



Adrian Bailey who, with his father Alan, founded Bailey's of Norfolk

hours anywhere in the country. We have an excellent relationship with the haulage companies we use and it is probably quicker and cheaper than if we had our own vehicles," said Alan, before revealing that the bill for haulage would this year be over £400,000.

Despite its growth Bailey's still remains very much a family firm. The production staff of six is headed by Adrian as Production Manager/Partner and Alan's wife Mary runs the office. Alan's best friend from his youth also works for the company.

It was as a family that 12 months ago they discussed the future strategy of the company.

"The options were to continue to supply the existing demand or

to plough a lot more money into the business and become 100% professional and sell 100% professional product which would meet the highest standards.

"I spoke with various agronomists and learned more about the industry and which way it was going. We then decided to produce all of our products to USGA guidelines."

To achieve this aim soil scientist, John Farrell, a graduate in Natural Resource Management was employed on a full time basis from the middle of last year.

"When I arrived here all I had was an empty room and in the first four months I set up the laboratory. I want to be able to set up more tests for things like compaction and porosity and we are

**'We also offer a service to our customers whereby we test samples from their course so we can give them independent reports what their problems are or are likely to become'**

just getting the equipment for them in now," explained John.

His arrival has enabled Bailey's to be totally confident that whatever is sent out through the gates is of the highest possible quality.

"Everything is tested on a daily basis. Each bay holds 200 tonnes and I take 10 samples from each one. The replication ensures that the analysis is representative of the dressing in that bay. The samples are then analysed, tests include particle size distribution, pH, organic matter content, permeability and porosity.

In an industry where an inferior product might not produce a problem for three or even five years it is sometimes difficult to persuade the purchaser away from products that do not meet our stringent specification but are nevertheless easy to apply.

Alan and John are keen to ensure that greenkeepers do not have problems which are stored up for the future.

"Each load which leaves our plant goes out with a full specification sheet which the greenkeeper is encouraged to file away and keep.

That is his guarantee that he bought the right stuff for the job.

"We are producing a product which is as tightly controlled as is possible in this country," explained Alan.

"We are embarking on a course to be registered by ISO 9002 so our current laid down laboratory procedures will be under constant scrutiny. We should have achieved this within the next three months," he added.

"We welcome the fact that people can take samples and have them independently cross checked whenever they wanted," confirmed John.

"We also offer a service to our customers whereby we test samples from their course so we can give them independent reports what their problems are or are likely to become.

"I believe that if the USGA specification with regard to porosity, capillary action and particle size distribution were to be adopted

universally in the production of turf dressings and root zones the long term future of golf courses would be safeguarded. There are things within the industry which make me concerned but obviously companies which do produce quality products have nothing to worry about."

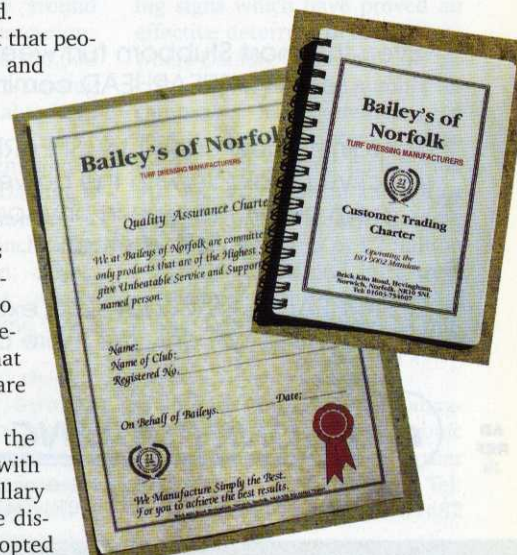
It is with the aim of becoming more involved in the industry and assisting greenkeepers wherever possible which persuaded Bailey's to become Golden Key sponsors.

"Golden Key was something which we discussed and we believed that BIGGA's objectives with regard to maximising the knowledge of members for the benefit of the turf are compatible with our views," explained Alan.

"If we are going to work to a standard we want the greenkeepers to be aware of what we are trying to achieve and what the benefits will be. That way the industry can move forward together," said John.

With Golden Key membership bringing a higher profile for Bailey's of Norfolk the company will no doubt continue its growth and Alan Bailey will continue to travel up and down the country on the kind of sortee which brought him so much success as when he first visited Surrey.

"The majority of my customers are also friends and I want to support this industry as much as I can. I think it has a huge future particularly if industry standards can be set and met by everyone and the speculative amateurs and their inferior products are driven out."



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# A game of TAG

**We all remember mothers sewing names into school pullovers to improve the chances of recovery should they go astray. The idea has survived, been refined and, as Douglas McCartney explains, could help prevent valuable machinery from disappearing.**

If the most profitable criminal activity in the world is drugs, the second most profitable is most definitely theft. Overall crime is estimated to cost Britain more than £20 billion a year.

