



Leading lights of the competition, with the winner and finalists

Having been a season ticket holder off and on for over 20 years he sees parallels between himself and "Bully" the Black Country's great folk hero.

"I liken myself to Steve Bull because he is a natural player and goal scorer and I'm a natural greenkeeper. I have gut feelings about things. I know when the weather is going to change that sort of thing. I was made to be a greenkeeper," he said, giving a glimpse of the sort of conviction which impressed the judges.

"I don't need to convince people at this golf club that I can do the job because they just need to look at the course but being Premier Greenkeeper is going to be beneficial to me as it shows that the industry has judged me to be Premier Greenkeeper."

Cedric is well used to coping with the critics, whom he calls the five percenters.

"There are the same five percent of the membership in every golf club who know more than the greenkeeper. All memberships are the same but all golf courses are different. You have to stand and take the flack and it is the hardest thing to do. You learn from experience and I certainly feel for the younger well qualified greenkeepers who don't have the experience to deal with the customer."

Part of that experience has resulted in Cedric banning the phrase "temporary greens" at Broadway.

"They are alternative greens rather than temporary and I would like other greenkeepers to stop using the word "temporary" as it causes problems with golfers."

Looking back at his 24 years at Broadway Cedric can't help but

feel a bit frightened by the speed of it all.

"You turn around and 10 years have gone because you are always thinking about the next project. I've built every tee at least once, some of them twice and even more."

Cedric's greenkeeper education started with a week long STRI course he attended while at Bridgnorth and since then has revolved around BIGGA.

"I read magazines and books, attend lectures through the Midland region and Harrogate and also visit other courses with the Chairman of Green and our pro where we play with the local greenkeeper and then look around the course, sheds etc. Likewise they come here. Since winning the Regional Final several greenkeepers have made a

point of visiting to play the course and no doubt more will come having won the National final.

"In the last few years I've felt a need to get more involved in BIGGA, although at Broadway we are a little bit in the fringes of Midland events, and attending seminars at Harrogate has done my confidence a lot of good."

Looking back Cedric has seen the industry change dramatically and he is never slow to move with the times.

"If I took the whole of my career, had someone said to this this young whippet of a lad doing Bridgnorth golf club on his own that he would have pop-up irrigation, triple mowers, self propelled mowers, really expensive equipment to maintain, that he would end up in with an office with a computer and have detailed

records to keep I think he would have melted on the spot.

"In my career I've seen an awful lot of changes and most of them for the better," said Cedric.

"I have been extremely lucky here because I have an excellent team and the Chairman of Green has been superb."

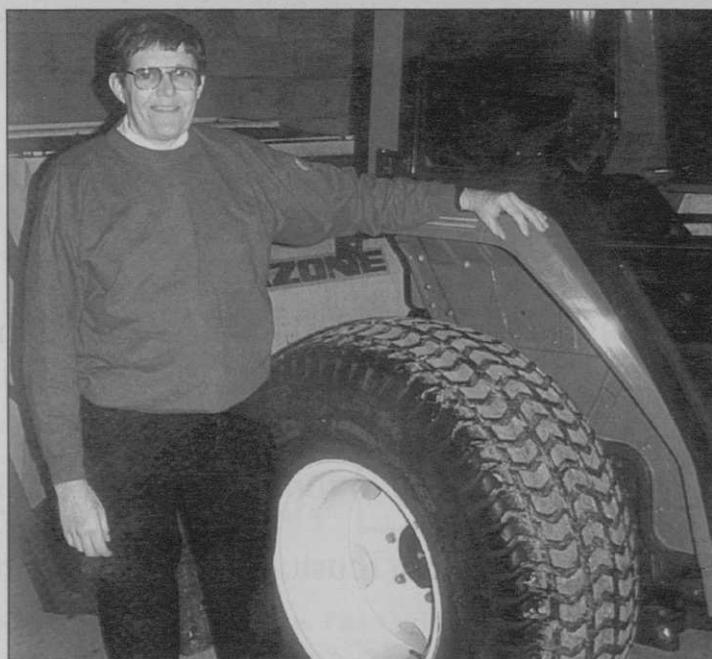
Cedric became the Miracle Professional Premier Greenkeeper from a strong field of finalists representing the five BIGGA regions. Paul Jenkins, of Lilleybrook GC representing the South West and South Wales; Huw Morgan, of Wilderness GC, representing the South East; Stewart McBain, of Hazlehead and Balnagask GCs, representing Scotland and David Leach, of North Manchester GC (now at Lancaster GC), representing Northern.

