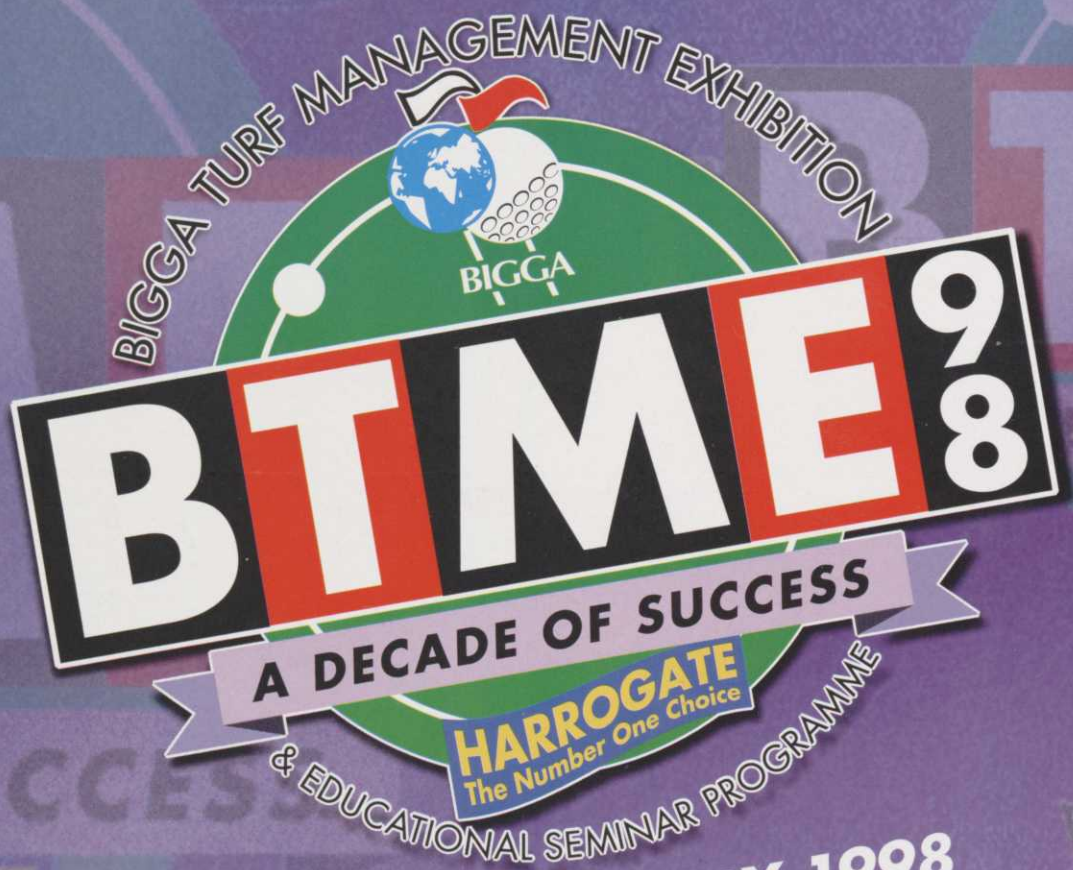


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International

OCTOBER 1997

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Ganton, venue for the Hayter Challenge Final and, inset, Paula Humphries' winning team. Pictures by Brian Morgan and Scott MacCallum

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A tribute to David Spurden

Everyone can recall the absolute shock they felt on the morning of Sunday, August 31, when they awoke to the news that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been killed in a horrific crash in Paris.

A world went into mourning and the collective outpouring of national grief, as highlighted by 12 hour queues to sign a book of condolence and the funeral itself, will be remembered for the remainder of everyone's lifetime.

However, the vast majority of those who grieved had never met the Princess, but formed their "attachment" from television pictures, the printed word and glossy photographs.

A mere 25 days later the world of greenkeeping suffered an equally shocking and tragic loss. In its way the loss cut deeper because David Spurden, who was killed in a shooting accident out on his beloved Ganton course, was known personally by so many who shared his profession. Not only known but respected and, perhaps most of all, liked as a friend.

Respect came from his wonderful skill and greenkeeping ability – you needed only to look at Ganton to appreciate that – and liked because in an industry known for the genuine nature of so many of its people David had also reached the top of the tree. It is rare to find class acts who can wear both business and personal hats with equal aplomb, but David did just that, and in such an unassuming, down to earth, fashion.

