

MORE NEW PRODUCTS NEXT MONTH

and DIY kits for perimeter netting and golf practice nets.

Headland Amenity launched a range of liquid slow-release nitrogen fertilisers. Based on triazone, the products are designed to promote uniform turf growth and improve grass quality throughout the season while also reducing summer scorch risks and leaching. One of the major benefits, according to Headland, is that fewer applications – taking less time – are needed to dress the turf, compared with conventional products. Because the nitrogen is released more slowly, only half the number of applications are needed throughout the year to better the performance of traditional urea-based liquid fertilisers. The range includes: N-Sure (28N:OP:OK) containing 72% of its nitrogen in slow release form; Trisert KS (15N:OP:12K:8S) with sulphur and potassium as well as 60% slow-release nitrogen, intended for hardening-up turf and helping to prevent disease by discouraging annual meadow grass and acidifying the soil; Trisert (13N:3P:4K) with phosphorous and potassium plus 72% slow-release nitrogen to provide a balanced feed with an 8-12 week release pattern.

Claymore Grass Machinery showed the Sabo Roberine Continent 400-3D, which is designed for cutting tees and bunker surrounds. Features of this 1.8 metre triple are the rear-mounted 14.5hp diesel engine, the hydraulic driven transmission and mowing units, the three-wheel configuration and power steering and standard weight transfer system, plus optional 3-wheel drive and differential lock. Mowing speeds can be varied to suit conditions and there is the choice of either 7- or 10-bladed cutting cylinders. Cutting heights are from 8mm to 55mm and grassboxes are available as extras. Claymore also showed the Continent 800-D, a 1.5m wide out-front rotary with a top operating speed of 20km/h. If extra traction is needed the 800-D has a weight transfer system as standard and the option of four-wheel drive and differential lock. A balanced wheel base at front

and rear gives stability on slopes.

Euromec displayed its new range of front deck mowers and collection machines. The mowers, unlike many competitive machines, have been designed from the outset to collect grass cuttings. Large hoppers and the provision of a powered high lift dump are two of the common features. The top of the range compact Turbogross model has a zero steering radius, enabling operators to cut grass in the most inaccessible places. Also available is a wide range of extras: chopper incorporating collection system, front brushes, flail mower, scarifier, side discharge deck and snow blower. Euromec also displayed the new multi-purpose walk behind TurboVac which collects all types of debris from any grass or hard surface area.



The new Ransomes Fairway 250 – a lightweight five unit mower

Ransomes launched a lightweight five unit fairway mower. The Fairway 250 comes in two- and four-wheel drive versions, both equipped with water-cooled diesel engines, hydrostatic transmissions and interchangeable cutting units. The highly manoeuvrable two-wheel drive machine has a 23hp engine and 5in (127mm) diameter cutting reels with a choice of nine or 11 blades. For more demanding mowing applications and where extra grip is required, the 33hp model is equipped with selectable two and four-wheel drive and has the option of seven or 11 bladed 6.5in (165mm) diameter cutting reels.

Green Link Products launched Liquid Green, a new turf colourant that allows greenkeepers to respond instantly to turf damaged through cultural, climatic or chemical means. Applied as a conventional spray, Liquid Green provides the turf with a natural looking green colour for up to 14 weeks while the grass

recovers. The cost is less than 0.5p per sq metre. In addition to its application as a spray pattern indicator, Blazon can now be used to colour lakes, ponds and water hazards, imparting a natural, healthy appearance to water that is off-colour, dirty or just in need of extra sparkle. Blazon and Liquid Green are distributed in the UK by Farmura Limited.

Johnsons Seeds unveiled three new amenity grass varieties: the perennial ryegrasses Merci and Danilo, and the strong creeping red fescue Diego. Merci is described as an exceptionally fine-leaved, compact, dense turf type – combining very good wear tolerance with the characteristics which produce high quality ornamental turf. Merci is included in the Taskmaster mixture for golf tees and lawns. Danilo is a dual purpose turf cultivar for both heavy duty sports wear and for less intensively used turf such as lawns and landscaped areas. It has good shoot density and fine clean easily-cut leaves. It too is included in Taskmaster, as well as Johnsons 1995 J5 Mixture for fairways. Diego is the highest ranked cultivar on the 1995 STRI Merit List – with the top rating for short growth, mowing tolerance, shoot density and freedom from dollar spot.

