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# GREENKEEPER

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■ The next edition of  
*Greenkeeper International*  
should be with you by May 13

# GREENKEEPER

## International

APRIL 1997

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### This is London calling...

The golf club which bears the name of our capital city has a celebrity studded membership – and an enthusiastic greenkeeping team run along army lines. Scott MacCallum visited the golfing haven only half an hour from hustle and bustle ..**Pages 17-19**



### The quality of cultivated turf

Because there's an element of uncertainty in buying turf, Robert Laycock argues the case for a more informed purchaser – and how to get what you want .....**Pages 13-15**

### Powered by electricity

The strange sensation of using a virtually silent greensmower is something you could easily get used to. The Learning Experience evaluates the electric mower .....**Pages 25-27**

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The London Golf Club – and the bunkers where even the rakes are regimented Pictures by Scott MacCallum

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COMPETITION:  
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# A game of golf in the real world

**W**ell it's here. The new golfing season has begun for everyone outside of the addicts whose breath freeze during their protestations to have you open an ice bound course.

For the golfer it's the best time of the year. He strides to the first tee in the latest Ashworth full of expectation and confidence, the words of David Leadbetter's latest video still ringing in his ears and the smell of freshly cut grass filling his nostrils. From then on, though, it's the same as every other year. Same involuntary lunge at the ball, same wicked slice, same old comments from his partners, same old course – bare fairways, builder's sand in the bunkers and slow greens.

Then The Masters comes on the telly. "Well, if we had greens like that we'd all hole putts"... "Look at those fairways, a perfect lie every time"... "All it needs is a little time and effort and we could have flower beds like those."

When he gets back to the club and he's changing his shoes out of the back of his car the guy doing the same next to him agrees with every word he says. So does the guy in the next shower after the game. Even the steward agrees.

"The luckiest golfers in the world must be the Augusta National members. Imagine playing there every week..."

Well, no as a matter of fact. It would probably be interesting for our club member to know that while he's playing in the winter foursomes or the spring medal the Augusta member is having to make do with a game of bridge or checkers in the majestic clubhouse because the shrine to golfing excellence outside the window is closed, even when the sun is splitting the sky. In fact, it's closed for a large chunk of the

year irrespective of weather so every effort can be made to produce perfection for one week in April.

While our man snorts when he sees the accounts during the AGM, and in particular the amount spent on greenkeeping, it may interest him to know the equivalent figures at Augusta National would be enough to pay a handful of good old British fat cats for a couple of years each. Come to mention it the greenkeeping staff at Augusta would just about number enough to run a smallish British public utility.

It's all about making the most of the resources available and cutting cloth to suit. There is no denying that the staff at Augusta National make the most of the unlimited resources they enjoy, which is no mean feat in itself but just as impressive is the wonderful job done at clubs up and down this country where smaller budgets are made to stretch much further than is initially thought humanly possible and where course closure is the rare exception rather than an extended rule.

Wouldn't it be nice for a change if Britain's unsung greenkeeping heroes got the credit they deserved.



Scott  
MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

**L**ast month I returned to my homeland when I attended the Scottish Conference in Perth.

It's always nice to see so many old friends across the border, and on this occasion, it was particularly enjoyable as it brought back some old memories. It also shows what a small world it is.

The evening before the conference we had a meeting with the Scottish Section Secretaries and it turned out that I was at school with the sister of Stephen Dixon, the East Section Secretary – St David's school in Dalkeith!

The Section Secretaries' meeting was excellent. It was great to see so many constructive suggestions and so much enthusiasm. I've been to a number of these meetings now and they are all informal but there is so much that is positive which comes out of them.

The Scottish Conference was opened by our first Chairman, Walter Woods, and I closed it which seemed fitting. Between us there were some brilliant speakers.

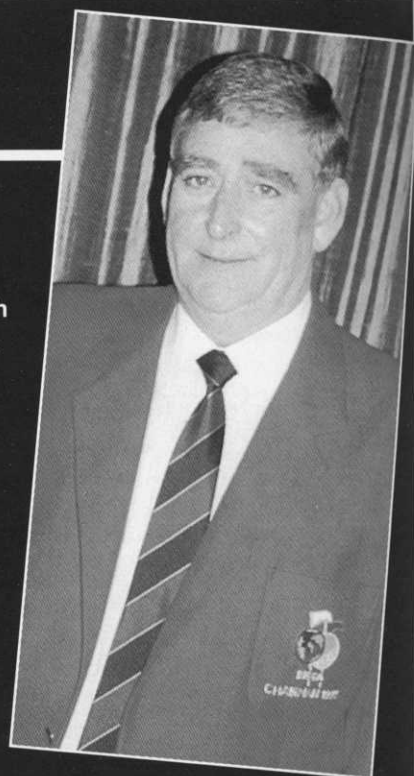
A couple of weeks later I was also at the Mere Conference in the Northern Region, again preceded by a positive secretaries' meeting. This was also an extremely fine conference with some interesting speakers.