Having reached the final stages each finalist was again visited and all aspects of greenkeeping were examined including the golf course, maintenance facility, record keeping etc.

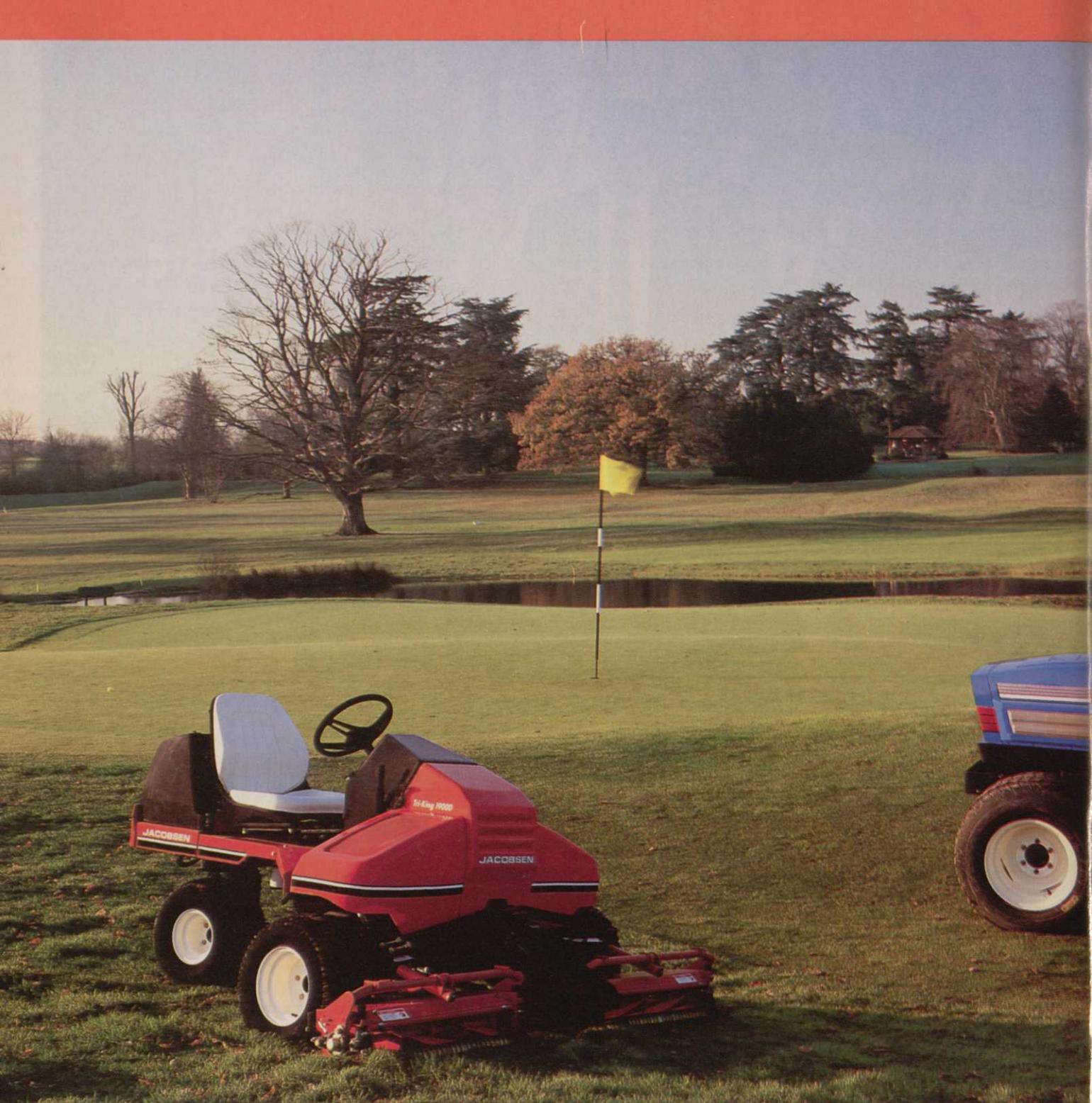
The interview portion of the final was undertaken at Aldwark Manor by Richard Minton of Miracle Professional and Pat Murphy, BIGGA's Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Education Sub-Committee, who had visited the courses, and Roger Mossop, also of Miracle Professional, and Neil Thomas, BIGGA's Executive Director.

