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■ The next edition of  
*Greenkeeper International*  
should be with you by  
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# GREENKEEPER

*International*

**NOVEMBER 1997**

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Hankley Common, winner of the 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Pictures by Bob Taylor and Scott MacCallum

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# GREENKEEPER

*International*

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# Gaining an undeserved reputation

It wasn't so many years ago that "the environment" was nothing more than the title given to a Government Minister as a consolation prize when he had set his heart on becoming Home Secretary. And "Ecology", well that would have sat rather nicely on Maureen Lipman's BT "Beattie" adverts. "An 'ology! He tells me he's failed but he's got an 'ology. You get an 'ology and you're a professor!"

It was only ten years ago that I recall a friend of mine, who had returned to Scotland from Germany for a holiday, having to drive for miles to find a garage which sold unleaded petrol so he could refuel. I'd never heard of the stuff!

Nowadays the environment and ecology are not just words in the dictionary, nor merely the hobby horses of vegetarian, 2CV driving Liberals, but part of our everyday existence. Go into any primary school in the country and you are just as likely to have a five year-old come up and discuss the hole in the "O" Zone layer with you than quiz you on who is your favourite Tellytubby... Laa Laa, if anyone's interested.

We are all far more aware and quite rightly so. We have, after all, merely borrowed this planet and will be passing it on to our children and our children's children.

I can't believe that I've just written that, but it does show how ingrained we have become.

During this surge in global awareness golf has often been cast as the villain. As a result, the negative publicity spread by non-golfers who think Jack Nicklaus starred in "The Shining", has put greenkeepers at the sharp end. They have needed to be seen as whiter than white when it has come to the environment.

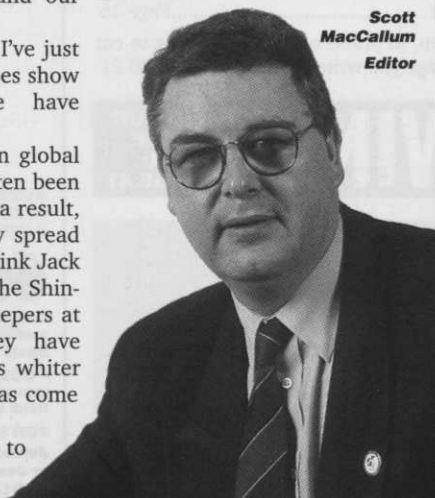
For that reason and to show that, despite

the purely circumstantial arithmetical evidence, golf is not an environmental four letter word, the success of this year's BIGGA Golf Environmental Competition, in association with Rhône Poulenc and Amazone, has been a huge boost to the game as a whole.

The quality of the entries was quite superb and in Hankley Common the competition has a Champion in every sense of the word. If anybody were to doubt golf's commitment to the environment and ecology they should pay Ian McMillan a visit at Hankley Common, where the work which goes on with the full support of the membership would be a real eye opener.

Indeed one of the most useful elements of the competition was the involvement of Dr Keith Duff, English Nature's Chief Scientist, who was one of the judges. He was extremely complimentary about what he found at golf clubs around the country and is an authority to whom many sceptics will listen.

Perhaps through the involvement of a non golfing body like English Nature, in environmental terms, golf will finally shed its reputation as the black sheep of the family.



Scott MacCallum  
Editor

## As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY  
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

My month started with Board of Management meeting at Aldwark Manor where one of the major decisions taken was the acceptance of the findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Salaries and Conditions of Employment. These came about following a series of meetings at which the Secretaries and the Golf Club Owners, as well as Bob McLaren the Chairman of the GTC, were involved.

The structure which is now in place will be useful for anyone who wishes guidance on greenkeepers' salaries.

Also discussed at the Board Meeting was a major new money raising initiative aimed at boosting the new building fund. This will be launched shortly. The identity of next year's Vice Chairman was also revealed. Gordon Child's right hand man is going to be George Brown, of Turnberry. I've known George for some time and I'm delighted that he will be coming in. It's the first time that the new constitution, which allows for someone to be appointed from outside of the current Board, has been put to such a use.

The day after the Board Meeting I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of David Spurden. There were so many there that many of us were unable to get into the crematorium many of them David's colleagues from around the UK, greenkeepers and trade alike, who had made the journey to Scarborough.

That was followed by a trip to Northern Ireland for the IOG Show where I was royally looked after. Allison Sloan fulfilled the promise he made to me at the Hayter Final to buy me my first pint of Irish Guinness while another member of one of the newly formed Northern Irish Section committees Graham Wylie deserves thanks for driving me to the airport.