It is perhaps fitting that a week before the accident Ganton played host to the last Hayter Challenge Final and that 63 greenkeepers from all over Britain and Ireland had the opportunity to play David's course. With potential critics aplenty and, in Ganton, a huge

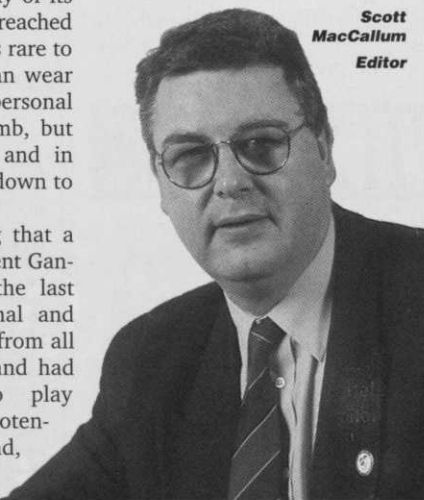
reputation to protect, it would have been a daunting prospect for many, but David was relaxed – he even represented the Northern Region team and played well, especially in the morning.

He knew he had no reason to be anything other than relaxed because, as he no doubt suspected, Ganton was the real star of the week. The praise which flowed for its condition and its layout during both practice and competition days, as well as during the gala dinner, would have caused many a head to swell... but David merely smiled contentedly.

You can ill afford to lose people of the calibre of David Spurden and in an industry as close knit as greenkeeping that loss is even more acute and hard felt.

I pass on heart felt condolences to those who will feel that loss more than most – his team, colleagues and members at Ganton Golf Club, his family and, in particular, his son and daughter of whom I know he was so proud.

That two such remarkable people be lost in such a short space of time is truly a tragedy and for those who knew either of them personally the loss creates a gap in their lives which will never be filled.



Scott MacCallum
Editor

As I see it...

BY PAT MURPHY
BIGGA CHAIRMAN

If I'd known being Chairman was so arduous I'd have gone into training six months before I took over. You literally don't stop and this month has been exceptionally busy.

It started with Saltex at Windsor which, with its Royal connections, was a rather subdued place to be two days after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. However, it was an excellent show. I judged the stands and

attended a launch of a new greenkeeper's hard hat by Course Care. I wish it every success.

The next week I headed to Northern Ireland, where, following some superb preparatory work by John Pemberton and Janet Adamson, we were able to launch two new Northern Ireland Sections. If the enthusiasm of the meeting is any gauge they will both be successes – see Page 33 for more information.

The three of us took in a North West Section day on our journey home and enjoyed the hospitality of the Section and the company of Ian Holoran and Bert Cross, the Regional Chairman and Vice Chairman, as well as Viscount Whitelaw, who had taken the trouble to attend. I also managed 12 holes of golf.

Arriving at my hotel after midnight I was picked up by the Editor at the crack of dawn the next morning to turn the first sod at the new six hole academy at the Berkshire College of Agriculture. It is an exciting venture and I wish it well.

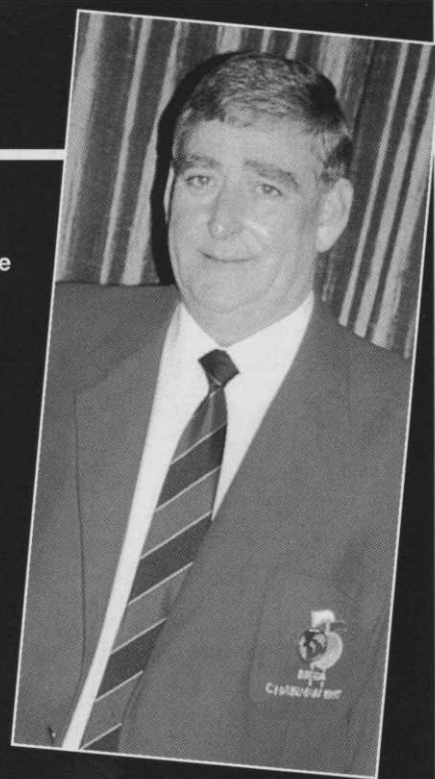
The next day I travelled with Neil Thomas to Scotland for a surprise presentation to Elliott and Edna Small. They both deserved their tributes and I enjoyed once again being among my "ain folk".