Another highlight of the month was the Northern Section dinner dance at Bradford Golf Club which this year had a record attendance of over 100. This is my own Section and I attended with my wife and presented the prizes. It was nice also to welcome the Northern Regional Chairman Ian Holoran and his wife, Audrey, in attendance as well as Regional Administrator Bob Lupton with Sara. I was also delighted that Bill Lawson was able to come along.

It may be of interest to other Sections that Northern are about to start events aimed at the non-golfing members and we will have fishing and clay pigeon shooting on our calendar.

On the golf course spring has definitely sprung and no doubt like you all I've been hard at it hollow coring, top dressing and overseeding all the tees and greens at Shipley.

Can I wish you all rewarding and successful seasons.



# Fastest greenkeeper on one or two wheels

If there is a BIGGA member in the country faster than Terry Colville, Deputy Course Manager of Mill Hill Golf Club in North London, he must be working under an assumed name having been better known as Speedy Gonzales or Road Runner.

Because Terry is happiest when he is racing along at 165 miles per hour on the back of a 600cc Yamaha Thundercat. He can even pull wheelies at around 140mphs.

Terry's skill on a motorbike is such that this season he is taking part in the Supersport Series racing at, among others Brands Hatch, Donnington and Mallory Park and he is being touted as a future champion.

The nickname "The Nutty Novice" is displayed on the sides of his bike and it is a clue to the fearless style adopted by the man who, during the week, is number two to Tony Dunstan, Course Manager at Mill Hill and current Chairman of the London Section.

His father was also a fine racer – Terry describes him as the equivalent of a club professional golfer – and Terry grew up on bikes, from the age of three or four encouraged by his father, also Terry.

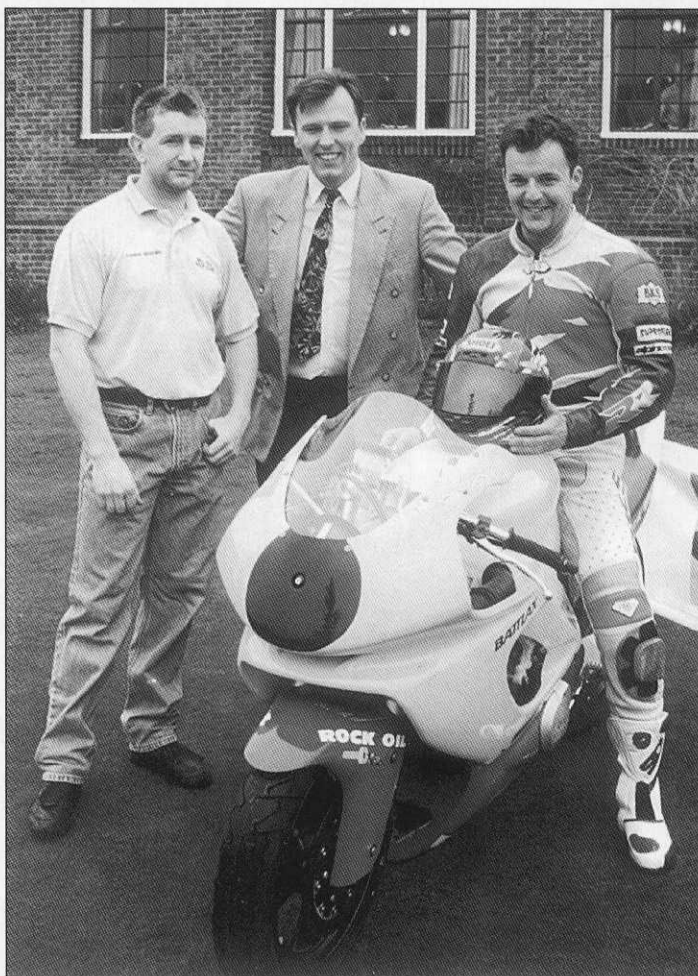
With his mother less keen on the idea Terry junior didn't have a bike for a period of three years but two wheels were very much in his blood and he was drawn back into the sport.