During the late 1980s the UK motorcycle industry was faced with a crisis which threatened its very existence. That crisis was theft. In 1989 nearly 85,000 machines – around 10% of all registered motorcycle – were stolen. Losses were so great that in 1990 the industry's leading insurer, with 62% market share, announced a withdrawal of theft cover for high performance machines, no theft cover for high risk areas and no theft cover for owners under 28 years of age. In short, the industry was faced with virtual destruction.

The main problem centred around "ringing" – machines stolen and broken for spares or rebuilt from written off machines. As in most cases of professional crime, police intelligence units were aware of those involved but the ease with which existing markings such as frame and engine numbers could be removed had meant that even when suspected thieves were caught in possession of machines or parts with dubious provenance no clear evidential link could be established with actual stolen property. The result, in many cases, was that suspected stolen property was being returned to those suspected of stealing it.

Physical security products such as hitch locks, wheel clamps, ground anchors, padlocks, etc. present only a mild irritation to

the determined thief. Though such products may deter the opportunist amateur they would not provide a long term solution to the problem.

It was reasoned by the police and auto crime experts that a truly effective, permanent identification system, would greatly increase risk of detection/conviction and at the same time greatly reduce the value of items stolen. Technical groups from the leading motorcycle manufacturers began testing various existing marking systems – eye legible, magnetic and electronic. Both eye legible and magnetic were cheap but easily overcome and were discounted.

The final solution was Datatag, an electronic identification system, developed by multi-national giants Yamaha Motor and AEG Electronic of Germany.



Datatag scanning gun

At the heart of the Datatag system is a coded microchip transponder or "tag" which is designed to be hidden inside property. These tags do not require power and because they are so small they can be covertly fitted to items ranging from something as small as a Bonsai tree through to large earth movers.

Tags contain a microprocessor circuit linked to a read/send antenna and are preprogrammed with a 10 character Hexi-Decimal code which enables more than 500 billion code combinations. Programming is carried out using a sophisticated laser etch system which means codes cannot be



Warning signs: a powerful deterrent

altered or deleted when attacked by electrical or magnetic devices, or even exposure to low level radiation. Tags vary in size from as small as a grain of rice to a credit card.

Tags are read by scanning devices supplied to Police, Customs and other authorised bodies free of charge. When an item is scanned the tag number is displayed on the scanner and is then cross referenced with the Datatag main frame computer through a private Videotext system also supplied to authorities free of charge. The Datatag computer is on-line 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and provides details of the item, owner and any incident including crime reference number and Police Station handling.

Since 1992 Datatag has reduced motorcycle theft from 10% of bikes registered to less than 1% and is available through all motorcycle main dealers. Recoveries of whole or part machines are currently around 55%. Numerous prosecutions have resulted. More than 120,000 bikes are now fitted with Datatag and discounts are available from all leading insurers.

With a proven system and a national infrastructure Datatag is now operational in a number of additional markets including: plant and construction, cycles, marine craft, caravans, equestrian, computers to name but a few.

It may be argued that there is little common ground between motorcycles and ground maintenance equipment which is true apart from ...a dramatic increase in theft incidents, high value equipment, easily removable

identification, large second hand market, notoriously difficult to secure and low risk of detection and prosecution for the criminal.

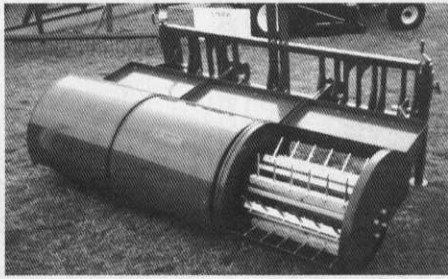
Datatag recognises these similarities and in 1996 launched a tagging project into the garden and agricultural machinery markets. The project has the backing of the British Agricultural & Garden Machinery Association and involves BAGMA members tagging all types of golf course and grounds maintenance equipment, ranging from hedge trimmers, and chainsaws to tractors and trailers. Greenkeepers will be only too aware of the high value of modern golf course equipment and the increasing number of thefts and should seriously consider the electronic tagging as a norm rather than the exception.

Costs vary in relation to the item to be tagged and range from around £20 for pedestrian mower to around £80 for a JCB. All items tagged display prominent warning signs which have proved an effective deterrent in all markets where Datatag is operational.

In recent years a number of companies have attempted to copy the Datatag system. To date none has succeeded mainly due to a lack of technical know how and financial stability. Datatag has spent in excess of £2 million on development and infrastructure provision. It is estimated that a total spend will exceed £4 million in order to satisfy fully scanner and Videotext demand.

■ Douglas McCartney is Managing Director of Datatag Electronic Identification Systems. Further information can be obtained Tel: 01482 222070 Fax: 01482 224545.

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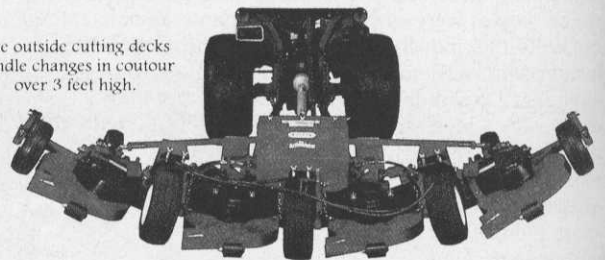
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# Centrifugal pumps explained

We continue to take the mystery out of the business of spraying.

