUCTS



■ A low-cost, lightweight transporter equipped with the option of either petrol or electric power units has been introduced by grass machinery manufacturer **Ransomes**.

Suitable for use on turf or hard surfaces, the Sprinter utility vehicle, pictured above, is designed for all applications requiring fast, efficient and cost-effective movement of light goods, tools or work materials around golf courses and sports complexes.

The four-wheeled Sprinter has a polypropylene body to resist knocks and bumps while its tubular steel frame and heavy-duty suspension give a smooth, comfortable ride. Rugged moulded bumpers are fitted at the front and rear for added protection.

The petrol engine available for the Sprinter is an air-cooled unit developing 8.5hp and fuelled by a 6gal (28 litre) tank. Alternatively, customers can specify the electric Sprinter which has a 36-volt direct drive motor powered by six 6-volt batteries. Equipped with electronic speed control, the system gives an operating range of up to 30 miles from a single charge, depending on temperature, terrain and load.

The Ransomes Sprinter has a manually-tipped, polyethylene dump box suitable for carrying tools, work materials and other light loads. Maximum payload of the vehicle, including driver and one passenger, is 800lb (364kg).

The price of the petrol-engined Sprinter is £4,100. The electric model is £3,950, to include a battery charger with fully-automatic timer.

■ After two years of development and testing, **Dennis** has added the 24in FT610 to its range of fine turf machines. Designed with greens and tees in mind, the FT610 can be used to cut, comb, scarify, de-thatch, brush, roll,

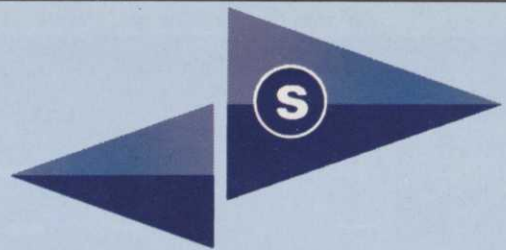
sorrel roll, or slit, simply by removing and replacing cassettes – a job which takes less than a minute and requires no tools. "This variety of functions performed by a single power unit allows for year-round usage with cost effective savings in time, money, and storage space," says managing director Ian Howard.

Other features include:

- Variable drive speed, independent of engine revs, gives the operator total control (including cuts per metre/yard);
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- Three-part differential rear roller for manoeuvrability with minimal turf damage;
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- Choice of Kubota or Honda engine; and
- Simple backlapping facility on removed cylinder cassette.

Price starts at £1850 without cassettes. Cassettes start at £328. Tel: 01332 824777.

■ **Huxleys** report an amazing response from customers for its new Soil Reliever Vertical Deep Tine Aerator. Orders have exceeded initial expectations and include Carnoustie Links, Helensburgh GC, Radley College, Tylney Park GC, Shrewsbury GC, Parker Hart Contract Services, Corhampton GC and Sundridge Park GC. Director Paul Huxley says: "On all demonstrations, customers have been tremendously impressed by the Soil Reliever's speed, smooth operation, clean finish and robust construction. Use of the hydraulic link attachment allows the operator to regulate aeration depth from the driver's seat, and routine maintenance is minimal." Tel: 01506 856968.



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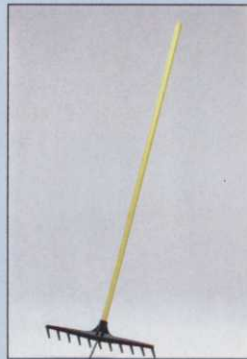