He made his mark when he went to an open day at the Goodwood circuit and on his own road bike was lapping at speeds comparable with those on specially prepared racing bikes.

A former grand prix racer Rob Orme took Terry under his wing and he honed his skills at the racing school at Mallory Park, near Leicester.

"Rob told me I should be racing and helped me in getting sponsorships particularly from Bridgestone who supply me with tyres," explained the 25 year-old Nutty Novice.

Terry has already ploughed about £10,000 of his own money



Tony Dunstan, Jamie Bennett and Terry Colville, the 'nutty novice'

into preparing for the season and it will take about another £6,000 to complete the 14 race programme... and that's if nothing goes wrong and he writes off a bike.

"That's a major disadvantage as many racers have teams behind them and they don't have to worry about money," revealed Terry.

He does have sponsorships and in addition to Bridgestone thanks Jamie Bennett, of Grass Roots Trading Company, who among the generous support is paying his entry fees; Rock Oil, who supply his oil, and local dealer Judd's Motorcycles.

In a sport when a new helmet, and you need a new one each time one is even slightly dam-

aged, costs £440 all help is greatly appreciated.

"I believe that Terry has great potential and I'm delighted to be able to help him," explained Jamie.

Like many motorbike racers Terry is no stranger to his local casualty unit and his latest visit saw him off work for five weeks with two broken ankles and damaged ligaments, not forgetting a dislocated shoulder.

"I've also broken fingers, fractured the top of my foot and had all sorts of sprains," said Terry, whose first race in his series was on March 23.

*Greenkeeper International* will keep you up to date with his progress.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Deere & Company has acquired the assets of the German farm machinery company, Maschinenfabrik Kemper GmbH. The agreement is subject to approval by the German anti-trust authorities.

Based in Stadtlohn, Germany, Kemper is a leading European producer of specialised maize headers, with European sales in 1996 totalling around \$50 million.

Kemper will retain responsibility for product development and manufacturing, and will continue to provide full sales and service to its customers through the Kemper dealer network.

Deere & Company and its subsidiaries worldwide manufacture, distribute and finance a range of agricultural, construction and groundscare equipment, and also provide a variety of financial services.

■ KK Ransomes, the Japanese subsidiary of Ransomes, has announced the appointment of Mr Shoji Katsuta, pictured, as Technical Sales Manager.

Trained as an engineer. Mr Katsuta brings to the position a sound technical knowledge together with additional wide experience of international business gained from working in North America and Germany in recent years.

Based at the company's southern office in Kaizuka City, Osaka, Mr Katsuta will be working closely with KK Ransomes' Managing Director, Mr Katsuji Ohashi, and Ransomes' five distributors in Japan to maintain the strong growth in Ransomes, Cushman and Ryan grass and turf machinery business throughout the country.

■ Johnsons Seeds, the leading supplier of turfgrass seed for professional users have appointed a new distributor – East Riding Horticulture Ltd.

East Riding which has its head office in Sutton on Derwent, York, also has a branch in Kirknewton, Mid Lothian.

Some excellent golf clubs are hosting Sectional Qualifiers while the venues for the Regional Qualifiers form a group of clubs which it would be hard to better.

■ South West and South Wales

## HAYTER CHALLENGE

– Burnham and Berrow GC, June 11.

■ Midland – Warwickshire GC,

June 26.

■ South East – Ham Manor GC, June 27.

■ Northern – Mattfen Hall GC, July 9.

■ Scottish – Loch Green GC, Troon, May 27.



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# Ecological plan brought to life

By Neil Rowland, of Innovative Design by Newart

Following discussions with the local naturalist group I was responsible for erecting nest boxes at South Herts Golf Club in Totteridge, North London,

Although the Club is on old farmland with many elderly Oaks, Hornbeam and Ash in the hedgerows there are very few suitable nesting holes, as dead or decaying trees tended to be removed in the name of tidiness.

I erected a mix of 64 boxes, mainly for Tits and Nuthatches, some open fronts, three Owl boxes and this last spring a

Kestrel box high on a Lombardy Poplar.

Some 80% of the Tit boxes were taken up in the first year though the Owl boxes were used by the Squirrels.

The cost of the whole scheme has been borne by the golfers themselves as we initiated box sponsorship and members "bought" an allocated box for £10.

A list of numbered boxes is displayed during the Summer so that the member can see whether his sponsored box is being used during the nesting Season.

Each nesting family of Blue

Tits consumes a total of some 10,000 caterpillars until the young fly from the nest.

It is sensible to provide nesting facilities throughout the Course so that nesting birds can consume those caterpillars which are eating away the Oak leaves.

