

'How often sharpening is required depends on several factors, such as the amount of sand on the leaf, weather, cylinder adjustment, volume of work and the greenkeeper's definition of a good clean cut'

way it will be cut true, sharpened in or out of frame, if they are not. Not all cylinder grinders can undertake in-frame grinding easily, if at all.

The argument on grinding bottom blades is not the same, and of course they have to be removed, nevertheless the frame and stiffener must be seen as an integral part of the blade with 'trueness' applied to the complete unit.

So what is the place of backlapping? Firstly, it is the cheapest, simplest and perhaps quickest means of sharpening a cylinder mower on most golf courses – using grinding paste and running the cylinder in reverse and many courses do it as a weekly routine. What this does is shown in exaggerated form in diagram 3, with both cylinder and bottom blades being 'sharpened' to produce an extended metal-to-metal contact area, and a considerably greater power demand. Obviously no greenkeeper would let his machines get to this state. Best practice must be to use backlapping for no more than honing the shear edges, using no more pressure and paste than are necessary. This way there should be little difference between the life of a bottom blade whether it is backlapped or ground, however in practice backlapped edges with greater

contact area, and often greater pressure, generate heat and distortion and so become blunt faster – and a vicious circle starts.

Some courses seldom backlap but rely on regular grinds, for them grinding particular pedestrian mowers is quicker and easier than backlapping. How often sharpening is required depends on several factors, such as the amount of sand on the leaf, weather, cylinder adjustment, volume of work and the greenkeeper's definition of a good clean cut. The advent of hydraulic cylinder drives has been a major spur to backlapping, but it has also led to considerable abuse – simply because it is too easy to do, not that manufacturers complain, it leads to extra blade sales. Some machines have a special backlapping facility giving high torque at a slower speed, not just simple reverse drive.

Another disagreement between makers is over whether it is best to adjust the cylinder to the bottom blade or blade to cylinder, and how to do this. While there are significant differences in theory, in practice this is minimised as the all-important adjustment is height – in essence the relationship between the rollers and bottom blade. More important in practice may well be the ease of removing

or changing the cylinder – and resetting it. The form of adjusting also has a theoretical effect on relief angles, for instance where either cylinder or bottom blade pivot, however few if anyone takes note of this although it can make several degrees of difference.

As to the economics of grinding, this is complicated by the circumstances of each club, the sharpness demanded, the abrasiveness of the soil on the grass, the number and type of equipment used and staffing. However with sharpening required probably at least twice a year and costing say £2 per inch, and most golf courses having at least 400 inches of cut, then sending mowing cylinders off-site is likely to cost over £800 a year. Additional factors include the cost of having spare machines while others are off-site being sharpened, possible reduced bottom blade wear and perhaps improved overall sharpness. Having spoken to several greenkeepers who do their own sharpening, the suggestion is that the repayment period is only two or three years, shorter than they first envisaged, while the service and sharpness is significantly better. Of course these clubs have a full-time mechanic – and this puts an additional dimension on the argument.

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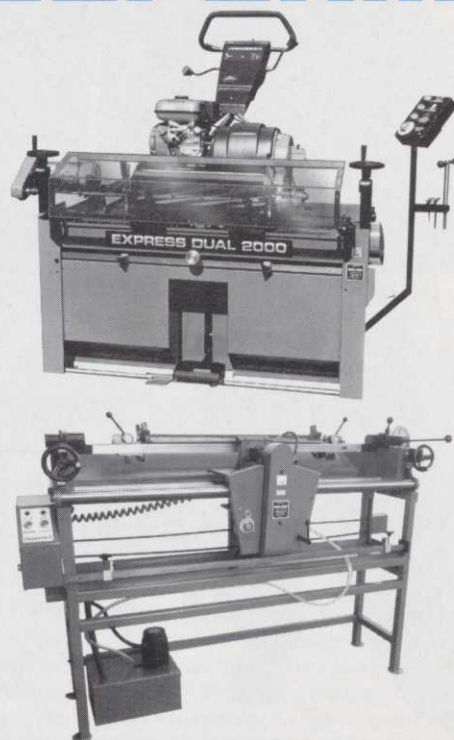
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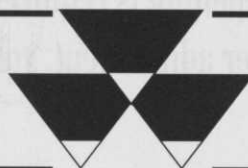
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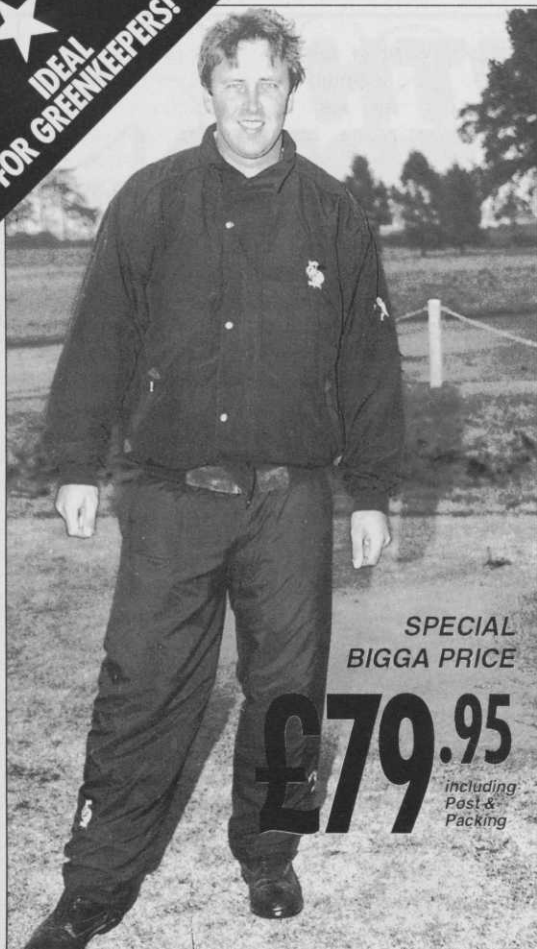
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Around the Green