After long deliberations during which Cedric emerged the winner Stewart McBain was judged second and Huw Morgan third.

Stewart received a holiday voucher to the value of £350 and Huw a holiday voucher to the value of £250.



Underneath the arches: Cedric with clean wheel rim which so impressed the judges



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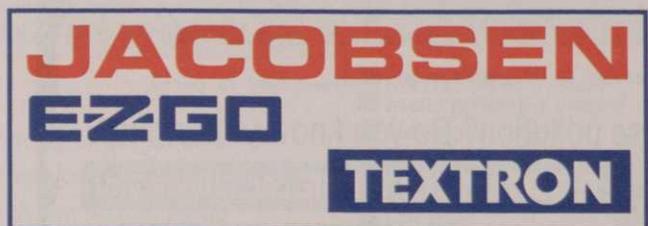
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'Amazing' year

It's hard to believe that this is my final column and that my year as Chairman is coming to an end.

When people ask if I've enjoyed my year it would be very easy to play it down and say, "Yes. But it has been hard work." It is true that it has been busy at times, but I just think that I'm so lucky to have had the opportunity to do it.

Among the things I will look back on with particular affection are last year's Harrogate when I donned the red blazer for the first time, as it was the realisation of an ambition I'd held for a while, and also going to America, where I had the chance to visit Augusta National.

I've also been lucky that it has been a very positive year for BIGGA. Nobody within the Association has travelled as much as I have this year and wherever I've been I've met positive people – people who enjoy what the Association has to offer and get a great deal out of it. That's been great to see.

Also, when I've been abroad I've been able to listen to what our international colleagues think of BIGGA. They admire the won-

As I see it...

BY DEAN CLEAVER
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

derful education we offer, which everyone agrees is second to none, and they want to be part of it. That's why so many of them join our Association. We, at times, take it for granted and it is nice to listen to other countries appreciating BIGGA.

One of the first things I was involved with when I became Chairman was the formation of FEGGA and it was something I very much wanted to succeed.

Our meeting in Amsterdam in March was a milestone because we had many countries represented around the table all coping with the same problems and aiming for the same things. It was marvellous.

It has moved a lot quicker than we thought. The first AGM is at Harrogate and we already have written confirmation from the European Ecology Unit that there is a place for us at their table and

I'm delighted that I am FEGGA's nomination. It is important that we have an input in Brussels into what's said with regard to golf.

Talking about the industry as a whole there is no doubt about it that our job as greenkeepers and Course Managers is becoming increasingly difficult. The standard of golf courses has risen tremendously but people's expectations are such that they expect more and more.

Winter golf used to be a bit of fun – put a few clubs in a bag and off you'd go. Now it's not like that, it's serious stuff all year round.

It has an affect on the golf course. We always do our best to give golfers what they want, but it does create problems.

At times it is forgotten that the green stuff we look after is a living plant. The abuse it gets and the extreme conditions that we put it under mean that it is going to react in ways we don't expect and you do get bad luck.