This scheme has been copied at other local clubs, providing there is an enthusiastic golfer with "birdies" in mind to initiate a scheme, there will always be a following of members to support a project of this nature.

I will be pleased to advise on the setting up of a scheme.

## Westurf gets dressed up to the nines for '97

At Long Ashton GC on April 30, Westurf will open its gates for the ninth time giving the west country greenkeepers and groundsman an early season taste of the likely front runners in the turf care marketplace.

Westurf is a fine example of the making of a Region. It brings together all who represent the voice of our industry, where they can talk, try and test any machine or product in its own environment. On show will be all the old tried and tested, along with the new and brand new launches seen for the first time.

The region are proud of its exhibition here in the west. It not only brings to you the customer, the best that's on offer in the way of equipment but also presents the opportunity of an educational experience. Among the exhibitors will be all the Region's training colleges, the STRI, IOG and BIGGA all willing to answer your questions.

Westurf is certainly worth a visit, not just for greenkeepers and groundsman but for managers and committee personnel as well. All will find a warm welcome.

Parking and entry are free. There are demonstration areas for both fine turf and outfield. Hot and cold refreshments all day, not forgetting the chance to win a free holiday voucher.

The Regional Board and BIGGA staff look forward to meeting visitors. For further information please ring 01803 844056.

Bowcom will launch two new products for greenkeepers at Westurf '97. Plifix is a revolutionary indicator which clearly identifies walkways or ground repairs without interfering with the greenkeeper's normal work or mowing while the Bowcom One-handle Bowspray was developed on request from greenkeepers who wanted flexibility when using aerosol markers.

**Exhibitors:** Amenity Land Services • Amenity Technology • Atterton & Ellis • Avoncrop Amenity Products • Bailey's of Norfolk • Barenbrug • Bennett Engineering • Better Methods - Europe • BIGGA • Bioseed Probiotics • Bourne Amenity • Bowcom Ltd • Boyd Golf Course Accessories • Britannic Garden Furniture Ltd • British Seed Houses • Cannington College • Celtic Mowers • Complete Weed Control • Course Care • DGM Turf Equipment • Encore Leisure Ltd • Farmura Ltd • GWilliam Kellands • Gem Professional • H. Pattissons & Co • Hartpury College • Headland Amenity Products • Huxley's Grass Machinery • IOG • K Two Group • Levington Horticulture • Lindum Seeded Turf • Logic Irrigation Ltd • Lubrication Engineers • Maxicrop International • Medland Sanders & Twose • Miracle Professional • Nomix Chipman • Ocmis Irrigation • PJ Flegg • Pencoed College • Pipewise UK Ltd • Pro-Seed Equipment • RS Bird • Ransomes • Rhône Poulenc • Rigby Taylor • Rocol Site Safety Systems • Roffey Ltd • Ruffords Top Dressing Supplies • Scotts UK Ltd • Shelton Trenching Systems • Sisis Equipment • Sovereign Turf • Sparsholt College • STRI • Supaturf Products Ltd • Swan Plant Services • Ted Hopkins • Tildenet Ltd • TH White • Tonick Watering • Turf Irrigation Services • Vitax Ltd.

## Video library is on offer

A free library of 30 operator training videos for turf maintenance equipment is being offered by Toro to all colleges and other establishments running training and education courses for golf greenkeepers. The videos, each 20 to 30 minutes' long, give students a complete overview of the safe operation and routine maintenance of Toro machines, including how to make adjustments to set up equipment to get the best performance out of it.

Anyone interested in getting the library should contact David Cole at Toro Commercial Products. Telephone 01480 476971.

## In fast lane

As winner of the last year's Blazon "Jet Setter" campaign, former Formula One World Motor Racing Champion Nigel Mansell, together with his greenkeeper Jeff Mills, took delivery of a new Hardi sprayer for Woodbury Park Golf & Country Club in Devon.

The Blazon 1997 'Spray Watch' campaign offers greenkeepers the opportunity of winning for their club a Hardi AMK 400 litre Tractor Mounted Boom Sprayer, fully equipped.

## Profits up

Deere and Company has reported record first quarter worldwide net income of \$176.7 million or \$0.69 per share for the quarter ended January 31, an increase of 10 per cent in earnings per share compared with the first quarter of 1996.

### New post at Rhône Poulenc

■ Rhône-Poulenc Amenity has appointed John Hall to the new post of Contractor and Utilities Customer Manager. This post enables Rhône Poulenc Amenity to gain closer contacts with the Spray Contractor and Utility Customers. John will be able to advise on technical, product stewardship and business issues as well as

providing relevant training. This close contact with the key players in the industry will be to the mutual benefit of both parties.