Time to rest? Not likely! Off to the Hayter Final. I did delay my arrival – the first time I've had to do so since becoming Chairman – because of my wedding anniversary on the Wednesday but I got to Ganton on Thursday in time for a few holes with Kim Macfie. I was also delighted to present Kim with a music centre as a token of the Association's appreciation of his support to BIGGA over the last five years.

Surely a break this time? Nope. Off to Stockholm for the Swedish Exhibition, which was absolutely fantastic. I was well looked after by Per Olof Ljung, Tommy Lindelof and his wife, Helen, and enjoyed the finest meal I've had since becoming Chairman. It's an expensive place though!

It was only on returning for Sweden that I learned of the death of David Spurden, a man whose company I had enjoyed just over a week before.

It was the most tragic end to what, for me, had been a successful month.



Association's thank you to Elliott and Edna Small

Last month witnessed the end of an era. For the last seven and a half years greenkeepers in Scotland, old or young, have been able to lift a phone and know that on the other end of a line help would be at hand in the shape of Elliott and Edna Small.

As BIGGA's Scottish Regional Administrator since January 1, 1990, Elliott and Edna, who is as much a part of the Scottish greenkeeping scene as her husband, have seen at first hand the way the industry, and BIGGA itself, has developed.

That development has reached the stage where BIGGA is able to employ a part-time Regional Administrator and Elliott and

Edna are passing the Region's reins into the more than capable hands of former policeman and still talented golfer, Peter Boyd.

"I believe it is the right time for the change to happen and I think Peter will do well," said Elliott, in the spike bar of Ganton Golf Club during the last playing of the Hayter Challenge Final.

"I'll still be involved in the Association if they need me and they know that they only need to ask for anything and I'll do it. I'm not going to walk away and, for the first year at least, I'll be there to guide Peter," said Elliott.

As our picture shows, Elliott was presented with a set of golf clubs by the Scottish members



and Edna received a figurine at a surprise presentation in Stirling last month.

As Elliott discovers the joys of a bit of spare time for the first time in seven and a half years you can be sure that, with the aid of his new clubs, his handicap of 8 will start to tumble.

BIGGA cracks down on abuse of courtesy golf

BIGGA is taking steps to tighten procedures following evidence that, in certain cases, the "courtesy golf" extended by golf clubs to full BIGGA greenkeeper members is being abused.

A small minority of greenkeeper members (and in some cases non greenkeeper members) are not contacting the club in advance, are not producing membership cards or are using membership cards they are not entitled to and are making frequent visits to the same golf club. As a result, an increasing number of golf clubs are now refusing to continue to offer the privilege of courtesy golf.

BIGGA Sections looking for host clubs for their golf days have also been affected and are increasingly being turned down by golf clubs. This has become a major concern to BIGGA and the vast majority of members who do not abuse their courtesy golf. The Association is,

therefore, anxious to ensure that the selfish actions of a minority of people do not spoil this wonderful opportunity for the majority.

BIGGA has introduced several changes of procedure to ensure that only working greenkeepers obtain full membership, including the need for greenkeeper members to have their renewal form validated by their club, and as a reminder to members, has also issued the following guidelines:

Only those with full greenkeeper membership should seek courtesy golf.

Courtesy golf is only given at the discretion of the individual golf club and is not an automatic benefit of membership.

Members wishing to seek courtesy golf at a club should contact the club at least 24 hours in advance of wishing to play.

On arrival at the club, members should report to the Secretary/Pro

Shop and follow normal procedures for playing golf.

Members should always produce a valid membership card as proof of status to the club.

Members should make a point of thanking the club for their courtesy on completion of their round of golf.

Members should not seek courtesy golf at any one golf club more than twice per year.

Golf clubs wishing to verify membership or requiring further details should contact BIGGA on 01347 838581.

All suspected abuses of the card should be reported in writing to BIGGA headquarters where such complaints will be investigated. Members found guilty of abuse of the card will be disciplined under Paragraph 15 of the Association's Constitution and Rules which gives Sections the power to suspend or expel the member if necessary.

Salary recommendations published next month

The findings of the Standing Committee on Greenkeepers' Salaries, comprising representatives of BIGGA, the Association of Golf Club Secretaries and the Association of Golf Course Owners, will be published next month.