Keeping in touch with news and comment from the regions

MID ANGLIA

Next month sees our first golf fixture of the year at Royston Golf Club, April 25. This will be, as normal, the qualifying event for the Hayter-Beaver competition. Entries should be sent on the appropriate form to our new fixtures secretary, Richard Saunders, and not to Chris Brook. Richard's address is 55 Leys Road, St Neots, Huntingdon, Cambs PE19 1EP. Please enclose a cheque for £20.

Six people attended our all-day safe-lifting course at the Family Golf Centre. Several people turned up in the afternoon, as they thought it was the usual format of an afternoon talk. Our apologies to these people, as it was not shown in the fixture card that it was an all-day course. Next year we will try to get more details of events in the fixture card so this does not happen again.

The National Education Conference at Harrogate was a complete success, with varied topics and good speakers, particularly from overseas, ie America and Sweden. The show itself went well although it was disappointing to learn that the English Golf Union is backing an alternative event to be held in London. The general feeling among greenkeepers is one of complete support for the existing event at Harrogate. It was great once again to see so many representatives of the Mid Anglia Section attending, although we could have had a bit more support during the snowball fight which took place at 2am on the Thursday morning against the London section.

PAUL LOCKETT

EAST OF ENGLAND

Our fixture list for 1995 is nearly complete, and looks like this:

May 18 – PGM Trophy at Elton Furze GC; June 6 – Purdeys Trophy/Hayter qualifier at Sandilands GC; August 23 – Rigby Taylor Trophy at Carholme GC; September 28 – Lambs Trophy/Rhône-Poulenc Prize at Spaldings GC; October 10 – Secretaries Association v BIGGA East of England at Sleaford.

Our winter education seminar at Kenwick Park (Louth) was given by John Hacker of PSD Agronomy Ltd. This first-class talk on grasses, irrigation and course presentation was enjoyed by all who attended. I expected about ten to 12 members if we were lucky, but in fact 30 attended (not bad for our small section). Our thanks go to Kenwick Park and Ian Morton for allowing us the use of the club facilities.

I heard recently Don Dykes of Carholme GC in Lincoln is to retire in June after 25 years at the club. I am sure he will be missed, but I hope he can attend our days out, especially the golfing day at Carholme in August.

GRAEME MACDONALD

SOUTH WEST AND WALES REGION

What a winter wonderland our trip to the BTME at Harrogate turned out to be. We started off in dry weather conditions which was a pleasant change for our part of the world, even the sun shone in places. After one initial hiccup where

EVENTS DIARY

April 26: Westurf, Long Ashton GC, Bristol

May 9: Drainage '95, Rockingham Castle Estate, Market Harborough, Leics. Tel: 01604 499662

June 21: South Turf, Motspur Park, South West London

July 20-23: The Open Championship, St Andrews

July 31-August 2: National Tournament, St Annes Old Links Golf Club, Lytham

September 13-14: Hayter Challenge Tournament Final, West Lancashire Golf Club, Blundellsands

our friends from the farthest point south nearly missed the coach – through no fault of their own, I might add – we sallied up to the Fatherland, one minute's silence was respected. For the first evening, the Leeds v QPR match was on the agenda, and this set the tone for the week when Leeds won 4-0.

What an exhibition! Better than ever and that's hard to imagine. There is an incredible, almost family atmosphere at Harrogate. Viscount Whitelaw made a point of hoping that it would continue, and that BIGGA was good for golf and golf clubs. The turnout was excellent, and the organisers made sure of continued attendance by having all roads leading from the town closed – due to adverse weather conditions, they said. Seriously though, we were snowed in and could possibly have been home sometime in February.

The seminar programme was the only area which many felt could be improved. It was suggested that maybe we should have the National Education Conference and the exhibition as one, and return to workshops on Monday and Tuesday. This would improve the quality of the seminars even more.

Nothing however could dampen the enthusiasm on the journey home, not even drifting snow and rain. All the talk was about the trip for 1996, a gratifying feeling for those who organise it all. Let us know if you would like to come with us. Get your name down on our list now. This trip and the conditions for some greenkeepers was a new experience, so please book early. Tel: 01803 844056.

MARION CHILD

MIDLAND

The first winter seminar – held at Walsall GC – saw 33 members turn up for talks by Mark Radford of ET Breakwell and Graham Francis of TTL. We would like to thank them both for their talks, and Walsall GC for the use of the club-house.

The second winter lecture is to be held at Telford Golf and Country Club on March 31 at 2pm. The speakers will be Andy Cole of the STRI and Peter Jefford of Rufford Top Dressings.

The golf fixtures for 1995 are as follows: Spring Tournament/Hayter Qualifier – Kenilworth GC, April 26; Summer Tournament – The Warwickshire, August 27; Autumn Tournament – Maxstoke Park GC, September 25; Christmas

Tournament/AGM – Worfield GC, December 7.

Fixture list and entrance details will be posted to you as soon as possible.

I would like to welcome the following new members: Darren Hardy, David Farmer, James Cowson and Gordon Smith.

Leaving the best till last, I would like to thank my staff for all their suggestions for the magazine – unfortunately they could not be used in Greenkeeper International, perhaps the Sunday Sport!

