

# Goodbye weeds.



## 'Intrepid' will take care of your turf weeds

'Intrepid' is a new cost-effective selective weedkiller that can be applied throughout the growing season. It's powerful three-way mixture will control many broad-leaved weeds in turf. And unlike some turf herbicides, repeat applications *are* possible should new weeds germinate or deep-rooted weeds regrow during the season.

# Goodbye empties.



## Miracle will take care of your used containers

Empty pesticide containers are no longer a problem. In conjunction with a registered waste disposal contractor, Miracle Professional offer a *free* service on the UK mainland for all Miracle (ICI/Zeneca Professional Products) labelled containers. Envirogreen Ltd will collect and dispose of your empties in full compliance with legal requirements.

# Good buy, **Intrepid**

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READ THE LABEL BEFORE YOU BUY. USE PESTICIDES SAFELY.

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54

# NEW PRODUCTS



■ The Kilworth RotoBurier range has been extended with two completely new models of rotary burier for tractors from 16 to 20 horse power.

The 85L and 110L have been designed with smaller tractors in mind as until now stone burying work has been restricted to tractors above 20 horse power. The use of a RotoBurier to bury stones, vegetation and debris prior to seeding or turfing has become an important part of the construction and reinstatement of playing fields, golf courses, green areas within new developments and other similar areas. As the RotoBurier can produce a seed bed in one pass the reductions in time and labour/machinery costs are considerable. The new models have all of the user friendly features of the existing larger machines including easy access to the blades, replaceable inner skin and mechanical side shift. The RotoBurier range now consists of six machines from 0.85m working width up to 1.7m working width. This brings the Kilworth stone burier range to a total of nine models up to 2.5m working width. Prices start at £3200 + VAT. For further information contact Kilworth on 01530 412690.

■ British Seed Houses has published a Golf Greens Guide which details the choice of grasses available for greens.

The Guide also includes extended sections on Providence and Avalon, the first velvet bent for 15 years.

Avalon possesses tremendous

shoot density and wear tolerance and represents a huge step forward in the choice available for overseeding greens.

The Guide is the first available specifically for golf greens and complements the Turf Grass Manual and Wild Flora Manual already produced by British Seed Houses.

The Golf Greens Guide costs £4.95 and is available from British Seed Houses, Bewsey Industrial Estate, Pitt Street, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 5LE. Tel: 01925 654411.

■ Anyone who has tried adjusting a brushcutter carburettor, while also keeping the cutterhead running free, will know that it is virtually an impossible operation to carry out accurately. It can waste considerable time and, therefore, represents an inefficient workshop practice. In addition, it is important that, for maximum performance and long life, the carburettor on a modern high speed engine is set correctly.

There is now a solution to this problem from Risboro' Turf. The Park Brushcutter Workstation unit holds a brushcutter or trimmer in a locking clamp leaving the engineer's hands free to assemble an engine and make all the necessary adjustments. The Workstation rotates through 360 degrees and can be locked in any position. The unit will take machines up to 80 pounds in weight. There are seven models to choose from including floor, wall and bench-mounted versions.

Mark Barthelmie, Managing Director of Risboro' Turf, said. "This latest introduction in our workshop range makes what has in the past been a difficult operation, very easy. The Park Brushcutter Workstation improves workshop efficiency and cost effectiveness, while at the same time providing better working conditions for service personnel."

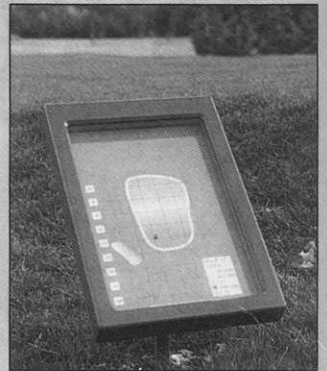
■ The True-Surface Vibratory Greens Rolling System is a set of three lightweight roller units which fit easily onto a standard greens triple mower and use the machines hydraulic drive to power their vibratory action.

Although the rollers only weigh

■ The Pin Point Green System is the perfect answer to the question Where's the Pin? A clear full colour graphic overlaid with a grid shows the green side area of the hole. This gives the distance from the front or centre of the green to the hole about to be played. A magnetic marker then points exactly to where the hole is cut. The Pin Point Green Systems are available completely free of charge to golf clubs.

The system has been designed to enhance yardage booklet sales and a schematic of the whole of the hole can be included if the golf club so desires.