Other committee men were quick to help Janet, Amanda and I on the BIGGA stand.

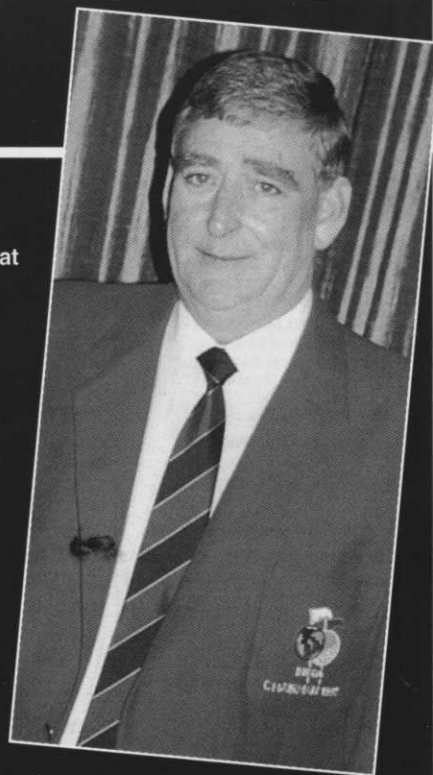
Amazingly, on returning, I was able to spend some time at my own golf club. We have two new tees under construction while on the 8th and 9th we hollow cored the greens.

Next up was the Kubota Challenge at The Belfry and a chance to meet up with more friends, including Derek Ganning, and talk with others from the English Golf Union, the Secretaries and the Golf Foundation.

It was an excellent competition as always and congratulations are due to Rene Orban and his team at Kubota for their hospitality. I'd also like to thank The Belfry for giving me a buggy so I could get about in support of the team.

After that I was back to the golf club where I had my annual visit from the STRI and found myself running the clubhouse in addition to my regular duties, as the club steward was on holiday.

Holiday? What's that?



# Education tops agenda at European conference

**The FEGGA European Conference draws near; Neil Thomas sets the scene...**

The Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA) will hold its first European Conference for its member associations during the period 21-23 November in Fuengirola, Spain. Delegates will be based at the Hotel Mijas in the village of Mijas while the Conference will take place at the Spanish Toro dealers centre in Fuengirola. Toro's support for the Conference through General Sales Manager, Bob Buckingham is much appreciated by FEGGA's member associations, while the Company's backing for FEGGA since its inception in March 1996 has been instrumental in the establishment of the new Association. So, some 18 months on from the first gathering of associations in Amsterdam, the stage is set for a European Conference which will point the way forward for greenkeeper associations throughout Europe.

At present there are 16 member associations of FEGGA and it is anticipated that all will be represented at the Conference in Spain.

Two vital matters will be at the forefront during the Conference – education and the environment. FEGGA considers it very important that the greenkeeper associations throughout Europe can come together to discuss education within the greenkeeping profession and also discuss the situation in each country in respect of environmental issues. The Conference will also enable the member associations to become better acquainted with each other and thereby strengthen the new Association.

Each member association has been invited to send two delegates who will present papers respectively on the education programme and environmental issues within its country. These papers, together with the ensuing discussion, should enable FEGGA to develop a comprehensive overview of educational and environmental matters as they affect greenkeepers throughout Europe. FEGGA can then move on to establish its own programme of improving educational provision for greenkeepers throughout the countries of its member associations aiming to set common standards, while, through its place on

the EGA's Brussels based Ecology Unit, it can seek to ensure that greenkeepers' interests are protected and promoted within the environmental debate. This is therefore an important Conference.

At the Conference, BIGGA's papers will be presented by Chairman, Pat Murphy (Education) and David Roy of Linlithgow Golf Club (Environment). David's club has recently been selected as the Scottish Region winner in the BIGGA 1997 Golf Environment Competition in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity. FEGGA's office base is currently in Sweden through the auspices of the Swedish Greenkeepers Association with administrative support being jointly provided by the SGA and BIGGA. The current member associations are Austria, Belgium, BIGGA, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, GCSAI, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. Anyone requiring information in relation to the Conference or concerning FEGGA generally should contact Tommy Lindelof at PO Box 42, S-139 21 Varmdo, Sweden – telephone 46 8 570 196 10/ fax 46 8 570 198 10.

## FLYING DIVOTS

■ Martin Brothers (UK) has appointed Mike Crabtree as Regional Sales Manager North covering Scotland and the Northwest Region.