Centrifugal pumps create flow and pressure by centrifugal force produced by an impeller. Liquid enters through the centre of the impeller and as the impeller spins, centrifugal force throws the liquid into a spiral passage leading to the outlet. The only moving parts in centrifugal pumps are the shafts and impellers.

Some Centrifugal pumps are manufactured using materials that wear quickly or corrode due to commonly applied abrasive materials used in the Amenity industry. These pumps also require priming and are subject to back pressures from nozzles and control units

#### Agitation

Tank agitation is important to ensure a uniform mix of chemicals. Without agitation the chemical mix may separate and the spray will not be applied in the correct concentration. All sprayers



benefit from a tank agitator to maintain uniform mix. The most common type of agitation is hydraulic jet agitation, however, machines operating mechanical agitation are also available.

Hydraulic jet agitation, commonly called jet agitation, uses a portion of the pump flow to create a mixing action in the tank. A pump must be selected that is large enough to provide the extra volume the jet agitator requires. The flow can be through a standard nozzle or a specially designed ventura nozzle that creates a vacuum which increases the discharge from the nozzle.

The ventura type nozzle increases the mixing action by two and a half times and is very

effective when pump flow is otherwise marginal.

Mechanical agitation is less common and produced by paddles or propellers located in the bottom of the spray tank. The agitator is powered from an electrical motor that drives the mixers. Any of these agitators, when properly designed and operated, will adequately agitate most pesticides or suspended chemicals.

#### Sprayer monitors and controls:

System monitors are available that sense the operating conditions of the sprayer, such as travel speed, pressure and/or flow. These statistics feed into a micro-computer along with such information as swath width and litres

of spray mix being used. The console displays the pressure and travel speed.

The accurate monitoring of the spray operation will result in improved pest control and more precise pesticide placement.

#### Pressure gauges:

The pressure gauge should be designed to measure liquid pressure with a range about one-and-a-half or two times the maximum anticipated pressure. Liquid-filled gauges are preferred over dry gauges because the former reduce vibrations.

#### Boom control valves:

Boom control valves are essential when the spray operation does not require the use of the complete boom i.e. when spraying fairway perimeters, reduced width turf areas or when finishing a putting green. The valves, either manual or electrical, control the flow to either the left, centre or right boom section, or any combination of these. These boom controls, whether manual or electrical should be balanced pressure units.

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## It's all about keeping in touch

This letter has taken about three months to compile, but it is with great pleasure that I write to pass on my thoughts about my first year in office as the Section Secretary.

The job of Secretary is not an easy post (as some may think). You almost have to be a walking Filofax crammed with a huge bank of faces, names, places, facts and figures and an endless supply of telephone and fax numbers. Other qualities for being successful in the job are agony aunt, diplomat, liar, the ability to teleport to any part of the UK and a good drinker – the last part being by the time you get through the rest of it you need a good drink to keep you sane!

Seriously, you do need a good home life and an understanding wife as the hours needed to do this job are incredible. In the past I have been Vice and Chairman of my Section twice and until now, I did not appreciate my own Section Secretary.

Over the past year the help and encouragement I have received from different areas of the Association has been superb. From trade companies, members of BIGGA, my own golf club, Section committee, Elliott and Edna Small and the staff at Aldwark Manor. Without the help from all these areas I could not have done the job.

I have to say that I am still learning and will do for a long time to come but as they say "Things can only get better!" So please bear with me.

On a sadder note I have to say that there is still a great deal of apathy. Within our Association our members (my own specifically) still do not attend BIGGA functions whether that is golf, social or educational. Just what do we have to do to get bums on seats!

This Association that we have built is a superb club if you can look at it in this way. It is not purely for Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers or the hierarchy but for everyone employed in the fine turf industry.

The friends that I have made all over the UK through BIGGA, the great times I have had and all the ideas and knowledge that I have collected in the last 10 years are things that I would not swap for anything.

If there are people in BIGGA who do not share this point of view with me, then they are very sad individuals. You have to put a wee bit in to take a wee bit out.

And after all we are Jock Thompson's bairns.

Do not be afraid to approach the likes of Walter Woods, Jack McMillan, Jimmy Kidd, Chris Kennedy or other such big names to say hello. These guys are human and share the same problems as you.

The same goes to the Head's of BIGGA.

Honestly they do not bite, even though they wear different jackets. They are nice helpful people and are there for you the member.

Last of all, please speak to the Section Secretary. We do like to keep up with all that is going on in our Sections and who knows we might be able to help solve a problem.

**Stephen Dixon**

*Section Secretary East of Scotland*

## Enthusiasm will see us through

The article by David Roy in the February issue of *Greenkeeper International* sadly echoes many similar comments I have recently heard from greenkeepers around the country.

I don't think the article overstates the case of uneducated and thoughtless golfers and I believe the comments of frustration from greenkeepers can equally apply to many Chairmen of Green. I have been involved at my own club as Chairman of Green for the last 7 years and, more recently, to give continuity, a new title of Course Consultant.