Finally, if anybody wishes to contact me, my address is: 14 Croft Close, Winyates West, Redditch, Worcs B98 0JT. Tel: 01564 833563 (work) or 01527 524217 (home).

KIM BLAKE

SOUTH WALES

The Pyle & Kenfig GC played host, as is the norm now, to our winter competition and AGM. Although numbers were down on last year, some 40 hardened golfers braved the windy, icy-cold conditions to play over the course as they have never seen it before. For the Pyle & Kenfig GC have recently purchased the leases on the land surrounding the course and this has now allowed them (in case you hadn't noticed) to remove all of the fences that have kept the greens guarded so well for so long against both sheep and cattle. An enormous difference and a great improvement, congratulations!

Congratulations also go to Paul Robinson and his merry team for the condition of the course. It was so refreshing to see so many new members and so many members present from Dyfed. In fact it was the new members who took the honours: Winner of the winter competition and Vitax Shield – John Borge from the Vale of Glamorgan GC; 2, Graham Lowe of Glyn Abbey GC; 3, David Gladwin from Carmarthen GC; longest drive – Huw Thomas, formerly of Pontardawe GC; nearest the pin – Gerwyn Price, who seems to be on a roll for he also recently won £600 worth of holiday vouchers in a BIGGA competition.

Our AGM followed the golf and attracted 50 members. The meeting went relatively smoothly taking only 50 minutes and for this we have to thank our chairman, Idwal Morris. New officers are Douge Donne and David Ward who replace the retiring Dennis Archer and Les Hallett.

Our sincere thanks to all at the Pyle & Kenfig GC for allowing us courtesy of the course for this annual event, but especially their captain, Glyn Charles for his kind words during his presentations, Roger Thomas, the secretary, and Don Booth, the chairman whose company I sincerely enjoyed throughout the whole day. I would also like to thank Pat Coombes and her catering staff for what can only be described as a superb Christmas dinner and, most importantly, our sponsors. Our main sponsors were Vitax with Celtic Mowers sponsoring the longest drive and nearest the pin competitions.

There was a good attendance of over 30 for health and safety adviser Richard Monk's lecture

at Pencoed College. His paper outlining recent updates in the Health and Safety at Work Act provided a good, informative evening for all.

Congratulations are in order, firstly to Mr and Mrs Malcolm Rees, owner of Power Cut of Carmarthen, on the birth of their 9lb 5oz daughter Deanne, and secondly to Huw Thomas, formerly of Pontardawe GC, on his appointment as sales rep of RS Birds Ltd. Huw took up his position on January 23. We wish him well with his new career and I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot more of him. Jamie Probert, 22, is the new head greenkeeper of Pontardawe. Well done!

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of two tragic events. On January 8 John Walsh, a former head greenkeeper at Southern-down GC who learned his trade at nearby Royal Portcawl GC, passed away. John was only 36 and retired from greenkeeping five years ago due to ill health. He fought a long and hard battle against cancer, was well known locally and well respected. On January 14 Christopher Thomas was killed by a train only yards from his house. He was only 20, a student at Pencoed College and an assistant greenkeeper at South-ern-down.

Dates for your diary: Wednesday April 5 – South Wales annual seminar, Mechanisation on the Golf Course, at St Mary's GC, Bridgend; Wednesday April 26 – Westurf, Long Ashton, Bristol.

You should all have received a 1995 fixture card, sponsored by Tacit. If you haven't or need a replacement, please contact me.

PETER LACEY

BUCKS, BERKS AND OXON

Firstly my apologies for the lack of reports during January and February, but the section was fairly quiet and there was no juicy gossip to write about.

One golfing event that did take place was the Turkey Trot, followed by the AGM. This was held at Mapledurham GC near Reading. The format, again, was a Texas scramble. Results: 1, G Walsh, R Lucas, A Cooper; 2, D Childs, D Goodchild, T French; 3, P Reeve, G Patient, B Wall. Thanks to Lachlan Morrison and staff for preparing the course under difficult weather conditions. Thanks also to the catering staff for a splendid meal afterwards.

Two football matches have taken place recently – and once again Berks beat Bucks (6-5) with man of the match Chris Saunders scoring a hat-trick. In the second match Berks/Bucks greenkeepers beat Ellesborough golfers (7-4). Poor old Dale Childs got knobbled and had to come off. Apparently the team played better with Dave sidelined! Man of the match was Gareth Austin (a rock at the back). Once again anybody wanting to represent Oxon phone me on 01491 578147.

The next golfing event is the Spring Tournament at Beaconsfield GC on April 5. This is an 18-hole event to be played in the afternoon. It is also the Hayter qualifier so there is lots to play for. The invitations will be posted along with the season's fixture card.

LINDSAY ANDERSON

SOUTH WEST

Having just returned from the 1995 BTME at Harrogate, I would like to say what a very worthwhile visit it turned out to be in many respects. There were the educational seminars on many relevant topics from budgeting and finance to health and safety, to turf grass trends, all of which proved very informative.

Around the Green



The trade exhibition, held at the same time, was larger than in any previous year and gave greenkeepers the opportunity to view new machinery and discuss relevant issues with company representatives. Lastly, but just as importantly, there was the opportunity to socialise with fellow members both during the stay and whilst on the coach. Thanks go to Gordon and Marion Child for their excellent organisation which led to a very enjoyable week. To anyone still undecided about the trip I can strongly recommend it for 1996 and, at a greatly subsidised price thanks to funding from Westurf, what more incentive is needed?