If there is a problem on a golf course people tend to see it as a problem that the greenkeeper has created. "You must have done something wrong for that to happen."

That appears to have been what happened at Collingtree Park. It is the worst I've ever known in terms of what the radio and the papers were saying. It was just unbelievable.

The disappointing thing is that the media doesn't go to the right people to ask the questions so it gets taken out of context and blown out of proportion. We can all sympathise with Alistair Connall.

We've perhaps become the victims of our own success because for years we've wanted more say in what occurs on the golf course. We wanted more input, more responsibility. Now we are beginning to get that recognition and there are more people with total responsibility for their golf course.

However, with that comes more pressure.

At times we can all be guilty of disappearing into our shell if things are getting on top of us. When the course is A1 everybody

wants to speak to you but when the course is not so good, or there is a little bit of a problem, it can be quite a lonely job, people are less likely to talk to you. It really is amazing.

On a lighter note I had a couple of funny experiences while wearing the Red Blazer and flying to and from functions during the year. On a flight in America the air crew were wearing red jackets and one of them said to me, "We're not expecting anyone". They must have thought I was a relief pilot or something.

Then, coming back from a FEGGA meeting in Bordeaux, I was wearing my blazer under my waterproof jacket but it was just visible. A stewardess looked at me and said they should be able to make me a little more comfortable.

She phoned through to another steward and stewardess who were there to greet me when I arrived at my seat, took my bags from me, stowed them away and generally made me extremely comfortable. It was only when I read the in-flight magazine that I noticed all the staff were also in red jackets. When I took off my blazer I could see them trying to read my badge and it was then that they realised I wasn't an airline official.

Back to BIGGA business. I would like to see the job we've started with regard to the appointment of part-time employed Regional Administrators completed by the deadline of October. They are important positions and we will all get the benefit of them. The sooner that they are all in place the better.

I'd also like to see the regional management courses continue to thrive. They are there for your benefit and are subsidised and so are available to people who might not have been able to afford them otherwise.

If Sections want a course and can get the numbers to attend we will certainly put it on.

It just leaves me to thank Gay Hill Golf Club and all the members for the wonderful support throughout the year – particularly Barr Breckenridge, the Greens Chairman. The fact that I

(mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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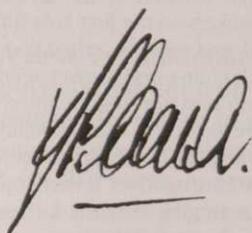


comes to an end

attended so many functions as Chairman put more pressure on my team and they have been magnificent and a great support all through my year. Thanks to Alan Rowney, Andrew Kite, Raymond Taylor, Gerard Hickman and Noel Greene.

Also, thanks to all the BIGGA staff for their support during the year.

Finally I'd like to wish Pat Murphy an enjoyable and successful year in office when he takes over from me at BTME.




A year to remember: Dean Cleaver with a table-full of souvenirs from his period in office as BIGGA Chairman

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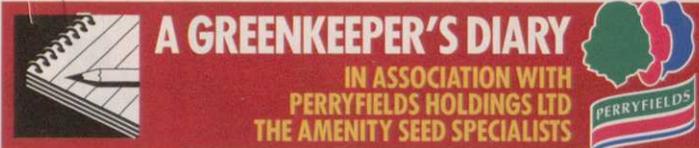
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Enduring January...

Morecambe Golf Club is situated in an exposed position on the coast but this does not deter our hardy members from battling the elements out on the course. Heavy play continues right through the winter and much of our work is planned to minimise and counteract the damage caused. The course is generally well drained (but not a links) and most of the greens remain dry and firm throughout the Winter. Temporary greens are not required because the course gets flooded and unplayable before the greens get too wet. When hard frost is thawing the course is closed. The larger tees are in play throughout the winter, some of the smaller ones have alternative winter tees and others have an area mown out in front of the tee. We have a few tee mats which are used wherever problems are encountered or during construction work. To direct traffic around the course and keep trolleys away from greens we use white lines applied through a basic wet line marker. These can be moved around as they fade to shift wear patterns and seem to be more effective than hoops or roping off, the latter seem to be taken as a challenge to be overcome.

