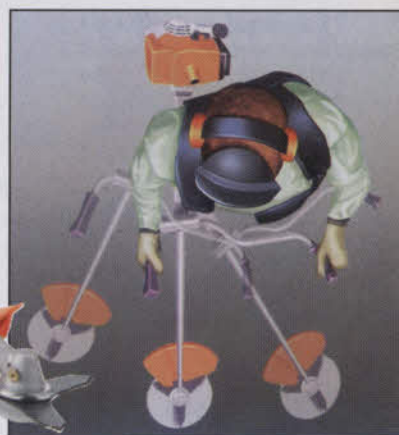


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Incredible journey for Joseph

Lady members of Bude and North Cornwall Golf Club thought they were doing the decent thing when they found a new home for Joseph the Cat who had adopted the golf club as his base for the last 18 months.

Looked after by the members who carried biscuits in their golf bags for him Joseph was in fine fettle until he was injured while out on the course.

Member Pam Lane took him to the vet and began to look for a more permanent, and safer, home for him.

As luck would have it a woman in a village ten miles away was looking for a cat and the match was made.

Unfortunately, though a few days later Joseph went missing and ten days later he turned up... back at Bude and North Cornwall Golf Club, a little thinner but in good health.

Members are now organising for a special house to be made for him and are holding raffles to raise money for his food.

Simon leads the way

Simon Ridland an assistant at Canford Magna Golf Club in Wimborne, Dorset, has become the first man to achieve NVQ Level 2 through his prior experience and knowledge without going to college and by being assessed at his own Golf Club.

The assessments were carried out initially by Canford Magna Deputy Course Manager, Matt Maryon, who subsequently moved to become Course Manager at Yeovil Golf Club. The assessments were then completed by his own Course Manager, Trevor Smith.

"I'm absolutely delighted to be the first to achieve the qualification and the club have rewarded my success with a pay rise," said Simon, who initially worked on the construction of the Canford Magna's 36 hole construction before being retained on the greenkeeping staff to carry on the maintenance.

"I'm now thinking of doing Elmwood College's HNC distance learning package which will hopefully lead on to my NVQ Level 3 in Sportsturf Maintenance as I still want to further my qualifications but can't afford the time to go to college," said 35 year old Simon.

"The assessments were initially carried out over a six to eight month period and the GTC Training Manual was used as the training programme and



Matt Maryon and Trevor Smith congratulate Simon Ridland (centre)

the vehicle towards the City and Guilds Level 2 Sportsturf. The practical assessments were planned to be done by observation on the Golf Course within the normal work schedule and the knowledge evidence was checked by oral questioning from the questions prepared from the underpinning knowledge in the Training Manual and everything was logged," explained Matt.

Trevor added that they also gathered a lot of prior evidence of work Simon had carried out during the construction of the course using photographs.

"We at the GTC are delighted that Simon has achieved his NVQ Level 2 in Sportsturf with the support of Matt

& Trevor who we trained to be work based trainers and assessors. The concept of NVQ's have made it possible to release the potential of employees who have not previously had the opportunity to prove their competence and value in the workforce to gain nationally recognised qualifications and to receive reward. Their appetite for self-improvement then goes on," said GTC's N/SVQ Co-ordinator Sue Gudgeon.

"I'm sure that Simon fully appreciates the support that was given by Matt and Trevor and it will hopefully encourage more experienced greenkeepers to become qualified," said Sue.

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Dean Cleaver, the Chairman of FEGGA, gives an overview into the aims of the Federation...

EuroUNITED

It does not seem two years ago since many of us gathered in Amsterdam and made that unique decision to form the Federation of European Golf Greenkeepers Association (FEGGA).

For many years we had discussed whether there was a need to form an umbrella Association to represent National Associations on a European level. Many discussions and decisions were being made with no greenkeeping input. For this to continue we felt would be damaging to the industry and indeed the game of golf.

