

REAL WORLD TEST
COMPACT TRACTORS
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land course – were supplied by Western Farm Machinery at Stratford-on-Avon, who happen to be Massey Ferguson dealers.

Course Manager Keith Weston said that in the past little dealer support had been needed. Later he explained that the club sent all its main machinery out for a winter service to ensure maximum reliability during the season. There were absolutely no complaints over the service provided by Western Farm.

As of writing the expectation is that local Jacobsen dealer, Abbey Mower Supplies Ltd, will become an approved Iseki dealer, and The Kenilworth Club is a committed Jacobsen user and Keith commented that if Mick's service on the Iseki is as good as has proved with other Jacobsen equipment he will be happy to go to them.

The main tractor at Kenilworth is a 37hp Iseki 537 with 4WD, cab, and mechanical transmission. It has proved to be totally reliable no breakdowns were admitted, except when it was run without coolant and this caused two oil seals to warp. The fact that this appears to be the total extent of the damage has been taken as proof of the quality of the engineering. An ex-assistant greenkeeper also managed to do some damage to the tinwork but this has not prevented the machine from functioning – again a tribute to the machine.

Bought in 1991 the 537 now shows 2565 hours on its clock as a measure of the considerable amount of work it has undertaken mostly with verti-drain, fairway gang mower and trailer. The hydraulic gang frame also takes a set of verti-cutters thus significantly adding to the tractor's duties. The creep ratios on the tractor are an essential for deep tine aeration as is the cab. Keith commented, "It gets very cold when operating for considerable lengths of time at low speeds and the operator is justified in expecting some comfort." The tractor is used with a 1.46m Verti-drain and covers all the greens and most of the fairways on the course each year.

The operator platform is particularly user friendly and devoid of clutter with all controls ready to hand. Four wheel drive is used most of the time – in particular it is seen as giving a better and surer travel with the Verti-drain.

The club also has an Iseki 4270 from the same source – and with equally as good a service record.

Lamborghini 660S at Chiselhurst Golf Club

Prime reason for selecting the Lamborghini 660S was for its excellent power to weight ratio. In fact it is not a compact tractor within the strictest terms as it is actually from the Same/Lamborghini "fruit and narrow" tractor range. This gives it an overall width which is less than many compacts while having little greater weight but considerably more power (60hp). The "fruit" specification also provides a high level of specification including a full 'Q' cab without any need to fit options. To Gary Tait, Course Manager at Chiselhurst, the narrow width was a welcome bonus.

The most applicable extra on the tractor is the loader which Gary rated as excellent, especially when it came to putting it on and off. One of the most important tasks undertaken with the tractor has been to reform several banks on the course, using bucket and grader blade, for this the tractor has been brilliant, in particular because it has a 12/12 shuttle gear box – ie 12 ratios with a single lever forward/reverse shift. Also notable is the visibility from the cab, while external operation of the hydraulic lift make fitting implements to the linkage considerably easier.

Deep aeration is a future requirement thus



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sufficient low gear ratios were considered essential, and these are part of the standard specification of the tractor.

Service support is provided by Ian Kerry Machinery – who supplied the tractor for the 1996 season. They also supply an enhanced level of service which includes a monthly visit with major services at six monthly intervals. Gary also commented that the tractor has the benefit of a three year warranty. To date no problems have been experienced.

The main occupation for the tractor, other than bucket and loader work is with a trailer and with a rotary mower on roughs in summer. Because the course is exceptionally compact and also has some quite steep banks the manoeuvrability and surefootedness of the Lamborghini 660 are ideal. Turning circle can be enhanced by steering brakes, and the tractor has both four wheel drive and four wheel braking. Turf tyres are fitted.

Gary said that when Ian Kerry Machinery knew he was in the market for a new tractor they asked to bring the 660S out on demonstration and he liked it immediately, considering it ideal for the course.

He also added that the club had been able to get an excellent deal. There was no hesitation in recommending the tractor to any greenkeeper, and Gary expects it to be good for at least a ten year life on the course.

Kubota L4200 at North Wiltshire Golf Club

The Kubota at North Wilts is one of the new 'Grandel' models and was bought from Handy's at Swindon in a deal which traded in two tractors including an aged MF 135 with loader. Course Manager, John Boorman, said that the old tractors had become unreliable and that the new tractor would be expected to undertake more work.

John said that he had been given a set sum with which to purchase the tractor and the deal had to be made within this constricton. He added that the dealer would have liked to sell him a smaller model, however the club has an Amazone high lift Groundkeeper and expects to buy a deep tine aerator and thus needed the extra weight, power, and a low gear. Also on the wish list was a back hoe, and for this the L4200 would also be ideal, however, John is not holding his breath until he gets one.

Although the tractor was taxed for the road, it will not be used on the road, partly because insurance (for roadwork) would not be cost effective. Fortunately off-road tracks allow the tractor with trailer to be used to collect compost from a local farm.

The machine will also be used for cutting the rough. With the course built on the edge of a hill effective four wheel drive is essential.

Another important consideration with the Kubota was the fact that it is small and light enough to use on greens when necessary.

It is now one year old and it has worked for 250 hours. Of course these are engine

hours – derived, like all tractor hours, from engine revolutions rather than from time. There were some criticisms of the tractor, one of the assistant greenkeepers is a large lad, he finds the cab a little small and has some problems finding some of the controls which are below seat level. There have also been some cab door catch problems and a hydraulic pipe which was perished had to be

replaced – under warranty, but overall John said he is more than happy with the tractor and he rated Handy Garden Machinery "as one of the better dealers". The club also has another Kubota. John said that the club now has a five year plan in place and this should allow for a better and more regular turnover of machinery.

He expected the Kubota to stay on the course for ten years.

Below: Gary Tait, Course Manager at Chiselhurst with their Lamborghini.

Bottom: North Wiltshire's Kubota L4200



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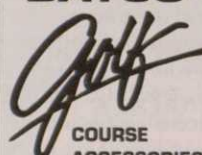
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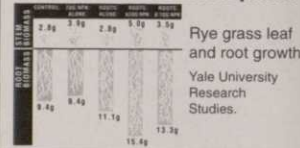


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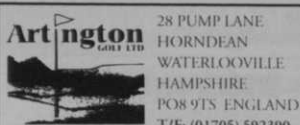
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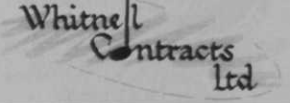
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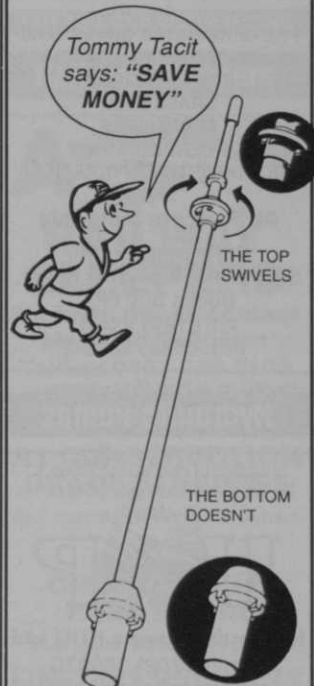
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