When I started I really had no idea of what I was letting myself in for. After reading the R&A discussion document "The Way Forward" I began to get some idea of the immense task ahead. I was extremely lucky to have Martin Gunn as Head Greenkeeper (now Course Manager) and we struck up an immediate rapport. I felt that a lot was wrong with the quality and health of the course but I did not know why and this is where Martin could and did help me.

The Club first brought in the STRI in 1987 but little notice was taken of their recommendations. However, since 1990 we have closely followed the advice on the management of the course by Agronomist, Jeff Perris, and Ecologist, Bob Taylor. Using the services of the STRI again gave us the opportunity of educating members and on the recommendation of the STRI we now have a Policy Document in place. This will protect the course from our boundary hedges, woodlands, traditional flower and hay meadows to the tees, fairways, bunkers and greens.

To keep members informed of work and plans for the future we have produced quarterly newsletters and also run occasional "On Course" evenings with our Agronomist and Ecologist in attendance. We also have a prominent Course Notice Board for information on a day to day basis.

However, we still receive a certain amount of criticism from ill-informed members. Sadly it appears that in every club I have visited there is this small hard core of critical members who think they know better than their own qualified greenkeeper, agronomist, ecologist, and even golf course architects. You do certainly need to become very thick skinned to

last in any job involving the golf course.

I think every golfing authority, the R&A, the Home Unions, BIGGA and STRI are agreed on "The Way Forward" for golf course management. It really is of prime importance now to convince the golfers and there are now videos, books, pamphlets – in other words lots of help available. The support is there and it is now up to all clubs to take responsibility for the education of their members into realistic golf course management.

We have found that many members now support our policies but unfortunately they are the silent majority and it is important for Greenkeepers and Club Officials to be strong enough to handle the vocal minority of ill-informed critics.

The more I have become involved in the wider issues of course management and have been lucky enough to work on the fringe of the education of golfers I am convinced that many of the problems that have developed over the last few years have been created because more and more golfers are taking holidays in Spain, Portugal and Florida. They are playing on golf courses managed in a totally different way and with different climates to their courses at home. The courses abroad are often managed in an environmentally unfriendly fashion with extreme use of water, pesticides and fertilisers and at immense cost. We need to convince golfers, and the non-golfing public, that natural and environmentally managed courses are the correct route to take and that golf on them is in fact much more fun and has certainly more variety.

These issues are not going to go away, water will become more expensive, that is if it remains available for golf courses, and many pesticides will become illegal. Other methods need to be found.

Many golfers who have taken up the game in the last 15 to 20 years have not had the opportunity of playing traditional British golf and do not appreciate the joys of playing the ball along the ground as well as in the air. Television has a lot to answer for, as many courses have tried to ape the American style of play which is never going to be successful on older designed courses with small tightly bunkered greens and with totally different climates. Golfers from all over the world flock to the British Isles to play courses such as Carnoustie, Ballyunion, Portmarnock, Royal St. Georges, Royal County Down, Sunningdale and, of course, St. Andrews and there are many other lesser known gems.

It is important that greenkeepers like David Roy do not lose their enthusiasm or become disillusioned with the unrealistic demands of what I hope is the minority of golfers. It is up to everyone in authority in the clubs to support these issues and to back "The Way Forward" for golf.

**Malcolm Peake**

*Temple GC*

*Henley on Thames*

## Allow foxes to eradicate rabbits

In your article on rabbit control undertaken by the Middlesex based MG Wildlife you rightly refer to the conservation aspects of the work they carry out.

Rabbits are a major pest and unless the present population explosion is brought under control major damage to trees, shrubs and some meadow land plants can be expected.

The damage to greens, tees and fairways is also considerable and expensive to repair in both labour and materials.

It therefore came as a surprise to see in your article that this company which purports to control rabbits uses "silenced rifles to control animals such as foxes".

As foxes are a major predator of rabbits and other small rodents which can cause damage on a golf course it seems to me to be counter productive to shoot them unless the object of the exercise is only to promote shooting.

I feel that the eradication of rabbits which, despite the cuddly aspect of the little beast portrayed, is essential. We should encourage all predators including, and most importantly foxes.

I have for the last 40 years been responsible for the maintenance of two 18 holes and a 9 hole golf courses and would in no circumstances encourage the shooting of foxes.

I recommend to all your readers the need to eradicate rabbits wherever they are found and the encouragement of foxes.

### DI Wilkinson

Hull, Yorkshire

■ Editor's Note. A spokesman for MG Wildlife said he agreed that foxes kept the rabbit population down and that they actively encouraged foxes unless they were, on the rare occasion, the only predator on the golf course.

## Bad attitudes on display

I read the article on the London Golf Club's course in the April issue of *Greenkeeper International* with despair and incredulity. If it had been written on the basis that no one should try to emulate the methods adopted at the London, even in the extremely unlikely event of equalling their budgets and manpower it may have served a purpose. As it is, virtually every statement contradicts standard practices elsewhere. Criticisms of UK education are unwarranted, though certainly standards at some colleges need tightening up and this is being actively implemented.