For some time, some of the National Associations had applied for a place on the EGA's Ecology Management Committee. With the formation of FEGGA a place was granted for one person to represent all Associations. We were obviously delighted with this decision and felt this would only benefit the progress of the Ecology Management Committee.

Education is something all Associations have been working very hard on for many years, and in most cases with much success. There was a definite need for all Associations to get together and learn from each other's education, and then to aim for a minimum level within Europe.

There are many other aspects that affect our business in maintaining golf courses in Europe. It must be good to pool our resources, so we may learn from each other and benefit from each other's experiences and resources.

This was the main basis for forming FEGGA in the short term; in the long term there are many more ambitions to fulfill.

At this point I must stress that FEGGA has no wish to interfere with the running of National Associations, supporting their individual activities and representing them at European level.

Following the initial meeting in Amsterdam an interim Board of five members was elected with their main job to prepare a Constitution ready



FEGGA has a policy of holding meetings around Europe and this picture shows the Board on a recent visit to Estonia and the country's only golf club - the Estonian Golf Club. L-R: Board Members, Roland Favrat, of Spain; Per-Olof Ljung, of Sweden; Claus-Detlef Ratjen, of Germany; Dean Cleaver, of the UK, and Elise Jarvenen of Finland. Also in the picture are the Federation's two administrators, Neil Thomas and Tommy Lindelof, as well as, on the extreme right, Rein Paalberg, the Course Manager of the Estonian Golf Club.

for the first AGM in January 1997 held in Harrogate, England. This was approved along with the election of the interim Board.

During last year (1997) FEGGA started to establish quite well and was beginning to be recognised for the work it was doing, and the role it was beginning to play.

We now have 16 Member Associations, representing some 10,500 greenkeeping members.

The Board meetings we held served two purposes, one to obviously carry out Association business, and secondly to take FEGGA to National Association events. We feel that it is very important to support these events and so build up a closer relationship. During 1997, we visited Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Spain, all very worthwhile visits.

We started 1997 by taking our place on the Ecology Management Committee. Like any new committee member, there has to be a settling in period, but now three meetings later feel that we are making a good contribution. "Committed to Green" is something the Ecology committee has been working toward for some time, and is something we are keen to support and be part of. It is so

important that greenkeepers are involved in decision making, as without their support, success will be limited. It is also vital that Federations encourage golf clubs to be part of "Committed to Green", to show that Golf and Ecology can go together.

FEGGA's main activity for 1997 was to be our first conference, and this was held in Spain during November. The theme for the conference was 'Education and Ecology' followed by time for open discussion. The papers were presented by each Association, with two delegates representing each National Association. All the papers presented were excellent and indeed we learned so much from each other. As I mentioned earlier, one of our aims from the beginning was to have a minimum level of education, something that despite what education was being used could be used as a benchmark.

This indeed was achieved at the conference with everyone agreeing to set their minimum level of education on the equivalent of NVQ Level 2. It is fair to say there are Associations that have surpassed this level already. This minimum level will be reviewed as time goes on.

The papers on Ecology proved to be

most enlightening. We all have different rules and regulations that we have to work to. It did prove how little we know about each other's environmental affairs. FEGGA will help in this matter, as will our involvement in the Ecology Committee. Good communication is vital.

The conclusion of the conference was that there was a great need for FEGGA and we had all witnessed FEGGA working during the conference. We would now hope that the conference will be an annual event picking out different themes each year.

Looking ahead we would like to recruit more members, and help some of the countries that as yet do not have an Association, therefore we plan to visit some of these countries this year. It's also important that we consolidate on what we have achieved already and not try to do everything at once.

I would like to thank the European Golf Association for their support of FEGGA, and I hope I have given you all a brief insight into the role of FEGGA, and its ambitions for the future. I certainly hope we can continue to work closely together in the future.



• Just a trim?

In this magazine dedicated to good turf maintenance practices, one word certain to cause an outbreak of apoplexy is aesthetics. By dictionary definition, aesthetic means "relating to beauty rather than to other considerations", though in golf terminology it has come to mean making the course look as good as it plays, or even better. A few still denigrate the process completely and regard aesthetics as nothing more than 'pretified gardening'.