■ Eamonn Wall & Co has recruited Stuart Wilkie to open a second office in Scotland. Stuart will operate from Rothienorman in Aberdeenshire and cover the north of Scotland for the company.

■ Mark Pyrah has been promoted to Field Sales Manager for Kings Horticulture after seven years as Technical Sales Representative.

■ GCSAA President Paul McGinnis has been appointed Golf Course Superintendent at Alta Mesas Country Club in Arizona. He had previously been Superintendent at Moon Valley Country Club in Phoenix, Arizona.

■ We apologise for any confusion that may have arisen further to the article on page 33 of October's edition of Greenkeeper International regarding the new Northern Ireland Sections. The article should have stated, the North East Section will cover Counties Antrim and Londonderry, the South East Section Counties Armagh and Down. Members living in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh will have the choice as to which section they wish to join. We hope this clarifies the situation.

## Irrigation champion retires after 27 years

Bill Hawthorn has retired as Director of Watermatation after 27 years of service to the company which he founded jointly with Robin Sitwell in 1970.

In the last couple of years Bill has focused on improving standards within the industry and has given a series of nationwide lectures on irrigation, in associ-

ation with the EGU Golf Course Committee workshop programme.

He was also named BTLIA Personality of the Year last year.

"Bill has been a tremendous asset to our company and with his wealth of industry experience we are sure that he will be

a great success in his new role as an irrigation consultant. We would like to wish him well and look forward to working with him on projects in the future," said a spokesman for Watermatation.

Bill has joined Wardle Consulting Engineers as Technical Director.

## A cut above...

Sally Abell, of the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, was presented with the Hayter Harrier lawn mower she claimed as her own for winning the Great BIGGA Bunker Competition by Kim Macfie, Sales and Marketing Director of Hayter, at the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel Golf and Country Club.

Sally's estimate of the number of bunkers which would be found during the course of The Open at Royal Troon was the closest of all the press and media who entered

the competition. It was the third year that the competition had been run and Sally gave her colleagues in the Media Centre very little chance by being only two out in her estimate of 857 – the actual figure being 859.

"I'm absolutely delighted to have won, and I thank BIGGA and Hayter for putting on such an interesting competition during Open week. It certainly does provide some interesting statistics and gives us a chance of winning a superb prize," said Sally.



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## Forum discusses where industry will be in future

A need for slow growing, low maintenance grasses to be promoted on the STRI listings was just one of the discussion points which came out of a forum of architects, agronomists, constructors, greenkeepers and seedsmen organised by Barenbrug in Toulouse, France.

The forum was looking at where the industry might be in five or ten years time and the point which came through loud and clear was the need to find a way of minimising the use of water, fertiliser and fungicides on golf courses.

Among those involved were architects, Martin Ebert, Jeremy Pern and Jonathan Gaunt; agronomists, George Shiels and John Hacker; constructor, Graeme Webster, greenkeeper, Gordon Irvine and Michel Mulder, John Bradley, Gerard van t'Klooster, Nicolas van Hanja and Claudine Taillefer of Barenbrug.

Jeremy Pern, who is the European Architects' representative on the European Golf Ecology Unit, explained the aims of the Unit and highlighted the implications of some European legislation which was on the horizon.

Gerard van t'Klooster said that seed people were already looking into producing drought resistant seeds and those which have an ability to flourish in more salty water.

George Shiels commented that every one of the fungicides currently used will soon be removed from the lists. He added that grass selection in future would revolve around those grasses which cope with recycled water and that selection should be done by agronomists rather than architects or greenkeepers.

John Hacker advocated the production and promotion of ecologically sound grass mixtures but Gerard felt that they had to breed for the STRI list because they needed to be on the lists to sell.

# Easier way to pay subscriptions

BIGGA, in conjunction with Premium Credit, is now able to offer members the opportunity to pay their subscription by direct debit in 10 equal monthly instalments.

All renewal forms will be accompanied by a bank/building society mandate authorising Premium Credit to collect the monthly instalment from the member's bank or building society.

Members wishing to take advantage of D/D will, however, need to return their completed mandate and renewal form BEFORE their membership expires. The first instalment will then be collected

one month after the membership is renewed. Therefore, members with an expiry date of 31 December will not have to make a payment until 1 February and their last payment will be 1 November. Please note that if forms are submitted late, that is to say after the expiry date, the first two or three instalments may well be collected together to bring the remaining payments into line.

Any new member wishing to pay by direct debit can contact headquarters for a direct debit mandate which should be returned with the application form.

