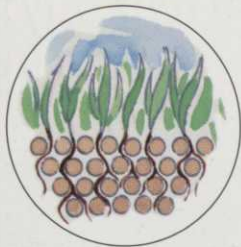


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Golf Greenkeepers Association

GREENKEEPER

International

SEPTEMBER 1995

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A parched landscape at Shipley
Golf Club Picture: Scott MacCallum

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Seeking a middle path

For many greenkeepers this has not been a good year. Reports to Headquarters indicate that greenkeepers continue to be hauled before their green committees with the prime accusation being 'the state of the golf course'. There seems to be little regard for the cold days of May and June when the grass was not growing to be followed by a heat-wave which in many cases burnt off what little grass had appeared. That is not to excuse the incompetent, idle greenkeeper but there is increasing concern within the Association at the treatment handed out by green committees often to men of vast experience where wisdom in greenkeeping matters would be difficult to deny. Frequently it seems that those who sit on green committees, professionals from many walks of life, act in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner which is quite alien to how they conduct their own businesses. At the receiving end is the greenkeeper and the result is stress and disillusion.

Greenkeepers are only too well aware, or should be, of the technical and practical expertise needed today to meet the highest standards of course maintenance. They labour under conditions unbeknown to their predecessors of twenty



BIGGA in focus

BY NEIL THOMAS

to thirty years ago with the vast increase of traffic on golf courses and the demand for winter golf. The educational courses and programmes developed through BIGGA and the GTC in recent years have now set in place an educational structure which can accommodate greenkeepers at all levels. Even the mature greenkeeper, without pretensions to attend college, is catered for through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Scheme as a means of recognising the experience of the years. In this day and age greenkeepers can only stand still at their peril. I believe that the great majority of greenkeepers well understand the need to move forward and do seek the support of their clubs to this end. This support is not

always forthcoming and sometimes reluctantly given. Many clubs still need to recognise that the golf course is without doubt their greatest asset and that their most valuable employees are, in fact, their greenkeepers. The educational processes include courses in communication and in this key area there is hope for the future. For surely it is the breakdown in communication which is often the root cause of the greenkeeper's problems with his green committee. Sometimes this breakdown is pre-empted by a failure of the greenkeeper to communicate with the golf club membership. Slowly but surely the quality of the training now provided is reflected in the growing confidence of the greenkeeper to communicate with the membership, initially in one-to-one situations and through judicious use of the club's noticeboard. Equally there is increasing evidence of the enlightened golf club allowing its Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper to address meetings of the general membership regarding the maintenance of the golf course and his role within the club.

Some Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers stand accused of lack of management expertise, and this after many years service. One is moved to ask exactly what has been going on during those years. If the employee concerned has stood still why has the club allowed that to happen? If the employee has sought to enhance his expertise has the club offered assistance towards his training and if not, why not? More often than not in these situations there are two sides to the argument and there needs to be a meeting of minds and compromise. I am not seeking to defend those who fail to meet acceptable standards. It is my belief, however, that even in this day and age most greenkeepers, by the very nature of their calling, remain industrious and concerned, as a matter of professional pride, to present their

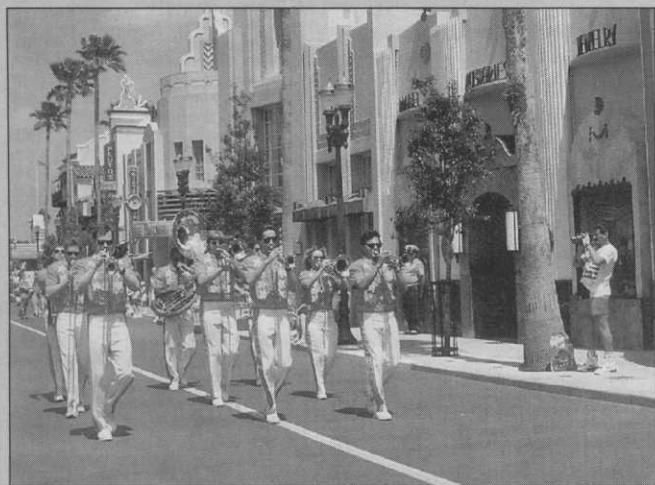
golf courses to the best possible standard. They can be frustrated by lack of resources and equally by the reluctance of clubs to budget for and support their training needs. Some clubs even object to their employees joining BIGGA as their professional association. Such restrictions are unnecessary and indeed clearly not in a golf club's interests. The enhancement of knowledge must ultimately lead to higher standards of greenkeeping, better-maintained golf courses and the plaudits of the members. I'm sure that green committees do not enjoy having members complaining any more than greenkeepers enjoy incurring the wrath of green committees. There has to be a better way of running the show.

