



problems (unless the operator forgets to do it) because the oil is added to the fuel. Four-stroke engines may also be suitable at certain degrees. Make sure the engine specification is okay for the maximum degree of the bank that the machine is going to be used on. There may be a possibility that continuous use at acute angles could result in the engine being starved of oil resulting in premature wear and the increased chance of an engine seizing.

When using propelled machinery it is important to have some form of differential lock to provide extra traction, if the terrain is rough. A braking device is also necessary so the operator always has complete control of the machine.

#### **Types of machine available**

Brushcutters and clearing saws. These can be described as the replacement for the traditional scythe and will make light work of clearing fairly dense vegetation. Two versions are available – straight shaft or back-pack unit with flexible shaft.

Where access is not restricted and an operator can work comfortably without the risk of injury a straight shaft model is suitable. A range of cutter heads can be fitted so these machines will cope with vegetation ranging from grass, scrub to small trees.

In recent years the back-pack unit has become popular. The weight of the machine is carried on the operator's back like a rucksack – this greatly reduces fatigue.

The flexible-shaft-driven head allows the user to swivel it both horizontally and vertical. This gives greater freedom of movement and better balance when working on steep gradients or rocky terrain. Whether mowing ditches or banking it is recommended that cutting starts at the bottom and works upwards. Never should the cutterhead be above shoulder height.

#### **Hover mowers**

It can be said that these mowers changed the whole concept of bank mowing and today, four decades on since their introduction, they are still being used to keep steep banks looking tidy. A hover mower is suitable for keeping around bunkers and tees trimmed. When working these banks the operator should stand on the top, never on the slope.

#### **Rotary, Flail and Reciprocating**

These types of cutting systems are all favoured for banks where long, rough grass that is mown infrequently is likely to be encountered.

Most of the reciprocating cutterbar mowers available have been designed to work in the

mountainous pasture regions in Europe, so they are well able to cope with bank work in the UK.

All the machines in this category have pedestrian and ride-on models specifically built to work on sloping terrain, so ask your local outdoor power equipment specialist for details and a demonstration.

#### **Long arm**

The long-arm tractor-mounted mower is suitable for a wide range of applications. Like all the machinery described in this feature extreme care should be taken when using these flail heads.

The surface on which the tractor is to stand needs to be carefully checked. For example, the banks of a river or stream can be undercut by flood water and the sides could collapse without warning. The brink of a bank should be mown first so that any likely hazards are easily identified. Work out from the tractor and never reverse it with the arm fully extended or make high speed manoeuvres.

When choosing a machine always check the manufacturer's minimum specifications first. These have been set after the wheel base, centres of gravity, weight distribution and ballast options have been analysed. With this information the most suitable

unit can be matched to the tractor. It is recommended the tractor is fitted with an accumulator float device which makes the operation safer. Independent rear-wheels should be made active, to enable the operator to get out of a difficult situation should one arise.

#### **Cylinders**

There are slopes where cylinder mowers are used but the ground conditions on these must be smooth and stable. Generally the equipment will have to have a high degree of traction by the use of differential wheel locks, special tyres and weight transfer systems. At the same time it must be light enough not to damage the turf with wheel markings or scuffing especially when turning. There can be a considerable variation in the bank cutting abilities between different cylinder ride-ons.

There is plenty of specialist advice available and this should be sought when deciding which machine to buy. Make sure you view all the options before making a final decision.

Whatever equipment is used on banks, operator training is essential. They need to be fully conversant with the machine and aware of possible dangers. Bank cutting requires common sense – if it looks risky it is better left alone. Safety should always be the number one priority.

# THE 1997 BIGGA GOLF ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



THE WINNER:

## HANKLEY COMMON

“ The amount of work undertaken over the last ten years in developing the ecological potential of the course has been considerable. This has involved an on-going commitment to woodland management – tree thinning and felling, natural regeneration control and programmes aimed at heather conservation and reinstatement.

Over the last few years a massive tree felling operation has been carried out and the club is now looking at ways of reinstating the heathland character.

The club also recognises the need to develop an ecosystem approach to retain sufficient scrub to assist the diversity of wildlife which is present. The RSPB has offered advice with regard to wood lark conservation and the course does support other notable rarities such as the sand lizard and silver-studded blue.

The heathland flora is allowed to develop in the semi rough areas which is also worthy of special note given the prestige of the golf club.

A small number of ponds have been created which support quite a diversity of insect life including dragonflies.

A company has been employed to look at energy use within the clubhouse and while at the moment no policies are in place, already all peripheral lighting is controlled by sensors which offers energy savings. The club is also looking to purchase a bottle crusher for recycling clubhouse waste.