Etesia's range of professional ride-on and pedestrian rotary mowers made its debut. For cutting slopes around tees and bunkers Etesia offer the PSE, a lightweight yet rugged four-wheeled rotary mower. Powered by the latest 3.8hp 2-stroke Suzuki engine this 46cm (18in) machine is compact and easy to transport between sites. For situations where a wider machine is required, there is the self-propelled RKEB with 4-stroke 9hp Kawasaki engine and the RTEB fitted with a 7hp Bombardier Rotax 2-stroke. Both machines have electro-magnetic blade clutches plus a safety feature that stops the cutters rotating within three seconds once the controls are released. The blade is driven through a floating coupling designed to protect the engine crankshaft from excessive impacts.



■ Fiona Whitelaw, an account manager at Fairway Finance, achieves a lifetime ambition by meeting Lord Whitelaw, who she claims is a distant relative.

■ Turnberry course manager George Brown was presented with the keys to a new 45hp L4200 from the Grandel series, the 25,000th tractor sold in the UK since Kubota set up here 15 years ago. Handing over the keys to this unit, which has been specially show-finished in silver and Kubota orange, was Brian Hurlley, vice president-director Kubota (UK). Mr Hurlley said: "The sale of the 25,000th unit is a very important milestone in the history of Kubota in the UK. I am delighted that this state-of-the-art tractor is going to such a prestigious and loyal customer as Turnberry."



■ Ray Burniston and Pat Bates, attending BTME for the first time as exhibitors with the Association of Golf Club Secretaries.

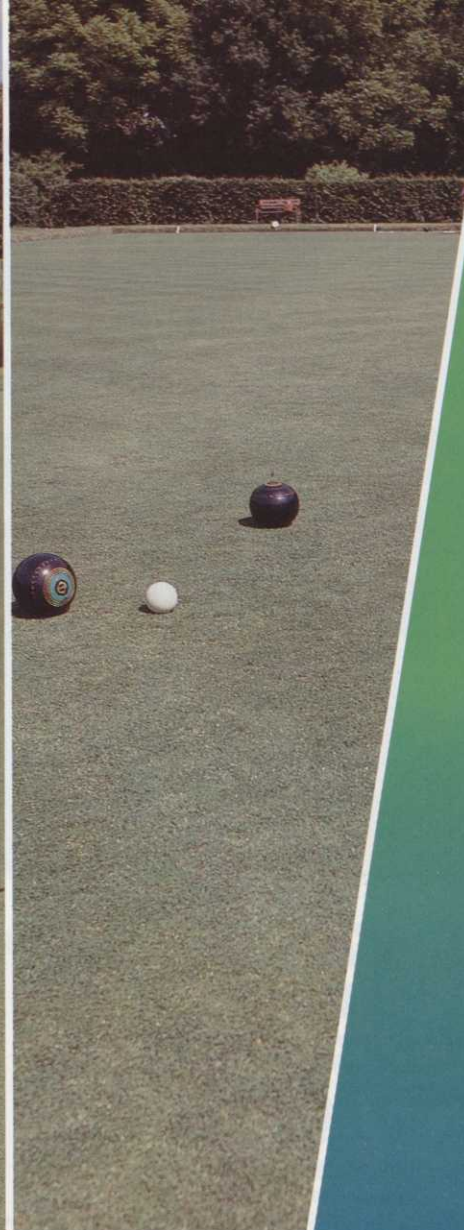
■ Lost during the show were two black cases belonging to the BAGCC, but found in the Old Swan Hotel was a wallet. If you have any information, please call BIGGA HQ on 01347 838581.



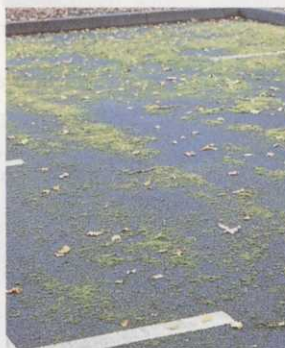
A family affair

A farming family has turned its land into a golf course. Charlesland Golf and Country Club Hotel opened two years ago. How are they adjusting to the change and coping with greenkeeping? And what does their spring maintenance programme entail? Chris Boiling went to the Republic of Ireland to find out.