My plea therefore is for better communication, cooperation and understanding. Unemployed greenkeepers represent the worst possible scenario – most certainly for the individuals and equally certainly for the golf clubs who have to find successors who may or may not be more competent than the individuals being replaced. Whatever the rights and wrongs of dismissals in the current year, it reflects no credit on the game of golf and there has to be a better way forward. It lies in education and training, in conciliation rather than confrontation and in an ability for those vested with green committee responsibilities to take the broad rather than narrow view in understanding the pressures under which the modern greenkeeper has to operate as well as respecting his ever-increasing skills and knowledge.

The **BEST** piece of
ADVICE I ever received



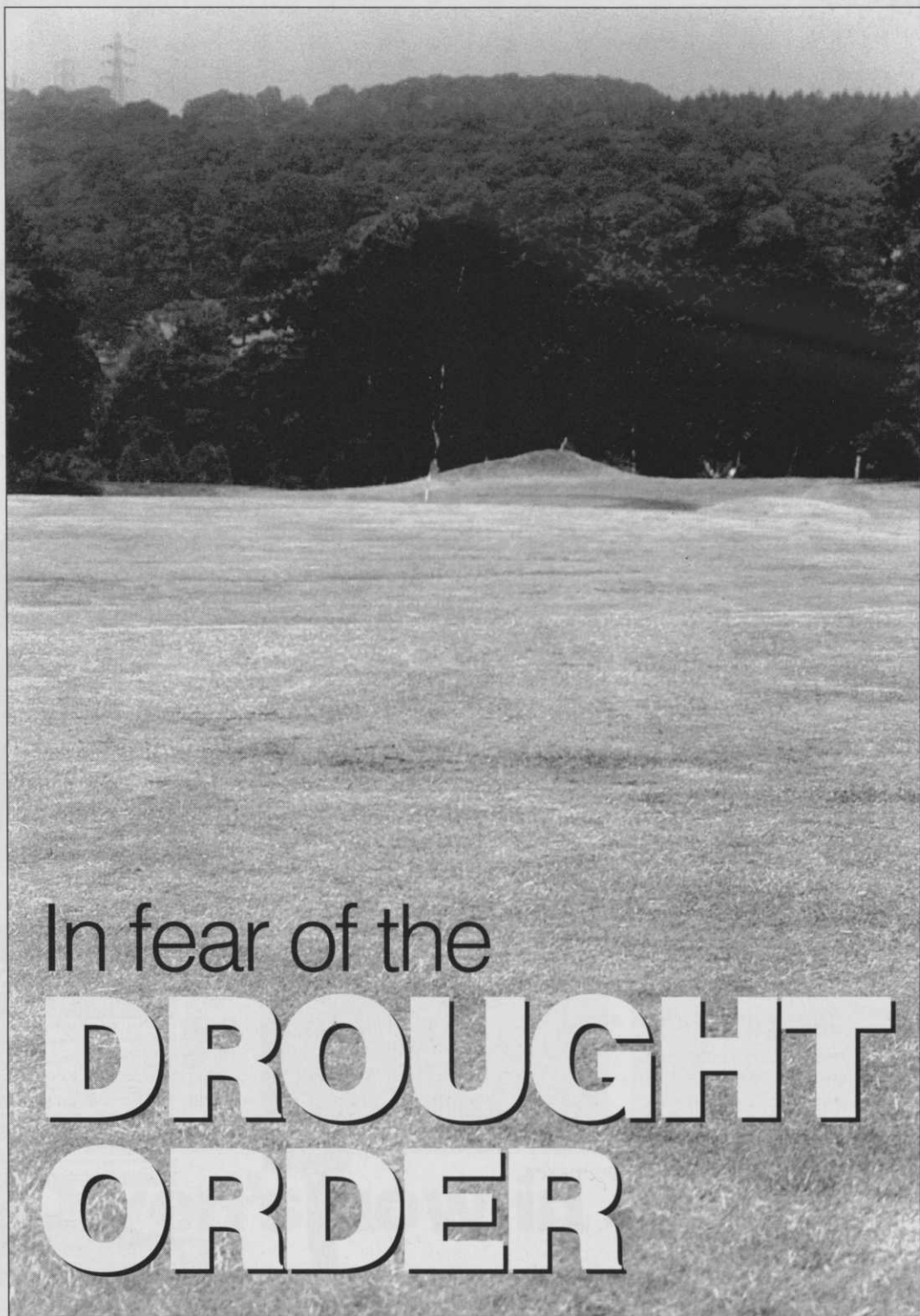
George Brown,
Course Manager at
Turnberry:
"Learn to eat
humble pie. You
often have to do
something that you don't
really want to do."



