

On completion of the golf we had the AGM which ran smoothly. The Chairman emphasised the need for more fund raising within the Section.

After 10 years our Regional Administrator Gordon Child is standing down. Gordon, assisted by his wife Marion, has done a fantastic job for the Region and BIGGA as a whole. They will be greatly missed. If it was not for their hard work over the past 10 years the Region would not be in the healthy state it is today. A successor is being appointed and he/she will be a paid employee of BIGGA. This means there will be no more annual refunds from Headquarters and each event that we hold will have to make a profit or at the very least break even so we keep the Section solvent at all times.

As the AGM marked the Section's 25th Anniversary Eric James, a founder member of the Section gave us a brief history of its progress. As I am sure you all know Eric has been Chairman of our Section for most of its existence.

Jim Fry has been President since our Section was formed. He has supported BIGGA at International, National, Regional and Section level. Before BIGGA he was a staunch supporter of BGGGA and has sponsored a large number of our events over the years. Thank you Jim on behalf of our Section for all the marvellous support you have given us.

The main item on the Agenda was the election of the Committee:- President - Jim Fry; Chairman - Allen Mitchell; Vice Chairman - Ed McCabe;

Secretary - Jeff Drake; Tournament Organiser - Mark Webb; Magazine - Ken Lodge; Sparsholt College - Bob Dennis; Regional Board - Keiran Daly, John York, Andy Hill, Tony Gaod, Fred Deacon, Trevor Smith. If you have any queries concerning the Section, Region or Association in general contact any of the above.

On completion of the AGM the catering staff provided us with an excellent Christmas Dinner. The wine was kindly donated by Jim Fry and once again our thanks go to him.

All that remains is to thank our main sponsors for the day:- Rigby Taylor, represented by Mark Wilton and John Deere, represented by Nick Clarice. Mark and Nick have been attending our Turkey Trot for a number of years and we thank them both for their continued support. Our thanks also go to Avoncrop, Parker Hart and Diamond Products for their contributions.

By now you should have received details of the Regional/Section seminar to be held at Sparsholt College on February 18. There is still time to book in, contact Jeff Drake, 10 Cold Harbour Lane, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP2 7PW. Telephone 01722 503938.

Preparations are being made for Westurf 97. The Regional event of the year will be held at Long Ashton GC on Wednesday April 3. We have asked for a dry, sunny day this year! I look forward to seeing you all there. Anyone who has transport problems please let me know along with anyone who has empty seats

in their car. I have room for 3 to start the ball rolling so give me a call on 01329 282362.

Unfortunately our speaker for the March Winter Lecture William McKechnie has left Parkstone and returned north of the border to Scotland. However British Seed Houses have agreed to fill the gap and Bob Scott will be giving us a talk on grass seed, in particular British Seed Houses new creeping bent. Whether you are a supporter of creeping bent or traditional fescue come along to Crane Valley GC on March 6 at 10 am. It should prove to be a very interesting topic. Lunch will be available and 9 holes of golf has been arranged, though the format of the golf is still to be decided.

Alan Rideout has asked me for a list of all winners of the Roffey Cup since 1985. The Roffey Cup is the best handicap score over 36 holes at the Spring Tournament. Alan is the present holder of the trophy and would like to update the names on the cup since they are sadly out of date. Anyone who has won the trophy since 1985 please contact Alan on 01202 394552.

Finally I am sure that the Section would like to wish William McKechnie good luck and good fortune in his new post in Scotland.

Ken Lodge

South West

Bleak conditions will now be rendering the courses deserted except for that strange sub species of the golfing family

- the senior golfer. I always somewhat naively assumed that this particular genetic freak evolved over many, sometimes hundreds of years at golf clubs but having worked at a brand new course I realise they just appear almost overnight at the first sniff of a new course being constructed. It is almost as though they dig themselves out of the ground complete with a half set of "pin-splitters" and 20 year old rubber shoes. It doesn't matter what the weather is like, the attire never changes. But there they are, the same fourballs everyday, consistently shooting scores of between one and two hundred with only a pot of tea and a piece of toast split four ways as the only visible form of nutrition. Don't get me wrong, they're a great bunch of people but why do they have to play every day. The fact that they have developed these blindingly quick proddy golf swings guaranteed never to lose a ball would lead me to conclude they feel positively cheated if they do not play every day. This theory is further substantiated when I see them return after their round to scour the area should the initial search fail to find an errant golf ball. Even their tee pegs are crudely tied together to prevent the loss of a one penny investment.