Of course, in dealing with a living

entity and the vagaries of Mother Nature, practical considerations must come first, thus it would never do to impose aesthetic demands if they run contrary to good agronomic practice.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that today's golfers have come to insist on visual niceties of a higher level than, say, 25 or 30 years ago.

Televised golf must take some share of the blame (or credit) for player sophistication, though who among us, hand on heart, would not admit admiration and envy at the stunning appearance of, say, Gleneagles, Pebble Beach, or Augusta National - as shown on T.V. The thought lingers that save for the extensive budgets that go hand in glove with these verdant cathedrals, there goes every greenkeeper worth his salt.

Pride in your golf course will be an additional driving force; that satisfying though brief moment of egoism a reminder of a job well done, especially when a member saunters across and comments, "The course is looking marvellous today."

One particular practice, aesthetically pleasing yet available to all, thanks to the advances made in lightweight fairway mowers, is contour mowing and striping. It all started in the mid 1970s, when a US Tour event promised a wash-out after days of downpour prevented a tractor and seven gang trailed unit from working. In desperation, a Tour official asked if they would try using a greens triplex with higher blade settings. They did, the compaction was minimal, and the neatly striped fairways looked great on T.V. The

players loved it and the rest is history.

Swiftly adopted, this new fairway cutting technology really took off in the 1980s, for triplex cutting brought not only improved aesthetics, but with a markedly lighter weight machine came minimal compaction and a noted improvement in fairway turf quality.

Trendy it was, and the practice certainly worked, yet now there is hardly a triplex to be seen working on fairways. The reason is simple, for manufacturers responded by introducing lightweight multi-plex mowers, purpose-built for fairway cutting and grooming, coupled with the ability to closely follow ground contours without scalping.

The original thinking behind triplex cutting had not been overlooked, for with multi-plex mowers the beauty (and gain) is to be found in units that work at speeds well in excess of triplexes, while maintaining those same aesthetic qualities that first started the ball rolling - less compaction, a reduction in turf damage, a sharper demarcation between fairway and semi-rough, distinctive and improved cutting qualities and a marked upgrading in fine turf species. All this plus great striping effects into the bargain.

The whole business of striping and patterning brings out the best in greenkeeper innovation, with upwards of seventy percent of course managers now following some form of patterning. Most popular, while probably also the least complicated to perform, is striping by sequential direction, back and forth along the fairways yet following rigidly the contours

An enhanced visual effect is attained with eye-catching striping continued into the fringes



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Lightweight fairway mowers provide a noted improvement in turf, both in quality and appearance.

of each hole. Regimented straight up and down mowing, it seems, is buried alongside the horse-drawn gang and the scythe.

For reasons of variety, others have taken to cutting at cross angles; alternating and varying a 45-degree angle, usually twice during the week, with just an occasional back and forth and returning to follow strict contours at weekends. All agree that wide, sweeping turns at the end of fairways produce visually pleasing half-moon or peanut-waisted effects rather than boring straight lines. If there is a single secret, it is to conjure infinite variety in routing by experimenting freely, thereby ensuring that the mower doesn't cover the exact same ground as it did the time before. Quite apart from the beauty of it all, this is a great compaction saver.

Summer is typically the time of major tournaments, thus it seems appropriate to list some advisory notes on fairway mowing for a championship:

- A course should be set up to require accuracy as well as length. The narrowing or widening of fairways, which necessitates a change in mowing height, should be undertaken as long in advance of the competition as possible. Fairways should be maintained to provide a firm and tight turf. Fluffiness results in 'fliers,' or shots without much backspin.

- To decrease grain and playing against a mowing stripe, mow fairways at an angle against the direction of play.

- Locate the centre of the landing zone from the tee, and repair all unplayable areas from that point

going 45 yards forward to the green and 45 yards back toward the tee.

- Overwatering landing areas and approaches to greens will be perceived as tricking up the course.