The sad fact is that the London is an example of a tiny minority of megabuck courses, most of which have failed and most of the survivors continue as rich men's playthings or loss-making prestige symbols. It would be invidious to name the few exceptions.

As a final comment may I pass on the comment of one of my friends in the USGA who complimented British courses in having teams with largely qualified staff contrasting with American courses, where in too many cases one finds a graduate sitting behind a computer console, supported by ill-educated labourers capable of doing only their own specialised task.

### J H Arthur B.Sc.(Agric)

Budleigh Salterton

East Devon

## Don't knock the educators

I write to express my sincere concerns highlighted in your excellent article regarding the London Golf Club.

My concern is of criticisms levelled at NVQs and Modern Apprenticeships which are at present being introduced within our industry.

I have in the past shared with Steve Jones (Course Superintendent) the frustrations, disillusionment, despondency and even anger with the so-called system of education for Greenkeepers in this country for almost all of my 28 years in Greenkeeping.

I too have made attempts to introduce systems of training within individual Golf Clubs to compensate for the inadequacy of colleges and college lecturers.

However this approach cannot be right because: (a) We must have a standard across the whole industry as employers need to know who to employ according to what that person is capable of; and (b) An insular approach to training is extremely costly if it is to achieve acceptable results (in terms of time as well as money). I do not care how much your training budget is - an efficiently managed business cannot afford to throw time and money away.

Most of my frustrations have been allayed however since the Greenkeepers' Training Committee became involved in first NVQs and

just recently the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

Without going into any detail, NVQs are about standards on the golf course (not in a lecture room). The standards are set by your own industry and judged/assessed by your own industry, ie Golf Course Managers (on the golf course) who are qualified GTC trained Assessors and who are industry competent.

Modern Apprenticeships have been introduced for under 25's to provide a structure for NVQs so that progress can be monitored (using individual training for each apprentice) throughout the period of the apprenticeship and is again monitored by your own industry using industry competent Golf Course Managers as well as elected, approved training providers/centres.

Under the structure of Modern Apprenticeships the refunding of training costs is available to the employer on the Apprentice's achievement of the relevant level. The Government has had to do this to get employers to invest in training and I for one cannot miss out on money available for training. As a Course Manager I would not be doing my job properly if I ignored this fact.

I would therefore strongly urge any Course Manager or any Employer who shares the frustration of Steve Jones not to try to "go it alone". There is an excellent system in place governed by your own Authority on training - the Greenkeepers' Training Committee. Please contact them on 01347 838640. Once you know all the facts you can then make an informed decision.

### Duncan McGilvray

Golf Course Manager

Letchworth Golf Club

### (mis)adventures of Gordon the Greenkeeper



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# POINTLESS REVOLU

**Alternative, or soft, spikes have arrived with a bang in the United States in the last four years but will they make as big an impression on this side of the Atlantic? Scott MacCallum spoke with the man charged with the task masterminding their introduction to Europe.**

The clatter of golf spikes on paths and car parks is as much a familiar sound at golf clubs up and down the country as surlyn on wood or the cry of "Fore!" but it may soon be consigned to the golfing archives, becoming no more than an audio reminder of what once was... alongside the hickory shaft, featherie golf ball and loud checked trousers.

Having said that, noise pollution is perhaps the least significant development of the alternative spike revolution which is currently sweeping the United States and which seems poised to make an impression on this side

of the Atlantic.

Alternative spikes -Softspikes is a trade name like Sellotape or Hoover - arrived in America four years ago and, pushed by the superintendents, around 1,000 of the 14,000 golf courses in the United States have gone "spikeless". It is forecast that that figure will rise to 5,000 by the end of the year.

You can well understand the superintendents' appreciation for the new soft cleat which barely marks the green but through their design - small gripping teeth around a plastic base - still offers significant traction for the golfer.

On certain courses spiking can make quite a mess of the green. You may recall last year's USPGA

Championship at the Riviera Country Club and the problem the later starters had finding a route to the hole devoid of destructive spike marks.

A boffin has worked out that the average number of paces taken on a green is 52 and the number of spikes per shoe is 11. With that in mind each golfer leaves 572 spike marks on the green, 10,296 on a round. That's over 41,000 potentially damaging spike marks for each fourball.

Cliff Hitchcock is Managing Director of MacNeill UK, a fully owned subsidiary of MacNeill Engineering Worldwide, the world's largest manufacturer of sports shoe hardware, which produces the Tred-Lite alternative