When you look at a map of Ireland and see where Greystones is – on the coast 18 miles south east of Dublin – you expect the town's newest course to be a links. Indeed it's on the same coast as Portmarnock –



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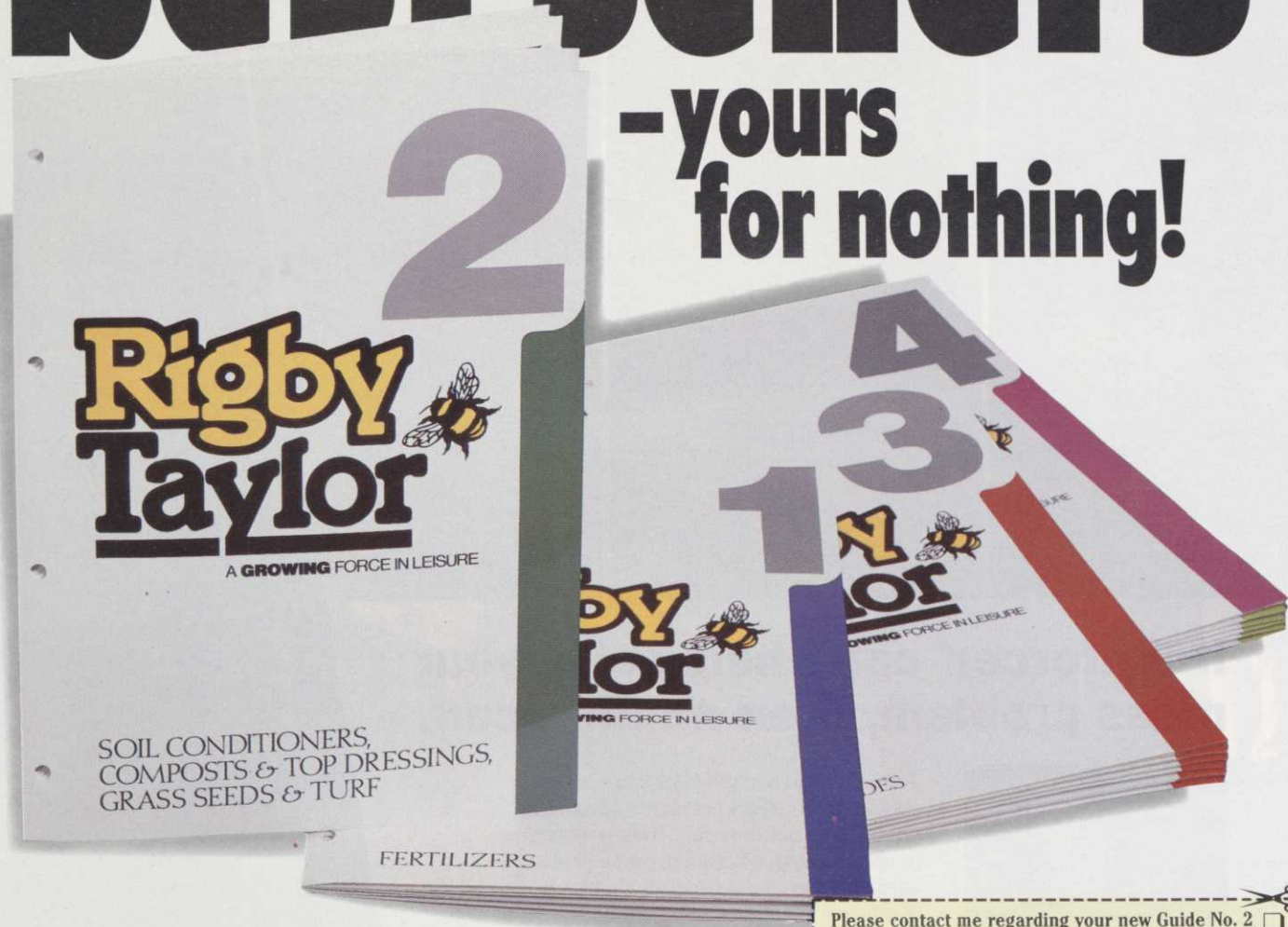
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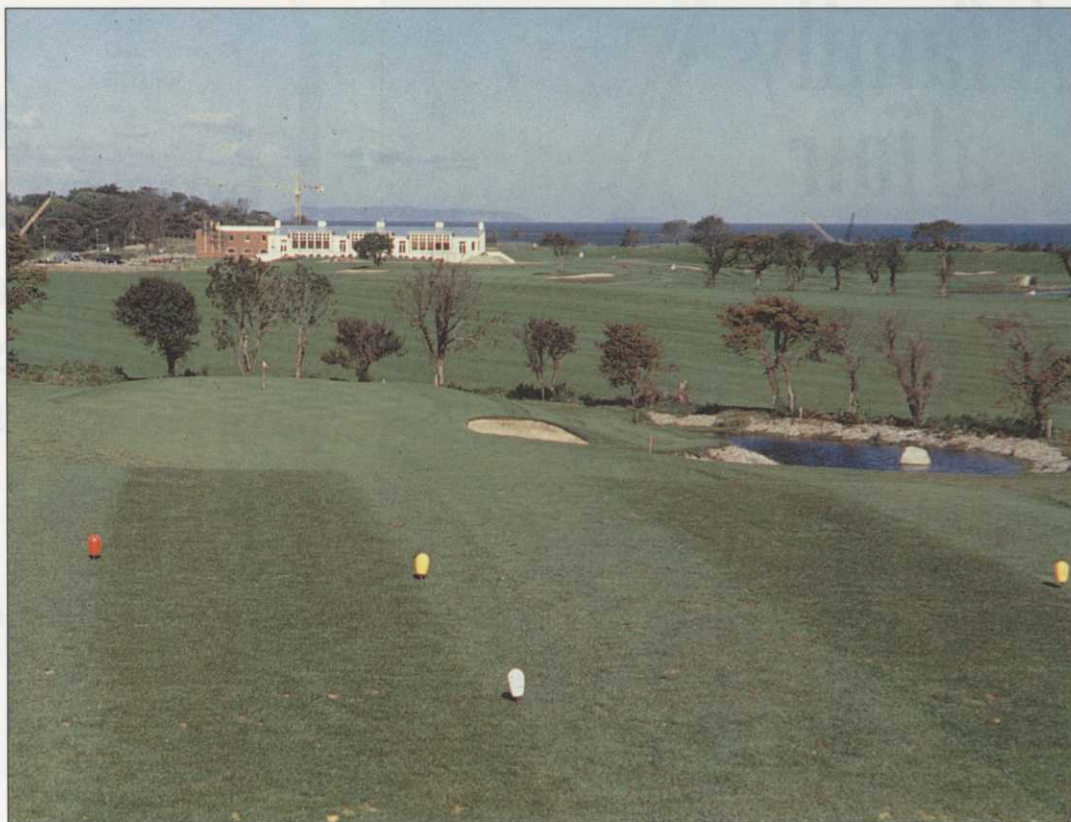
but further south. The 3rd, 4th and 6th tees at Charlesland Golf and Country Club Hotel are only 20 yards from the beach, but it's not a links course. The former arable farm has been turned into a parkland course.