But enough of my ramblings and on to the Section news. A full house was present at the annual South West seminar at Cannington College and we were treated to some excellent speakers. Jim Arthur sitting in for Bill Lawson, who had to drop out through ill health, gave

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us the benefit of his views on a variety of subjects. George Brown educated us on the preparation of Turnberry for the British Open and also on the nocturnal habits of Scottish greenkeepers and there were also some excellent talks from Gordon Irvine and the BIGGA Roadshow team among others. Thanks must go to Rhone Poulenc for their sponsorship.

Later in the month we gathered together for the Christmas Tournament at Worlebury GC and once again this proved to be very popular. The course was presented superbly and our thanks must go to Chris Stabbings and his crew for this. As at the previous meeting it was local knowledge allied to a touch of banditry that took the honours with Derek Mogg, the host club's Captain and John Kane of Clevedon winning first prize with 39 pts. Les Johnson, our retired Salford member, and Trevor Cleverley, of Elestoke, took second place. Our thanks go to Worlebury GC for the use of their course and the sponsors, Roffey Bros, for providing the wine on the table which was very much appreciated. A superb Christmas lunch was followed by the raffle with all the prizes being provided by other local sponsors. We were then entertained for an hour or so by a comedian. Although he might have heard of the phrase political correctness I would not recommend him to a convention of black Irish lesbians but nevertheless he kept us very much amused!

We are now getting together a couple of courses on first aid and spraying etc. If anyone is interested in attending any of these please contact either Peter Baynton or myself on 01380 828380. Marc Haring

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East Anglia

Quite an eventful day I think – that's how December 12, 1996 will go down in history. A day when Essex man decided to set up on his own and call themselves, surprise, surprise, the Essex Section. A day of mixed emotion for me being an ex-Essex man myself I shall miss the lind of my old haunts and "HG" Wells who was always good for a laugh as we shared the Cockney wit and humour.

Life must go on however and while we wish Essex man all the best for the future the East Anglia Section must look at recruiting from within, especially North Norfolk greenkeepers who many now be more interested now that there is now quite so much travelling involved.

If the Section is to survive which I am sure that it will now that it is truly East Anglia, we must all relate to it as our Section, take pride in it and support it as much as possible.

Ian Willett is our new Secretary and anyone who wants to know anything at all about the new East Anglia Section can contact him on 01842 754241 or through Thorpe Ness GC. If anyone wants me to put anything in the maga-

Around the Green



zine contact me on 01603 432120 or through Eaton GC.

Back to that history making day at Alderburgh, a game of golf did precede the AGM and the top three were Ian Willett, Andy Sheehan and Sam Sylvester, all on 32 pts (that's points not pints).

Three other people are also worthy of a mention. They are Lyndon Upham, who thought he'd take the tiger line off the temporary first tee but put his ball through the clubhouse window. He tried to look the other way but could not keep a straight face. Not that breaking the window was funny but the sight of the spectators hitting the deck like someone had just thrown a hand grenade was.

The second person is Roger Plummer, who scored 19 points. He only "played nine" he said as the other nine were blobs.

Your scribe, to score more points than Roger, was always going to get a mention. The third person is Andrew Kersey who scored eight points. Full marks Andrew for handing your card in. As the song goes things can only get better.

The four desperados, Curtis, Chesham, Richardson and Rushbook played the nine hole and came 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

We also had the men in green coats from BIGGA Palace to oversee the pantomime. They were John Pemberton and Derek Farrington, who is our area officier from on high. We shall all see him in due course.

John Pemberton presented the prizes to Doug Smith, Spring Shield, Steve Millard, Summer Shield, Ray Mitchell, Autumn Shield, and Tim Russell, Winter Shield.

