

guided tour of the course and the club's new greenkeeping complex by the host Head Greenkeeper and Section Chairman Bill Mitchell.

After a superb lunch our President John Palfrey presented the Avoncrop Trophy and prizes on behalf of Avoncrop Amenity: 1. Gordon Tamblin (Mullion GC), level; 2. Michael Child (Saunton GC), -4; 3. Gary Hargrave (Sidmouth GC), -5. Congratulations to all the prize winners especially Gordon who returned a superb level round in such difficult conditions.

It felt just like one of those Monday mornings regarding our afternoon speaker as our original speaker was taken ill just 24 hours before the meeting so we decided to use the new BIGGA ecology video as back up but to our horror the video machine didn't work either. So we approached Gordon Child to see if he could speak on NVQs. Gordon agreed and with some five minutes to prepare gave an outstanding talk. The Section would like to thank Gordon for standing in at the last minute and John Palfrey of Avoncrop for sponsoring the prizes. We would also like to thank Perranporth GC for allowing us the use of their facilities and all the staff

Around the Green



at Perranporth for making our day run so smoothly. Also thanks go to the Head Greenkeeper

Bill Mitchell and his Assistants John and Fred who always have their links in magnificent condition.

Richard Whyman

South Wales

Well spring is truly upon us and I'm sure that you're all busy hollow tining or verti draining and the like. Let's hope for a warm wet season and no prolonged dry spells.

Our latest Pencoed College evening lecture failed to take place due to the untimely withdrawal of the lecturer to be! To the rescue came our Education Chairman and Timekeeper, Malcolm Davies with his Assistant and Quizmaster, Peter Gillard. A quiz to beat all quizzes was based on general knowledge, greenkeeping, football and trivial pursuit. Six teams of three competed for the honours (a bottle of Scotch!) and the win-

ners were my team, the Arsenal! Well done to the lads from Aberdare GC and commiserations to the other teams, the Spuds, the Vikings, the Crays, the Thugs and the Poas. An excellent evening with a difference, thoroughly amusing and enjoyable.

A sincere thanks to both Malcolm and Peter for hastily arranging the evening and doing such a grand job.

Peter Lacey

South West

February saw about 30 greenkeepers turn out for the Lawson Trophy at Clevedon GC. This was quite encouraging considering the forecast which was nothing short of horrific.

However Mr Fish and Mr Kettle etc were a bit wide of the mark and we got away with some light winds and a bit of scotch mist just to keep us on our toes.

Clevedon is in the throes of some major rebuilding work at the moment and so we were on a bit of a cross country race trying to find the 18 holes in the correct order but the new greens, particularly those that had recently been built by the greenstaff themselves were in quite exceptional condition.

Almost perfect fescue dominated swards are difficult to find during the best of times but in the middle of February, well I can only conclude that Barry Reeves and his crew must have a magic wand or something. Anyhow, enough of my petty envy, thanks are due for all their hard work and obvious expertise.

Having got back to the clubhouse safely we were then given an excellent late lunch followed by the sharing of the spoils, all of which were presented by Lawsons. First place with 36 points was Michael Fawcett of Marlborough with Maurice Pierce of Wells in second with 34 points on a countback from our beloved Secretary Peter Baynton. A sterling performance considering the pressure he is under. Thanks to Lawsons for their sponsorship and to Clevedon Golf Club for allowing us the pleasure of their course for the day.

Remember the short courses. We have recently held a First Aid course and a PA1 and PA6 all of which appear to have been successful. If there are any others you would like to go on please give me a ring on 01380 828380.

Marc Haring

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Two integral cogs in the workings of golf

by Bob Taylor, Ecologist STRI

What an excellent show BTME turned out to be. All of the seminars I was involved with were extremely well attended, the practical workshops were filled to capacity and the show itself surely must have encouraged record levels of entrants. The STRI stand was certainly full to bursting most of the time, with a considerable amount of discussion being devoted to ecological aspects of golf course development and management.