The Committee was formed following a significant increase in the number of golf clubs which were contacting BIGGA and asking advice on greenkeeper

salaries and conditions of employment.

The 1998 Recommendations of the Committee will be mailed to every golf club in the UK and printed in the November issue of *Greenkeeper International*.

Golf clubs and greenkeepers requiring more detailed information can contact BIGGA for sample greenkeeper's contract of employment, job specifications for all levels of employment as

well as advice on greenkeeping qualifications.

"I am sure the recommendations of the Standing Committee will be a valuable tool for all golf clubs setting next year's pay awards for their greenkeeping staff," said Neil Thomas, Executive Director of BIGGA.

The Standing Committee will meet annually to review greenkeepers' salaries and conditions of employment.

FLYING DIVOTS

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

■ White Horse Contractors Ltd have appointed Robert Donald as Managing Director



following the retirement of Johan Koster after more than 30 years with the company.

Robert, an engineering graduate from Newcastle University, has worked within the sportsturf construction, drainage and irrigation sector for the past six years.

■ John Di Mascio, an agronomy lecturer from Hiram College in Ohio, has joined the staff at Myerscough College to lecture in agronomy, golf course design and golf history as well as being the Programme Manager for the college's Higher National Diploma course in Turf Science and Golf Course Management.



■ Derek McJannett, of Sherwood Forest GC and a member of last year's Hayter International Cup team, produced some scintillating form in the invitation Charnwood Rock event at Charnwood Forest GC.



Derek, with Garry Thurman Chairman of Green at Charnwood acting as caddie, broke the course record with a stunning six under par 63 in the opening round of the event. The round contained a remarkable eight birdies and two dropped shots. Derek, who plays off +1, unfortunately couldn't keep his form going and eventually finished fourth.

■ Those reading the piece on Valderrama in last month's magazine may have been surprised that the course had so little play. The reason for this was a pure typographical error. The course does not have 1200 rounds per annum but 12,000 - still not many by UK standards but more than was indicated.

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Facility helps students learn ins and outs of maintenance

After years of preparation and planning by Berkshire College of Agriculture, BIGGA Chairman Pat Murphy was the man invited to turn the first sod of the college's new six hole educational golf facility.

The six holes have been designed by Tom MacKenzie, of Donald Steel and Company, on 40 acres of parkland beside the main college building.

The six holes are each designed and constructed differently to give students of the college the chance to explore maintenance techniques on a range of styles.

The 1st will be a look into the future by examining a British specification; the 2nd is constructed to USGA guidelines; the 3rd will be badly constructed and badly managed to assist students with problems they might encounter later; the 4th will have a perched water table for tee and green construction; the 5th will be a traditional Old Tom Morris style hole using techniques from the last century while the final hole is a heathland style hole using a clay bowl style green and green construction taken from the 1920-30s.

The Industry Liaison Committee which drove the project consisted of Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers – including Martin Gunn of Temple, Alun Collis of Castle Royale, Ray Clark of



Harleyford and John Nudds of Garrards Cross; Club Secretaries, students, trade and PGA representatives as well as Malcolm Peake, Chairman of Green at Temple Golf Club.

The college received a £60,000 grant from the R&A for the project towards a final cost of £136,000 while additional sponsorship came from Greenscapes Ltd, Roffey Ltd, Hepworths and

Rigby Taylor.

Pat Murphy used a Kubota digger to lift the first sod and expressed his admiration for the project adding that he felt students attending the college would have a distinct advantage with such a range of holes to work on.

He then planted an oak tree to act as a permanent reminder of the occasion.

■ Pictures show the ceremonies.



Environment winners announced soon

The 1997 BIGGA Golf Environment Competition in association with Rhône Poulenc and Amazone Ground Care is nearing its completion with successful clubs being notified early this month.

The standard of entry has been exceptional and principle judge Bob Taylor, Ecologist to the STRI, has been delighted by the commitment to both the competition and environmental issues generally shown by the entries.

"The quality of environmental work being carried out at the clubs I've visited has been outstanding and it has been extremely difficult to select the clubs to visit and then those deserving of a second visit," explained Bob, who over the last few months has been to 25

courses the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

Bob has worked closely with Jonathan Smith in Scotland and Dr Keith Duff, Chief Scientist of English Nature, who has been extremely enthusiastic about the quality of entry and standard of environmental practice being undertaken by the golf clubs.