After the presentation our thanks went to all the trade for their support over the years. They include, Rushbrooks, Sisis, Rhone Poulenc, CMW, King's Toro, Ransomes, Doe's, Colliers, Rigby Taylor, Turf Actant, Ben Burgess and Bartrams.

If I have missed anyone out I am sorry but it should not happen in future!

The next stage was the election of the officers who are as follows.

President, Ernie Hart; Vice President, Bob Chesham; Chairman, Steve Millard; Treasurer, Martin Mystow; Handicap Secretary, Alan Carter; Secretary, Ian Willett; Scribe, Mick Lathrope; Regional Members, Michael Peters, Sam Sylvester, David Childs, Roger Plummer; Liaison Officer, Colin Rushbrook.

Next year's dates are Finn Valley, April 9 (Hayter Challenge), Next Round Ham Manor; Felixstowe, June 25; Yarmouth and Caister, August 13 (30 limit); Gog Magog, October 9; Gentleman's Dinner (Don't tell the wife) Walton Heath, March 7; National Tournament August '97 Cooden Beach.

I do believe that's nearly it except to say a big thank you to Aldeburgh GC for putting up with us yet again. They really do look after us. Thanks also to Mick Moss (CMW) for yet another turkey. Long may the tradition continue.

I'll just end by saying, come on East Anglia, let's get this show on the road. It's your Section. Support it!
Mick Lathrope

Sussex

The Turkey Trot for 1996 was once again held at Littlehampton GC. We were luckier with the weather this year, no frost, no snow, just the sea breeze that went through rather than round you. After a hearty breakfast and a brandy we set out to do battle. All was fine until we arrived at the halfway bar (provided by Miracle). After more brandy, beer and mince pies the golf deteriorated some what, but who cares as it's Christmas. After 18 holes we were all ready for a hot shower and our Christmas dinner. The food and the service were up to their usual high standards. Then to the prize giving. All scores have been verified by George Barr;- 1. George Barr(!), Paul Ward, Bob Watters, Mark Day, 54 points; 2. Rob Short, Les Templeman, Brian Finn, A. Finn, 54 points. The turkey vouchers were provided by Avoncrop. On behalf of the Section could I thank Keith Palmer, Secretary of Littlehampton, and Dave Wood and his greenkeeping staff for presenting the course so well. Rumour has it that we have been invited back again this year.

For those of you who do not already know two of our Section managed to find brides last year. Congratulations to Raymond Day who married Jill in October 1996 and to Alistair Cale who married Dee also in October 1996. After partnering Alistair in the Turkey Trot I don't know whether to send congratulations or sympathy to Dee (only joking Alistair).

Well that's it for now, don't forget I need your input for future articles. Contact me on (01403) 731567.

Colin Cathie

Surrey

As we are in a change over period on the committee it has fallen my lot to keep you up to date as to what has been going on in the Section.

The Turkey Trot was held at Guildford GC on December 3. The weather for once held fair, my thanks to all who attended and my apologies to those who were too late with their applications – for once the start sheet was full up! My thanks to the Management and to Chris and his merry men for a job well done. Results:- 1. J Mathis, Northants GC, 40 pts; 2. Billy McMillan, 37 pts; 3. Ian (Sooty) Sutcliffe, 35 pts. Trade prize:- I. Sellars, 40 pts.

The AGM was held after the golf, again my apologies to those who arrived at the correct time but after the meeting had started. This was due to events beyond by control. Four members of the committee have decided to

stand down this year – Clive Osgood, Derek Walder, D. Gibbs and Roger Glazier. Our sincere thanks to all the hard work they have put in over the years. We did manage to recruit one screaming and kicking volunteer, our singer and expert golfer, Johnny Mathis! Any more recruits would be welcome.

The lecture by British Seed Houses, held at Reigate Heath GC on December 12, was a great success and very well attended with excellent food and the American speaker being well worth the trip.

I will get the 1997 diaries out as soon as possible but we still have a couple of venues to fill. I would like to take this opportunity in thanking all of you "regulars" that have supported our events throughout 1996. We have been playing to full houses but new faces are more than welcome.