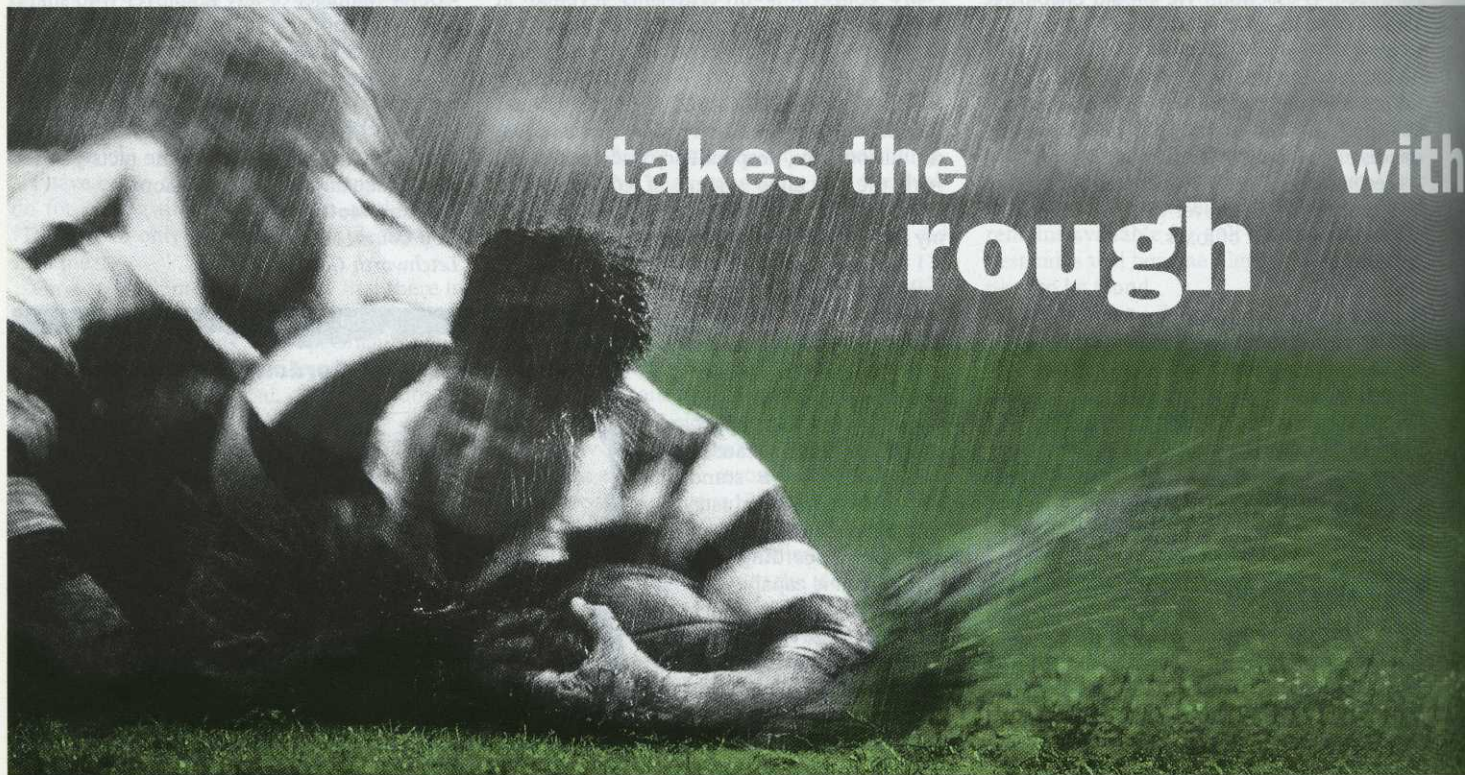
spike and many others under the name of golf shoe manufacturers.

"Since 1931 we have produced five billion golf spikes. We're currently producing four million spikes a day. I just can't understand where they all go. It's an amazing number of spikes," said Cliff, who masterminds sales and distribution for the whole of Europe from his base near Leicester.

"I keep being asked whether the alternative spike phenomenon in the States will come over to Europe and I think it is down to the types of grasses used. There are more courses in the States which use Bent grasses which have roots very close to the surface and which tend to spike up more easily than traditional European greens.

"I spoke with an American at the trade show in Orlando recently who told me that his course had gone 'spikeless' three months previously and he could not believe the improvement in the quality of the greens since that day," he said.

or just a fad?



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# TION

"I suppose certain courses, with those types of greens, in Europe will go spikeless. I know Valderama already has."

There is a big difference, however, between an individual trying alternative spikes and liking them from a comfort point of view and a golf club turning round and saying you have got to wear them.

"I believe the clubs in Europe which make it mandatory will be in a very small minority."

It is easy to understand Cliff's reasoning. Proprietary-owned golf clubs, which predominate in

the States, can set rules as they see fit and it is hard to imagine members' clubs, which are in the majority in Europe and particularly the UK, imposing such demands on themselves.