Rod Baker, Managing Director of Amazone Ground Care, who initially launched the competition several years ago, and Jonathan Hill, of Rhône Poulenc, have taken a keen interest in the progress of the competition.

"Jonathan visited two of the golf clubs with me, Gog Magog and Old Nene, and was delighted by the level of enthusiasm shown for the competi-

tion. I've also seen quite a number of Amazone machines on the courses I've visited," said Bob.

He was keen to stress that clubs which entered, irrespective of whether they won or lost, benefited.

"It is more than just a competition with winners and losers. I've been able to offer advice on all aspects of environmental matters while visiting the golf courses from tree, grass land or heather management through to care of ponds. All clubs will also receive publicity for the work."

The judging has taken the form of the European Ecology Unit's Commitment to Green project

which was launched at the Ryder Cup in Valderrama.

■ Next month *Greenkeeper International* will carry a detailed report on Bob Taylor's experiences during judging and the winners will be revealed.

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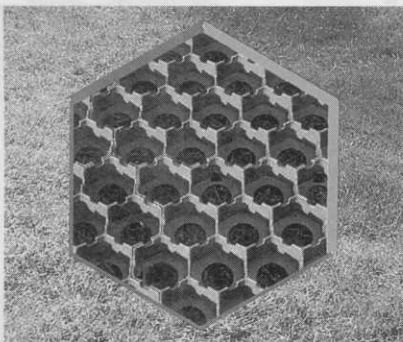
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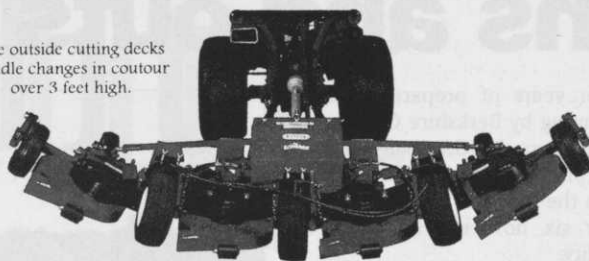
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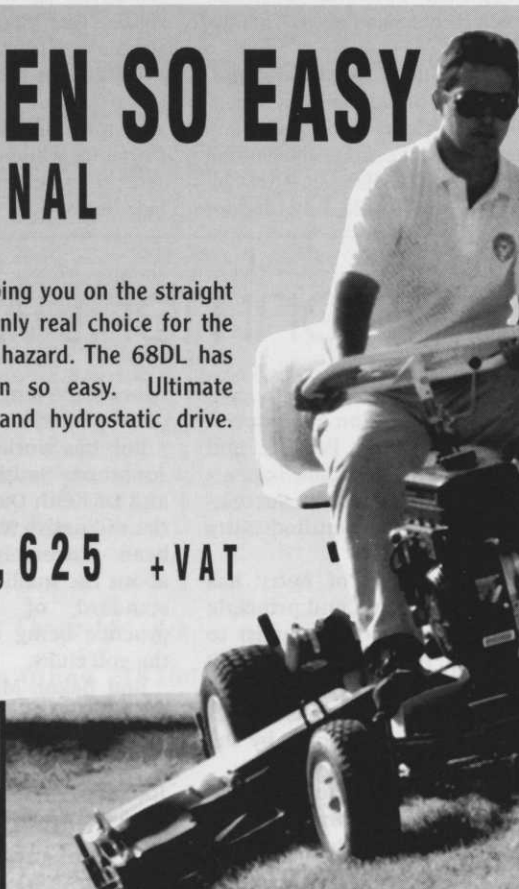
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Fusarium? Not on my patch, thank you

As you are all too painfully aware probably the most important disease that occurs on highly maintained greens is Fusarium Patch. *Microdochium Nivale* is highly disfigured and occurs primarily in the late autumn and spring but may strike at any time of year under

conditions of cool wet weather.

Regarded as one of the best ways to control attacks of Fusarium Patch, as recommended by the STRI, is regular switching with a fibreglass flexible rod or brushing with a dew brush. Both perform the same job as they

combine the droplets of water sitting on the surface of the turf, dropping them onto the soil and allowing the natural drainage of the soil to disperse the moisture towards the root level of the turf.