Whilst on the subject of Westurf, may I remind you that this year's event takes place on April 26 at Long Ashton GC, Bristol. Help is always useful and anyone able to assist in its organisation, before, during and after the show should contact me on 0117 9793127. The popularity of this event increases yearly with exhibitors and visitors alike, but it needs your continued support through the gates to maintain this, so remember the date and come rain or shine, be there!

By now every member will have received a fixture card for 1995, once again provided by TH White, Tetbury. Thanks to Pat Smith for organising these and to TH White for their continued support of the section.

Regarding fixtures, the next section event will take place at Bowood Golf and Country Club on Thursday April 6 and not Monday April 17 as stated on the fixture card. This event, sponsored by Hayter, is the section qualifier for the Hayter Challenge tournament.

There has been more interest in first aid and chainsaw courses in the past few months. If anyone would like to continue the trend, please contact me.

Finally, congratulations to regional board officer Robin Greaves who recently took up a position on the National Board.

KEVIN GREEN

NORTH SCOTLAND

Grantown-on-Spey assistant Neil Sadler is the latest addition to the North Section membership. Keep them coming!

We are running the 200 Club again this year, so please support your section by purchasing a ticket and maybe selling one to someone. This is the major fundraiser for the section and helps to keep outings and other events cheaper for the members.

Two items of note concerning the section to report this month. First up is the announcement that Nairn GC will host the Walker Cup in 1999. This is due to all the hard work put in by a lot of people at Nairn in producing a superb facility and to head greenkeeper Ian Carson who, along with his staff, have made the course one of the finest in the land with consistently superb greens. Well done to all at Nairn. Secondly, for the first time in 37 years the Scottish Golf Union president is a North man, George Gormley, a former captain of Moray GC. The North Section

welcome this appointment and look forward to closer ties between the SGU and BIGGA, which can only be good for all.

Harrogate '95 was a great event as ever. This was my first National Education Conference and I would certainly attend again, but the general feeling from the section is a return to the workshops next year. The exhibition was first-class and the seminars very enlightening. As to my own talk, it was fine for me, how was it for you? One of my highlights of the week, apart from meeting old friends, was the hastily arranged 'Burns Night' on the Wednesday. Next year I will bring my kilt if there is a repeat. Thanks to Cecil, Jimmy and Harry for their organisation at such short notice. Thanks also to the FA Premier League for arranging a Leeds home game during the week so that I could take a few lads along to see my idols! Roll on next year!

Finally, I know of two or three qualified greenkeepers looking for employment, so if anyone has a vacancy they should get in touch with me on 01862 894402 and I will pass on the information. These are lads who, at the time of writing, are out of work after finishing their college education.



IAIN MACLEOD

NORTH WEST ENGLAND

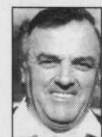
The BTME at Harrogate was once again a great success with all the halls full to capacity with exhibitors. It is hoped that the companies which exhibit at Harrogate will continue to do so in future. The EGU, it appears, will be supporting the P&O show at Olympia in 1996, after a change of mind, but this does not necessarily mean that others will follow suit. Speaking to many companies at Harrogate, they feel that BTME has a personal touch that does not exist anywhere else, and I totally agree.

Whilst at the BTME I met Andy Peel, a former N/W section member who moved to Bull Bay GC in Anglesey, and he asked me to inform his old mates that he now has a son, William, born November 22. Congratulations to Andy and Sarah.

Chris Haspel is returning to greenkeeping this month. Chris, who has worked for Richard Campey for the last couple of years after leaving Oaklands GC, is moving to an 18-hole golf course in Denmark as head greenkeeper and his wife Kay will also be involved with the business organising golf holiday packages etc. Good luck in your new venture.

This year's regional seminar will be at The Tytherington Club on Thursday March 16, so if you have forgotten please ring me and I will fit you in.

The Spring Tournament is at Wilmslow GC on Thursday April 13. This tournament is also a qualifier for the Hayter Regional Final. Entries, including £10 deposit, must be in by Saturday April 8. Send them to: Paul Pearce, 1 Swan Close, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1HX. Proper dress is essential both on the course and in the clubhouse. The N/W v N/Wales clash of the titans is at Northop GC on Tuesday May 2,



tee-off 1.30pm. I require a team dedicated to winning (and enjoying a good day out), so if you fit the description ring me on 0151 7245412.

BERT CROSS

CLEVELAND

The new 9-hole course at Hallgarth Golf and Country Club near Darlington opens for play on

May 15. This pay and play course will be open to everyone. By the time it opens £200,000 will have been spent on it.

New tees have been added, three greens have been relaid, six bunkers have been added, and the lake around the 5th enhanced. A new drainage system has also been installed because of the potential for flooding.

Welcome to new member John Ball from Castle Eden GC. Two new committee members are Ian Pemberton of Bedale GC and Chris Fiddell of Billingham GC. Middlesborough Municipal have obtained BS5750. Congratulations to Ian Holloran and his team.

The quiz between Cleveland BIGGA and Teeside IoG at Durham was excellent, resulting in a good win by Cleveland led by Kevin Heslop from Brancepeth GC. Thanks to Terry Charlton and Barry Clennell and all the staff from sponsors Turfcare of Leadgate, Co Durham.

The Spring Tournament at Wear-side GC, Sunderland, is on April 27. BRUCE BURNELL



LONDON

I would like to thank the GTC for organising the effective speaking course that was held at Porters Park GC. The two-day course was conducted by Frank Newberry and was extremely informative and beneficial. I would like to thank Frank for all his help and congratulate Jim Cassidy for his presentation at this year's BTME. It was evident that Jim had understood Frank's training concepts and it was a pleasure to see Jim (The Axeman) perform so well.