There is a small service charge (7%) made by Premium Credit in order to offer this facility and so a typical membership subscription of £49.00 would, therefore, work out at: Subscription, £49.00, Service Charge of 7% + £3.43, Total payable = £52.43, making each monthly instalment £5.24.

This facility is available to all members and may be used by individuals, clubs and companies.

Anyone requiring further information before their renewal form arrives should contact John Pemberton or Janet Adamson on 01347 838581.

# Euro campaign backs environment pioneers

On the final morning of the 1997 Ryder Cup, European golf was given top level backing for its environmental activities when European Commission President, Jacques Santer, launched the "Committed to Green" campaign.

This is a new initiative by the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, supported by the R&A and the PGA European Tour. The campaign aims to encourage everyone involved in golf to participate in improving the environmental quality of golf courses.

In welcoming this move by Europe's golfing bodies to address environmental issues, Mr Santer expressed the hope that "Committed to Green" will lead to golf courses being seen as role models for good environmental practice. He emphasised the need for Course Managers to work together with independent environmental specialists and local interest groups, to improve dialogue and to seek mutual solutions to environmental management questions.

Mr Santer congratulated the Ryder Cup organisers for their vision in incorporating a green dimension to the event. He also paid tribute to the example shown by Valderrama, in presenting a top championship golf course together with maintaining high standards of environmental care. The Commission President stressed the importance of long-term commitment to environmental care, and the need to encourage sustainable development through partnership and shared responsibility. The "Com-

mitted to Green" campaign will offer golf clubs the opportunity to demonstrate such an approach.

Speaking on behalf of the European Golf Association and the other golfing bodies present, Ecology Unit Executive Director, David Stubbs, thanked the European Commission for its encouragement and for recognising the role golf can play in fostering environmental awareness. He

## 'Golf courses can become role models'

went on to say that, "To be 'Committed to Green' is to demonstrate environmental awareness and responsibility. The aim is to increase awareness of the environmental attributes of golf courses, and to demonstrate how well-managed golf courses are of benefit to the environment and the community.

"The game still faces many environmental challenges - we have to be good conservationists; we need to address water resource and pest management issues; we want to ensure that greenkeepers receive appropriate training in ecological management; and we must communicate these points throughout the golf industry and to the golfing public. 'Committed to Green' will be a major

step forward in achieving this."

The campaign provides a structured programme through which golf clubs can demonstrate their environmental credentials. It is a fully inclusive campaign, open to all types of golf facility on a voluntary basis.

Emphasis is placed on continual improvement of environmental performance. For clubs which achieve high standards of environmental performance, there will be the opportunity of public recognition through the "Committed to Green" Award for Environmental Excellence. To ensure objectivity and credibility, the setting of environmental criteria and awarding of recognition will be subject to independent verification.

"Committed to Green" is coordinated at a European level by the EGA Ecology Unit. The campaign will be operated on the ground through a network of National Ecology Officers attached to their respective National Golf Federations.

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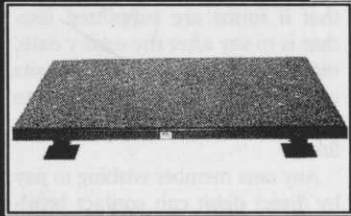
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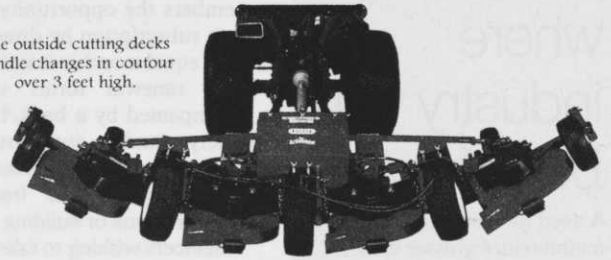
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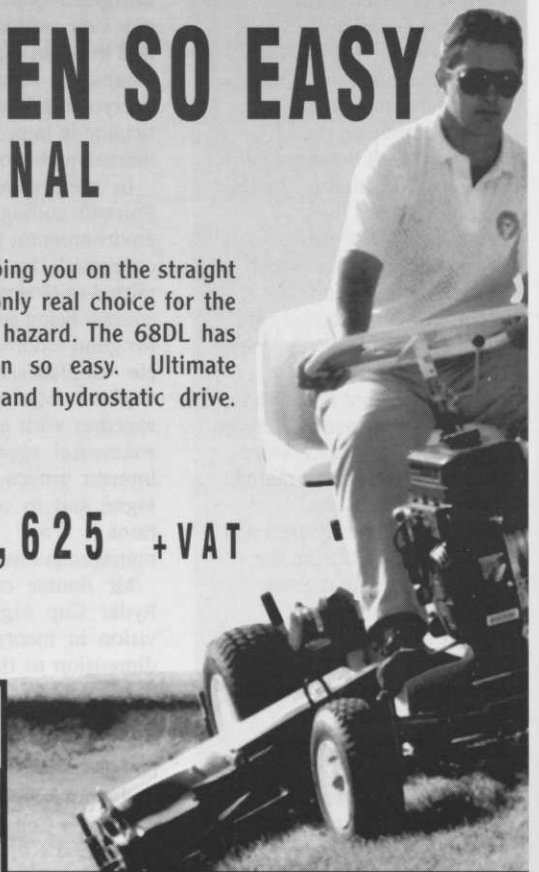
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# David to take over BIGGA design role