Indeed it is especially important to switch greens that are well

protected by tall trees or buildings as the green is therefore well protected from wind and direct sunlight and therefore dries slower. An added benefit of switching is a better cut if it is performed immediately after it is done.

Tim Webb, Tacit

'Course for all seasons' a good aid

This soft back A4 sized book has been produced by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club to bring some of the issues which their Golf Course Advisory Panel have identified as being of great importance to the management and maintenance of golf courses.

The book looks at six main areas that have an impact on the management of golf; Best Management Practice, the World around the Golfer, Golf Course Management, Communications, Golf Course Developments and What the Golf Authorities are doing. The book sets out to illustrate some of the issues that lead to conflict between golfers and greenkeepers eg. green speed, the 'TV' effect, problems due to the changing climate and all year round play. However, it shows that by having a sound course management policy, by investing in greenkeeper training and education, by working with nature and by using good communication skills, many of the problems can be overcome. Useful to greenkeepers as a reference guide, as a source of basic advice and as background information for talks to members, the book would be a useful addition to all Head Greenkeeper's bookshelves. However, if the book was read by all golf course committee members and all golfers then many of the problems that confront greenkeepers would disappear as golfers developed a much better understanding of the complexities of golf course management.

Copies of the book are available, priced £5, from Michael Barratt Limited, Profile House, 5/7 Forlease Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RP

Ken Richardson



Barenbrug makes its marque

■ Barenbrug's Arnold Pilon has been driving from Europe to Asia as part of the Paris-Peking Classic Car Rally. For the car, Barenbrug chose the good old British Jaguar MK 1, dating back to 1960. Undoubtedly, it's the first time the marque has been driven to the Chinese capital with a bag of

BAR 7/Amenity Leys on board, waiting to be sown!

For Arnold, the trip has not been straightforward. As well as participating in the Rally he had the task of visiting many of Barenbrug's European offices along the way. At least he was greeted with a warm reception.

Meanwhile there's a palpable air of excitement around Michel Mulder, Managing Director of Barenbrug UK. "It's great to see a quality British car, taking quality British grass, on behalf of a quality British company all that way to China", he enthused. "I can't think of a better form of cultural exchange."

Laser levelling brought in to fit new root zone

The first 18 hole golf course to be built using the new ProSport Eco-Zone root zone from Hepworth Minerals and Chemicals is at an advanced stage of construction at Biddenham near Bedford.

The course will be the focal point and principal amenity of a new development by Bovis on the western side of Bedford. David Pottage is the architect and designer and the course is being constructed by Golf Landscapes of Brentwood, Essex.

A total of 5000 tonnes of ProSport Eco-Zone has been delivered by HMC for the construction of the greens.

"One of the problems with this

site," says Bob Dunning, the Director in charge of the contract, "is that across the full 50 hectares of the course there is a fall of only about five metres, so we had to be very accurate in sculpting the base of the greens to the architect's design and that accuracy must be maintained as we fill them. Laser levelling has been needed."

After installing the drains, a porous membrane was laid on the base of the greens. 100mm of aggregate was then laid followed by 50mm of grit. Finally, the root zone was laid to a compacted depth of 275mm, with constant checks being made to ensure that the hand raked final

surface followed accurately the line of the base.

Where possible the vehicles, which each carry over 20 tonnes of root zone, tipped at the green site on to a porous membrane to prevent contamination. Where a green was not accessible to heavy transport, the root zone and other construction materials were tipped on a stockpile and taken to the green by dumptruck.

"We handle root zones as few times as possible," says Bob, "not just for economic reasons, good root zones perform best after their initial mixing so it is preferable not to mix them again any more than is essential."

Appeal to keep a look-out for stolen greenkeeping kit

In recent months the Greenkeepers' Store at Hallamshire has been burgled twice.

On the first occasion, last November, the offenders broke into the store during the night and removed much of the portable equipment such as strimmers, brushcutters etc and three new hand mowers which had been bought a short time earlier.

The three machines were Jacobsen 522 Pedestrian Green Mowers, complete with turf groomers, grass boxes and transport wheels, each one costing £5,300 plus VAT new. The serial numbers of the machines were 62261 02388, 62261 02390 and 62261 02317.

Subsequently, in April, the equipment was replaced.