It was nice to see such a good turnout from the London Section at this year's show. The quality of speakers at the conference was excellent and the evening entertainment was equally good. The weather turned very cold midweek and the heavy snow that fell caused quite a few problems for the town centre. The main one being no taxis to the nightclubs! The music pumped well into the early hours at Jimmies Bar and was the haunt for many a greenkeeper. A good snowball fight occurred after the Wednesday night visit and I don't know if the London Section beat the Mid-Anglia Section, so it will have to be decided at this year's annual golf team challenge.

The week was excellent and the company even better so make a date for next year and I will hope to see you all there.

Finally, I would like to say that all the golf venues for 1995 have been set and we are looking forward now to 1996 and 97. If anyone can help in finding a venue, then please contact Don Wilson on 0181 4490541. TONY DUNSTAN



SURREY

Firstly, a thank-you to Ian Kerry from the Surrey members who took advantage of the coach to BTME, which Ian kindly supplied. It was much appreciated. Also a thank-you to Watermation for supplying one of their engineers for our second winter lecture, held at Walton Heath Artisans Club. Thanks also go to Clive Osgood for his organisation of this event.

Looking forward to the coming golf season, the first of our events being the Spring Tournament at Blackmoor GC on May 4. I hope the event will be well attended. By now you should have received the Huxley Bowl entry forms. Be sure to return entries before the closing date to avoid disappointment. On June 6 Kingswood GC

Around the Green



will play host to the Cresta Cup. DAVID GIBBS

DEVON AND CORNWALL

Hopefully you will find this report under the right section's heading as I have been known to forget which section I belong to!

Just over 50 members attended our first meeting of the new year, which was our section seminar held once again at the superb venue of Fingle Glen. Only a dozen members took to the course for the morning's Zeneca Challenge competition which was played over the well prepared 9-hole course.

As usual, the trade supported the section by taking up stands in the reception area which proved very successful once again. Our thanks to Avoncrop, Barenbrug, Devon Garden Machinery, Fisons, PJ Flegg, MST, Rigby Taylor, Roffeys, Vitax and Willcocks for taking trade stands.

After an excellent lunch, Richard Minton of Zeneca presented the golf prizes to: T Gooch (Torington) 21pts; C Rawlings (Padbrook) 19pts; E Barber (Teign Valley) 16pts.

Our afternoon seminar was held in the Zeneca sponsored conference room, with members being treated to two excellent papers – Jim Arthur on 'Grass Identification' and Jenny Rolph on 'Dealing with pressure at work'.

Question time finished the afternoon programme which was of great educational value to all who attended. Our thanks to Jim Arthur and Jenny Rolph for their papers, to Bill Pile, Fingle's course manager, and his staff who made our day so successful, and to Zeneca and the other companies which sponsored the day.

On behalf of all the section members who took advantage of this year's regional package to BTME at Harrogate, I would like to thank Gordon and Marion Child for once again organising a superb educational trip. I would like to hear your views on the package you would like to see the region arrange for next year.

Members, please note our last meeting of the season will be held at Mullion on Wednesday March 22. This will also be our Hayter qualifier so please make sure your entries are returned to me with correct monies by the closing date.

Your help is needed to promote this year's Westurf Trade Show on Wednesday April 26 at Long Ashton GC, Bristol. Many of you will know groundsmen and committee members of your local sports clubs, so why not invite them to the show? Anyone in the turf care industry will be most welcome. We also need your support at Westurf so I look forward to meeting you all on our stand. RICHARD WHYMAN

AYRSHIRE

Our AGM saw the end of Derek Wilson's two-year reign as chairman. Derek reflected on the continuing rise in our membership and the renewed interest in attending not only the golf outings but also other aspects of section business such as the STRI day at Ayr College and the AGM. He then invited new chairman Ian McNab

from Dunfries and County GC to take over the chair. Ian thanked Derek on behalf of the section for his efforts of the past two years, then spoke about his hopes for his term of office, particularly in the field of more training lectures during the winter and better communication with our members within our very spread-out area.

We had a tenpin bowling night at Saltcoats for the Christmas get-together and although the turnout wasn't what we hoped for, everyone enjoyed it. The winner was myself, just scraping home from Harry 'What are these holes for?' Diamond, with several others just behind. This was great entertainment, with fabulous prizes, so don't miss the next one.

An excellent turnout of over 70 greenkeepers and club officials attended our STRI day at Ayr College and certainly got their money's worth as the talks were well presented, informative, and sometimes contentious, which certainly got the questions flowing. Although not agreeing with many of the points made by the speakers, it still made for a very good day.

I've just returned from the BTME and, as usual, thoroughly enjoyed it, with the only reservation being the lack of choice at the meals on Sunday and Monday nights. Thanks again though to all those involved in the organisation and here's hoping it continues for many years to come.

Our spring outing this year is a first-time visit to Kirkcudbright GC, a fine 18-hole parkland course on the Salway Firth with some great views if you're not playing well. Details will be out shortly, so let's have a good turnout. DUNCAN GRAY

NORTHERN REGION

Having just returned from Harrogate, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone from the Northern Region for their help on the regional stand and also door duty. Special mention must be given to David Milbourn, Andy Smith and Mick Hannam who 'mucked in' when I was struggling to find staff due to the weather.

The regional stand proved very popular as a meeting point and also for our patrons to meet members. It was also good to see David Hannam over from Switzerland and Alan 'Lofty' Lofthouse who is returning from exile to work at Fixby.