Grass clippings are stored in holding pits around the site, collected and taken to a designated area for tipping.

The membership is informed of the reasoning behind the current management works by evening seminars, open forums and members' evenings while all reports are available to the members. There are also regular newsletters and periodic status reports.

The members have been extremely positive in taking to designated pathways and areas cordoned off – imposed to secure reinstatement of the heath. ”

STRI Ecologist Bob Taylor

This competition, in association with Rhône Poulenc Amenity and Amazone Ground Care, is designed to reward the golf course that is judged to have done most to encourage good ecological management and so improve the environment. The three way sponsorship, initiated this year, underlines the industry's commitment to the environment and the desire of the game to show the way towards good practice. Hankley Common, under the expert management of Course Manager Ian McMillan, is the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition Winner.

# The search for a winner

STRI Ecologist, Bob Taylor has spent the last few months judging the golf clubs which entered the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition. Here he talks about what he found during those visits and gives an insight into what he was looking for.

One of the most difficult tasks has been to obtain an objective balance between the larger prestigious sites set within areas of outstanding natural interest alongside those smaller clubs of limited budget found within a lower quality landscape.

A major change to this year's Environment competition, which has welcomed the involvement of BIGGA and Rhône Poulenc alongside Amazone, has been with regard to judging and the standardised way in which each course has been assessed. Both English Nature and STRI have become involved and produced a standardised and therefore much more qualitative format in which to assess individual golf clubs.

This has largely been overcome by asking a series of questions on up to three separate occasions. The first level of assessment was undertaken while assessing each application, which proved very successful in balancing the tremendous degree of variation found.

Questions focused on the level of enthusiasm, not just of the Head Greenkeeper, but of the entire team and the Club Committees, and indeed whether the level of enthusiasm had reached the membership. One would not expect that many of the larger, more prestigious sites could bask within the confines of the landscape in which they find themselves, but this was not generally the case. Take Loch Lomond for example, set within some of the finest countryside possible. Not content with this, the club has appointed a full-time Conservation Officer who has been actively encouraging woodland management, including the construction and erection of owl boxes and the recent excavation of a pond



Left and above: the splendour of Hankley Common. All photographs by Bob Taylor

purely for wildlife.

Additional work involves recording and pinpointing the rare Loch Lomond dock which apparently occurs nowhere else. To the untrained eye, the Loch Lomond dock looks just like the common broad-leaved dock typical of wastelands and disturbed ground.

A second series of questions was asked during the individual site inspections. These, taken from the "Committed to Green" initiative recently launched by the EGA during the Ryder Cup, included: 1. Nature conservation; 2. Landscape and cultural her-

itage; 3. Water resource management; 4. Turf and pest management; 5. Waste management; 6. Energy efficiency and purchasing policies; 7. Education and training; 8. Communications; 9. Public access.

The final level of scoring was qualified by a further series of questions which centred on the scale of works undertaken, whether it is sustainable, the nature of the challenge, how much flak or criticism has there been and how effectively this has been overcome. A very interesting point raised by Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature,

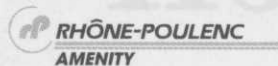
was, "Would the work impress a non-golfing nature conservation sceptic?"

Most of the clubs impressed Keith Duff but then he may be biased because he is one of the seemingly few golfing conservationists!

Having completed the above quite rigorous programme, it became apparent that several entrants were worthy of winning, making selection that much more difficult. All of the applicants this year were worthy of due recognition but in the end certain decisions had to be made and I am indebted to Keith Duff for sharing

# THE 1997 BIGGA GOLF ENVIRONMENT COMPETITION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



this burden with me.

The Dyke Golf Club is worthy of special mention with regard to Communication. Course Manager, David Ansell, has produced a noticeboard of photographs of the wildlife to be found and description of the work being undertaken, all of which is on regular view to the membership. Committee meetings are held monthly and reports are standardised so as to include regular topics on conservation management.

A similar scenario was apparent at Temple Golf Club whereupon a very strong and positive management structure is in place. Here, the green staff meet monthly with the Green Committee and weekly with the Secretary. The greenstaff together discuss policy on a weekly basis, so maintaining and ensuring the continuing enthusiasm for the work being recommended. Members are kept informed via notice boards, a quarterly bulletin and through on-course walks run by the greenstaff.

At Beau Desert and Berkhamstead Golf Clubs, notices relate the importance of each site to the players.