The Pin Point Green System is especially useful for any holes where a clear view of the green for the approach shot is not possible. Even when the green is on a level with the player, it is very difficult to gauge the distance to the pin. Pin Point Green Systems

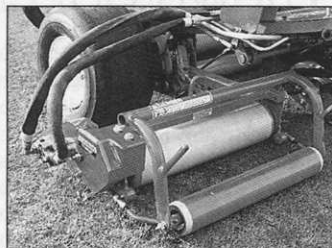


will sell the advertising space to sponsors, produce the graphics for each sign, including the advertising space that has been sold then supply the set to the golf club at no charge.

The cost of the sponsorship is £400 per box for three years for an area of 260mm by 110 mm. Alternatively the golf club can sell some of the space to sponsors to generate club funds.

For further information Tel: 01494 773757.

the same as a standard greens unit, they produce high frequency minimal weight vibration which energise the surface and transform the green back into its original shape, with the three individual roller units following the contours in exactly the same way as the mowers do. The effect is to true up the surface and increase the green speed without fear of compaction normally associated with heavy rolling.



Green speeds can thus be increased without the need to reduce mowing heights. This saves stress on the turf and produces lusher greens, hence the rollers popularity for tournament preparation.

They can also be used after Verti-draining to true-up the surface, and after topdressing

when their vibratory action will shake the sand down through the surface. Other uses include the greens true during the winter when there is little growth to mow, and quickly establishing a firm surface on new greens to allow them to be brought into play sooner.

For further information Tel: 0113 267 6000.

■ Swinley Forest has taken delivery of the first Material Injection System sold in Britain. Manufactured by Landpride Turf and distributed by Turfmech Machinery, the self-propelled MIS 2100 was installed at the exclusive Berkshire club by golf course equipment specialist, Surrey Grasscare.

Course Manager, Lawson Bingham, explained that the machine has been purchased principally to help alleviate sub-surface compaction on greens, tees, aprons and other problem areas around the course. "Injecting water at high pressure helps open up the soil to depth without causing surface disturbance," he commented. "It also enables wetting agents to be placed where they are most

needed. Owning our own water injection machine means that we can now aerate at the most appropriate time without holding up play for members and their guests. The MIS 2100 is a valuable addition to the club's machinery fleet."

Able to inject water or pre-mixed dry or liquid materials to a maximum depth of 8in (200mm), the MIS 2100 has seven nozzles set at 3in (76mm) spacings. Water is delivered to the machine's pump and injection nozzles via a hose connected to a nearby irrigation head or water tap capable of supplying 5 gallons (23 litres) per minute at a pressure of 15psi (1 bar). Liquid or dry materials are pulled into the soil from a separate container by the suction effect of the fast-moving water. Powered by an 11hp engine with electric start, the retail price of the MIS 2100 is from £12,615.

For further information Tel: 01889 271503.

■ Patissons has launched a new hole cup which encompasses the company's new five point anti mud design and can also accommodate American style flag pins.

"The original Bogey and Anti mud hole cups have been a great success for us but the tooling for these was getting very tired after having produced more than half a million over its 25 year existence," explained Mike Hinch, Managing Director.

"We have been working on the new designs for over a year, pulling together all the feedback we get from greenkeepers and other associates to ensure that we get it right. With the new ferrule acceptor design and the rigidity of the cup we can be sure that the flag pins stand to attention rather than doing an impression of the Leaning Tower of Pisa!"

The new hole cuts are available as from this month priced at £35.50 per nine. £3.95 each for the UK size and £38.25 per nine £4.25 each for the Expo, American version.

For further information Tel: 01494 794646.

■ BAC to Nature (Products) Ltd has extended its product range to include Natures Miracle a

culture of microbes that will cleanse and activate growth throughout the soil. Once greens have been treated with some fungicides and weed killer the only thing left alive is the grass and there will not be sufficient microbes in the soil due to prior applications of chemicals. This is not natural and this is why Thatch or Blacklayer may be experienced. Having no microbes in the soil leaves it wide open to attack from disease and creates problematic conditions. A solution is to apply cultures of natural beneficial microbes that will redress the balance and give a disease free environment. As a liquid Natures Miracle has many more attributes than any powder or granular form of microbe product.

Using Natures Miracle BAC to Nature claims will: Disperse Blacklayer; stabilise trees from shock; activate growth; vastly reduce the need to use fungicides; save on preparation time and be cost effective in course management

As all the products are 100% natural and organic it will not harm any human~ animal, or plant life. They will condition the soil naturally and accelerate the natural process.

Natures Miracle is primarily a beneficial selection of microbes and not a fertiliser. Although containing some nutrients in the solution Natures Miracle is a growth stimulant and soil purifier.

For further information Tel: 01904 331313.

■ The new range of Bray Seed Slotters and Spikers has been designed by a professional working groundsman, following years of development and trials.

The overriding principles used throughout the design stages were to provide an affordable range of products which would eliminate the time consuming and expensive methods of seeding, overseeding and repairing damaged or worn areas of grass.