International relations were also fostered by the presentation of a flag from the Swedish Greenkeepers Association and also an approach from the Ontario Greenkeepers Association who are seeking to twin with our region.

Once again BTME was an excellent and very well-attended show (especially considering the weather). I look forward to seeing everyone again for many years to come in HARROGATE! BOB LUPTON

NORTHERN SECTION

The Spring Tournament is our first golf competition of the year and is also the Hayter qualifier. Any member wishing to take part should contact me as soon as possible as numbers are limited. To all new members wishing to take part it will be held at Hessel GC on April 12.

One of our sponsors, Rhône-Poulenc, has told me it will be providing fleecy jackets as nearest-the-pin prizes for all our tournaments this year. Our thanks to them.

I would like to congratulate Pat Murphy on his 25 years' service at Shipley GC. I hope they appreciate your hard work over the years! MARCUS CORDINGLEY

SHEFFIELD

As our committee member Ian Collett has



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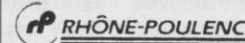
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BIGGA: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Around the Green



moved from his post at Brough and taken up his new job with Turf Grass Services International, the position of section correspondent has fallen to yours truly and I will try to keep members up to date with all section news. If any member has any information they want mentioning please contact me on 01405 765322. We at the Sheffield section wish Ian all the very best and thank him for all his work on the committee in the past.

At our February meeting members had the pleasure of having Neil Thomas, executive director, give a very interesting talk on BTME and the Association in the past seven years and hopefully where we are going to the year 2000. The education officer, Ken Richardson, talked about the Master Greenkeeper Certificate, Zeneca and Toro awards, BIGGA videos, the library, management courses and the N/SVQs. The attendance was quite good but could have been better.

I have spent a lot of time arranging speakers for lectures next year and have got some excellent people lined up, ie Jon Allbutt, Nick Bissett, Duncan McGilvray, John Hacker and Inturf. All the committee asks is that members support these lectures.

Congratulations go to Robert Needham on his appointment as head greenkeeper of Hickleshen GC. New members include Paul Bentley (Dere and Totley), Andrew Braithwaite (Holme Hall), Damian Kidd (Buxton and High Peak GC), James Neve (Brough GC) and Robert Townsend (Sickleholme GC).

Golf dates arranged: July 3 – National Tournament, Cavendish GC; September 25 – Autumn Tournament, Coxmoor GC.

RON ULLATHRONE

KENT

It is nice to see that the BTME is now so big that it has had to extend into a fourth hall. It took me some time to find it as it is separate from the main building, but diligent detective work and a nose for a good ale enabled me to find the Pump Room. I shall refrain from mentioning any incidents directly but suffice it to say the scope for bribery is enormous, especially amongst those hardy members, both greenkeepers and trade of the Thursday Lunch Club.

On a more serious note, I thought that the exhibition was excellent being well supported by both greenkeepers and trade alike. Let's hope that it can continue as an independent entity.

I have not as yet received any details of either future BIGGA events or news from around the region and so it only remains for me to wish everybody well with the current inclement weather and hope that by the time this appears all thought of floods etc are gone.

RICHARD PAGE

CENTRAL SCOTLAND

It is my sad duty to report that John Henderson, the only life member of the Central Section, died last month. John worked for many years at Canmore GC in Dunfermline before moving to Dunfermline GC, Crossford, where I was head greenkeeper and he became my first assistant. He remained there until his retirement in 1987.

He was a strong supporter of both SIGGA and BIGGA and until recently attended a good number of section events. He is survived by his wife, Margaret, son, daughter and four grandchildren.

On a happier note, with another successful BTME and AGM behind us we can look forward to the challenge of the golf course.

Entry forms for the Spring Tournament and

the Inter-Club Tournament (which is being reintroduced this year) should be with everyone shortly. As these events are becoming ever more popular, please return your entries as early as possible in case a limit is put on the numbers. The Spring Tournament is also the qualifying event for the Hayter Challenge Tournament. To qualify for this event a national handicap is required, so, if you don't have one, get three cards in before April 13. Due to the ever increasing numbers at our golf events, it has been decided to have an additional category, which means we now have 1st, 2nd and 3rd class sections. (With a bit of luck we might start a veteran's section, then I might stand a chance!)

While I am on about golf, here's a date for your diary: the Autumn Tournament will be held on Thursday October 12 by courtesy of Muckhart GC. Details of other section events will be circulated as soon as dates are confirmed.

Membership of the section is still on the increase and it is a pleasure to welcome Kenneth McIntosh, Kenneth Harper and James McLean as our newest members and I look forward to meeting them at some of our section events in the near future.

Following the huge success of our five-a-side football tournament last year, word is out that another section wishes to challenge us to a full 11-a-side match. (Did they have a spy at our event?) Hopefully this can be organised and if it is I will report on the outcome as soon as possible.



JOHN CRAWFORD

NORTH EAST

Firstly, I would thank Terry Charlton of Turfare for laying on the coach for BTME. It was good to see a lot of members from this section in attendance, and the feedback from them was that it was the best show yet. Again, it was good to see one of our members, Mal Lathan, at the seminars. The message is slowly getting through that these are an important factor and not to be missed.

The Spring Tournament will, we hope, be held at Newbiggin in April and the Autumn Tournament at Garesfield, but details have yet to be finalised. The autumn match against the East Lothian section will be held over the border this year and the match against Cleveland is also being played away.

Congratulations to Barry Weddell on his move from Foxton Hall to Almouth Village GC, where Willy Holden has taken early retirement.