At most clubs visited, education and training does appear to be available to the greenstaff. At Loch Lomond this extends to seminars and specific aspects of natural history such as the identification and ecology of lichens, their conservation being particularly important on this site. At the Manor House each member of the greenstaff has received a copy of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's report to the Club. At Lyme Regis, individual members are being encouraged to develop their own special interests such as Lepidoptery (the study of butterflies and moths). Almost all those clubs assessed do allow the greenstaff time to visit shows, attend local seminars and training days as appropriate for their developing interests.

Special mention should go to Royal Birkdale who, over the past few years, have undertaken a substantial amount of work in order to control the buckthorn and other scrub encroaching over the course. The level of work becomes even more impressive

when one considers the relatively short period of time remaining to get the course back in condition before the Open to be held in 1998. Burnham & Berrow, although not hosting an Open Championship, have over the past two years or so totally reinstated the dune character, this formerly had succumbed to the mass encroachment of sea-buckthorn. The topography of the dunes following removal of the buckthorn is now clearly evident.

A number of heathland courses entered the competition this year, including Berkhamstead, Beau Desert, Enville, Hankley Common and Liphook. All have made tremendous strides in educating the membership of the need to reinstate the heathland character and in undertaking work appropriate to reclaiming areas of heather. This, at Berkhamstead, has changed the frequency of cutting to encourage heather back naturally, while at the other clubs scarification, turf laying and the use of chemical herbicides have all been tried. All of the above have had to give consideration to tree and scrub removal – always a contentious issue with the membership.

It has been interesting this year to note just how enthusiastic many of the regional conservationists have been to the work being undertaken. Charnwood have the full support of their local English Nature consultant, Royal Birkdale has developed a very close working relationship with the Sefton Life Project based at Formby, Temple Golf Club make good use of the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Naturalist Group while Beau Desert Golf Club is benefiting from the expertise of the heathland project run by Sue Sheppard.

Even without such relationships, all of the clubs would, to a greater and lesser extent, satisfy the most sceptic of non-golfing nature conservationists and I would like to thank all of the clubs that participated this year and trust the advice given was appropriate and of benefit to each club.

I will look forward to reassessing these courses in the next year or so.

## Other major award winners

### Linlithgow GC – Regional Winner – Scotland

A number of conservation projects have been undertaken and include gorse management, grassland management and development and pond construction. Twenty bat boxes have been erected over the course and the Course Manager is keen to learn more about their placement and undertaking nest box surveys and a local bat group has been invited onto the course to record bats. The course is being used as a pilot project for both the Scottish Golf Wildlife Trust and the European Golf Association Ecology Unit.

### Royal Birkdale – Regional Winner – Northern

Birkdale is intrinsically a very important landscape covering a whole series of internationally important habitats and species and the enthusiasm of the club, from Head Greenkeeper through to the membership is excellent. Numerous projects are being implemented and are benefiting the wildlife on and around the course. The club is also looking towards the damage likely to be caused during next year's Open to provide further opportunity for habitat development and conservation management. For example the thinning and loss of cover to encourage greater botanical diversity.

### Temple – Regional Winner – Midlands

Temple was one of the first courses in the country to realise its environmental responsibility. This has grown to such an extent that it is now recognised as an ecologically friendly golf course to which people including conservationists can visit. The club has planted 2,500 trees in accordance with the Forestry Commission Grant Scheme and has also been engaged in hedge layering the work undertaken by the staff while the club intends to extend the amount of meadow-type grassland.

### Burnham and Berrow – Regional Winner – South West and South Wales

The club is built on a sand dune system which is of considerable ecological and conservation importance. The club recognises the ecological significance of these habitats and is keen to carry out management operations to reinstate or maintain their significance. Much of the work concentrates on the removal of sea-buckthorn and the reinstatement of sand dunes. In one or two areas ponds have been created, largely in an attempt to reform dunes and this has created areas of open water which is beneficial to wildlife.

### Berkhamsted – Specially Commended

There has been a drive towards reducing the dominance of trees and the expansion of acidic grassland. Heather is becoming quite strong which is leading to greater acceptance within the club therefore presenting other opportunities to develop the work. Indeed the club

boasts that due to the success of its management work it supports the largest parcel of heather within the surrounding area.

### Northamptonshire County – Specially Commended

Special recognition is given to the increasing interest that is now being devoted to rough management work. Gorse and broom feature heavily and the club is embarking on a programme of cutting and reinstatement. A number of trees have recently been planted to increase the amount of woodland in one section of the course. Ready mixed organic fertilisers are preferred and have resulted in well conditioned greens.

### Dyke – Specially Commended

The club is a very good example of a typical downland course with typical management problems but such as been the enthusiasm with which the challenges have been met the course is now worthy of higher ecological significance and it is perhaps more botanically rich in species numbers than adjacent downlands. Butterflies such as the adonis blue, silver-studded blue, brown argos, gatekeeper, small copper, small skipper and marbled white can all be seen on the course.