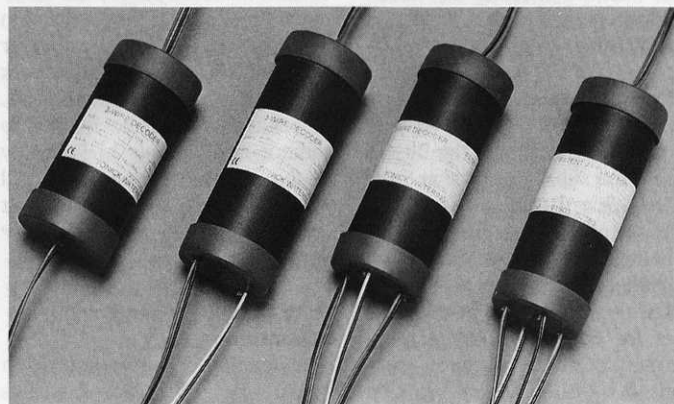
The equipment can easily be attached to existing machines, while the hand held equipment is ideal for local repairs and the smaller club.

For further information Tel: 01304 621037.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR GREENKEEPERS

### TONICK or TORO decoders? The choice really is yours!

We hear that TORO have "evaluated" Tonick decoders which work with their SC3000/1000 controllers and NWCDS control system.



Using technical mumbo jumbo, they have issued dire warnings against using the very competitively priced Tonick equivalent decoder with their equipment.

BUT... we know that they work perfectly well and so do the many satisfied greenkeepers who use them.

What really concerns TORO we believe, is the opening of their market to competitive tendering by many reputable installers of alternative product.

Decoders from Tonick, sprinkler parts from BEAR and controllers serviced by independent repair centres mean that Greenkeepers do, at last, have real freedom of choice.

- **Guaranteed compatibility**
- **3 year warranty**
- **Long life - designed to last for at least 10 years**

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TORO encoder £500-£900? **TONICK equivalent £98**

\*(TORO prices believed current at time of going to press).

**Refer to our display advertisement in this issue**

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## Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

This month sees the deadline for three of BIGGA's major competitions and the launch of this year's Regional Supervisory Management Courses and the introduction of a scheme to assist greenkeepers to pay for education and training.

### BIGGA Education and Training Grants

At a recent meeting of the BIGGA Education sub Committee and the BIGGA Board of Management, it was decided to introduce a scheme that was open to all greenkeeper members and would assist them with the payment of fees for education and training courses. Courses already subsidised by BIGGA would not be eligible and the scheme would only be available to individual greenkeepers and not their employers.

To be eligible greenkeepers must:

- Have been members of BIGGA for at least two years.
- Be attending education and

training that is relevant to their profession, ie. language courses, computing courses and motor mechanics would be eligible but wine and beer making would not.

- Have paid their own fees.

If the above criteria were met then greenkeeper members would be eligible to claim up to 80% of course fees to a maximum in any one year of £200. Refunds of fees would not be paid until proof of completion of a course (or courses) had been provided. A limit has been set for the maximum amount that the Association would grant in any one calendar year and the scheme would work on a first come first served basis. Greenkeepers will be invited to submit applications in February each year and the first grants will be awarded in 1998. Watch out for further details in *Greenkeeper International*.

### Toro Student of the Year Competition

The deadline for this competition is 30 May 1997. Some entries have arrived at BIGGA HQ but many colleges still have to respond. Remember that regional judging will take place in July this year, commencing in Scotland on 28 July, moving to Bradford on 29 July, Hemel Hempstead on 30 July and Cheltenham on 31 July. This competition not only gives

you the chance of winning the prestigious Toro scholarship but also gives you the chance to boost your career prospects.

### Toro Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

The entry deadline for this competition is 30 May 1997. Make sure that you have a chance of winning by submitting your application NOW and it could be your chance to win a Toro Greensmaster 3000 mower for your golf club and a trip to the United States for yourself.

### Regional Supervisory Management Courses

Full details of these courses have been inserted in this magazine. If you have not received your copy then contact BIGGA HQ. New locations for this year are Northern Ireland and South Wales and new subjects include Golf Course Design Construction and Maintenance, Leadership Skills and Recruitment and Selection. These courses are excellent value and are becoming very popular so make sure of your place by booking early.

### BIGGA Slide Library

As mentioned in previous articles, we have started a collection of 35 mm colour slides which will become the BIGGA Slide Library. If you have any slides that you

wish to donate then please contact BIGGA HQ.

### The Learning Experience 1998

Plans are well advanced for the National Education Conference, Workshops and seminars for January 1998 but there is still time for you to become involved. If you would like to talk or would like to hear a particular speaker or would like to suggest a topic for discussion then please let me know. New for the Education Conference in 1998 will be a "Greenkeepers Question Time", when a panel of "experts" will try to answer your greenkeeping problems. Watch out for further details in *Greenkeeper International* but in the meantime make notes of the questions that you have always wanted answered.