BIGGA's latest recruit is Design and Production Editor, David Emery, whose arrival enables the Association to bring all of its publishing work in-house.

A native of Durham, 25 year-old David trained as a Graphic Designer in Durham and continued his training at York College prior to joining the local *Evening Press* as an Editorial Designer where he worked on a range of magazines and newspapers. He moves to BIGGA a short time after he had been promoted to the position of Deputy Studio Manager.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge that working at BIGGA will bring and it is particularly exciting to be in at the start of the Association's move to bring all of its publishing work to Aldwark Manor," explained David.

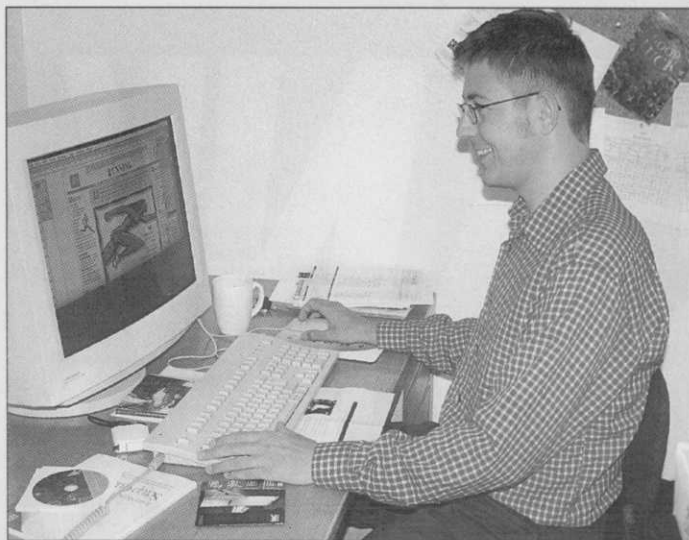
A sports fanatic, David, finds time – or he did before he joined the Association – for badminton, running, swimming and is a regular at a local gym. He recovers from his exertions by listening to music and relaxing at home with his girlfriend, Sarah.

Initially he will supervise the design and production of the Association's educational and promotional literature as well as its pages on the Internet, while he will begin working on *Greenkeeper International* in the February issue next year.

"We are all indebted to Tim Moat, of Headline Communications, for the wonderful design and production work he has done for the Association over the last seven years," said *Greenkeeper International* Editor, Scott MacCallum.

"In particular, the fact that *Greenkeeper International* has become the magazine it is today is due in large part to Tim Moat, who has worked on it since the first issue," he added.

"However, the continued growth of BIGGA meant that employing its own Design and Production Editor became a viable option and we are sure that David will enable the Association, and *Greenkeeper International* in particular, to maintain and improve on the already high standards."



BIGGA's new Design and Production Editor, David Emery

## Lab's prestigious first

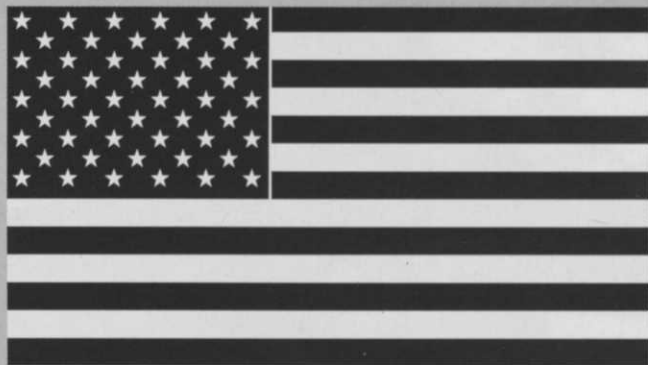
European Turfgrass Laboratories are the first European laboratory to be accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation, to undertake golf green materials testing to USGA standards.