However it doesn't look like a parkland course. The cold wind from the Irish Sea discourages tree growth. There are some oaks, some as old as 300 years, but they're not as big as you'd expect them to be. 4,000 trees were planted when the course was built a few years ago, but they're little more than knee-high and hard to spot.

The fact that it is neither a links nor what you'd expect a parkland course to be takes nothing from this 6739-yard (6159m) par 72 challenge. It is a charming course with several great holes.

Christy O'Connor Sr loves the 11th. It's a 338m par 4 that dog-legs left with a river running across the fairway at 220 yards. Anyone playing too safe or too left from the tee will be left with a difficult second shot over the largest trees on the course.

I liked the stroke index 1 16th. It's uphill all the way and it dog-legs to the right. With anything other than a straight-down-the-middle drive, you're left with a blind shot to the green. A good drive is rewarded with a lovely view of the pin through a valley which gives the hole its name – Torry's Canyon (named after the



digger operator who dug out approximately 32,000 tonnes of soil from this area. This was later used for the sub-bases of most of the tees and greens.)

Veteran Irish designer Eddie Hackett's signature hole is the unlucky-for-some 13th – the longest par 3 you can get. What makes the hole a little less daunting is the high tee – the highest point on the course – which offers splendid views from Howth to Wicklow Head and the little 13th green 250 yards away and 120ft below.