### Lindrick – Specially Commended

The club is very enthusiastic towards nature conservation management and is worthy of special consideration. The surrounding land is predominately arable or woodland so the course has preserved the outline heath supporting a wide and diverse ecological community. Extensive work has been carried out recently including the planting of 500 gorse plants, clearance and renovation as well as the development of a pond beside the clubhouse.

### Loch Lomond – Highly Commended

The course, by its presence, is now safeguarding the future of the historic parkland from further development – it lies within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and may in the near future become the first area of National Park in Scotland. It is almost unique in supporting the Loch Lomond dock, a very rare and localised plant species. The club employs a Course Conservationist and several ecologically based projects are currently being undertaken.

### Leominster – Highly Commended

Over the last seven years the club has done much in the way of tree planting in accordance with the Forestry Authorities woodland grant scheme and grassland retention. Some areas are being managed ecologically in that they were cut once a year while there is potential to develop the grassland rough. Policies are also in place with regard to storage and the disposal of grass clippings.



Amazone Groundkeeper in action at Leominster



Royal Birkdale: assessing site for Natterjack Toad pond



Dock at Loch Lomond



A male Common Blue at The Dyke



Wild pansies in the semi-rough at Linlithgow



Reinstating the dunes at Burnham and Berrow



Composting facilities at Temple GC



# Education Update

BY KEN RICHARDSON

Life has become very hectic in the Education and Training Department with Regional Courses, Aldwark Manor Courses and three competition finals taking place this month.

Bookings have started to arrive for the National Education Conference, Workshops and BTME Seminars and you need to send in your application as soon as possible to ensure that you reserve your place.

Despite all this activity, I managed to find time to visit Elmwood College, in Scotland, together with Janet Adamson, to talk to a group of full time students about the benefits of BIGGA membership. Hopefully, the information that we gave, together with a strong input from Ian MacMillan, Course Manager at Balbirnie Golf Club, will help to recruit many of these future greenkeepers.

The findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Pay and Conditions of Service have now been published and will be

sent to all golf clubs soon. The main details are published on Page 22 and I thought that it would be useful to include a copy of the Greenkeepers Career Pattern in this column - see right.

The Standing Committee felt that a career in greenkeeping should be linked to qualifications and experience, with appropriate recognition in the form of enhanced pay. Further information on Contracts of Employment, Job Specifications and Greenkeeping Qualifications is available from BIGGA HQ.

### Field Guides

The long awaited Grass Identification Field Guide is being printed and will be distributed later this month. Linked to the Greenkeepers' Training Manual, the guide gives information on the identification of ten common grasses found on golf courses. Further field guides on Trees and Shrubs, Control of Mammals and Machinery Maintenance will follow later in the year.