### BIGGA Golf Course Environment Competition, in association with Amazone and Rhône Poulenc

Although the deadline for entries into this competition was 30 April, there is still time to enter your club and compete for the first prize of £5000. Fill in your entry form today and send it to reach BIGGA HQ by 16 May.

## INTRODUCING THE NEW GREENSMASER 3200-D.



# Requirements for golf clubs and greenkeepers

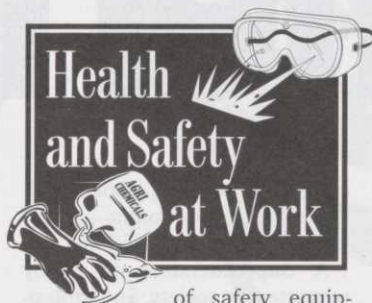
by Tony Rees MIOSH, Health & Safety Consultant & Senior Instructor with ATB-Landbase Training Services

This month we look at the employees duty to themselves and to others.

Employee's Duties, Section 7. "Every Employee must :

- Take reasonable care for his/her own health and safety  
- Take reasonable care for the safety of anyone who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions co-operate with the employer to enable the employer to fulfil his statutory obligations

All employees have a duty under the act to ensure that they look after their own health and safety, to this end all employees should not put themselves in a position where their own safety is in jeopardy. To most this point would be taken as using common sense but we must ask ourselves if we always take this attitude. It is often too easy for us to say that it's nothing to do with us as individuals but we should always remember that however many safety procedures, whatever type



of safety equipment our employers provide if we do not choose to use them in the way they were designed to be used and followed then they will be ineffective and we could be held liable.

We also have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety of anyone who may be affected by what we do or don't do. An example would be if we left an unattended piece of equipment next to a green or fairway and a player was injured from this equipment, or if we left the keys in an unattended tractor or grass cutter and an unauthorised person moved this and injured themselves, we as individuals may be deemed to be responsible.

Covering all the above we all have a duty to co-operate with

our employer to ensure that he can fulfil his statutory obligations, this may include us as employees using the personal protective equipment provided by our employer to reduce the risk of injury, or following the written procedures adapted for us by our employers.

## Other Duties of employees

Section 8: No person must misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interests of health and safety - when our employer provides safe equipment for our use then we should ensure that we use this equipment in the way it was intended, not interfere with any guards provided and follow all safety procedures laid down

Section 9: The employer must not charge for anything done or provided for health and safety where the provision is required by law - when our employer has provided personal protective equipment for our use as a means of reducing risk as required by the regulations then these must be provided to us free of charge.

Section 36: Where an offence

is committed by a person due to the act or default of another, either or both may be prosecuted - if a greenkeeper took a guard off a machine to use it and the following day the assistant greenkeeper used that machine with the guard not on and he received an injury from the unguarded machine, then the assistant greenkeeper could be prosecuted for using an unguarded machine, the original greenkeeper could also be prosecuted for taking the guard off in the first place.

The previous articles show that although our employer has the ultimate responsibilities for health and safety, we as individuals can also be held accountable for our actions.

Next month we will look at The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations and how they affect our daily work routines.

Further information on training courses and consultancy contact ATB Landbase Training Services (Jean John on 01282 617466 or Tony Rees on 01686 622799).

## SO QUIET, YOU CAN HEAR A PIN DROP.



Early morning mowing is no problem for this greenkeeper. He knows there'll be no complaints about noise because he's operating a Greensmaster 3200.

With an exceptionally quiet engine it maintains its power for a full day's work.

An operator's dream, this new model is the latest in Toro's top-selling Greensmaster 3000 series. Its unique new cutting system gives a superb quality of cut.



The new cutting system

If you want to hear a pin drop, give us a call and we'll walk your course with you and recommend the best machine for your needs.

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# The American

**Andreas Herrmann, from Golf Club an der Schlei, Schleswig Holstein, gives an insight into his two year Golf and Turf Management Programme at Rutgers University, in New Jersey.**

The annual turnover of the golf industry in the United States amounts to 60 billion dollars. Currently there are 15,000 golf courses and around 120 are being built annually. As a European it is hard to imagine these figures. One must see the endless expanse of this country in order to get an idea of it.

Arnold Palmer's popularity made the game of golf very popular in the 50s in the United States. Today one finds courses of every style. From public courses with five greenkeepers (up to 80,000 rounds per year) to private exclusive courses such as Augusta, Pine Valley or others,

with a working force of 30 and more in the summer. With a budget of one million dollars, bent-grass fairways which are cut every day and greens maintained at the highest standards are no rarity. No wonder that German golf tourists coming back from the States dream of these fairways.