Two new members to welcome to the section are Albert Davis and Andrew Bowes, both from Matfen Hall GC. They are currently in the process of planting 18,000 trees and shrubs, mostly hard woods such as oak, sycamore, beech, lime and some not so hard silver birch, rowan and aspen etc plus shrubs of various types. The club is expected to open 18 holes between April and May and a further 9-hole par 3 course later in the year.



JIMMY RICHARDSON

EAST MIDLANDS

Hands up all those members of the section who didn't attend this year's BTME. It really is a great show and should not be missed by anyone. Apart from the seminars and stands there is an excellent social programme with comedian Tom O'Connor and singer Linda Nolan entertaining us all in great style. Despite some awful weather, it didn't stop Dave Leatherland making the most of all the snow and coming off by far the worse in a snowball fight. On behalf of all section members who did attend, I would like to thank staff at HQ for their hard work in making this show for us.

Congratulations go to Nick Root of The Leicestershire Golf Club on completing 25 years of service. The club presented him with a gold watch.

Thanks go to Pete Jefford of Ruffords Top Dressing for his recent entertaining talk on top-dressing. Thirty-one members attended, but we still need more support from all our members. I would also like to thank Charnwood Forest GC for the use of their facilities on this evening.

This month we welcome the following new members to our section: Ian Marshall of Kirby Muxloe GC (not to be confused with the Ian Marshall of Wellingborough GC), Christian Harrison and Stephen Priestley of Branston GC and Robert Woodise of Horsley Lodge GC.

One more date for your diary is this year's AGM and Texas scramble at Kirby Muxloe GC on November 8.

ANTONY BINDLEY

SOUTH COAST

I have just got back from the 1995 BTME at Harrogate. What a splendid show this is with the opportunity to meet fellow greenkeepers from all over the world. With Tom O'Connor to entertain us at the banquet and Dr James Beard to update us on the future trends of the industry, it was a memorable event. It is now up to all of us to ensure that it remains so!

We had a good meeting at Brockenhurst Manor GC on January 12 when John Pemberton from HQ came down and gave an update on the Association. Being an afternoon meeting it was noticeable that everyone was relaxed and a lively discussion took place. Also, our February meeting at Alresford GC was very well attended and the section is to be congratulated for turning out in such poor weather. Ian McMillan gave a good talk on Hankley Common Golf Course and the conservation policies adopted there.

It has come to the committee's attention that membership cards are still being used fraudulently by non-greenkeepers to obtain courtesy of golf courses. It must be emphasised again that there is a tradition of greenkeepers being allowed courtesy of the course but this is not a right. Anyone fraudulently using a card or allowing one to be misused is putting this tradition in jeopardy. Please ensure that this does not happen.

This month sees us throwing off the winter blues and launching into the spring programme – no more peace for some time now. But we will be pausing on March 14 to enjoy the section seminar at Sparsholt College..

This year's golf fixtures will be starting soon with the Spring Tournament at Corhampton Golf Course. Please send entries early this year as we will be closing the list ten days before the event so that players can be contacted prior to the day. Send entries to new tournament organiser, Mark Webb of Alresford Golf Club, at 12 Lime Road, Alresford SO24 9LD or phone 01962 733061.

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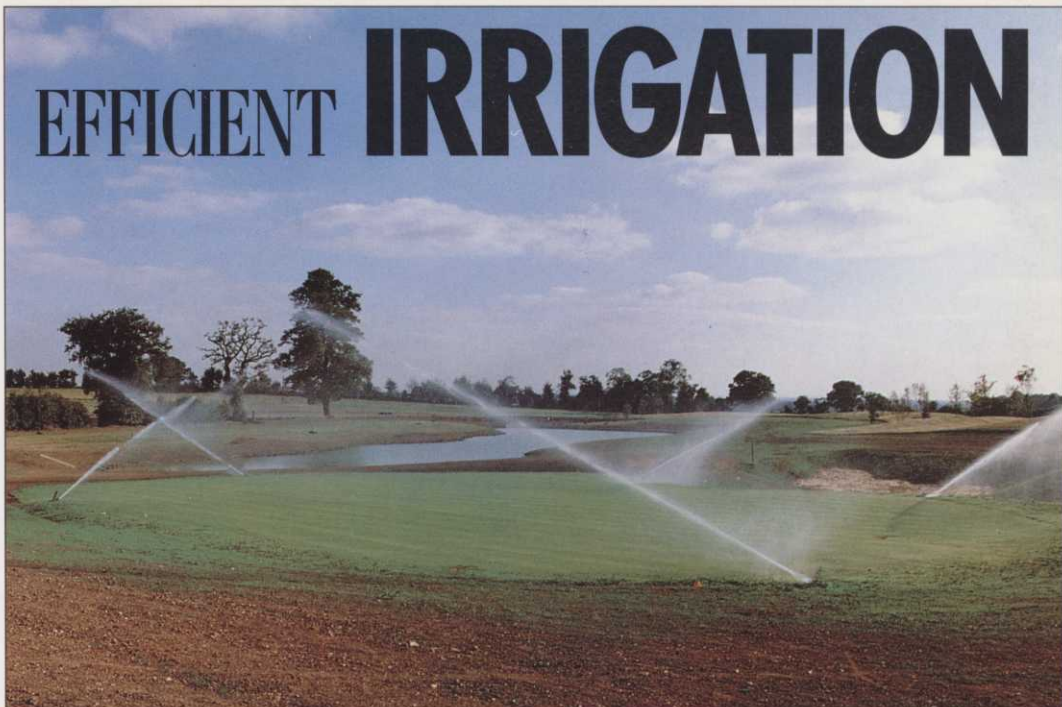
Independent consultant and chairman of the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association, Philip York, looks at sprinkler spacing, placement patterns and timing of operation.