There are five laboratories on the USGA list of accredited laboratories with ETL being the only one outside the USA.

USGA Golf Green Guidelines are very specific and require precise tests to determine particle size content, percolation rate, air and water filled porosities, along with a number of other tests to ensure that the rootzone drains properly and yet can sustain plant growth.

ETL also undertakes other testing procedures.

## GCSAA CONFERENCE AND SHOW, ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 2-8, 1998



# Go Stateside!

GCSAA's 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held in the Anaheim Convention Center. BIGGA will once again host a trip and the BIGGA party will meet at London Heathrow Airport on Sunday, February 1, for departure to Los Angeles at 3pm.

BIGGA will be able to arrange accommodation for any member wishing to stay overnight before the flight at competitive rates.

The Disneyland Hotel has been selected to accommodate our party and offers outstanding facilities. It is located near to the Convention Center and adjacent to Disneyland.

The GCSAA Conference and Show runs from February 2-8 with the trade show taking place from February 6-8. You will be able to attend the conference seminars and education programmes as well as take in the latest golf course equipment, products and services at the trade show.

### ITINERARY

#### Sunday, February 1

All members will assemble at London Heathrow Airport and will take the 3pm Virgin Atlantic flight to Los Angeles with onward transfer to the Disneyland Hotel for an eight night stay on a room only basis inclusive of private facilities.

#### Monday, February 9

You will be transferred to the airport for your return overnight flight to London, departing Los Angeles at 5.30pm arriving at London

Heathrow at 11.45am on February 10.

### PRICES

£845 per person based on a twin share

£1270 per person based on single occupancy

Plus comprehensive travel insurance for the duration at £30. Included are:

- Return Economy class flights London Heathrow/Los Angeles
- UK and US taxes
- Transfer to and from the airport to the Disneyland Hotel
- Eight nights accommodation on a room only basis and US accommodation taxes

Please note: Registration costs for the Pre-Conference seminars which run from February 2-5, the Educational Programmes which run from February 5-8 and the Trade Show are not included in the package and bookings will need to be made directly with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. Details are available from BIGGA upon request.

Please forward full payment of £875 or £1300 (unless travel insurance is not required) to BIGGA, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York, YO6 2NF to arrive no later than Friday, November 28, together with name, address and contact telephone number. If accommodation is required for the night of January 31 please advise in order for the hotel rooms to be booked. Payment will be made on checking out of the hotel. N.B. Places on this trip are limited – book early!





**Roland Taylor takes a look at the vexing task of dealing with banks and slopes.**

**B**anks come in all shapes and sizes and are either natural terrain or man-made – they vary from gentle slopes to steep inclines. Even the flattest courses will have some form of banking, if only around bunkers and tees.

Some banks are cut regularly. Others may be left to develop as natural barriers, only being mown when necessary. Where they form part of a stream or river, regular attention is required to ensure the free-flow of water, especially in winter, to avoid possible flooding. Banks are an ideal habitat for fauna and flora to establish, but even then they will require some mowing as part of their management.

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account when considering the suitability of any machine. The most critical of these is the angle of slope as this will most certainly govern the final decision on what to buy. Ease of access also needs to be taken into consideration. Will it be possible to mow the whole bank from either the top or bottom? This is important when considering long-arm tractor-mounted units.

The condition of the surface is

# THE BANK JOB

critical, especially on new banking where water erosion can cause minor landslides and the soil's stability may be questionable. On older established areas wildlife will probably have taken up residence. As a result, burrows and holes could be lurking beneath the undergrowth. All this could make operating machinery difficult.

The type of vegetation will very often determine which type of mower to go for, as will the quality of finish required. Armed with

answers regarding the above information where do you start? Buying the right machine is important not only from an efficiency point of view, but also for the safety of the operator.

The first test is, can the bank be walked on comfortably? If the answer is yes, either a pedestrian or ride-on mower is probably going to be suitable. If the answer is no, then some form of extended-arm unit such as a tractor-mounted flail unit could be a possible solution. While some

machines will appear to be stable on the bank the operator may find them very uncomfortable to use. This sometimes applies to ride-ons where the machine's angle becomes so acute that the only way to stay in any position is to sit on the side of the seat. Not only does this create considerable fatigue it is also very unsafe. Clearly in these cases an alternative needs to be sought.

The power source is also relevant – two-stroke engines are ideal. There are no lubrication