By the way, Pine Valley has been maintained for decades by Eb Steiniger, a graduate of the University of Stuttgart Hohenheim. He left Germany at the beginning of the century and moved to America. Today Eb Steiniger is in his 90s and lives in South Jersey. He is said to be one of the grandfathers of the GCSAA.

GCSAA (Golf Course Superintendent Association of America) is an international organisation with more than 16,000 members. Like BIGGA, the GCSAA organises and promotes seminars, journals,

career development, scholarships, money saving discounts and, of course, the annual Golf Show.

A Superintendent is highly respected by society. Superintendents have various backgrounds. The majority is between 30 and 39 years old and has a two or a four year college degree in turf science. The Superintendent has to train himself constantly. I cannot confirm the impression that many Europeans have about the American Superintendent, who stands on the green with his mobile giving orders to his Assistants, without being involved in any work on his own. All my classmates (and future Superintendents) had several years of practical experience in the field and they were very well familiar with the boredom that may occur while aerating fairways, with dirty hands after fixing drainage problems or with a tired body after a 12 hour working day.

The Superintendent primarily is a manager. He has a budget of millions of dollars, he hires and trains people and he is a public relations person.

One shouldn't compare the American Superintendent directly with the German Greenkeeper, since the circumstances are different.

The Golf and Turf Management Program at Rutgers is one of the most challenging in the United States (besides other very fine turf programmes).

It is unique in one way because the classroom work is required only during winter. Two intense 10 week sessions over two years and two seasons of supervised field experience lead to a two year certificate. A weed collection as well as a 12 page report about the field experience has to be presented in the second year. The training is designed for people who already have practical experience in the field, for people who make a career change or for people who can't afford or schedule a full-time programme.

We are mainly trained on three levels: science (botany, soils, grasses), leadership (communication, leadership principles), and business (business calculation).

The Superintendent has to be a scientist, a manager and a businessman all in one.

The biggest part of the course is botany and related classes. Classes are held from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. The weekend is free and day trips to New York (only 50 minutes by train) are an attractive option.

My class consisted of 42 people. The average age being 29. The students came from all over the United States: California, Nevada, Colorado, Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, New York... I was the only European.

The first day started with a warm welcome and a general introduction to the programme. Everybody introduced himself briefly and talked about his goals. Quite a new experience for me, being a German. There were people there who were not shy to talk about their personal goals with an enthusiasm I'd seldom seen before. The attitude of the people was generally speaking very positive and they wanted to be the best at whatever they were doing at the time.

After I'd introduced myself, coming from a Bernhard Langer Course in Germany, everybody asked me about my "friend Bernhard". I wasn't really able to answer the questions, since I don't know "Bernhard" well enough to be able to talk about his well-being. Bernhard Langer is quite popular in the United States, as he had won the Masters a couple of times.

Classes started the second day. There were 16 classes in total: Golf Course Construction, Turf Diseases, Surveying, Weeds, Botany, Irrigation, Turf Establishment, Turf Maintenance, Turf-grass I.D. and Morphology, Soils, Landscape Plants, Landscape maintenance, Business Communication, Public Speech and Managing your Golf Course Employees.

Besides the brainstorming at school - and I mention this intentionally because the work of these ten weeks is a lot more than what is taught during a normal ten week session in a four year programme - there is always time to get in touch with colleague students. Many already had a two or a four year college degree in another field, often in business. For example T.J from North Carolina worked for the United States Government in the former



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LECTURES ON  
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SPECIAL GUEST  
SPEAKERS

# way

Soviet Union. A.J from Virginia had a bachelor in classical music (he knew all the German composers and musicians). Andrew from North Carolina was an actor at theatres before he went into the golf field (he played Shakespeare and we often talked about old Greek philosophy). I had worked as a therapist in my own consulting room before I changed career. Strikingly few came from the agricultural or farming field.

In common we all had the love for nature and for the game of golf.

Generally nature and pollution control is a big topic right now in the golf industry in the United States. The spirit of the age didn't leave America behind. Although some places still apply chemicals without thinking of pollution (a nearby course of Jeff's in Maryland applied \$200,000 worth of chemicals last year, this is about the total budget of some courses in Germany), the environmental awareness of Superintendents is definitely improving. The USGA has installed a special department which deals with pollution control and has spent \$12 million on research in this field in recent years. It supports the "Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program", which advises and supports golf courses which practise an ecological approach to their landscape maintenance: for example the reestablishment of wetlands or other areas that were sacrificed to some fairways, the ecological maintenance of roughs, the building of nest boxes for birds, the protection of "environmentally sensitive" areas and a lot more.