Following recommendations made by the Insurers and the Police, the alarm system was renewed with the very latest system installed and connected to the alarm monitoring company.

Despite all the increases in the security and alarm systems, last month the store was broken into and two of the replacement Jacobsen machines, with serial numbers 62261 03346 and 62261 03317, stolen.

It was obviously a carefully planned burglary as the Course Manager only left the store some 15 minutes before the alarm was activated and the offenders knew exactly what they could transport in the limited time available, and apparently did not mind the risk of burgling the store and stealing property in broad daylight, despite the alarms.

These machines are not com-

mon in this country, being American imported and will only be useful to specialist organisations such as golf courses and certain sports facilities ie bowls clubs, cricket clubs and the like.

From enquiries that have been made it is quite apparent that golf clubs have been targeted through the North of England over recent months and burglaries appear to have taken place at many course stores with similar results and even repeat burglaries have taken place where replacement equipment has been bought.

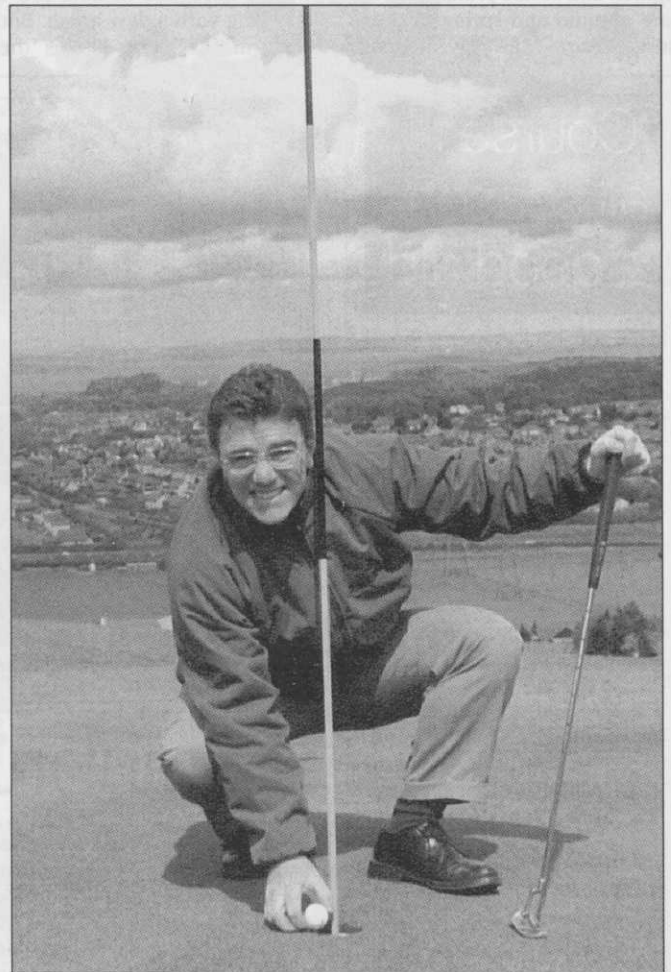
From the number of such incidents it is apparent that there must be an outlet for this equipment. South Yorkshire Police are asking if any Secretaries or Greens Staff are approached to purchase any similar machines to ours, or any other machinery which is being

offered for sale by anyone other than their normal reputable suppliers, to acquire as much detail of these people and their vehicles discreetly and pass this to South Yorkshire Police either through me, or direct.

Aside from the extra premiums and conditions that will be added to our insurance on the next renewal, the theft of such important and essential pieces of equipment causes some disruption to the normal working practices and could lose income to clubs by prestigious events being cancelled due to the course not being able to be presented in appropriate condition for tournaments.

— Keith Sharrocks, Secretary, Hallamshire Golf Club, Redmires Road, Lodge Moor, Sheffield

'These machines are not common in this country'



Success, but at a price

Tom Brannan experienced one of the quickest ways of emptying a wallet known to man at Winterfield GC recently. He holed-in-one in the East of Scotland Section Spring Outing, the feat occurring at the par-3 4th.

Apparently, and this comes from Chris Yeaman, of Swanston GC, his quote after holing the shot was: "Getting a hole-in-one was nearly as exciting as a Thursday night in Trotter's Bar in Harrogate this year." Whatever could he mean?

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