The free draining nature of the course means that construction work can continue throughout the winter. I try to programme a range of work suitable for differing ground and weather conditions to give us flexibility.

Greens mowing is carried out weekly if weather permits using pedestrian mowers set at 8mm while intensive aeration of greens continues throughout the winter, this consists mainly of slitting but we occasionally use solid tines and a Robin Dagger is used on problem areas. Maintenance of the trees, shrubs, hedges and woodland is a regular feature during January. This work lends itself to periods of hard frost when the possibilities for other outdoor work are limited.

Fungicide use is minimal at Morecambe Golf Club, if we get through October and November without using fungicide we usually get through the Winter. Our general policy is not to spray at first sign of fusarium but to keep an eye on it. If weather conditions

BY MARK BROUGHTON, COURSE
MANAGER, MORECAMBE GOLF CLUB

are ideal for the spread of the disease and the attack looks serious we resort to the sprayer. Sulphate of iron is applied to the greens occasionally throughout the winter in powdered form. This helps to prevent fusarium reaching problem levels reduces worm casting and improves presentation.

We usually try to get any major projects finished by Christmas and concentrate on smaller jobs such as bunker renovation and path construction after the new year. This year development work is limited, a major revision of the layout of the bunkers on the first hole is proposed and work is scheduled for path building and bunker renovation. In common with many clubs we are looking at the possibility of installing a borehole to supply water for irrigation. If things go to plan it should be ready for action before the start of the season.

When the weather is too desperate to venture out there is plenty to keep us occupied indoors. Overhauls and servicing of machinery are carried out in house where possible and course furniture tee markers etc are renovated. The annual review of Health and Safety policy and assessments is carried out this month with the involvement of all staff. Staff training and NVQ assessments are carried out throughout the year but the majority is carried out during the Winter particularly in January and February. This year we are trying out a scheme that gives us extra holiday over Christmas and new year in return for extra hours worked during the busy Summer period.

The main event of the month is BTME. A visit to the workshops, seminars and exhibition has become a regular fixture in my diary. The exhibition is excellent and gets better every year, and there is always something to learn from the educational programme. Even the trip home can be an entertaining challenge in the snow!

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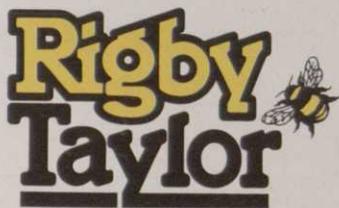
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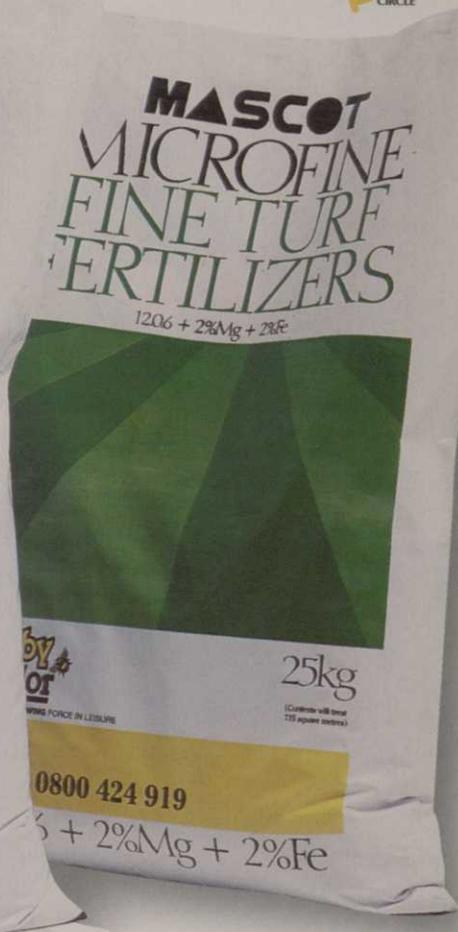
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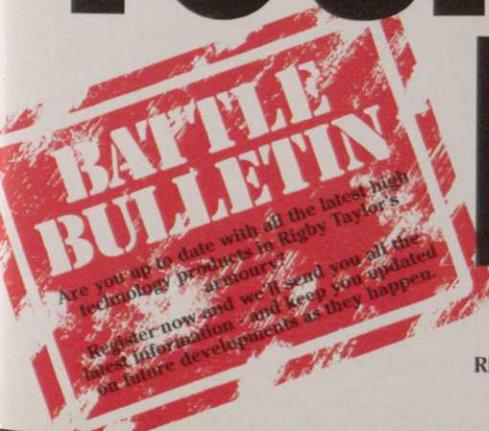
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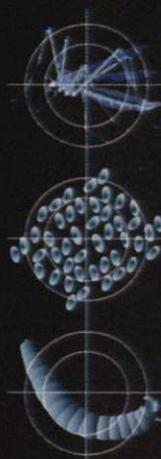
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TREES