It could, I suppose, be argued that greenkeepers were being polite realising my interest in discussing their course and what has been achieved, but I did on several occasions throughout the early part of the week during dinner, etc. overhear people discussing ecological issues such as how many trees have been planted and how raising the cutting height on areas of grassland has improved the course. Comments including, "Members didn't like it much at first" and "I was nearly hung for chopping that tree down" were also overheard. Greenkeepers did appear, and I am sure they are, genuinely interested. Indeed, I have always said that to the greenstaff, managing 'through the green' is a hobby, an interesting extension of their workload and a break from some of the more tedious operations

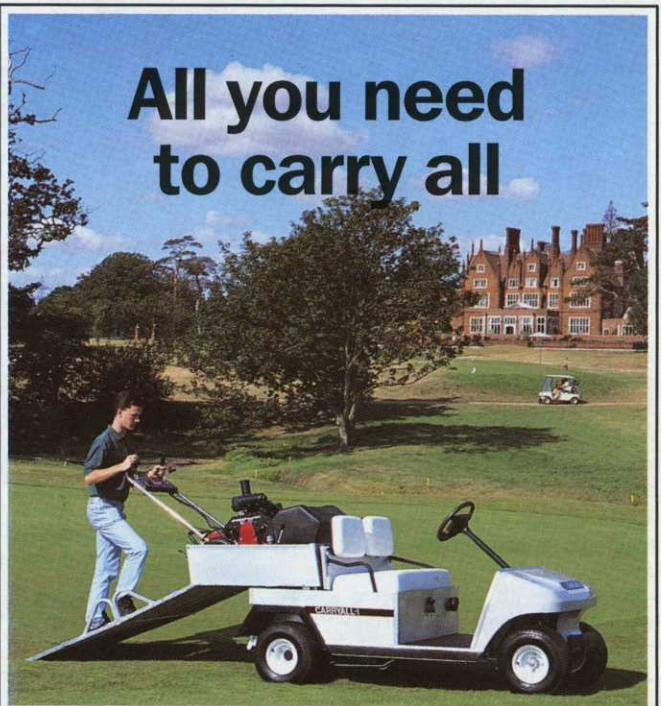
one could mention.

It was also interesting to note how most of the seminars during the week came round at some point to the need for sensible rough management.

Larry Gilhuly (USGA) showed the results of a members' questionnaire, and the environment came high on the list of their expectations of what constitutes a good course.

Bunkers were a major talking point. Why do we need so many? Answer, we don't - we could achieve far more from a sensible approach to using the grasslands, eg. semi rough, grassy hollows, the heather, water features, ditches, ponds, etc., if club committees and members should be brought around to this way of thinking. Education therefore will over the next few years be essential in this area and must be an important step in the way forward.

Talking of the way forward, I discussed at length the importance of the environmental management plan as a baseline for management. The plan will identify what can be found and how it will change given different management regime. It will form a baseline for monitoring, assessing gains and interest. Indeed, it is only by this approach that the wider environmental bodies, the general population (public), etc.



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will appreciate that golf is not a selfish use of the land, nor is it a pesticide dump and reservoir of toxic waste, as reported in certain press.

So, where do we start?

THE FIRST STEP

Setting up a Management Plan

The first step will involve an initial assessment of the course to classify the vegetation types. The plan must use the data collected to formulate an overall goal, determine the most appropriate targets and management techniques. Directing the management in this way will help to ensure that any money spent is used to the best effect, to ensure the most efficient use of the land and the resources to improve the course for play and for wildlife. Any target must be realistic, "ambitious" possibly and quantitative in terms of habitat and species quality and extent. A major aim must be to recognise the need to halt naturally occurring deteriorating referred to by ecologists as "succession" (eg. scrub invasion) and to retain habitat quality alongside the management of the playing surfaces.

A thorough site investigation will be a prerequisite towards the production of a long term management plan. The management strategy for the course must be practical and sustainable as the programme, more than likely, will be carried out by the greenstaff during appropriate periods using hired or club labour and machinery. If the management tasks being proposed are not practical or indeed affordable, then the project is unlikely to be sustained into the longer term.

The initial assessment of the course should be undertaken by a qualified ecologist with relevant field experience in applied ecological management and indeed the workings of the golf course. The Head Greenkeeper should be present for at least part of the assessment period so as to gain knowledge and reasoning behind the types of work being recommended.

The inspection of the course with all interested parties should provide a full description of the site and detail areas of impor-

tance while outlining and reiterating the main focus of the study.

The study should: (a) describe the site through collation of available physical and biological information; (b) identify objectives and purpose of course management; (c) realise conflicts and achieve the best means of resolving them; (d) detail management strategies to achieve objectives; (e) identify and detail scope for monitoring (auditing).