"There are around 4200 clubs in Europe and I believe no more than 400 will have gone spikeless in the next 12 months," fore-

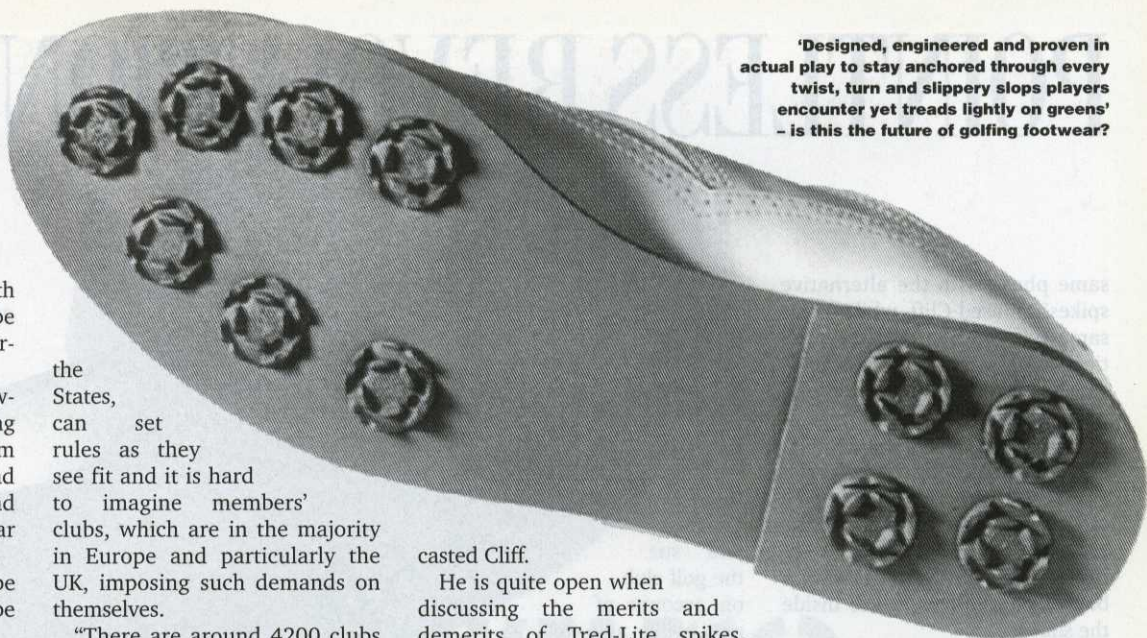
casted Cliff.

He is quite open when discussing the merits and demerits of Tred-Lite spikes, which under the overall MacNeill banner of Champ are being marketed as "Champ is getting soft".

"There is no doubt that the traditional spike, at 8mm long, offers the best traction you can get. The top Tour pro may feel he needs the most stable base he can get and still use traditional spikes. The average handicapper, however, would probably not notice the difference," said Cliff.

The new alternative spike marks the first significant development in golfing footwear since the dimpled soled shoe launched

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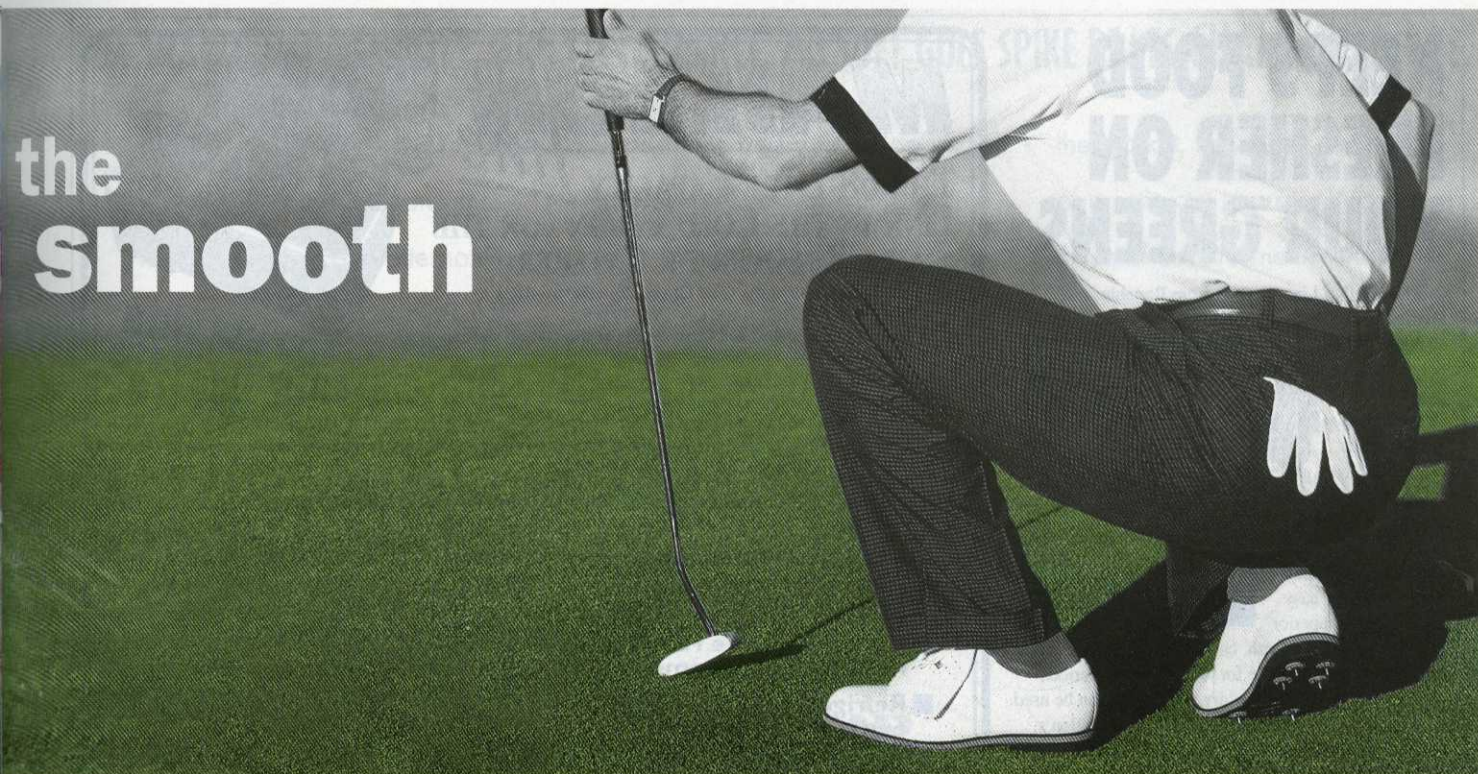