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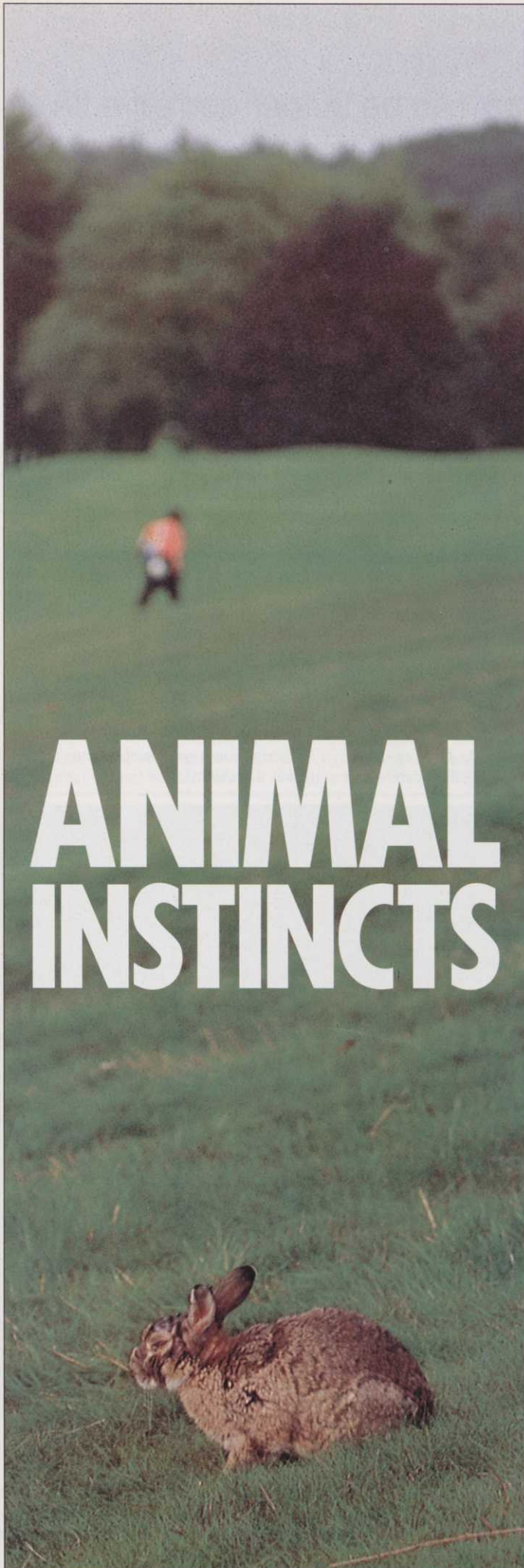
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# ANIMAL INSTINCTS

**A** number of mammal and bird species, such as rabbits, badgers, Canada geese and moles, are known to cause problems on golf courses.

Greenkeepers are the ones who have to deal with the problems – humanely. Public attitudes to wildlife management are such that the welfare of wildlife is quite properly a major concern and therefore greenkeepers will have to manage these animals in a humane manner. There is also legislation in place which prescribes the way in which many animals can be managed.

Wildlife on a golf course may be of considerable ecological importance and in addition may make a course more marketable in terms of the course's aesthetic appeal.

Therefore, the objectives must be to manage any species only when numbers increase to a level where they are causing economic losses to the course and then only

to take such measures as necessary to reduce losses to non-economic levels.

Problems encountered and management solutions available are detailed below:

## RABBITS

Rabbits cause problems by digging burrows and these are particularly prevalent on slopes and banks where drainage of water is more efficient. Digging occurs throughout the year but is more common in spring when new nesting sites are being dug in preparation for the birth of young. On flat ground, burrows are usually no more than 1m deep. Rabbits also cause damage by digging smaller, shallow scrapes in the soil and by eating the bark of newly planted young trees.

Under the 1954 Pests Act, it remains the legal obligation of occupiers of land to take steps to destroy wild rabbits on their land

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# How to manage wildlife without breaking the law

## ● Fencing can be 90 per cent effective

or, if this is not practical, to prevent rabbits from causing damage on adjoining land. Rabbit numbers can be reduced by gassing their burrows, by ferreting, trapping or shooting but gassing is at least twice as effective as any of the other techniques. Numbers are best reduced between November and March because they are at their lowest at this time of year due to natural mortality. Any action taken before winter will only replace rather than add to this mortality.