**NEW**

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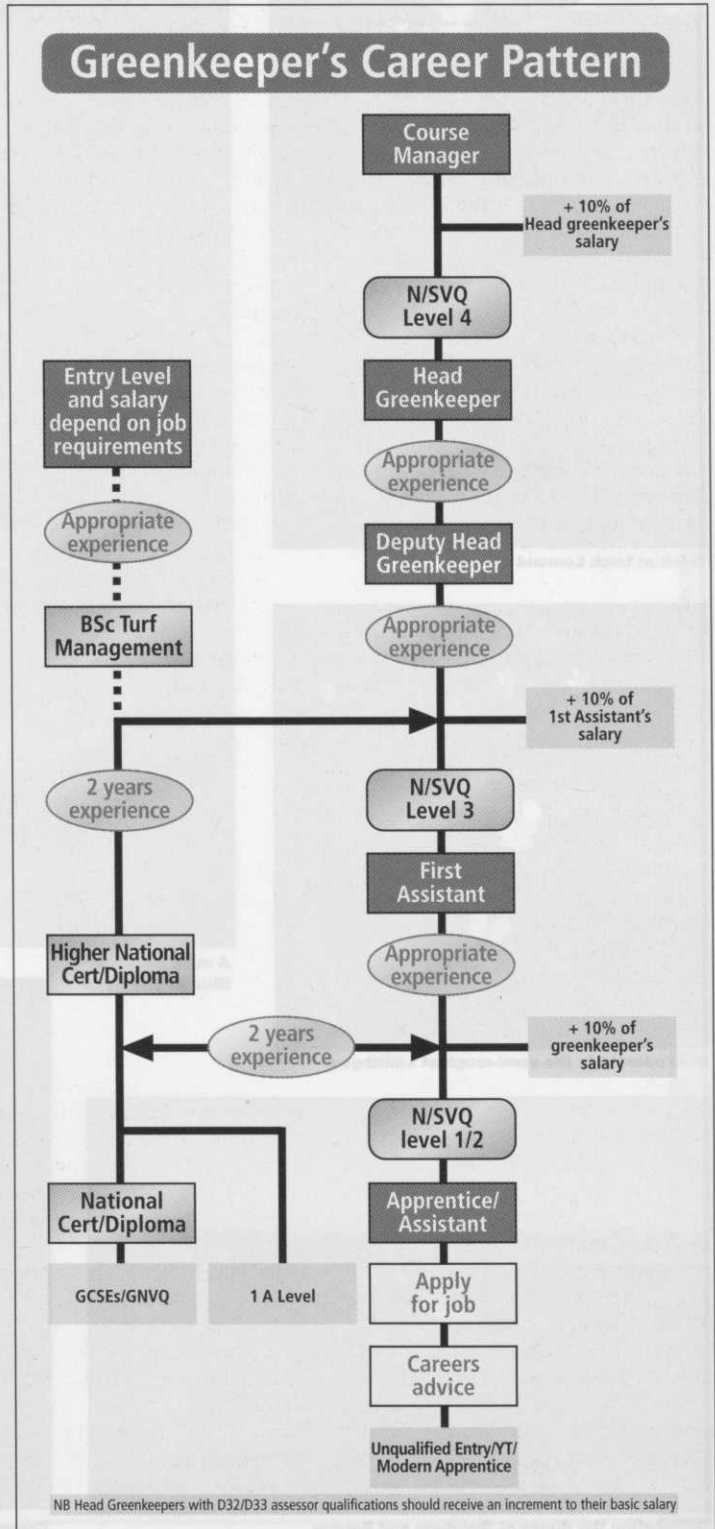
# Keep those conference and workshop bookings rolling in

### TRIMS 97

Copies of TRIMS 97 are available to colleges and other training providers for £350. This price represents a very substantial discount on the normal price for this latest edition of TRIMS course management software. Any training provider wishing to purchase a copy should contact me at HQ.

### Turfgrass Pests and Diseases Compact Disk

Copies of the Turfgrass Pests and Diseases Compact Disk are now available from BIGGA HQ priced at £175. Designed to help Course Managers, Greenkeepers, Lecturers and Students discover the facts about turfgrass problems and how to manage them.



AD REF 56

# RISK ASSESSMENT

By Tony Rees MIOSH

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 came into force on 1 January 1993 and provided a general framework for Safety Management and places duties upon employers, self employed persons and partnerships.

One of the main duties that the Regulations impose is where employers have to complete formal, suitable and sufficient, risk assessments and record all significant risks if more than five persons are employed (Regulation 3).

Risk assessment is the formal process of identifying hazards and then deciding what is the significance of the danger that has been identified. What this means for the Greenkeeper in general is:

1. What are the hazards ie something with the potential to cause harm. This could be, for example, any piece of machinery that you use, any chemicals etc or any time that you are actually on the course.

2. Once the hazards have been identified, you have to look at what is the probability that exposure to that hazard will result in harm ie what is the risk. Risk assessment is, therefore, what is the probability of something that could cause harm occurring and what would be the severity of the outcome. This process is similar to what we have previously looked at with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). However, whereas COSHH dealt specifically with chemicals and substances used at work, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations deals with all other situations that are encountered in the workplace that are not already covered by specific legislation such as Manual Handling, Noise, Display Screen Equipment etc.

Situations that Greenkeepers and green staff encounter are varied and this would give the impression that a risk assessment programme would be a difficult and arduous task, this is not necessarily the case however. It is important to remember that we carry out "risk assessments" as part of our everyday tasks anyway. For example, can you use the ride-on mower on the tees or are they too wet and you have to use the hand mower? You have looked at the situation and decided that it would be wisest and safest if you used the hand mower. With that decided you then realise that you have got to wear your safety boots with steel toe caps etc. This is all part of the process of risk assessing but without actually writing it down and recording it.



So in order to meet the legislative requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations request for risk assessments, you firstly have to identify all the hazards that you will encounter. This process can be made more manageable if the task or work area is broken down into stages eg.

#### WHAT

- is happening
- materials are in use
- is the effect on golfers, fellow employees, the environment
- legislation is in force

#### WHO

- is doing the job
- is exposed to the risk
- else could be affected
- is supervising the task

#### WHERE

- is the activity located
- are the instructions
- do waste materials go

#### WHEN

- is work/task carried out
- was task last carried out
- were procedures reviewed/updated
- else could task be carried out

#### WHY

- is task/activity being performed
- is exposure possible/risk uncontrolled
- is exposure not controlled at source

#### HOW

- is hazard controlled
- can exposure occur
- may people be affected.