Travel with BIGGA to the GCSAA
Conference and Show in Orlando,
February 1996 See Page 9

NEWS

SPECIAL REPORT



In fear of the **DROUGHT ORDER**

The driest summer since records began in 1727 has seen golf courses, many already suffering hosepipe bans, bracing themselves for the potentially catastrophic impact of Drought Orders.

With normally lush courses turning yellower by the day and many already surviving on rationed water supplies the probability of a total ban by Drought Order on "non essential use" – which includes golf clubs – could see courses close and/or their greens being lost to the drought.

A spokesman for Yorkshire Water, one of the first companies to seek an Order, said that there would need to be a "significant amount" of rainfall before the need for the Order could be removed.

"Because of the British climate we work to fairly wide parameters but we are getting near to the edge at the moment. We have hit a level of water stocks we would not expect to hit until much later in the summer," explained the spokesman.

Yorkshire as a whole is perhaps the worst hit area in the country with 40% of expected rainfall over the last four months and West Yorkshire the worst in in Yorkshire with only 20% of expected rainfall between April and July.

Graham Hollingworth, Head Greenkeeper of Horsforth GC in Leeds, said that if the Drought Order came into effect it would be a disaster.

"We would have to close the course or at the very least move to temporary greens. As a greenkeeper I would prefer to close the course because even now there is damage done on the fairways.

"I was here in 1976 and it was bad then but this is as bad as it could get."

Ron Bramley, Secretary of Fulford GC in York, said that they had the benefit of a borehole from which they are allowed to take a million gallons between March and September with the authorisation of the water authorities.

Pat Murphy, Head Greenkeeper at usually lush Shipley GC, said that the streams which came

down from the hills beside the course had totally dried up.

"We would normally cut our fairways three times a week but I can't remember the last time we did them," he explained.

Christopher Hodge, Secretary of Keighley GC, said that they had been taking water out of a local river but that the National River Authority was often stopping them. "I call them every day and if the level is 30 millimetres below a certain mark we are not allowed to take. If we are stopped we are currently allowed to use the domestic supply but that will stop if the Drought Order comes.

"We are letting our greens grow longer sometimes going

from Tuesday to Saturday without cutting them. We are just keeping them alive watering them five minutes every evening. but if the Drought Order comes into effect we will just lose the greens. We can't really move to temporaries as our fairways are also so bad."

Clubs which had invested in tree planting projects in recent months were seeing many young trees die off before having a chance to establish themselves.

One potential solution to the threat of losing greens comes from South African-born agronomist Gordon Jaaback who has experience of working in arid conditions.