The other three par 3s are all relatively short – 130-140m from the back tees – but all face different directions. The 17th is course director Clive Evans' favourite hole "because the green cost the

most to build." In a dip that collects water, the green was built up using 5,000 tonnes of material in the base. Two 9in water pipes were put in below this in addition to the usual greens drainage. This drains into a man-made lake beside the green, which makes it a very pretty hole. The clubhouse can be seen in the distance behind it.

In the distance because the 18th at 615 yards (562m) is one of the longest holes in Ireland. A double dog-leg, the positioning of the second shot is crucial, otherwise you may find yourself having to carry one of the two small lakes that guard the green.

The greens were among the first true USGA-spec greens in Ireland. They are now four years old and starting to come good. They dry very quickly and are playable all year round. In fact the course only closed for one day last year. This is not just because of the sand greens but also because of the drainage put in during construction. 20,000 tonnes of drainage gravel and 6km of pipes are now paying for themselves.

Wet spots

When the Evans family decided to turn their farm into an 18-hole golf course with a 12-bedroom hotel, they had a great advantage. They had been working the land all their lives so they knew all the wet spots. Eddie Hackett was asked to design round these and turn the worst spots into four water hazards.

Where he couldn't design

around them, they put in extra drainage and dumped tonnes of sand. On the upper part of the 16th fairway there are drains approximately every 4m. On the 10th fairway they tipped 60 tonnes of sand. "Work on the 10th is on-going as what was a bog for thousands of years cannot be changed overnight," commented Clive. "But we are changing it from a wet meadow to a meadow beside a lake."

The land was passed on to 50-year-old Clive's father by an uncle. But while 350 acres was a fine provider for Lewis Evans, his wife Mai and three children – Clive, Lance and Wilson – it was more difficult for the sons and their eight children to eke a living from it.

"We needed to do something more so we looked at this idea of turning it into a golf course," said Clive. "We didn't set out to have a hotel but we think the area is right for this sort of thing."

Youngest brother Lance, the only member of the family who was interested in golf beforehand, is the managing director. Eldest brother Wilson, a qualified accountant, is a director, and Clive, now a 26-handicapper, is in charge of the course. Under him is a qualified head greenkeeper, Sean Conroy, and four assistants.

Clive was also in charge of building the course, using his knowledge of the land, farm machinery and what he learned at BIGGA seminars and conferences.

The advantages of doing it



A family affair

themselves go beyond the obvious economies and the fact that you know things are being done correctly. The biggest advantage of DIY course building, according to Clive, is that you can build it so it is easy to maintain afterwards. "When we were building the slopes we knew we'd be looking after them every day of the year. So maybe it took two or three days longer to make a green, but it was worth it."

It means they can cut all the banks with machines and never scalp the top of mounds.

As well as knowing the location of the wet spots, Clive also knew where the wildlife lived and was able to avoid disturbing badgers' burrows and foxes' converts.

Biggest problem

Their biggest problem during the construction of the course was the amount of stones on the site. "There were so many that the

first agronomist said it wouldn't be possible to make a golf course where we wanted to. When I said that to Eddie Hackett he thought for a little while and then said, 'Why're you telling me that? God made this land to be a golf course, you've undertaken the job to build the course, you deal with the stones'."

Clive went to a show and bought a Kverneland stone picker. He reckons it picked up a 100 tonnes of stones per acre. The rest were buried with a Turfmech Rotadaron. The stones that were stockpiled were put to good use in drainage ditches and soakpits.

A sandpit on the course has also come in handy. After screening, the sand has been used on tees and to topdress several fairways, including the 10th. It's been used despite a pH of 9.4. "I know it breaks all the rules but the agronomist was prepared to

the risk it if we were. If it was a conventional club he couldn't tell the committee to use it because there'd be some genius who would read up on it and say it can't be done. But it wouldn't be the end of the world if we had to take up the tees, we could do them half at a time."

So far all is well. The tees are very dry and the sward looks healthy. Mats were never considered during the winter.

If you're starting to get the impression that everything at Charlesland was done on the cheap, you'd be very wrong. With seeds, for example, they've gone for the most expensive. The quotes they had varied by £26,000 and they took the dearest option, paying £110 for 30kg bags. That worked out at about £400 an acre. But they're pleased with the results. And the 650 members like the way the ball sits up on the fescues and bents in the winter. "I think it was the right thing to do," says Clive, although he is now overseeding the heavy wear areas with dwarf ryegrass.