The above objectives form part of the N/SVQ Greenkeeper Training Certification (Level 3) under the mandatory additional tasks within the Supervisory Section. These include: (a) Monitor and survey (b) Collect and record data (c) Analyse, evaluate, interpret and report.

Monitoring thereafter is an essential component of any management planning.

It will be necessary to detail and demonstrate the degree and effectiveness of the management programme and the likely timescales involved. It may be that the work fits into a phased timetable utilising periods within the year that tie in with the greenstaff's annual works programme. Equally, timing of the works will be essential if wildlife losses are to be avoided – it is of no benefit to clear a pond during the height of the breeding season, far better to implement the work when this is over but before the onset of the colder winter period. Phasing the work, ie splitting the water feature arbitrarily into portions, and carrying this out through just one portion each year will allow wildlife the chance to move safely as the work progresses. Undertaking the work in this way will ensure that

habitat and species continuity and sustainability are maintained and encouraged.

The concept of sustainable development is an integral component of ecological management. There is little point in encouraging wildlife by initiating ecological/ course improvements if the management regime necessary to sustain it cannot be maintained year after year.

The management objectives, if they are to survive long term, must reflect club policies and must be compatible with them. A further aim of the assessment should be to help club communication, ie between club officials and members and outside, to improve the course image within the wider population. Drawings and details of conservation work posted within the clubhouse and around the course on notice boards together with periodic informative evening discussions will all help to raise members' awareness of conservation management and may help to protect one or two areas from excessive trampling damage (heather-dominated carries, for example, are particularly sensitive).

The above will give an evaluation of the golf course which can then be monitored, enabling subsequent changes to be made to "fine tune" the management programme as and when required. It will help give priority to some tasks over others but, most importantly, will offer in a practical way a long term management strategy for the course that is readily achievable and affordable, both in terms of the greenkeeper's time and the financial budgets of the club.

A management plan can all too easily become heavy with detail and format, and it is essential, if the end user (the greenstaff) is not to be put off or lack confidence in deciphering it, that the plan compartmentalises the detail away from the important management prescriptions.

In management programmes we have to think long term and to define what will be required over perhaps five to ten years. We also have to quantify what is likely to be needed in terms of the four M's: Men, Materials, Machinery and Money.

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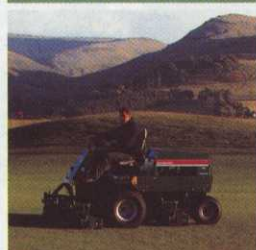
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The objectives of management therefore must be clearly defined at the outset. Thoughtful planning and consideration must be given to the requirements of individual species present within a given habitat type and to the requirements of animal or plant communities whose interactions are fundamental to the successful workings of the habitat. A major objective must therefore be to maintain or improve conditions within the vegetation types for communities, forestalling further losses or possibly extinctions. For example, where there are populations of red squirrel, it is important not to affect the balance of tree species which could render the site more attractive to grey squirrels. The native red squirrel is now such a rare animal that if any golf course has a population, it would be highly advisable to take whatever steps are required to ensure that this attractive and popular rodent is encouraged. This may be encouraging a greater diversity of conifers to maintain a more constant food source (red squirrels eat conifer seeds) while retaining low numbers of deciduous trees. This indeed may be the converse of what may be generally thought the most appropriate form of management!

Each habitat found on the course would be represented in the management plan. It will

be necessary to highlight the importance of tree removal alongside tree replacement, or infrequent grassland management within areas of deep rough. Management within and around water features may involve infrequent desilting, vegetation clearance and maintenance of water quality. On heathland sites, heather management will be of major importance, together with the removal of scrub and naturally regenerating tree species.

Monitor and review

Monitoring is an essential component of management planning. The management plan should encompass periodic ecological audits of the course to assess the degree of conformity and the extent to which the desired objectives set up for the individual areas are being achieved. The period for repeated audit-

ing will vary to some extent according to the sensitivity of the site. Although an initial review should ideally be undertaken within the first three years, varying thereafter, repeated monitoring will be of considerable importance in areas supporting potentially invasive plant species, such as bracken, birch, rhododendron, Japanese knotweed or Himalayan balsam.