John Nicholson, of Eamonn Wall & Co, looks at some of the unique problems that are encountered when golf; trees and the English Parkland landscape are combined, with Brancepeth Castle Co. Durham highlighting many of the difficulties.

In 1923 Lord Boyne decided to lay out a golf links in the deer park of Brancepeth Castle. To design the layout, he employed the premier golf course architect of the period H S Colt.

Colt with the assistance of his partner Major J S F Morrison, did a truly remarkable job, using the natural rolling land form to great effect. It is perhaps testament to the fine quality of turf that from conception to the course opening was only 14 months. In fact no turf or seed was imported to the site, so good was the native sward. This was possibly due to the fact that the park had for some 300 years benefited from the grazing and natural fertilisation provided by the deer.

The course is unusual in that it has three distinct characters – parkland, heath and the once ornate old castle garden. Therefore to retain the unique “Genius loci” of the site, three separate management prescriptions are necessary

It is also unusual in that it is registered by English Heritage as “A Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest”.

The course enjoys a wonderful backdrop; rolling countryside to the south and the magnificent castle and medieval church to the north.

There are few courses which can boast such a classic layout and picturesque setting. The castle which was described by Bernard Darwin as “a splendid pile which makes a backdrop to several holes”, combines with the golf course to form that special ambience which is only found in settings steeped in history.

The name Brancepeth itself evokes mystical thoughts being a derivative of Braun’s path (Boar’s path). It is said that the last wild boar in England roamed what is now the golf course and that the castle was often frequented by Richard III for the pursuit of such beasts.



Even slow growing species such as oak can have an impact in a relatively short period. The top picture was taken just five years before the picture above. The visibility of the left hand side of the green and bunker is reduced by some 30 per cent – resulting in uneven wear to the tee and a par 3 which will to some extent become blind

THE PARKLAND LANDSCAPE

The landscape remained much the same until the time of the English Landscape Movement when in 1783 Adam Mickel drew up plans for the landscaping of the park;. However these seem to have been largely ignored and the parkland is much today as it was

in the 16th century. Even when the golf course was constructed the parkland remained virtually unchanged. Colt, using all his undoubted skills, integrated the layout in an almost anonymous manner.

The first real changes to the

traditional parkland have accrued in the last 30 years The breaking up of many of the larger estates and with them their traditional management prescriptions, combined with changes in legislation, have led to the evolution of new landscapes. The once routine

'Woodland design should also consider aesthetics'

practice of burning off areas in the autumn to control the spread of unwanted vegetation is no longer allowed. As a result the open park lands which are no longer grazed are falling prey to regeneration of both trees and assertive weeds. Rose bay willow herb being the most common. The once open views and designed vistas are now no longer and the character of many of the classic parkland courses is being lost to regeneration. It is therefore important that courses such as Brancepeth realise the need for management and take advantage of the grants available to manage their existing woodlands and ensure their sustainability.