The greens were also sown with fescues and bents, but are now 50/50 bents and *Poa*. The greenstaff are overseeding with bents.

The fine-tuning of the course continues. A bunker was put in on the 17th to stop mis-hit shots reaching the green and further bunkers are to be built on the easier first nine to tighten up the fairways. One big job on the cards is building a "landing area" on the 14th, which slopes severely from left to right. "It is the only hole on the course that may break Eddie Hackett's golden rule - 'The perfect shot should never be penalised'," said Clive.

In the future the former farmers may build another 18 Eddie Hackett holes on their land and a planning application has been put in.

With this in mind, we wondered if they were to do it all again from scratch is there anything they would do differently?

"We'd have built a much smaller clubhouse," said Clive. "Traditionally in golf, the course supports the clubhouse but from a purely business point of view it shouldn't have to be like that."

SPRING MAINTENANCE AT CHARLESLAND

Drainage and aeration

In March we will Verti-drain the greens for the first time. Prior to this hollow-tining has been sufficient. We will topdress with silica sand incorporating 25kgs of seaweed meal per green and overseed with bent.

Tees will be hollow-tined, topdressed and overseeded with dwarf perennial ryegrass. Sides of tees and heavy wear areas will be aerated and overseeded with dwarf ryegrass. Greens and tees will be slit weekly according to weather conditions. Verti-cutting will precede Verti-draining. Heights of cut will be at 5/16in prior to Verti-draining and greens will be mown two or three times a week. The height of the cut will gradually be reduced down to 3/16 and mown six times a week by the beginning of May. Once the mild weather and good growth have come in (say by the third week in March) grooming will be carried out every day.

Nutrition

Prior to Verti-draining, 165kgs/hect of sulphate of potash and 145 kgs/hect of super phosphate will be applied. There will also be an application of five star slow-release nitrogen at 130 kgs/hect prior to Verti-draining. Sulphate of iron will be applied at one litre per green at two to three week intervals and alternated with liquid seaweed at two litres per green. During the fourth week in March 450 kg/hect of Floranid slow release 20:5:8:2 will be applied. Six to eight weeks later this will be repeated. Five or six days before open week we will apply liquid fertiliser as a boost. The tees will be given Floranid at the same rate at six to eight week intervals.

Disease and pest control

To prevent fusarium, Turfclear will be applied prior to Verti-draining and overseeding. Leatherjackets and casting worms will be controlled by using the same product. We will alternate this application with the application of Rovral. All young trees will be sprayed around with round-up Simazine in early March.



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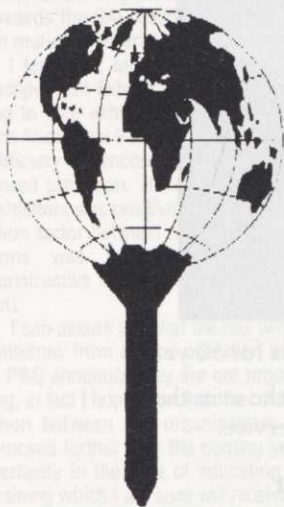
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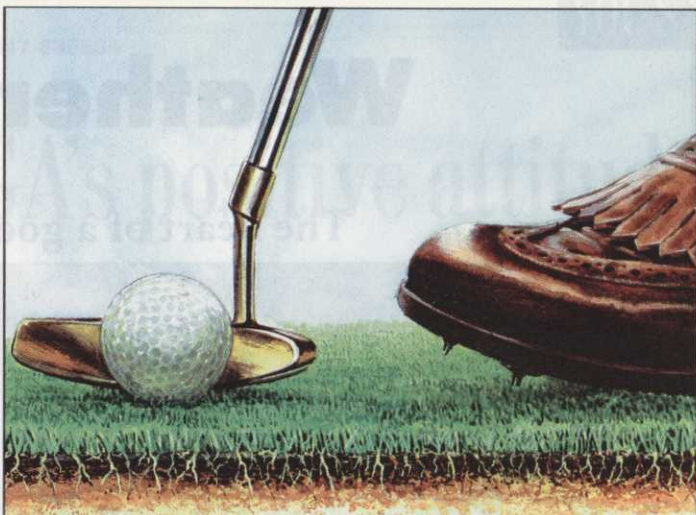
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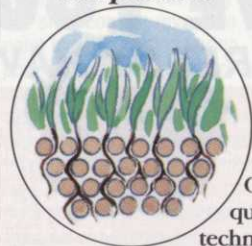
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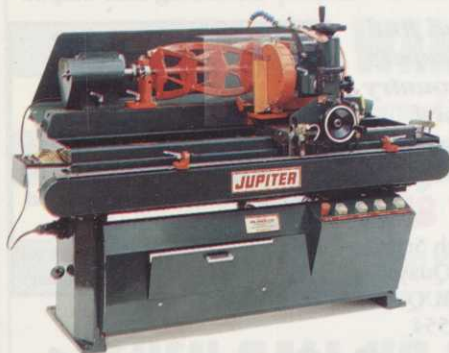
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IoG's thanks for BIGGA's positive attitude