The often used argument of many environmentalists that Golf Courses are like greenhouses with highly cultivated monocultures loses its power when seen in this background.

Another new trend is IPM (Integrated Pest Management). Two main reasons seem to be responsible for that. First, it reduces the impact on the environment and second it is money saving in the long run. One example would be the Pseudomonas Treatment for Biological Management of Turfgrass Diseases. A specially developed strain of the bacteria "Pseudomonas aureofaceans Tx 1 licensed by Michigan State University plays an important role in reducing the occurrence of several fungal diseases. There are three main routes by which bacteria are able to control turf grass pathogens: Production of antibiotics - Competition for nutrients - Parasitism.

In the ninth and tenth week the tension in the class reached an almost unbearable level. We missed our homes and friends, we had enough of grasses, trees, fertilizers and mowing frequencies. Dan from the Pebble Beach Company wanted to be back in California to be able to play golf in Hawaii. Rodney missed the mountains and the sun from Col-

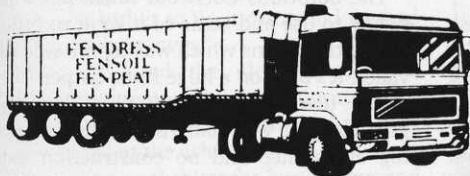
orado, Tracy missed the Whiskey from Tennessee and I missed a Wiener Schnitzel. However, the highest obstacle, all the final exams, was still ahead of us. We watched each other looking more and more tired. The beards grew longer (no time for shaving) and the shirts weren't ironed anymore. Everybody had reached his personal limits. The days were long and the nights became short.

In the end we had a big party and we embraced and congratulated each other for still being part of the game.

Whatever we, as Europeans, may think about Americans, their positive attitude is definitely infectious. An experience of special value, recommended to everyone who likes a challenge and an excellent level of turfgrass teaching.



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**The Course Manager at Naunton Downs Golf Club is a rare breed – a “Hook” that is welcome on the golf course.**

**Scott MacCallum met Robert Hook to discuss the problems he’s overcome**

**N**aunton Downs is a fine golf club. It has a location to die for, high on the Cotswold hills, with views which would have had Constable drooling. It is a testing course which satisfies its 800 plus membership as well as hosts of visitors and a clubhouse with comforts which make the worst 18 hole nightmare bearable.

But it was not always so.

When Course Manager Robert Hook arrived at Naunton Downs three months after it opened three and a half years ago, he found a course which had fallen into many of the traps and pitfalls which lie in wait for new golf developments.

“There was no definition to the fairways. The rough was cut once every three weeks with a rotary mower. They’d started cutting the greens low immediately and didn’t know about groomers so they were always on and they’d hollow cored just after the turf was laid. Everything generally was very ‘sick,’” recalled Robert.

But one of the biggest problems was the actual design of the golf course itself.

“Part of the golf course, which is laid out over old agricultural land, included a huge ravine and four consecutive holes were played straight across it. On one of the holes you might have to take a 9-iron off the tee and follow it up with a full five-wood to get across the ravine. It was difficult to play and the course’s reputation suffered as a result,” explained Robert. As we looked at where the four consecutive ravine holes had been and the huge gully into which golfers had to submerge themselves, not knowing whether they would have the strength to come out the other side, it brought to mind images of Peter Pan – the “Lost Boys” being replaced by those “Lost Golfers” who had failed to make the ascent and were living in the bottom. Robert’s seafaring ancestor, the black sheep of the family, Captain Hook, could have been completed the picture. Indeed an ability to retain one’s youth and vigour would have been useful to the golfers at the Naunton Downs of a couple of a couple years ago.

Due the fact that the course had 650 newly-signed up members champing at the bit there was also great pressure to open before a significant growing-in period.

Robert knew within a very short time of arriving that drastic, remedial action would be required to put Naunton Downs on the right path. He girded his loins and approached the owners.

“I told them that things needed to change. It took a bit of persuasion but I made them realise that they had to scrap holes, redesign and construct new ones,” explained Robert. In fact the land containing the ravine holes was sold off to finance the new work.

What followed might have acted as the perfect story line for Mission Impossible, or Challenge Anneka!

“I got back from a holiday around midnight and opened a letter that was waiting for me from the golf club. It said that the directors had decided to go ahead with changes to the golf club but that I had to get the whole project completed from start to finish – that was



# MISSION

build three greens, five tees, ten bunkers, reshape the fairways and install the irrigation – in seven weeks! Oh yes, and the course had to stay open during the construction work.”

It was a project Robert tackled with relish and no little skill, much of it learned under Jim Russell at Lingfield GC and Ray Day at Saunton.