This procedure requires a physical examination of the work area and activity and can often be sufficient to identify the majority of the hazards that you will encounter in your work.

Once the hazards have been identified we must then look at the second part of the risk assessment process, actually assessing the outcome and what its severity will be. We will look at this next month.

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

## NEW PRODUCTS

### A valuable addition

Launched at the Saltex exhibition, Mascot Magnet from Rigby Taylor should prove a valuable addition to the range of products available to today's greenkeepers and groundsmen.

Iron products in various forms have been used for many years, in some cases to correct iron deficiencies, but on many occasions to produce an even dark green sward when otherwise the grass would look sickly and yellow. The continual use, however, of traditional ferrous sulphate (sulphate of iron) can lead to problems with "black layer", blackening, iron pan formation, reduced root growth and corrosion of spray equipment.

Mascot Magnet has none of these drawbacks and will produce a beautiful green sward even during periods of negligible turf growth. Mascot Magnet has therefore all the advantages of traditional iron treatments but none of the disadvantages!

Mascot Magnet utilises a mixture of high purity, biologically active iron chelates plus a leaf penetrant. The addition of a leaf penetrant system enables very efficient movement of the iron chelate through the turf-grass foliage in addition to uptake via the root system. Mascot Magnet will not only produce rapid and long lasting "green-up" of turfgrasses, even during cool autumn/winter conditions, but will also correct iron deficiency under alkaline and acidic conditions.

"The product was originally developed for the Spanish market where the soils in many areas have high pH levels," said Clive Williams, Marketing Director for Rigby Taylor Ltd, "but when the performance had been confirmed by an independent trials programme at ASTARA (Aberystwyth Sports Turf and Amenity Research Association) we realised that there was a substantial market for this product all over Europe.

"Groundsmen and greenkeepers faced with television coverage particularly in the autumn and winter will find this product invaluable," concluded Mr Williams.

### Power packed

The new Jacobsen LF135 Turbo features a powerful, 35-horsepower, fuel efficient, turbo-charged Kubota diesel engine. That turbo power goes straight to heavy duty, seven inch diameter reels to tackle tough



warm season turf, wet conditions or hilly terrain. For additional traction and handling, the easy to engage mow switch gets automatic four-wheel drive.

More powerful features include the hydraulic oil monitor, alarm horn and the high-back, contoured suspension seat that reduces operator fatigue.

For more information Tel: 01536 417777.

### Cleaner sweep

Spaldings has introduced a range of replacement brushes to fit most leading makes of yard sweeper.

The brushes are available in both heavy duty steel and nylon options and regular replacement of brushes ensures maximum sweeping efficiency.

The products can be ordered under Spaldings product numbers 2600 for steel and 2601 for plastic and are priced at £3.99 each.

For further information Tel: 01522 500600.

# More Belfry blues



**Scott MacCallum and National Chairman Pat Murphy arrived to cheer BIGGA's team in the Kubota Challenge. Unfortunately they didn't make it in time to inspire the team into the final.**

**T**hey came, they saw, they finished third.

It doesn't have a great ring to it but alas it does sum up the fortunes of the 1997 BIGGA Kubota Challenge team where a horrendous back nine in the semi finals consigned our men to the third and fourth play-off during which they finally played to their potential.

Since becoming Editor I have attended three Kubota Challenges and in that time the BIGGA team, competing against the Golf Club Secretaries, the English Golf Union and the Golf Foundation has never finished in the same position twice.

Guess the one position for which I am still waiting?

In '95 we finished last. It was our worst performance in the history of the event and, at the time,



**Steve Sullivan**

I took full responsibility as "new boy" for my inability to halt the team's slump to such lowly depths. Last year things looked up and we claimed second place losing in the final to the then defending Champions, the EGU, but this year we dropped a place



**Paul Neve**

beaten in the semi final by the EGU over the new PGA Course at The Belfry.

The EGU went on to win the event for the third successive year and are beginning to dominate the Challenge in the same way BIGGA did in the heady years



**Stefan Antolik: "Captain Fantastic"**

between 1985 and '93 when we won every time – count them. That's nine wins in succession.

The eight man team, led by Stefan Antolik, did redeem itself with a convincing win in the third and fourth place play-off against the Golf Foundation but it was



# in the Kubota

the failure to compete for the "big prize" which really rankled.