To the Executive Director,

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Institute of Groundsmanship to thank yourself, Bill Lynch, the members on your BTME steering committee and your members at the BIGGA AGM for the very positive attitude taken towards the SALTEX/BTME partnership on mutual co-operation.

I feel sure, as does the team from Independent Exhibitions, that after talking to your exhibitors on the Thursday and Friday that P&O will now have great difficulty in proceeding with their proposed exhibition. The attitude from the exhibitors was positive and the co-operation factor between our two organisations was welcomed as a very constructive move by both BIGGA and IoG.

I can assure you that the IoG will not withdraw from any co-operation policy if P&O announce they are not proceeding, in fact I hope I see that the co-operation between our organisations can proceed further over the coming years, certainly in the area of education and training which I am sure will receive the support from our executive and members in general. I know our respective training officers are going to talk this through in order to report back.

It was very unfortunate for BTME that the weather took a turn for the worse on Thursday but how you must have been pleased to see queues to get in. I must admit we thought it would be empty.

Congratulations on an excellent BTME, this must have been one of your best exhibitions, the feeling among the exhibitors was very positive and it is now assured a future calendar slot along with SALTEX, supported by both the exhibitors and visitors, both to the benefit of the profession.

Derek Walder BEM, vice chairman, the Institute of Groundsmanship

Defending hard hats

Is there a golf course in Britain where the greenkeepers wear, as a protection against flying golf balls, hard hats as a matter of routine? This would seem a simple and obvious safety measure, given that the golfer's traditional shout of 'fore', if called, is frequently made inaudible by the noise of machinery the greenkeeper is using.

I ask this question because, at the club where I play, the committee recently bought each greenkeeper a hard hat to wear when working on the course, but failed to make its wearing compulsory. The result of this is that 75% of the greenkeepers refuse to wear their hat. The reasons given to me by the non-wearers for not wearing the hats have been both varied and unconvincing. I can only think that the underlying reason is that they think it sissy and unmanly to wear visible safety

clothing. They are quite happy to wear safety boots, also provided, which are of course indistinguishable from normal boots.

James Smith, Ollerton, Nottinghamshire

Bad and the good

Regarding the article on 'poor consultants' in the December issue. I am presently a course manager in the West Country. I have been in the business for nearly 15 years, with nine of those at management level.

The previous course I worked at was a new one in Kent. I can safely say that this was the worst experience of my career to date. A major part of this was caused by the so-called agronomist.

Firstly, the greens and tees were constructed poorly from the outset, under his guidance. I took the job on when the course was 18 months old because I could see the huge potential of the course. Then when the obvious problems ensued and I put my case forward with articles and evidence aplenty, the management of the golf club still took the advice of the agronomist. (He even said that slitting greens was totally unnecessary and a myth amongst greenkeepers!)

The end result was that I had to seek alternative employment and what made matters worse was that the present course manager actually took my position well before I left and effectively pushed me out, even though he knew all the problems I had encountered.

The reason I have written this letter is to ask: "How much longer do head greenkeepers/course managers have to put up with poor conflicting advice from certain agronomists?" There seems to be no standard amongst their trade. What qualifications do you have to have to call yourself an agronomist? Obviously, there are some good experienced agronomists but there are also a relative number of poor ones.

Head greenkeepers/course managers have to ask themselves: "do we need these so-called agronomists telling us our jobs?" Let us just get on and do the job we are paid to do and call upon them if the need arises (which is fortunately the case in my present job).

I would welcome other greenkeepers' comments as I am sure I am not the only one who has suffered this fate.