"I would suggest a light covering of straw over the greens pinned down with a net. This lets the light through and holds in the moisture, stopping evaporation," explained Gordon, who has also written a water management article on Page 15 in this issue.

"It must be wheat, not grass, straw and I would say that you would need two or three bales per green.

"Obviously while the greens are covered up you could still play off temporaries," he explained.

As *Greenkeeper International* went to press, and with the dry spell expected to continue, more water companies were seeking Drought Orders.

French seminar puts you in picture

Packages are available to attend the International Exhibition for Maintenance and Upkeep of Golf Courses in Orleans, France, on November 18-20.

The packages which include three nights bed and breakfast at the Novotel Hotel in Orleans, lunch on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, buffet dinner on Friday and gala dinners with entertainment on Saturday and Sunday nights and entrance to the exhibitions, entrance to the lectures and all transfers from the hotel to the exhibiton and restaurants costs 1760

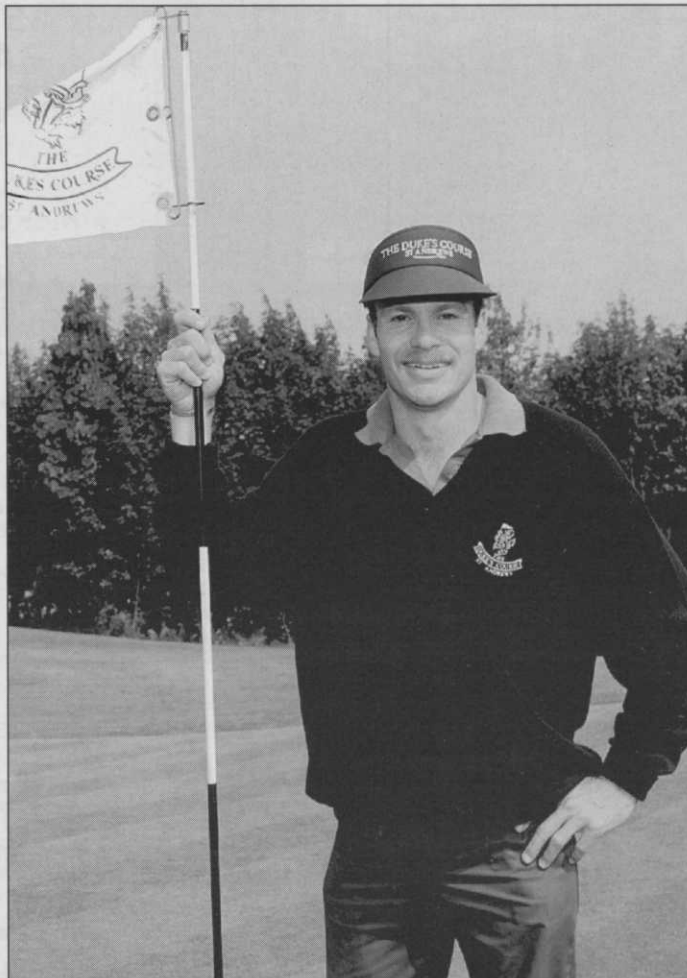
French francs (approximately £220) another 600 francs for a single room. A simultaneous translation of the lectures in English will be made if there are sufficient non-French participants. Otherwise transcripts will be provided.

Lectures include "Weed control of summer grasses" by agronomist JM Calderon-Rodriguez; "Time Management" by a speaker from the Business European Centre; "Irrigation Water Quality" by course designer Didier Comte; "Speed of the Greens" by agronomist Abdo Badra and "Safety, European Norms (material, phytosanitary products, users" by Christian Pisseau, of the National course in Paris.

Less formal events include a golf tournament at Bordes GC, a rugby match in Orleans and the gala dinners which are a "Mexican" evening and a "French Cancan" evening.

For further information contact M. Jean-Luc Duclos Tel: 00 331 3475 8790 Fax: 00 331 3475 8789.

NEWS



Owen's now in charge of the Duke's Course

Owen Browne, Head Greenkeeper at the new Duke's Course in St Andrews - pictured - has been promoted to Course Manager.