Non-lethal methods such as fencing can be used to exclude rabbits from parts of the course and if properly maintained can be over 90% effective. Chemicals marketed as repellents are also available. They are sprayed onto the turf. Data on the effectiveness of these compounds is at present limited, although we are currently undertaking trials on one product. Finally, tree guards can be used to provide effective protection for individual trees.

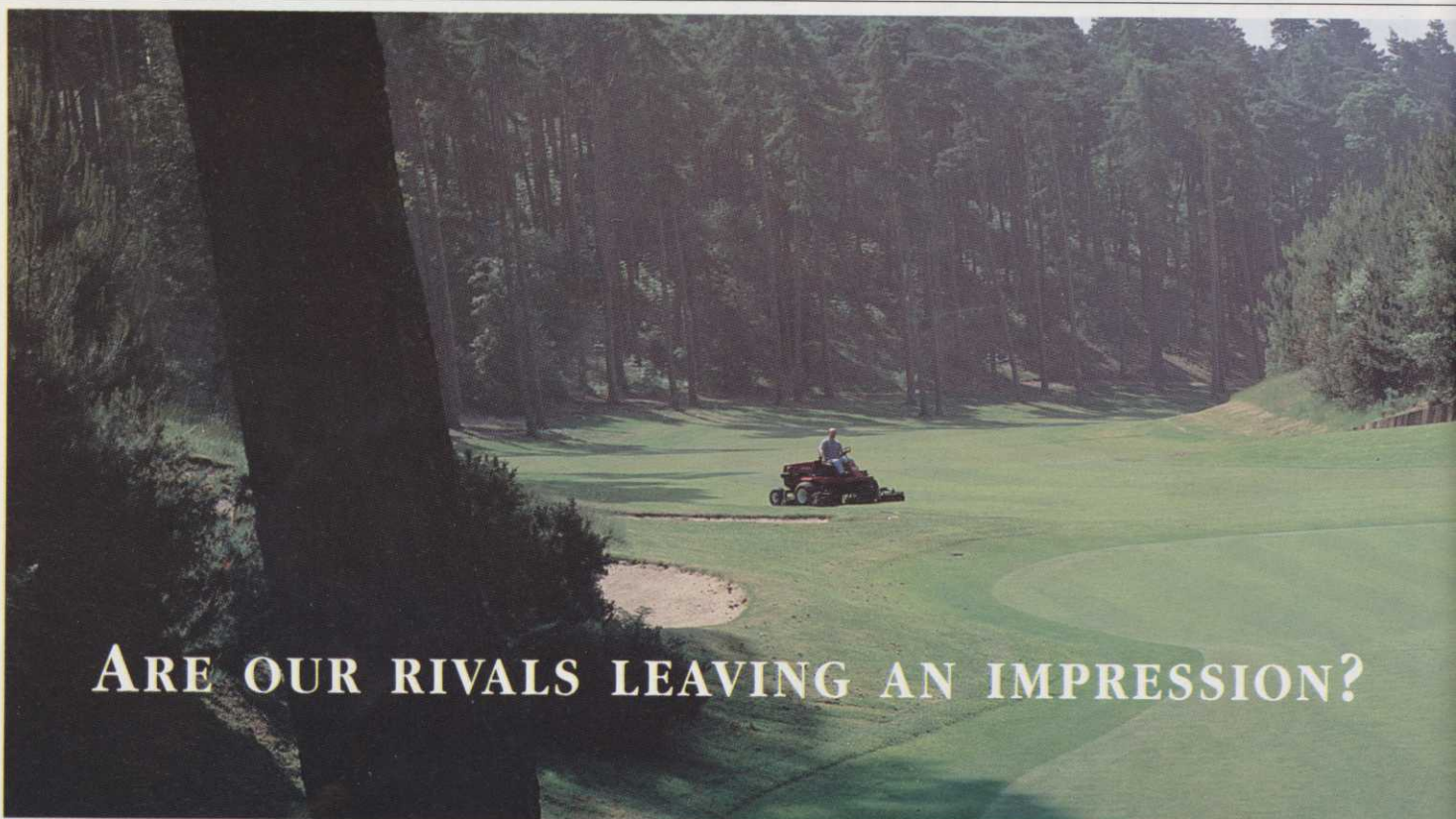
### **BADGERS**

Badgers damage turf by digging holes when looking for food, such as insect grubs or worms, and this can occur