Site, species or habitat monitoring should be followed with a "review" of the management plan. Following changes on site, it may be necessary to update or modify the management plan. One of the main benefits derived from the monitoring and review process is the possibility of being able to improve upon the management techniques being used as knowledge of the most appropriate methods continues to develop and improve.

Given the interest that is now apparent through the golf industry towards ecological and environmental issues, it may be worth stating that BIGGA have been instrumental in the production of a practical guide to ecological management and accompanying video showing management techniques in action. Both are available from Aldwark Manor. STRI Golf Ecology Services are available through Bob Taylor, Ecologist with STRI who can be contacted on 01274 565131.



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■ Roller vane pumps produce moderate flows and pressures. The rollers are held in a slotted rotor revolving in a concentric case. As the rollers pass the pump inlet, the cavities between and under the rollers enlarge and draw in liquid. When nearing the outlet, the cavities contract – due to the concentric housing – and force the liquid out of the pump.

Roller vane pumps handle a variety of pesticides and have a low



purchase and maintenance cost. These pumps operate very efficiently, but as pressure increases, the volume (output) decreases.

For courses that use wettable powders regularly, a roller vane pump should not be selected as it is unsuitable for use with abrasive/corrosive materials i.e. iron and nitrates that rapidly cause wear to the pump housing, the slots in the rotor and the rollers. Though replacing the rollers is quite simple it may not restore the pump to a satisfactory working condition.

■ Diaphragm pumps have at least

one chamber sealed at one end by a membrane or diaphragm. The other end has an inlet and outlet valve. The diaphragm connects to a piston. As the piston moves, suction draws the liquid through the inlet valve by moving the diaphragm, which enlarges the chamber. The return of the piston forces the diaphragm inwards shrinking the chamber and propelling the liquid out.

Diaphragm pumps require little maintenance because there is minimal contact between the spray material and moving parts. Abrasive materials are less likely

to damage this type of pump, however the diaphragm will require periodic checks every two – three years for leaks. Most pumps have a diaphragm that is resistant to commonly used chemicals and provides a long service compared to other types of pump.

■ Piston pumps propel liquid by a piston moving in a cylinder and operate in a similar way to Diaphragm pumps but, due to the materials coming into contact with the cylinder bore, they are more susceptible to wear and damage. The intake stroke draws the liquid in through one valve and the output stroke forces the liquid out through another. Piston pumps require either an internal or external air chamber (surface tanks to dampen pulsation in the liquid flow associated with each pump stroke. Without the gurgler tank, the sprayer will “pulse” rather than spray a steady stream.

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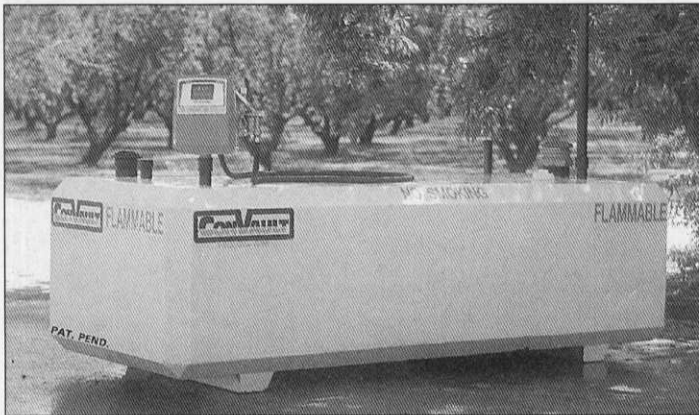
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■ A completely new fuel storage system has been launched into the UK and European market place. This patented system is known as "Convault" – an above ground storage tank (AST) which can store petroleum based products and other hazardous substances in an inherently safe and environmentally sound format. An above ground fuel tank is pictured above.

Although new to markets on this side of the Atlantic, Convault has been in service in the U.S.A. and Canada for approximately 10 years with over 17,000 tanks sold to date.

Convault has been developed to meet the highest environmental and fire safety concerns. Within the UK, Breton Precast Ltd. recognised the importance and potential contribution of the regulatory authorities. From this a Risk Assessment Document was compiled which addressed the key safety and operational issues. This document received a positive response from the regulatory bodies involved.

The environmental benefits of using an above ground system includes full visual inspection of the tank at all times which means, should a leak occur, it is detected at the earliest opportunity, removing the possibility for soil and ground water contamination which is associated with conventional underground storage tanks and below ground suction lines.