The Parker Salver is open to suggestions, give me, or any committee member, a ring and let us have your ideas. Hopefully someone else will take on the newsletter in 1997 so I will wish you all the very best for the New Year.

Ted Stiles

Kent

First of all I hope you all had a good Christmas and a happy New Year, and no doubt a successful Harrogate.

I have got some long overdue results from last year's golf tournaments. At Sundridge Park we played for the Gem Professional Shield on a very nice day with the course in excellent condition. The results were:- Overall winner – J. Fullager; 2nd Nett – R. Lucas; Best Gross – H. Morgan; 2nd Gross – P. Rudkin; Trade Prize – G. Ogilvie. Many thanks must go to Gem, Sundridge Park and Raymond Day and his staff for the course.

Secondly the Turkey Trot at Darenth Valley was played on a beautiful, but frosty, morning. The course was in excellent condition with the best prepared temporary greens in the South-East. The golf scores were a credit to the course and the results were:- 1. B. Abbott – 40 pts; 2. S. Grand – 38 pts; 3. D. Wood – 37 pts; 4. J. Fullager – 37 pts; 5. J. Le Mar – 38 pts (trade prize). After the golf we held the fastest AGM ever – 15 minutes with no complaints! After a superb meal and the speeches the committee provided everyone with a festive bottle of wine to show thanks for your support during the year. Thanks must go to Darenth Valley, the sponsors, Scott and Avoncrop, and Nigel Stapley and his staff for the course.

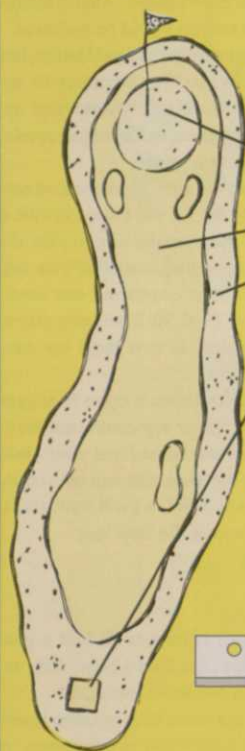
For 1997 we have some new tournaments lined up. Firstly, there is a four-somes knock-out to be played between March and September and a greensome at Wilderness in the summer. Further information will be sent out soon. All members will be sent out a letter with a slip attached and if the slip is not returned by the closing date you will not be included on the golf mailing list for the rest of the year.

If you have any news etc please call me on 0860 260240.

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GROWTH INDUSTRY



Hugh Tilley examines the field of fertilisers and looks at the developments which have taken place.

While there are various views on the need for fertiliser on golf courses, particularly on fairways, most greenkeepers accept a need for fertiliser on greens and tees which are regularly mown with clippings boxed off. Greenkeepers are also recognising that more rounds over an extended season require the grass to be kept growing for longer and for it to be strengthened.

There is also an increasing requirement for courses to look good throughout the year. As a result there are several pressures to apply fertilisers, perhaps in increasing amounts, and to increasing areas of the course. There are also differing thoughts over the use of organics, turf conditioners and growth stimulants, and perhaps there is now a realisation that applying the major nutrients without a balance of minor nutrient and trace elements is recipe for disease etc, and, talking to Course Managers, greater use is being made of analysis. Most fertilisers are supplied through a local agent, who also often supplies other services such as soil and tissue analysis. The most usual scenario on most courses appears to be to apply a "complete" fertiliser in the spring and then to top up with nitrogen once or twice later in the season as needed - often using the later

dressings to include other products such as iron and/or a fungicide. The last few years have seen many changes in the manufacturer supplier chain, the golf course and its manager has become more important while agriculture has declined in importance and this change has led to greater importance being attached to meeting the requirements of golf. Other changes have been in the composition of greens, which are the areas which receive most fertiliser, as more and more are built or re-built to USGA Guidelines with under-drains, stone and mainly sand root zones. Composition of the root zone has considerable bearing on fertiliser use. There have also been several critical changes in supplier and manufacturer with changes of name - ICI became Miracle, via Zenica and Fisons became Levington Horticultural while US based Scotts and Mascot, both marketed by UK companies, have made a significant impact on the UK golf course. Miracle is now wholly owned by Scotts, but both will continue to run as two separate operations while it is seen how they marry together.