throughout the year. Badgers and their setts are, however, protected by legislation which makes it an offence to interfere with badgers or their setts without a licence. Therefore, preventing badgers causing damage is a complex problem which could not be adequately covered in this article. However, an extensive booklet for this purpose, called 'Problems with Badgers?', is available from the RSPCA (Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1HG).

### **CANADA GEESE**

Canada geese cause damage to the grass particularly around ponds and lakes on a golf course by excessive grazing and trampling of the ground and they may make areas unplayable as a result of excessive fouling. Their droppings may also pose a potential health hazard if players eat, smoke or drink without washing their hands after handling golf balls which may have landed in the droppings. In addition, during the nesting period geese may become aggressive towards members (although some greenkeepers may not see this as a problem).



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## ● Altering the habitat by planting shrubs can deter Canada geese

Canada geese are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which requires that a licence must be obtained from the DoE or MAFF for certain types of management procedures and for any control carried out during the close season (February-August inclusive). These procedures include egg pricking, egg substitution and shooting during the close season or at night. However, the Act does not allow licences to be issued if the only purpose is to prevent damage to amenity land and therefore it is unlikely that one would be issued for management on golf courses.

Procedures not requiring a licence include fencing along the edge of ponds or lakes to deny easy access to adjoining grass. This may make an area less attractive to the birds and, consequently, may lead to a reduction in numbers or divert geese from greens to areas of rough where their grazing may be less damag-

ing. Also, altering the habitat, for example, by allowing the grass to grow or planting shrubs, can be undertaken to break up the open vistas preferred by geese along the water's edge and this may discourage them from using the area. Newly planted shrubs should, of course, be protected by fencing during establishment. Visual scarers can be used but, although they can be effective, they may be unacceptable on aesthetic grounds.

### MOLES

The most obvious damage which moles cause is the hills of soil produced as a result of digging their underground tunnel systems which can be several hundred metres long and can run at depths of up to 2m below the surface. Moles are managed by poisoning, by gassing and by trapping. Poisoning is carried out by placing worms treated with strychnine in mole runs.

However, the sale or supply of strychnine for general purposes is prohibited under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1933, except to those with written authority from MAFF to purchase it for the express purpose of killing moles. Written authority will be given only to those who have received training in the technique and further information on how to obtain training can be obtained from MAFF offices. Treated worms should be placed in deep rather than surface runs to prevent these worms becoming a hazard to other wildlife. Gassing is conducted mainly by placing tablets which generate phosphine gas into mole runs. Traps, which kill moles, should also be set in deep rather than surface runs and should not be set in mole hills. Control is best done between October and April when moles tend to be most active and their workings easily seen.

## Try a course on wildlife management

A course to provide greenkeepers with training in aspects of wildlife management is being provided by the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) starting this autumn in conjunction with BIGGA and the GTC. CSL is also able to provide consultancy advice to greenkeepers and further information on both these aspects can be obtained by writing to Gordon McKillop at the CSL, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Tangle Place, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3LQ.



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*Bringing perfection  
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Seven greenkeepers, seven different tractors: Hugh Tilley found out how each fared in their own environment

# Seven FAVOURITE tractors

**T**ractors are a prime part of the machinery fleet on most golf courses, their main functions may be hauling a trailer, aerating, loading, mowing or any of many other tasks. Their ability to provide traction, carry or drive an implement, or provide hydraulic flow and pressure makes them versatile and cost effective work horses. However while most tractors are extremely versatile the specific requirements of certain courses often determines which abilities are most important and so which tractor is most suitable.