Convault's complete above ground vaulted tank and fuelling system is constructed using a steel tank which is insulated and wrapped in a poly membrane liner, all of which is then encased in a 150 mm reinforced concrete

shell. The complete unit provides full primary and secondary containment, a certified 2 hour fire wall, can withstand vehicle incursions and it is also bullet resistant!

Convault meets applicable safety requirements for secondary containment, leak monitoring, spill and over spill protection, and is also certified for phase 1 & 2 vapour recovery.

The initial size of the tanks available range from 4,500 litres (1,000 gal) to 18,000 litres (4,000 gal).

For further information telephone 01232 351711.



■ Huxleys' new Groundforce 104 is a rugged, easily maintained four wheel transport vehicle, designed for off-road use on golf courses, playing fields, caravan parks, schools and university grounds, and a wide range of amenity areas.

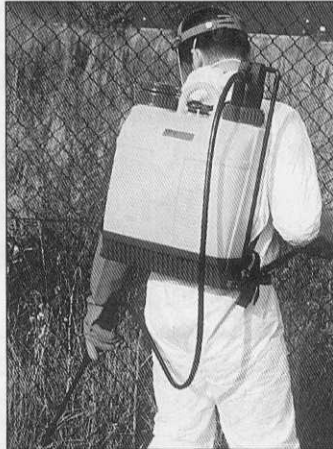
The Groundforce has an automatic clutch and is simple to drive. All you do is select forward or reverse, release the handbrake, depress the throttle and you're moving. The powerful 16 hp Kohler overhead camshaft engine is smooth and exceptionally quiet (74 dbA at full operating speed), with easy access for routine service checks.

For strength and durability, the Groundforce is designed with sturdy upper and lower tubular

steel frame construction, with automotive type transaxle for long service life. Automotive hydraulic rear disc brakes provide sure stopping power, even when carrying the full 1500 lbs (680 kg) total payload capacity. There's also an optional hydraulic lift, to make light work of tumping heavy loads from the 16 cu ft (0.45 cu metre) tilt box.

Prices from £5,595 plus VAT.

For a free demonstration or further details telephone 01962 733222.



■ Spaldings latest addition into their 12,000 strong product range is a professional quality 18 litre knapsack sprayer.

The sprayer, say Spaldings, is designed for long periods of use in arduous conditions. It combines an ergonomical tank design with balanced weight distribution for accurate and efficient application of today's pesticides.

It features a heavy duty 1000cc piston pump for a long trouble free life and an easy move handle allowing for left to right handed operation and is designed to suit all users.

The telescopic lance, say Spaldings, is supplied as standard with an adjustable nozzle to suite all application flow rates.

The machine costs £59.98.

For further information telephone 01522 500600.

■ Rolawn, Europe's largest turf grower has introduced the 'Turf Inspector'.

The character will be used to convey the company's message about the independent testing of

its turf by the Sports Turf Research Institute.

"We want to make some serious points about turf quality and we feel that the turf inspector helps us to do this," stated Terry Ryan, Rolawn's Sales & Marketing Director.

Turf Testing Doctor Andy Newell of the Sports Turf Research Institute visited the Rolawn Turf Company's fields recently to conduct tests on the botanical composition of Rolawn's well known Medallion turf.

The tests which took place late last year on two fields amounting to 88 acres, revealed an annual meadow grass content of half of one percent and identified exactly the cultivated grass species present in the finished turf.

The tests were carried out to the STRI's own operating procedures and not to a procedure set out by the Company.

Rolawn began its policy of inviting independent testing by the STRI in 1995. The first tests were conducted to identify the botanical composition of their Advantage greens turf.

The company is happy to provide free copies of the STRI reports upon application.

■ Concern over the increasing number of thefts of ground's maintenance equipment has prompted Buckinghamshire-based Risboro' Turf to become the first manufacturer to fit Datatags as standard on all pedestrian self-propelled machines produced by them including, the new Little John scarifier and Big Willy aerator. Commenting on this security initiative, Director, Richard Taylor said, "During the year, the British Agricultural and Garden Machinery Association set up a scheme to fight garden machinery theft. Through this we learnt about Datatag, and realised it would be an invaluable addition to our products. We are fitting them during production at no extra cost to our customers."

Datatag is an electronic identification device that utilises micro-transponder technology. Each tag has its own 10 character alpha-numeric code which can