Originally from Melbourne in Australia Owen was originally employed by Greenmaw (UK) as one of the construction team working on the course and specifically involved in the construction of the greens, tees and bunkers as well as the installation of the irrigation system.

He was promoted to Head Greenkeeper in November '93 and was involved in the interviewing

and directing of staff and the establishment and maintenance of all turf and landscape areas.

In his new position Owen's duties will also include the ongoing maintenance and continued growing in of the new par-72 course and ensuring that the playing conditions laid down by course designer Peter Thomson are adhered to.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York attended the opening of the courses just prior to The Open Championship at St Andrews in July.

FLYING DIVOTS

■ Nigel Tyler has been appointed Technical Sales Representative to the Amenity Division of County Crops Ltd. He was previously employed by Rufford Top Dress Supplies Ltd.

■ Geoff Walley has been appointed Head Greenkeeper at the new Mobberley GC. near Manchester.

■ Tony Dunstan, Course Manager at Mill Hill GC, Barnet, London has achieved his TDLB D32 and D33 assessor award at Oakland College, St Albans.

■ Club Car has signed a deal to continue as the official golf car supplier to the PGA until the year 2001, the PGA's centenary.

The new agreement is for 10 Club Cars for use by the PGA's seven regions and national headquarter's field staff at pro-ams and tournaments.

■ The first edition of the Golf Owners Operators and Developers Directory has just been launched. It is aimed at giving a comprehensive list of all suppliers to the golf industry. It carries the names of 549 companies and classifies the services and products which they offer under 241 different headings.

It can be purchased direct from the publishers, Golf Business Communications Ltd, 5/7 High St, Dorchester-on-thames, Oxfordshire OX10 7HH for £15 inclusive of postage. For further information call 01865 341580.

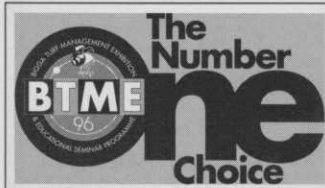
■ In August's issue we stated that Mike Ardley, was the Head Greenkeeper at Braintree Golf Club. The Head Greenkeeper at Braintree is, fact, Kevan Sharpe who has been with the club for 17 years. Apologies for any embarrassment caused by the error.

The BEST piece of ADVICE I ever received



David Walden, Greenkeeper of the Year. Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows in Peterborough:

"Always try and better yourself. Never stand still and never think you've done learning."



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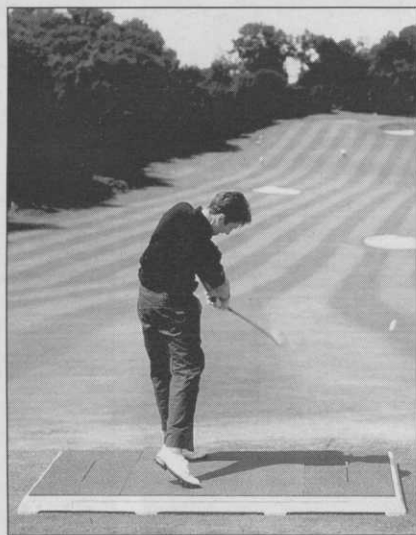
The second part of our prize competition is on Page 29

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AD REF 151

College's trophies to nine of the best

Oatridge College in Broxburn, West Lothian, at the end of the summer term saw nine students collect awards in greenkeeping and groundsmanship.

They were, standing from left, Jamie Martin, David Roy, Alistair McLean, David Atkinson and David Bryans. Seated, from left, Pamela Quin, Matthew Thomson, Derek Hunter and Thomas Meenagh.



GCSAA Conference and Show, Orlando, February 5-11, 1996

BIGGA's trip of a lifetime!

As in previous years BIGGA is offering you the opportunity to travel with us to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's 67th International Golf Course Conference and Show at the Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida from February 5-11, 1996.