Most golf course tractors are in the 25hp to 70hp power range and while those below 45hp are often tagged 'compact' there is considerable overlapping in specification and price. Not all tractors are equal, the standard specification of one tractor may be significantly higher than another, on the other hand sophistication usually costs money, so a basic tractor may offer best value, especially if it is only needed occasionally. Tyre and transmission options need most careful consideration, four wheel drive may be an option not needed by all. Specific equipment, such as a loader, may call for extra hydraulics or a larger pump while a cab may be a desirable option for 'compacts' usually quoted with basic roll-bar.

There is almost infinite scope to match machine to specific requirement, which is just as well as the needs of each golf course is as individual as its greenkeepers and traditions. This makes it impossible to try to compare one tractor against another. Nevertheless specific requirements often indicate a specification and this may be found as standard or at little or no extra cost in a particular model. Existing equipment and main line operations, such as deep aeration, trailer and loader work or gang mowing often determine the power, weight and transmission requirements, or there may be a price constraint. Another and very important reason to select a specific make and model may be the ability of the local dealer. Thus this feature is not an attempt to judge one machine against another but to appraise them against their environment and the expectation of their respective greenkeepers.

## Massey Ferguson 1260 at The Belfry

The Belfry has a fleet of eight tractors of varying sizes, but the selection of a Massey Ferguson 1260 was largely determined by the need to operate a deep tine aerator. A prime consideration was the strength and credibility of the dealer support, and Derek Ganning, course manager, stated that they would not contemplate going to a supplier who could not provide the level of support they at The Belfry consider essential. The course has considerable favourable past experience with ET Breakwell Ltd at Shirley and while Breakwells had just changed their tractor franchise, Derek said it was not as if MF was an unknown make, furthermore the quoted price was 'competitive.' While the exact price was not quoted to *Greenkeeper International*, the suppliers did hint that it was in the region of £17,000.

The Belfry had demonstrations of both the MF and one other similar machine before making their decision. Options specified included cab, front weights and extra wide turf tyres. As the machine was to be used extensively on tees and greens the requirement for the widest possible tyres is obvious. The machine has four wheel drive as standard. Front weights are required to ensure stability with the 1.6m wide Wiedenmann Terra-Spike and this is more important due to the fact that the tractor has a high lift capacity of 1300kg at link ends. Although The Belfry cannot be considered a hilly



Derek Ganning, left, receives the keys to his MF 1260 from ET Breakwell's Mark Radford

course, tractor stability is important and they had noted how compact tractor and Terra-Spike are as a combination.

Asked what in particular they like about the tractor, the first response was "the gears," both for their ease of selection and for the handy positioning of the levers. Although the gearbox provides sixteen ratios in both forward and reverse, selection is simple and the 'shuttle' lever makes shifting direction easy. Maximum speeds are 16.2mph – and slightly less in reverse while the minimum speed at the rated engine speed is 0.8 mph, which is considered slow enough. With all three gear levers placed beside the driver to the left the operator platform is kept uncluttered, and the 'tidiness' of the whole layout

was remarked on.

The Belfry expect that the tractor will be used for other tasks and these could include operating the Gannon reseeders and also a Varispreeder. The PTO has a rated maximum power of 31hp, and with both 540 and 1000 rpm outputs, there are the options to transmit maximum power or drive lesser loads with greatest economy. The PTO has an independent clutch which is operated hydraulically, again an essential feature where PTO operation is to be the main use of the tractor.

Technically the MF1260 has a rated engine power of 35 hp at a rated speed of 2500 rpm. The engine is a three cylinder turbo charged diesel which gives maximum torque at 1600 rpm.