Few changes in product are envisaged. BASF now market their turf fertilisers through Kings Horticulture. The term "fertiliser" has a precise meaning in law - and analysis of the product must be stated. But as one maker stated the exact method of analysis can vary between US, UK and Europe - thus "like" need not be "alike".

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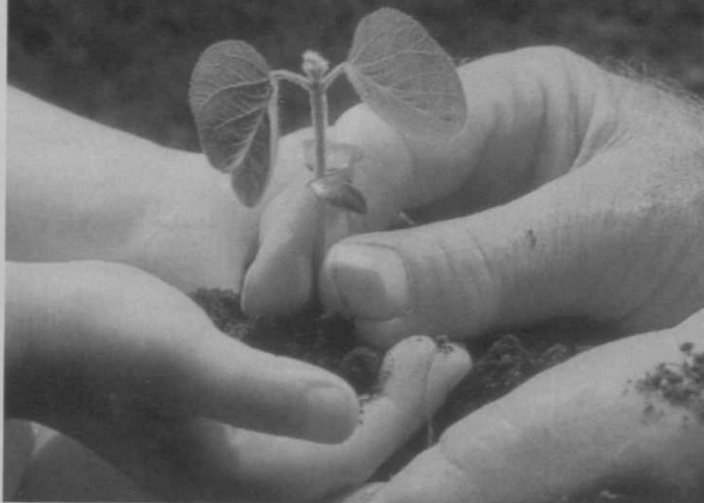
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GROWTH INDUSTRY



The main plant nutrients are Nitrogen, Phosphate and Potassium, normally abbreviated to N, P and K after their chemical symbols. In addition many fine turf fertilisers have added iron – Fe – for its ability to induce deeper green into the grass and to help suppress moss, they may also have other elements such as sulphur (S) and Magnesium (Mg) plus trace elements.

Techniques such as resin coating have been proven and from a single exponent (Sierra) there are now several makers offering coated products. Didin (a nitrification inhibitor), IBDU and Methylene Urea (MU), the latter two urea nitrogens, have to be broken down before becoming available to the plant and this is another way in which nitrogen release can be extended and these are well proven for those who want to make their nitrogen uptake extend into the mid-summer period – but not all manufacturers are agreed how effective this is. Resin coating is claimed to be able to extend the release season by up to six months.

Many nutrients do not bond to sand – thus N and K in particular may be leached out, nor may there be any nitrification bacteria to breakdown urea into nitrate for uptake by the plant – thus the form of N become critical for sand based greens. Mark Hunt, of Scotts, admitted that their range was particularly geared to this type of green. Of course the whole idea of slow release is to save time and labour (on application) as well as levelling out the growth curve. Drought in the last seasons has only partly affected grass growth on greens because many courses now have irrigation removing lack of water as a controlling factor allowing nutrient to be utilised. High summer temperatures increase bacterial activity and so increase the rate of nitrification. On non-irrigated fairways differing thinking may be needed, although perhaps fertiliser can be used to promote drought resistance – with longer stronger root growth which can pick-up soil moisture better. Special fertiliser formulations are available for the turf market with both liquid and solids on offer, however a past ploy on most courses has been to use a mini-granule in early season to put on all the year's potassium (K) and phosphate (P) with enough nitrogen (N) to get the grass growing,

however increasingly the use of a mixture of nitrogen sources within the fertiliser is resulting in products with higher levels being available. Typically these products will have three types of N – with immediate, medium and slow release properties.