The BIGGA party will assemble at Gatwick Airport on Sunday, February 4 for departure to Orlando at 12.30pm. BIGGA is able to offer accommodation at the Holiday Inn, Gatwick at a cost of £39 per person for any members wishing to stay over the night before departure.

The Clarion Plaza Hotel, chosen by BIGGA to accommodate our party, offers excellent amenities including a heated swimming pool and whirlpool, three in-house restaurants, live entertainment and a night club. The Clarion Plaza has the added convenience of being a co-exhibitor hotel and is based next to the Convention Centre.

The GCSAA Conference and Show takes place between February 5-11 with the trade show on February 9-11. You will have the opportunity to attend educational seminars, programmes and the trade show bringing you up-to-date information on golf course management, technology and the latest trends in turfgrass management.

ITINERARY

Sunday, February 4

All participants will assemble at Gatwick Airport, for the 12.30pm direct flight with Virgin Airlines to Orlando arriving at 16.40 local time. The group will then transfer to the Clarion Plaza Hotel for a nine night stay on a room only basis.

Tuesday, February 13

Transfer to the Orlando International Airport for the direct flight at 19.10 arriving at London Gatwick at 08.15am on Wednesday, February 14.

PRICES

£530 per person based on twin shares or £710 per person based on single room accommodation.



The trip to Orlando will also give you the chance to see the sights: but there's nothing Mickey Mouse about the GCSAA show - it's the best there is. Picture: Walt Disney Company

Plus comprehensive travel insurance for the duration of £55. Included are: Return economy class flights Gatwick to Orlando, UK and US taxes, transfers to and from the airport to the Clarion Plaza Hotel, nine nights accommodation based on room only and US accommodation taxes.

Please note: Registration costs for the Pre Conference Seminars which run from February 5-8 and for the Education Programme which runs from February 8-11 are not included in the package and bookings need to be made direct with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Details are available from BIGGA upon request.

Please forward full payment of £585 or £765 (unless travel insurance is not required), adding £39 if accommodation is required for the night of February 3, to BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Airedale, York, YO6 2NF to arrive by Friday, November 17 at the latest, together with name, address and contact telephone number.

Home studying gives Alan a chance of NVQ success



The Welsh College of Horticulture NVQ Amenity Horticulture Home Study Programme has proved a huge success for

Germany-based Alan Walton, pictured.

Alan, who has been in Germany since 1986, is currently Assistant Head Greenkeeper at Sennelager GC in Lisspringe.

"I had decided not to go to German college because I wanted to see if the standard of greenkeeping education in Britain was as good as reputed," said 33 year-old Alan. "I was pleased to discover the Welsh College of Horticulture and its home learning modules for NVQ Level 2 status.

"It must be said though that due to the level of information and competence required that only a relatively experienced greenkeeper can hope to do this course in the time I have done it. A total of six months studying and three weeks at college is not a long time for someone starting from scratch."

Graham Wright, the Greenkeeping Courses Co-ordinator said that the Home Study Programme allows the student to study at his or her own pace; study technical papers in an easy to read format and achieve NVQ Level 2.

"The potential users of the programmes are people who are part of rural golf clubs with small staff, greenkeepers who are apprehensive of college courses or living overseas, small companies unable to release staff for training courses or people undergoing a career change," explained Graham.

Anyone seeking further information on the home learning programme should contact Graham Wright on 01352 840861.

● The Greenkeepers Training Committee is now an approved centre for NVQs: for details call 01347 838640.