Duncan Bawcutt  
with his  
John Deere 855

#### John Deere 855 at Bowood Golf & Country Club

The second tractor considered is a John Deere 855 of which Bowood Golf & Country Club in Wiltshire have two – alongside several other models in the same shade of green. Of the two machines the more interesting is their loader tractor as this is equipped with both front loader and a back hoe. Used to load topdressing as well as for trenching and similar work, "It is," says Duncan Bawcutt, course manager, "perfect for what it does." Although about four years old and with a modest 1200 hours on the clock, it has never had any problems, "just one set of seals, damaged by string around the axle". The three cylinder direct injection diesel engine is rated at 24hp and it is, says Duncan, a superb engine which always starts first time and uses no oil. "Furthermore it is quiet, unlike others I could name."

However perhaps the most important feature of this tractor is its drive train (transmission in American) which is hydrostatic. Used as a loader this means quick gearless speed and direction changes making for fast work cycle times. Of course it also has power steering and four wheel drive, features which Duncan considered essential for such a use. Operation is so simple to use that the tractor is frequently 'borrowed' by other departments on the estate. Bowood have their own fitter, Tony Rummig, and he particularly likes the tractor because it is "simple to work on". He said they operate a slightly extended service schedule, although based on the JD recommendations, because, "we use better oil." Asked about the cost of replacement parts, his comment was that if you never need any, it did not matter how much

they cost. The one modification which Tony admitted having made to the tractor was to the exhaust as the standard outlet is a stub on the side. To this he had added an upright pipe to emit the exhaust gas above the operator's head.

When first bought the tractor was simply equipped with the JD 70A front loader which was counterbalanced by a concrete block lifted on the rear links, however the versatility of the unit was later increased by the purchase of a Lewis Landlord 300S back hoe for trenching and ditching. An important design feature of the tractor, and one which makes it suitable for loader and back-hoe, is the substantial frame built into the tractor as this gives strength and rigidity to take the stresses and strains of the work. Mounting and demounting both loader and back-hoe is quick and easy, about two minutes to remove the front and perhaps ten to clear the back. The back-hoe mounts on a sub-frame and is held with two bolts while the hydraulics are self-contained and driven by a PTO pump. The front loader has a built-in stand which flips down when required to remove the unit.

Another feature of hydrostatic transmission is the ability to vary speed instantly, and Duncan said this makes the 855 particularly ideal for topdressing. The tyres on Bowood's 855 are 'oversize turf', and are interchangeable with those on the larger 33hp JD955.

The engine is a direct injection three cylinder diesel, with a two range transmission giving maximum speeds of 8 and 11mph. The PTO is live and independent, and a mid PTO is available as well as the conventional rear one. All up weight without loader and back-hoe is well under a tonne.

# Contact!



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# Seven FAVOURITE tractors



## Zetor 5245 at the Chesfield Downs Family Golf Centre

The Chesfield Downs Family Centre has two Zetor tractors, one five years old and another just three – and they expect to buy another shortly. Course manager is Chris Brook and he joked about the cab being big enough to be a dining room. In fact with extra seats it is both roomy and safe to carry one or two passengers, in addition it is quiet and comfortable. But of course the most important reason for Chesfield Downs' pur-

chase is financial: Zetors represent exceptional value for money, and Chris made no bones about the fact that they equal cheap horsepower. The original machine cost £6,500 with interest free repayments spread over four years, and while changing circumstances and inflation together with increases in specification have raised the cost of a replacement, Chris still does not expect to pay more than £12,000, interest free over three years for four wheel drive and 50hp.

Chesfield Downs do their own servicing on the tractors, ensuring that oil changes are carried out regularly and everything is kept up together. The dealer, Lodgeway Tractors, has been very supportive, but there have been no reliability problems on the tractors, although they have experienced one clutch cylinder oil leak, and the lights have posed some problems – but Chris said these are not vital to him. Those replacement parts which have been needed have been inexpensive too.

The Zetor 5245 is powered by a 50hp 3 cylinder direct injection diesel engine with a ten speed transmission. One of the features of the transmission is that it has two low speed gears at the bottom of the range which are ideal for working with a deep tine aerator – Chesfield Down has a 1.6m Terra-Spike, whereas some tractors need a special creep gearbox.