What made it all the worse was that at the turn during the semi-final BIGGA was up in seven matches and level in the other. Shades of the Americans in the Ryder Cup at Valderrama.

It would be unfair to point the finger at those players, many of them extremely solid ball strikers, for losing their match in that semi final. As they say, anyone can win over 18 holes and there has to be a loser, but I think it is important that those players who did show fighting spirit and won the three points in what was ultimately a 5-3 defeat should be given credit. Step forward John Waite, Paul Neve and Captain Fantastic Stefan Antolik.

It is perhaps worth highlighting this very point to someone like Seve Ballesteros who had considered being a playing Captain in the Ryder Cup. Seve, it doesn't work. Speak with Stefan. You'd be so wrapped up in your own game that you wouldn't be able to keep the wheels on the respective wagons of the rest of the guys.

Whatever lessons were learnt from the disappointment of the semi finals were put to good use in the third and fourth place play-off against the Golf Foundation. Although a day too late, they

were inspired:

National Tournament Champion, Steve Sullivan, fought back from an unpromising position to reach the infamous final hole of the Brabazon course all square. Once there he held his nerve and holed a long putt to clinch the match. Whisper it, though, he won the hole with a seven.

Mike Hughes demonstrated a skill on the same hole which, if he could market, would make him a very wealthy man. Relaxed, having already clinched his game on the 16th, he landed his approach some distance short of dry land but two Barnes Wallace bounces later and he was in a position to chip onto the green.

John Waite earned full points over the two days but things had looked less than promising when he arrived on the 8th green with nothing to do. He had found the water off the tee and conceded the hole. It didn't dent his confidence, however, and he expressed his confidence in his ability to close out the match... which he did on the 15th.

Archie Dunn was forced down the last having been dormie two but kept a cool head and hit a fine five iron to the left edge of the green to close out the match.

Trevor Pipe fought gamely but by his own admission has spent more time recently on the bowl-



Archie Dunn

ing green holding a jack than on a golf green wielding a putter and was undone by the length of The Belfry course.

Captain Fantastic, up against a man who chipped in twice in the first seven holes, fought back to halve his match by winning the final hole. Using a golfing brain which would have done Ben Hogan proud he laid up a yard in front of the lake after his opponent had found water then showed his steely nerve by firing

an approach into the heart of the green. That's Stefan's story anyway!

Paul Neve was BIGGA's secret weapon and could lay claim to the title of "Finest 24 Handicapper in the Country". Having been one of the three heroes on the first day he produced the biggest victory of the second day when he rounded off his match on the 13th green.

The man given the responsibility of playing the anchor role was Antony Bindley a man who is the possessor of the most violent practice swing in golf. It is quite remarkable that after an act which would induce hernias in all but the fittest he can produce such unerring accuracy and he put that to good use in his 5&3 win.

So third place and I'm eagerly awaiting next year when I hope to complete a full set of places with a victory. However 1997 will be remembered for the high degree of camaraderie displayed by all 32 competitors, the magnificent organisation masterminded by Peter McEvoy and Sporting Concepts team and, perhaps most of all, the extraordinary hospitality of Rene Orban and everyone at Kubota who make the event one of the highlights of the season for all who are lucky enough to attend.



The Greenkeepers team

## We all share in the grief

As you are aware, it was my intention to write some words for *Greenkeeper International* following the final match of the Hayter Challenge Tournament at Ganton Golf Club. However, following the tragic death of David Spurden, such a contribution seems untimely and totally inappropriate. Instead I would prefer to record my gratitude to David and convey to his colleagues and family, my deepest sympathy at this sad time.

I first met David in May of this year. Instantly I recognised in him the qualities of warmth, good nature and pure human kindness. He was conscientious, self deprecating but with a strong sense of determination to succeed. I only met him a few times but his friendly disposition and true gentlemanly qualities were such that I felt I had known him for years. He prepared Ganton to perfection for our Challenge Tournament Final and I know how proud he was to have secured his own place in the competition, played on the course he loved and served with such distinction. He will be greatly missed by all and greenkeeping has lost one of its finest ambassadors.

Please convey the condolences of all of us at Hayter to his staff, his colleagues, his Club, but most of all to his family. No words can adequately ease the pain they will be enduring but, hopefully, the knowledge that their grief is shared will be of some comfort. He was a man of outstanding stature.

**K.I. (Kim) Macfie**  
Sales & Marketing Director  
Hayter  
Spellbrook  
Bishops Stortford

## 'Ambassador' will be missed

Everyone will be shocked and saddened to learn of David Spurden's death at Ganton GC in a tragic shooting accident.