After working for a contract organisation doing a wide variety of Amenity and Agricultural Field Trials in Scotland, John joined Rhône-Poulenc's field trials team.

### New partners

■ Terravent has appointed two new overseas distributors. Jean Heybroek BV, Houten, Holland, will import and distribute Terravent's soil aerators and decompackers in Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg while Sports Turf Services of Christchurch is importing and distributing Terravent's products in New Zealand.

**THE FACTS: NOT THE HYPE**

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Course Manager  
East Sussex  
National Golf Club

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# Leatherjacket damage a real risk to turf this spring – report

DowElanco's Pestwatch service has detected a rise in leatherjacket populations across the country this spring. Attributed to poor weather conditions this time last year, the rise means that populations are currently exceeding the traditional threshold for treatment in rough grassland.

"This indicates that there will be a particular threat to fine turf this year," says Talei Herbert of DowElanco's Specialty business.

"The high quality of grass required to make up cricket or football pitches and golf fairways and greens could really suffer visually from this level of leatherjacket attack."

Leatherjackets feed on grass stems just below the soil surface taking out tillers and even the plant's central shoot. The pest will leave bare patches of soil in its wake if large populations are left unchecked.

In the Midlands and North West, average pest numbers are exceeding the threshold for treatment in grassland. And in the South and South East, soil sampling is recording average populations of 2 million larvae/ha – the

highest level of activity found in this part of the UK for more than five years.

"Last year, despite the existence of high pest populations, only a small percentage of grass in the UK was treated to prevent damage," explained Miss Herbert.

"This is mainly because bad weather during the spring of '96 slowed pest activity down. Low temperatures force the larvae to remain further below the soil surface, making damage much more difficult to recognise."

According to Miss Herbert, higher populations of adults survived to lay eggs last autumn. This was compounded by the fact that weather conditions over the autumn favoured successful adult flight and egg laying. A warm, dry period was followed a few weeks later by moist conditions which, in turn, suited larval development and survival.

"This spring there is a real risk of turf damage," warns Miss Herbert. "Areas at risk should be treated with Lorsban T at a rate of 1.5 litres/ha. This will arrest damage and help to reduce the risk of damage for the following season."

## HANDSHAKE FOR PRIZE DRAW WINNER



Keith Lough, Head Greenkeeper at Beamish Golf Club, was the lucky recipient of £150 worth of BIGGA vouchers after winning the Vitax Prize Draw at BTME. He is seen being presented with his vouchers by Henry Bechelet, Vitax Technical Sales Advisor.



As part of a plan to highlight the many wonderful events held throughout the Sections it is hoped to print photographs taken at Section events.

First in is this offering from the East Section in Scotland. Chris Yeaman from Swanston Golf Club is the one in the funny hat.

Please feel free to send any contributions to The Editor, BIGGA Headquarters, Aldwark Manor, Alne, York YO6 2NF.

## (mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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# Architects' specifications to bring more washed turf

## (mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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An article by Dr Jim Beard extolling the virtues of washed turf has taken Stephen Fell, Managing Director of Lindum Seeded Turf right round the world, and resulted in a major new investment for the company.

The concept of turf washed completely of any soil particles by pressurised hydraulic means prior to transplanting is not new. Ben Warren patented the system as early as 1970, but it was not until the USGA specifications advising a high sand root zone for golf greens came into force, that golf course architects began to specify turf prepared in this way.

The danger with conventional turf is that the finer soil attached to the sward is responsible for a layer developing between the turf and the root zone which retains excess water. With properly washed turf there is no conflict between soils, water flows freely into the prepared root zone and rapid root development within a free draining environment is the result.

StrathAyr, an Australian company seeing the way things were going, bought the patent on Ben Warren's system in the 1980s, and introduced it to the US in the early 1990s.

It was to Bill Casimaty head of StrathAyr, that Stephen Fell wrote after reading Dr Beard's article. He was directed first to Austria, then the US, to see the process in action, before finally arriving in Australia, where StrathAyr, had completed the re-turfing of Melbourne Cricket Ground with BAyr Root Washed Turf. After six months of investigation Stephen Fell was finally convinced that totally soil free turf was the only logical material to use on sand based construction, and the StrathAyr process was the only system with the means to achieve this 100%. "If the turf is only partially washed the benefits are completely lost," he said. "We felt the whole concept was so right that we could convince people of the long-term benefits."

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