“The first thing I did was sit down and work out how much I thought it would cost and put that figure to the directors. I estimated £10,000 per green and with the tees, bunkers and the casual labour said the project would cost in the region of £75,000.

“I told them I could build a green in a week. It was September but fortunately it stayed dry, otherwise we would have been in big trouble.”

Another complication was that we didn’t have any maps for the irrigation because the company which had originally been used was no longer in business and the work was com-

pleted by a local contractor. That meant we had great difficulty finding the mains when we plumbed in the new, Write Rain, irrigation.

The notorious Cotswold Brash left a lot of debris to use and some of it went to build up one of the greens which was on the side of the valley. It’s built on a huge stone carpet.”

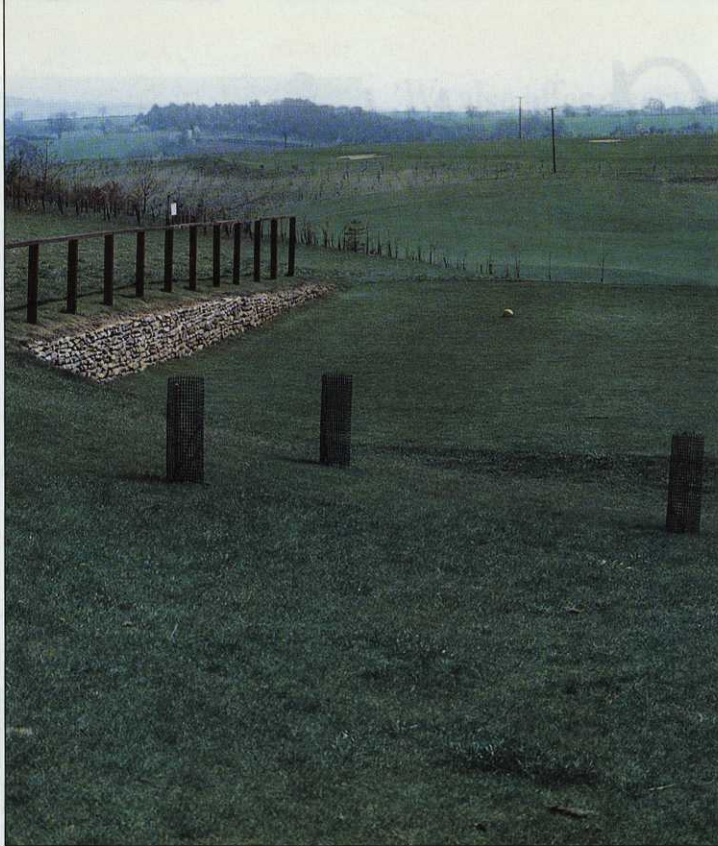
The team was Robert, plus three other greenkeepers who had 18 months greenkeeping experience and no construction experience, between them.

“I took on four more from the Job Centre but we lost quite a lot of the casual labour because they couldn’t cope with the long hours – 12 hours a day seven days a week. One guy disappeared within half an hour. We gave him a pair of boots and didn’t see him again,” laughed Robert, as he recalled the incident.

“We were lucky that we had an excellent JCB driver who knew exactly what to do. I put



**Left: the ravine which caused original problems.**  
**Right: a new tee**



all the levels out and got the specification right and the gang would follow behind the JCB putting in all the root zone from our five tonne dump truck, and 40 horse power tractor and three tonne trailer.

"After seven weeks of this we had all the turf down, we'd used big turf rolls laid by contractors on the greens and smaller turfs on the tees."

By the end we'd done 1400 square metres of green and 2000 square metres of tees and banks.

Having met the seven week deadline the course was given a rest to allow it to grow in until the spring. We were taking the grass down a millimetre at a time, dressing well back into early March and we had very good root development when we opened.

"The owners had given us a definitive deadline because, they didn't want to miss any potential new members joining at the beginning of the following season. They'd actually said they wanted it to be open on April 1 but I told them it was unlikely because we're 800 metres up here and our growing season is about five or six weeks behind so we finally opened the new holes on May 1."

Even that took a bit on planning as right up until the day of opening the course was still

"I just went for it. I also did accounts and secretarial classes in the evenings as well as I wanted to be ready for office work.

"BIGGA has really helped me because every angle is covered by my education with BIGGA or articles in the magazine," said Robert, who is fulsome in his praise of his team of Roger Myatt, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Leon Piercy and Colin Martin.

Looking back at the work which was completed two years ago Robert is extremely proud of what he and his team achieved.

"Although we were working to a tight deadline everything was done to specification and there were no corners cut and I do believe the

finished product is good. The one thing we might have done differently is make the tees bigger but we are currently extending them as part of on-going construction work" said 35 year-old Robert.