Despite the best endeavours of scientists to produce ever slower release nitrogens, nitrogen usually has to be supplemented in the summer when the plant can use it, however warm autumns and some mild weather in winter has allowed some nitrogen to be used out of season. Potassium (potash) – K – is also leached from sand and so can be deficient and as a result additional fertilisers are being added to most ranges to give the knowledgeable greenkeeper a suitable product to apply. Experience in agriculture and horticulture has shown that a surfeit of K can cause other nutritional problems, and a lock-up of other elements – but there is no suggestion that this is occurring with golf greens. Both the potassium and phosphate elements tend towards giving the plant greater resilience to wear and disease, while nitrogen is known to promote softer more disease prone growth, but in truth having the elements available in the right proportions must be the best answer to healthy turf. Other important 'minor' elements are magnesium and sulphur, the former often available as a specific element of the fertilisers, however there are many other elements needed by healthy turf, particu-

larly close mown turf which is verti-cut, scarified and has the clippings removed. Several manufacturers now include seaweed extract, "hoof and horn" or other organic ingredients in their product to broaden the spectrum of nutrient provision as well as to help carry the major nutrient. This belief – that organic compounds are good – is also promoted by the many suppliers of turf conditioners and growth stimulants and although seldom proved by analytical science has a lot of adherents amongst greenkeepers. Other particular concerns for the greenkeeper are take-up of fertiliser by the mower, hence the preference for micro or mini-granules apart from blunting the blades, fertiliser is corrosive, nor is there any sense in removing an expensive product with the clippings even though it may help them rot down! Most clubs with irrigation will run a watering programme specifically set to wash the fertiliser off the leaf and into the ground – and many suppliers actually suggest this course of action.

Several manufacturers stress that their products are true compounds rather than blends – blends being cheaper and easier to produce because they are simply a mix of the required 'straight' ingredients. The contention is that such mixes can separate and cease to be homogeneous, so producing variable results on the ground – these worries are voiced strongly by suppliers of compounds. In contrast the supplier

of blends is able to state that there is little evidence of this on the ground and that he can mix a product which will more exactly match the customer's requirements. One supplier added that he takes care to ensure that all granules are within a close size tolerance so that they have similar spread characteristics. Chelation is another science blinding word relating to fertiliser – in theory chelating means that the nutrients are 'buffered' so that they are less likely to bond to soil or other elements so becoming 'locked-up' and unavailable to the plant.

Liquid fertilisers have a number of adherents, and in particular N can be effective as a foliar feed. As a general rule liquids are less concentrated but more readily available thus they have a definite place in agronomy.

Several suppliers of organic compounds augment their products with the major nutrients in order to provide a total feed – and to meet greenkeepers' requirements, few greenkeepers subscribe to the muck and mystery theory that if it is organic and includes 'everything' it must be good for the grass.

Just what is the correct level and analysis of the major nutrients which should be applied is far too complex a matter to discuss here – it should be a matter of soil analysis and discussion between greenkeeper and supplier. There are a wide variety of differing compounds on the market offering an almost infinite range of differing ratios of N, P and K, perhaps with Fe, S and/or Mg. so the greenkeeper can take his pick. Many head greenkeepers and course managers have very decided opinions of what their course needs, and greater education has allowed them to base these views on science. Unfortunately for the greenkeeper, plant and soil science is extremely complex and subject to an infinite range of variables and conditions, ask any agronomist – so that what works well one year, in one soil, in one management may not produce the same results the next year or consistently. Nevertheless the main objective of most greenkeepers is to keep the grass looking healthy and growing so that it can be cut. Perhaps the greater truth is that grass growth really enables turf to be kept at its pristine best – and that this is the nub of the greenkeeping art.

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Greenkeeper awarded MBE

Jimmy McDonald has been awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List.

It topped off a wonderful year for Jimmy, who ensured that Royal Lytham & St Annes was in magnificent condition for last year's Open, the final major championship of his illustrious career.

"It was a wonderful surprise and reflects well on the work that the entire greenkeeping staff put in during the run up to and the week of the Open itself," said Jimmy, who receives the award for "Services to Golf".

It is a fitting tribute to the success of the '96 Open and, with him due to visit Buckingham Palace in the next few months to receive the Award, makes his quote in the lead up to the Championship all the more fitting.