The importance of woodland management

In 1920 the well known course architect Dr Alistair Mackenzie stated in his book "Golf Course Architecture" that:

"Perhaps the most serious mistake made by a golf committee is the fallacy that they will save money by neglecting to get expert advice ..."

He goes on to say: "There can be little doubt that the poorer the club, the more important it is not to waste its small funds in doing the wrong kind of work, but to get the best possible advice from its inception."

The use of an independent specialist allows a club to adopt an unbiased long term plan and strategy for improving the quality of the trees and woodlands as and when resources allow.

The arborist should be used to assess the existing tree cover on the course and to draw up a woodland management plan to ensure that the appropriate long term results are achieved. If, as is quite common, the club also desires the strategy of the course to be altered, then a golf course architect should be used in conjunction with the arboriculturalist.

Within all golf clubs there are a range of opinions as to the main issues and problems and just as many divergent views on how to put these right. This is understandable as there are few absolutes or prescribed standards in either woodland management or golf course design. Further, as the composition of a club committee changes, so do the policies for woodland management and course improvement. These

become at best inconsistent and at worst, may swing from one extreme to another. In addition, securing a consensus within a committee may lead to ineffective compromise when an imaginative decisive approach is required.

There are rarely any easy short-term quick fixes when tackling flaws in existing tree cover. Similarly, fundamental design faults usually require comprehensive solutions rather than merely tinkering with the problem.

A management plan needs to command the support of the majority of the membership and should include a review of existing tree cover on the course and its effectiveness in fulfilling the required long-term objectives along with proposals to ensure these long term objectives are secured. These objectives should be achieved by a gradual evolution of tree planting and management rather than drastic short term changes.

When a management plan involves additional tree planting indigenous species should be used, particularly around the perimeter to create a strong structural framework that will look natural in the wider landscape.

Species selected for planting should take account of the following:

- soil type
- drainage
- aspect
- climatic factors
- resilience to golf ball damage
- form and shape

● compatibility with the wider landscape character

● compatibility with the landscape character of the golf course

● compatibility with the character of the individual hole

● compatibility with existing tree planting

● light management

● provenance

● stock type and quality.

Consideration should be given to both the visual impact and contribution the trees make to creating the golfing strategy of each hole. A management plan should ensure that these roles are protected, reinforced and enhanced where necessary. In addition the plan should protect and enhance the wildlife value of existing and proposed tree planting on the course while also protecting and enhancing the contribution trees make to promoting safety both around the edge of the course and between the holes.

Sustainability and aesthetics

In forestry terms sustainability is the production of a normal forest, ie a forest with an even distribution of age classes, from newly planted stock to mature trees. Although golf courses do not exist for the production of commercial timber (although this should not be ruled out) the principle of sustainability can still be applied. Sustainability should be one of the major objectives of any management plan, as the loss of a tree or woodland can affect the aesthetics of a course, influence its

strategic qualities and, on a broader scale, can affect the wider landscape.

In order to achieve sustainability, a management plan should aim to create an uneven canopy with a diverse species mix. An uneven canopy would allow the loss or removal of over mature trees without a drastic change to the landscape and would safeguard the woodland against such dramatic losses as occurred in the storm of 1987 where in southern Britain some courses lost virtually their entire tree stock. Similarly, courses which lacked diversity suffered devastation with the emergence of Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s.

In addition to aiming for sustainability, woodland design should also consider aesthetics. The surrounding landscape has to be complemented by any planting and extremes should be avoided. Too diverse a mix can be as unsightly as a monotonous plantation. Colours should be harmonised rather than contrasting and changes of mix should be blended together avoiding harsh lines.

Sustainability cannot, unfortunately, be gained overnight. It requires long term management in order to gain the necessary uneven canopy. Species mix can however help to reduce the time scale as different species have different growth rates and varying life spans. A continuous programme of under planting is required on older established courses in order to

The increased growth rate which occurs when trees are 'topped'