The right selection and spacing of sprinklers is critical if a course's irrigation system is to be efficient. To understand that, you need to remember that a single rotating sprinkler will distribute progressively less water per square metre to its maximum radius and that is why, even if it were practical in golf, you do not see one sprinkler in the middle of the green. The problem though is often seen on tees where for misguided reasons of economy one sprinkler is positioned in the middle of a tee (there are other factors which effect the performance in this case which I will discuss later). How then do we achieve a reasonably uniform application of water?

Initially, let's take the case of two sprinklers overlapping each other. As we move them closer together to the point where the radius of one reaches the other, one can see the resulting improvement in the uniformity of coverage to a point where theoretically it is 100%. Now take four sprinklers, typically used on say a 500m² green. It is probably not difficult to imagine that within the spacing the uniformity is as near as possible to 100%. Usually, because of sprinkler design and the distance across the diagonals, 80-85% can be achieved.

Outside the spacing there is a limited distance where sufficient water will be applied for the operating times required to be the same as the area within the spacing.

If spacings are stretched (or for that matter compressed) the result will be uneven applications with the result that the operator



will have to operate the sprinklers for longer than necessary to ensure the under irrigated area receives sufficient water, therefore water will be wasted, adding to operating costs and quite probably causing agronomic problems through run off, puddling and soil saturation.

Before we move onto specific applications for golf course irrigation equipment there are further aspects which must be discussed which have a major bearing on system efficiency.

Firstly, wind. The theoretical situations I have explained so far assume a still air situation (and this is the basis of all catalogue information). If we introduce the wind factor to the single sprinkler situation more water per m² will be deposited on the windward side, therefore the more the site is exposed to strong prevailing dry winds the more the designer must take this into account. Incidentally, it is an accepted fact that the triangular spacing of sprinklers is better than square in helping to combat the effects of

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

To promote a better understanding of golf course irrigation techniques, design and cost factors, the British Turf & Landscape Irrigation Association (BTLIA) is considering opening its membership to club secretaries and course managers.

Formed 20 years ago as a trade organisation, the BTLIA is of the opinion that individuals with an interest in irrigation – perhaps as a purchaser of a system or senior greenkeeping staff – would benefit by becoming more closely involved.

"Experience has shown that the majority of UK golf club officials, committees or managers have little idea of the deeper considerations of the use of irrigation equipment in the long term," says Philip York, BTLIA chairman. "By joining our Association they will become much

better informed. This, in turn, will assist developers, architects and golf club officials to appreciate just what they are buying, and why.

"At present, purchasers of irrigation systems are largely influenced by cost factors. Price alone should not form the ultimate decision-making process.

"Membership of the BTLIA will help golf club officials by educating them in the technicalities, finer points of design and operating costs and standards of workmanship.

"It will also help them to service, maintain and efficiently operate what is, after all, a complex investment."

For further information write to the BTLIA c/o Myerscough College, Billborrow, Preston, Lancs PR3 0YE. Tel: 01995 640611.



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wind, as there is within reason better coverage of the area equidistant between heads.

Secondly, the typical application rate of sprinklers in a square or triangular configuration is between 12-18mm/hour. Other than on extremely well constructed greens or tees, it is unlikely that the absorption rate of the soil in the rootzone will be equal to this, therefore if there are any slopes, high points etc – and usually there are – the surplus will run to the low points and again there will be a tendency to over irrigate to compensate. This can to some extent be overcome by aeration and the use of wetting agents.

Sprinklers which are not operating at the correct pressure will not distribute water efficiently; under pressurisation will result in too large a droplet, over pressurisation will result in too fine a droplet too easily disturbed by the wind.

We advocate the use of pressure regulated valves on even the simpler systems. The flow control device on basic solenoid valves is only of use when the upstream pressure is constant and in case it is usually unwittingly altered after (if it ever was!) calibration. To know how much water you are applying see the formulae in last month's magazine.

Now let us look at some typical practical applications.

Greens

Sprinkler selection for the putting surface will be determined by the overall dimensions and shape. The objective should be to place the sprinklers – all must be of the same configuration – in a uniform square or triangular spacing at the edge of the putting surface so that even with a minimal specification no part of the putting surface is more than the equivalent of 25% of the radius outside the spacing.

Approaches

Except in exceptional circumstances, two full circle sprinklers should be used of the same configuration and spacing (extended from the greens sprinklers) as the greens sprinklers.

Tees

Many budget proposals for tees feature a single sprinkler or single row of sprinklers (depending upon tee size). We do not recommend this layout as, inevitably, disappointment will result through a combination of unfortunately mis-specifying, wind and mis-management.

Far better to go for a double row either side of the teeing surface, preferably using full circle sprinklers.

The current general practice in the British Isles is to irrigate once per 24 hour period to replace the losses by evapotranspiration during that period. Some agronomists would argue that

this encourages surface root growth and therefore thatch. Therefore it is better to irrigate an 18-hole course over a 48- or even 72-hour period, watering 9 or 6 holes per night.

We are irrigation engineers, not agronomists, but do know that providing the control equipment is correctly programmed the losses by evaporation will be reduced.

A normal irrigation cycle should always be at night, not only to avoid inconvenience to players and other maintenance practices but also because wind speeds are typically lower and ambient temperatures are lower, therefore evaporation losses are less.

Some controllers have a syringe (or soak cycle). This permits a full cycle (or partial cycle on selected areas) of the system, wetting the surface which will encourage better percolation of water when the full irrigation

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