"If your dear old aunt was visiting you'd make a damn good tea but if the Queen were coming you'd do it a wee bit differently, wouldn't you," he said at the time when discussing the meticulous work which went into preparing for the Championship.

The effort paid off and during and since the Championship



Jimmy, fourth from right, and his team

praise for the course has been unstinting.

"I have had letters from all over the world congratulating us on a wonderful Championship and on the condition of the course.

"The feedback I've had is that the genuine links with burnt up grass was just what was wanted. Ironically just a few weeks prior to it I was worried because it was still pretty green."

As ever Jimmy has some thoughtful views on the country's great links courses.

"They should be treated like listed buildings and not tampered with. Ideally, on the Open venues play should be restricted and the clubs compensated. They are like

pieces of antique furniture and should be treated as such."

Since July's Championship much work has been done to return, particularly the spectator walkways and tented village area, to what it should be.

"Because we had two dry summers in a row the sward wasn't a thick as it should be and the damage was quite considerable on the walkways and the nine hole course but John Mallinson, of Ormskirk, who we used after the last Open, has done a great job in repairing the areas."

The recognition Jimmy has received reflects well on the entire greenkeeping profession and Neil Thomas, BIGGA's Execu-

tive Director paid tribute to him.

"The Award is richly deserved and reflects a lifetime's commitment to the greenkeeping profession. Many greenkeepers have worked with Jimmy and been trained by him over the years and a good many have gone on to manage their own golf courses having benefited greatly from the time spend with him.

"As well as being a personal award it is pleasing to see the recognition of greenkeeping as a profession and today the profession offers excellent opportunities. This is in no small measure due to the efforts of the older generation such as Jimmy who has set standards and through the year's enhanced the status of greenkeeping and greenkeepers," said Neil.

Jimmy's CV is the envy of most. He has been Head Greenkeeper at four Opens, four Senior Opens, been Deputy at another Open and has Ryder and Curtis Cups under his belt. He also helped to rebuild the nine hole course at his home in Traigh in the West Highlands.

"The first congratulatory fax came from Traigh. I was chuffed by that," said Jimmy.



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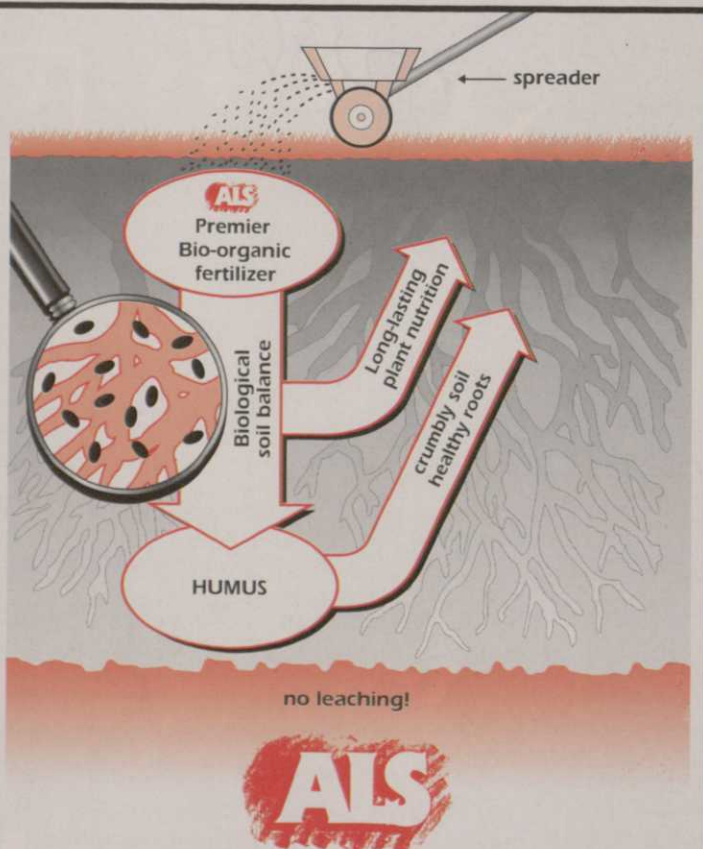
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