"We've also rebuilt a lot of the bunkers and had to drill into them with Kangol hammers because the original design was such that where you would expect the top of the sand to be was the base soil. We've done about ten bunkers that way," explained Robert.

"The greens are fine. I'd actually say they are better than the originals. We hardly have any annual meadow grass because we dry them out aggressively. We keep a lot of water in the profile but let the top inch or two get very dry to encourage the roots to go down."

Naunton Downs is now moving in the right direction. The course is well received – the layout has shed most of the required climbing and members can spend their time on the practice range instead of the gym.

"The main shareholder, Ian Wilson, is very forward thinking and we are currently building astro turf tennis courts as it provides added value to members and their families."

It shows that with expertise and hard work even the most unpromising of situations can be turned round and that though skills learned through BIGGA's education programmes demanding projects can be tackled and completed successfully.

# IMPOSSIBLE

being played in the conventional manner.

"On opening day I shifted the new tees to play to the new greens and, as I knew where the rough was going to be, I'd fed the areas three weeks earlier so up it came and we had definition straight away."

Bearing in mind the element of haste involved in the remoulding of Naunton Downs Robert can now look at the finished product and feel proud at the achievement.

Robert has a real thirst for knowledge and his CV can tell of three years on a Grassland Management Course from Bicton College in South Devon; a National Certificate and National Certificate Advanced and Levels 1-3 – 3 being Business Management and Accounting; a correspondence course for a National Practical Certificate Technical; Phase 3 Management in Greenkeeping; Phase 4 Business Management as well as spraying and tractor driving courses.



**The greenkeeping team at Naunton Downs**

**Scott MacCallum travelled east to visit Bailey's of Norfolk, a newcomer to Golden Key sponsorship, and found a company which is setting new standards.**

On one particular day back in the late 80s Alan Bailey set off, from his base in Norfolk, for Surrey with the aim of selling his own brand of top dressing.

He called on 14 golf clubs in one day, taking care to establish directions to and the name of the Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper of the next club on the list before moving on. At some clubs he didn't meet his intended target so left his card, a brochure and a sample before moving on to the next.

By the time he had returned home to Hevingham, close to Norwich, there were orders from 12 of the 14 clubs already at the office.

From that encouraging start Bailey's of Norfolk has grown to become one of the principal suppliers of top dressing to the golf industry with clients from as far afield as Scotland in the north and Plymouth in the south.

It is a success of which the family firm is particularly, and rightly, proud and this year Bailey's of Norfolk has taken another major step by becoming one of BIGGA's Golden Key sponsors donating money to the Association's Education and Development Fund.

So what persuaded Alan Bailey to make that trip to Surrey?

"I could see that golf was a part of the leisure industry which was poorly served by top dressing suppliers and I also knew that it was a sport which had huge potential, especially with the advent of golf coverage on the television," explained Alan, who prior to that had been in the top soil industry since 1976.

"I did my own market research and found that the demand for top dressing was not being met. Clubs were being told they couldn't be supplied for six weeks. There is no industry in the capitalist society where you can do that because there is soon someone who will move in. We moved in and filled the void.

"I considered Surrey to be the Stockbroker belt and that it was the wealthiest part of the country and so the best place to start."

It proved a very wise choice. In that first year Bailey's turned over £212,000 in the golf industry and supplied around 60 golf clubs.

"We went from a nil turn over to quarter of a million in one year," recalled Alan.

That signalled an expansion of the company which had previously consisted of just Alan and

# Setting the standards



Soil scientist John Farrell at work



his son Adrian and initially it caused a few problems.

"There were so many lorries coming through the village with raw materials and leaving with the finished product we ran into difficulties with the planning authorities."

However a public inquiry, a move to a new 33 acre site half a mile from the original site six

years ago and a half million pound investment in a huge 15 bay building saw the company well placed to make the massive strides that it has.

"We have the capacity and planning consent to treble our output. In effect we are only currently operating at between 30% and 35% of our potential.

"We have our future guaranteed here. We do not comprehend, and would consider it physically impossible, to produce turf dressings or other products using the careful husbandry quality control methods we employ if we moved away from this plant," affirmed Alan.

"We only manufacture turf dressings - TD1 and TD2 - that are produced with the natural

resources of the area. We have indigenous sources of lovely lime free sand and vast supplies of Norfolk fen soils and the indigenous Norfolk sandy loam which we can make into divot mixes and fairway dressings. It really is a lovely unique product with a very low clay content."

They can also counter any criticism that being "out in the sticks" in Norfolk they cannot compete with more centrally based competitors.

"If someone were to call now from Plymouth wanting a load we would have it to them by the time they start work tomorrow morning," said Alan having first checked the clock and found it to be reading 12.10pm.

"We can deliver within 12