Although the Zetor is larger, more powerful, and heavier than a 'compact' tractor there is now a well established option to fit wide low ground pressure tyres, and Lodgeway Tractors say that they can fit GoodYear 'Softrac' tyres which give even lower ground pressures; these tyres made specially for turf production fit as if made for the tractor. In summing up, Chris said, "Yes – we're very pleased with them," but perhaps the fact that he is considering buying another is the ultimate seal of approval.

## Ford 1520 – Faringdon Golf Course

Fitted with a Lewis Landlugger 22 front loader and 4 in 1 bucket, Faringdon GC's Ford 1520 "does everything," according to owner Roger Carpenter. Bought two or three years ago, the tractor has played a large part in making this nine hole pay and play course at Faringdon, Oxfordshire which is run by the owner very much as a hands-on operation.

Roger tried out a number of competitive machines before selecting the Ford 1520 from T H White Ltd, whom he cannot praise highly enough. In comparing it he commented it 'eats' the competition, and was 'ten times better' than another well known make. In particular the transmission is far more efficient and it has a very effective lifting ability, both on the linkage and with the loader. Roger has not found it running out of power, but he did say that he would have the next model up in Ford's range if it had hydrostatic transmission.

With the loader and 4 in 1 bucket the tractor is an extremely versatile unit which is used for all manner of lifting,



Roger Carpenter aboard his Ford 1520

levelling and shifting jobs. Roger said that the transmission made operating it so easy, "you just rock the foot pedal to go backwards and forwards, and of course steering is fully hydrostatic." Furthermore the lift height on the loader is sufficient to load the normal tipper lorry. It is kept on and used as a front weight when operating with the Amazone Groundkeeper and

other implements on the back. The Groundkeeper is also a tool which has multi-purpose use at Faringdon being used to cut long grass as well as for collecting leaves, rubbish and grass clippings – "it'll take up anything," Roger commented.

"In fact the only time the loader comes off is when I go spraying the greens and I want the least possible weight". The

listed weight of the tractor is 1034 kgs and it has a 874kg linkage lift capacity. The tractor has a 23hp 3 cylinder engine and hydrostatic transmission, four wheel drive and wide turf tyres. Its service and reliability record is impeccable and certainly Roger was no less enthusiastic than the other users to whom *Greenkeeper International* spoke.

## Kubota ST30 at Laleham Golf Club

At Laleham alongside the Thames in Middlesex the need was for a compact tractor which was very light and versatile, and which could be used for tasks for which the Cushman was not well suited, such as aeration and other draft work. John Ross, course manager at Laleham, sees the compact as being complementary to turf maintenance vehicles. The club took quotes on several machines of similar specification before deciding on the Kubota ST30 supplied by J Gibbs Ltd of Bedford.

Particular features of the Kubota are hydrostatic transmission and a bi-speed front axle which means less scuffing of the ground on tight turns when using 4WD. Rated at 29hp and under a tonne in weight, the tractor offers a very high power to weight ratio and John has been able to slit weekly or more often all through the winter, often in front of the golfers without them being aware of it. As a result only about four days play have been lost this winter, and there has been no disease. John stated that a prime reason for buying the tractor was to take a lot of the TMVs' workload as these were in danger of being 'worked to death.' The ST30 has proved itself able to haul the Magna 5 mower,



John Ross with his Kubota ST30

although this will not be a regular task. John summed up operating it by saying it was quiet, comfortable and easy to use, and his only reservation was the relatively high centre of gravity which meant that common-sense is required by the operator, particu-

larly when operating with the loader. However Laleham on the Thames flood plain is basically a flat course. No reliability or service problems have been encountered, the one call made to Gibbs, under warranty, got them on the course within 20 minutes.

The ST30 is fitted with a loader and back-hoe and can operate a deep tine aerator which gives it even more versatility. "You can't be too flexible," John stated, "the Kubota ST30 gives us exceptional flexibility and we are absolutely delighted with it."

# Introducing the tractor

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