Paul Bishop, Yate, Avon

...It was very interesting to read about greenkeepers' anger at poor consultants in the December edition. I have a feeling that the number of greenkeepers being asked about their experiences with consultants has been limited.

If the head greenkeeper/course manager knows the business really well I don't think he or she should be in for a "surprise show" when calling in a con-

sultant. In the UK and abroad, we know of very capable people doing their business and also of people who are below acceptable levels.

First of all here, we are confronted with a choice. Is greenkeeping not a matter of making choices many times during the seasons? Preferably the right choice as many times as possible. This is beneficial to him/her and of course to the club, the members and the course.

Speaking of my own experience I am very enthusiastic about working with the STRI and have been for many years now. The feeling is they are part of a team that is working towards the same goal. In this team the head greenkeeper has his/her specific job or role to play. A consultant can be a good assistance here.

Frederick Ten Hage, LGV-Leeuwenberg

Why 'Jerry bash'?

I am putting pen to paper to express my displeasure after reading the article about being a greenkeeper in Germany. First of all, why do all articles concerning greenkeeping in Germany have to be negative to the point of being ridiculous. It seems that some people have nothing else to do but 'Jerry bash'!

I shall confine myself to one major point to avoid getting boring. This point concerns the matter of greenkeeping qualifications in Germany at the present moment. To publish a phrase like "you must have attended six weeks over a three-year period at a greenkeeping college, you do not have to be employed by a golf club" is absolute rubbish. For the sake of anybody wishing to come to Germany I shall quickly outline the procedure to become a qualified greenkeeper in Germany.

This is taken from the Delila GmbH near Krefeld in central Germany, one of only two recognised colleges in Germany so far.

Possibility 1: Four years as a labourer at a golf course followed by - 'course A,' three weeks at college and one year practical; 'course B,' three weeks at college and one year practical; 'course C,' three weeks at college and final assessment.

Possibility 2: A horticultural qualification is necessary as an agricultural manager or forestry or as a landscape gardener (either of which is a full three-year college course equivalent to block release). This is then followed by one year practical in your chosen direction and if you decide to change to greenkeeping you must do 'course A, B and C' as above.

As you can see, far more than six weeks is needed. By the way I'm Welsh not German.

Alan Walton, assistant head greenkeeper, Sennelager Golf Club, Germany

...I have been a greenkeeper for 25 years. The last seven of which have been spent in Germany. No, it was not all plain sailing for me at the beginning but statements like "We don't do it like that here" would surely not be accepted by a professional greenkeeper (without putting up a fight!)

It sounds like Elaine Holland and Stuart Bishop have had a bad experience in Germany, therefore their article represents the negative side of greenkeeping here.

Greenkeeping in Germany has many benefits other than earning more money. When a greenkeeper has earned respect as an expert in his field he can set about educating the members and his staff.

Mistakenly, a lot of greenkeepers coming to Germany expect everything to be the same as in the UK. It is not and probably never will be. But rewards can be high for the right people and working conditions are good.

I feel the article "Life can be tough as a greenkeeper in Germany" is too much of a generalisation of a country which varies greatly from north to south.

By the way, my staff do not finish work at lunchtime on Fridays, they also work weekends.

Seve Schmit, course manager, Golfclub Schloss Myllendonk, Korschenbroich, Germany

Just go for it

As runner-up in the 1993 Toro Student Greenkeeper Award, I have just returned from my third and final week as guest of the PGA European Tour.

Through the pages of this magazine, can I extend my thanks to Bruce Jamieson, my host at the Tour, and Louise Davies who made all the necessary arrangements.

I must also mention all those friendly faces, too numerous to name, who made my trips to La Manga, Mallorca and the Forest of Arden such a pleasure and success.

Finally, may I suggest to any student that this award offers a unique insight into the highest levels of greenkeeping and is a remarkable learning experience which is well worth every effort that it takes to win.

Richard Andrews, Highgate, London

Well-deserved win

I would like to congratulate David Walden on his victory in the ICI Premier Greenkeeper of the Year Awards. Having met him at Aldwark Manor, no-one could doubt his commitment to the profession, and I know he will be a great ambassador for BIGGA. I wish him well in his year, and for the future.

My thanks also to everyone from ICI and BIGGA headquarters.
Stefan G Antolik, head greenkeeper, Cooden Beach Golf Club (runner up)



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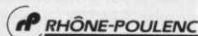
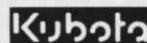


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