I introduced David to greenkeeping when, as a school leaver, he joined me at Otley GC in 1962. He worked with me for six years before accompanying

me to Ilkley GC for a further 11 years after which he became Head Greenkeeper at Knaresborough GC. David then moved to Ganton, remaining there for the past 15 years.

His work was always of the highest standard, this being reflected in the condition of Ganton in recent times.

He played golf, and with a single figure handicap was a regular competitor and winner in both regional and national events. He was also a member of the BIGGA Open Support Team.

David was keenly interested in, and quite an authority, on natural history and the environment, and with a cheerful, pleasant disposition made friends easily.

A man of rare quality, his loss to golf and greenkeeping is immense.

This fine ambassador for his chosen profession will be sadly missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

**Adrian Robertshaw**  
Middleton  
Ilkley

## In praise of education

While we have yet to make staff appointments from the many applications received, the response to our advertisement in the September issue of your magazine for our course vacancies has been overwhelming. The standard of applicant is evidence of the improvements that have been made in the education of greenkeepers over the past few years and the excellent training that they now receive.

**Graham Bond**  
General Manager  
Lanhydrock Golf Club  
Bodmin, Cornwall

## Don't believe the hype

I read the article on chemical soil analyses (p66. *Greenkeeper International* October '97) by NRM based on the old ICI Jealots Hill Agricultural research station with some consternation. The need to correct some false deductions is urgent, though few experienced Head Greenkeepers would follow ADAS recommendations for golf courses, which may be relevant to

non-greenkeeping conditions.

Details are given as to how pH, phosphate, potash and magnesium levels are analysed. My point is that I have yet to be given a level for any nutrient status below which the analyst regards that nutrient as being deficient. With phosphates particularly, we have excellent greens with levels of 10 p.p.m. and less – sometimes 3 p.p.m. We have some awful *Poa annua* ones at 300 p.p.m., sometimes over 1000 p.p.m. Most experienced men (confirmed by a breakdown of the analyses of greens fertiliser, 61% @ 8:0:0) would agree that golfing turf should never receive phosphates in fertiliser form if total dominance of *Poa annua* is to be avoided. Greens which are known to have received no fertiliser phosphate for 25 years still show figures in the 25-50 p.p.m. mark, though whether that phosphate is available to plants is debatable.

Potash being soluble may need topping up occasionally but analysis will never determine the level. There is absolutely no evidence that magnesium is a limiting factor in practice for healthy grass growth on any course – the only exception being sterile sand-only greens, virtually all of which are in poor or deteriorating condition, with increasing *Poa annua* invasion, as such greens have to be fed hydroponically and frequently with NPK and lime and even trace elements to stay alive and in comes the *Poa*.

There is no fixed figure for pH level – the ideal is the one you have which hopefully is natural to the site.

Nitrogen is the most important element in golf greenkeeping and there is no easy test for nitrogen. I rest my case.

I regard with sadness and alarm the return of fertiliser firms offering chemical analyses as a sales gimmick. Even STRI. (Dr Canaway, December 1995) states that they will no longer routinely analyse soil samples chemically, "as it tells us nothing".

If you want fine wiry grasses, use balanced nitrogen only. If you have awful *Poa annua* greens you may feel they need NPK but analysis will give you no help in deciding how much. We are not growing cereals or managing intensive grassland on our golf

courses. The link between phosphatic fertiliser and *Poa annua* has been known virtually all this century and is unarguable. Forget chemical (not physical) analysis and the sales ploy that so often accompanies it

**J.H Arthur B.Sc. (Agric)**  
Budleigh Salterton  
East Devon

## How to cut card fraud

I am writing to you about the BIGGA membership cards. I wondered if in the future it would be possible to put on the cards the members position at the club and the golf club's name. Both of which on the front as there is space to do this.

I would also like to see the member's official golf club stamp on the rear just as we had to do on our membership application forms this year. This may possibly stop any fraudulent use of the membership cards as I have heard of cases of this happening.

Does anyone else think this is a good idea?

**Chris Yeaman**  
Course Manager  
Swanston Golf Club  
Edinburgh

## A great team effort

On behalf of all the greenkeeping staff and myself I would like to thank everyone involved for the excellent help from the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team during the week of The Open. It was much appreciated and I hope they all enjoyed themselves despite the hard work they put in.

Many thanks again and I hope to see you in future.

**Billy McLachlan**  
Head Green Superintendent  
Royal Troon Golf Club

## Feature is spot on

I have just read the article, "Preparing for the Drama at Valderrama", and would like to express my sincere congratulations. It is the very finest that I've read about maintenance in this golf course!

**Rafa Castillo**  
Technical Editor  
Green Tecnico magazine  
Madrid