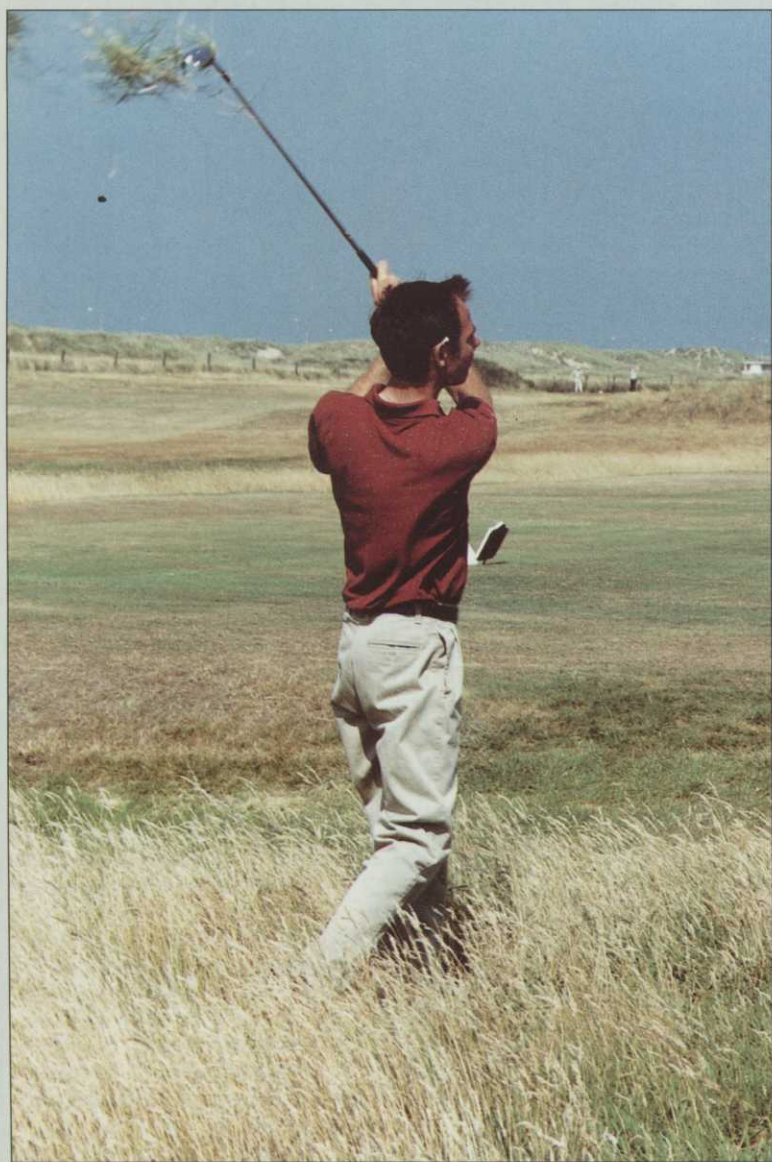
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MAD DOGS AND GREEN



Richard Barker finds a bit of trouble on the final day



One of the St Annes Old Links watering holes

The National Tournament saw a record entry and record temperatures. Scott MacCallum was on hand to record events.

The National Tournament, major sponsor Miracle Amenity Care, has long been renowned for its weather. Over the years our intrepid men have coped with most that mother nature could possibly throw at them but this year they almost had to give best to some of the hottest conditions any British greenkeeper could expect from the north west coast of England in July.

From the relative comfort of the St Annes Old Links Clubhouse we counted them out

and some five hours later counted them back again looking as though they were, not finely tuned golfing machines but, overweight jockeys who'd been forced to sweat it out in the sauna prior to the big race.

It wasn't conventional galleries our men had watching them as they struggled manfully around the magnificent links course but rabid canines and anglophiles who'd happened out around noon.

The Monday night Lancashire Hot Pot evening was amended to become Lancashire Cold Salad evening and the "set in stone" club rules calling for jackets and ties to be worn after 8pm were finally relaxed allowing the oxygen supplies delivered by the local paramedics to be returned only half used.

Several players thought they'd become delirious and seen a mirage through the heat haze on the final day only to discover it was just Clive Higgenbottom dispensing drinks from his 4x4.

If you are catching my drift you'll appreciate that it was rather warm at St Annes Old Links for the Miracle Amenity Care National Tournament this year.

In many ways the stars of the week were Geoff Whittle and his team who produced a course in magnificent condition belying the fact that there had been fewer drops of rain over the course in the past few months than new jokes in Frank Carson's Blackpool summer show. Incidentally Frank and Eddie Large, Vaudeville (summer) members at St