**'When they were launched greenkeepers thought they were great and were delighted that spike marks were to become a thing of the past'**

itself onto the market about 15 years ago.

"When they were launched greenkeepers said they were great and were delighted that spike marks were to become a thing of the past. What killed them off was that the dimples themselves created so many ripples on the greens that the ball bounced all over the place.

"Eventually people became disillusioned with the idea and they faded away. They now represent a very small percentage of the market. Are we going through the



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# POINTLESS REVOLUTION

same phase with the alternative spikes?" mused Cliff, while at the same time adding that the traction on the new spike is significantly better than was offered with the dimpled sole.

In America shoe manufacturers are just beginning to sell golf shoes with the alternative spike already in the shoes but the majority are still offering traditional spikes in the shoes with a bag of alternatives spikes inside the shoes.

"Some of the manufacturers are worried that if courses go spikeless the next step would be that you don't need golf shoes. Any shoe manufacturer could come up with a shoe that has a sole full of dimples. I believe that is in the back of the manufacturers' minds."

One problem which Cliff can foresee is potential litigation if someone is compelled to change his or her spikes before playing a course and then slips and breaks an ankle.

"What's going to happen then?"

He or she will sue the golf club on account of not being able to play the course without changing to alternative spikes. The golf club will sue the distributor and the distributor will sue us.

"That's why we do put a warning on the packaging to say they are not ideal for use on moist, slippery ground."

Another downside of the new spike is that, unlike the newest metal spikes which are made from tungsten, they wear out and need to be replaced.

"Our Tred-Lites last longer than most but because they have to be

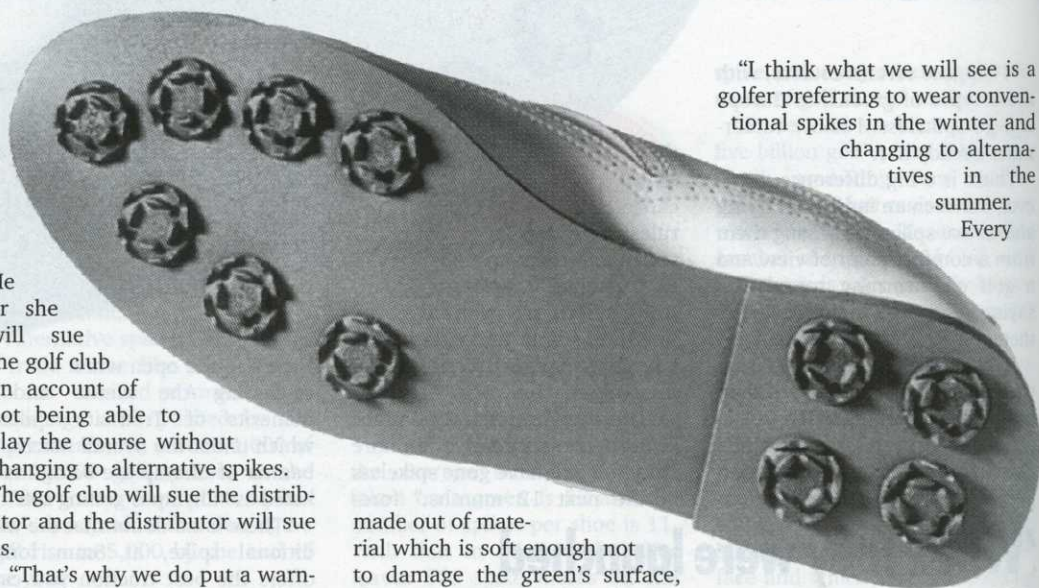
made out of material which is soft enough not to damage the green's surface, they need to be replaced. How quickly depends on the nature of the golf course."

From a business point of view the introduction of the alternative spike has been a huge boost to MacNeill Engineering which has now seen its production rise by 20% to cope with the new demand.

"I think what we will see is a golfer preferring to wear conventional spikes in the winter and changing to alternatives in the summer. Every

golfer will need two sets of spikes which is good for the industry," predicted Cliff.

■ If you have any views on alternative spikes please write to The Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, Nr York, YO6 2NF



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