- When mowing, use flags as directional markers for straight lines.

- Dew drag before mowing with a heavy hose to reduce bouncing and decrease the formation of clipping piles.

- When using two lightweight mowers, start mowing in the middle of the fairway landing zone and work in the opposite direction.

- Mow fairways as you would paint a floor. Start near the 1st tee and mow away from play to keep noise and interference away from the competition.*

Finally, a few words on fairway mower selection. A first priority must be to ensure the mower has ample horsepower, sufficient to cope adequately with your requirements, and if your course is a hilly one, plump for an on-demand 4-wheel drive option, which will eliminate wheel spin in damp conditions. Power steering, hand adjustments, fully floating cutting heads, verti-groom conditioning attachments; all will add to make fairway mowing a creative joy.

* tournament guidelines compliments of USGA Green Section Record.



This month, Ken Richardson gives details on the various BIGGA training courses available, and wraps up the entries for our three main competitions...

TORO Award for Excellence in Greenkeeping

The deadline for entries to this prestigious competition has now passed with entries well up on 1997. The panel of judges met in York early last month to confirm their methods of assessing each candidate before visiting their courses. The Judges have a vast depth of knowledge and experience and include the current Chairman of BIGGA, two Past Chairmen, the current Scottish Chairman of BIGGA, a Past Chairman of BIGGA and an ex BIGGA National Board Member. The Chairman of Judges is Walter Woods, first Chairman of BIGGA. Candidates will be judged during June and July prior to the National Finals in October where the winner will win a TORO Greens Mower for his club and a trip to the GCSAA Show and Conference for himself, while his team all win a set of BIGGA Waterproofs.



Toro Student of the Year

The closing date for this competition has now passed and 34 students have been nominated for the

Regional Finals which take place during the week commencing July 20 except in Ireland when judging will take place on August 4.

The BIGGA Golf Environment Competition

Judging for this competition which is held in association with Amazone Ground Care and Rhône Poulenc Amenity has commenced and Bob Taylor, from STRI, is slowly sifting through a record number of entries. Those courses selected for the next stage will be notified as soon as possible.

The Learning Experience 1999

Following recent changes of ownership, the Learning Experience is now sponsored by Textron Turf Care. Thanks to their sponsorship, BIGGA will be able to offer the full range of quality training at the National Education Conference, Workshops and BTME Seminars at special low rates for BIGGA members. From January 1999, onwards full time student members of BIGGA will be able to attend all seminars free of charge,

a saving of £60. Watch out for full details of the Learning Experience 1999 in future editions of Greenkeeper International.

Aldwark Manor Supervisory Courses 1998

Full details of this years Aldwark Manor Supervisory Management Courses were included with the June edition of this magazine. For further information, contact Sami or me at HQ.

Regional Courses 1998/1999

Full details of this year's Regional Courses are included with this magazine. This year sees a mixture of one and two day courses, all heavily subsidised by the contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund. Each course requires a minimum of 6 delegates so use them or lose them.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Irrigation workshop due to be held at the Barons Court Hotel, Walsall on 24-25 November, will now be held on 17-18 November.

This month, Geoff Steel gives advice on how to get the best deal for your savings...

Banks and Building Societies make the most out of the apathy of savers. They make billions of pounds in profit because customers do not try and get the best out of their savings. It is well recorded that accounts are initially publicised offering high interest rates, but then the interest rate is reduced over the years with higher rates only being offered to new savers.

Too many people think there is not a lot of difference between accounts and it is not worth shopping around. Just

consider that £1,000 at 2% interest, which is not uncommon, will be worth £1,268 after 12 years, whereas £1,000 at 7% will be worth £2,252 after 12 years. The extra interest alone has made up the £1,000 initial savings.

Looking for the best interest rates does not only apply to individuals, it applies to clubs and businesses. When I took over being treasurer of a local club, I found that we had a current account that paid no interest and a deposit account paying 0.9% interest.

We now have a current account paying interest of 3% and a deposit account paying 7.2%.

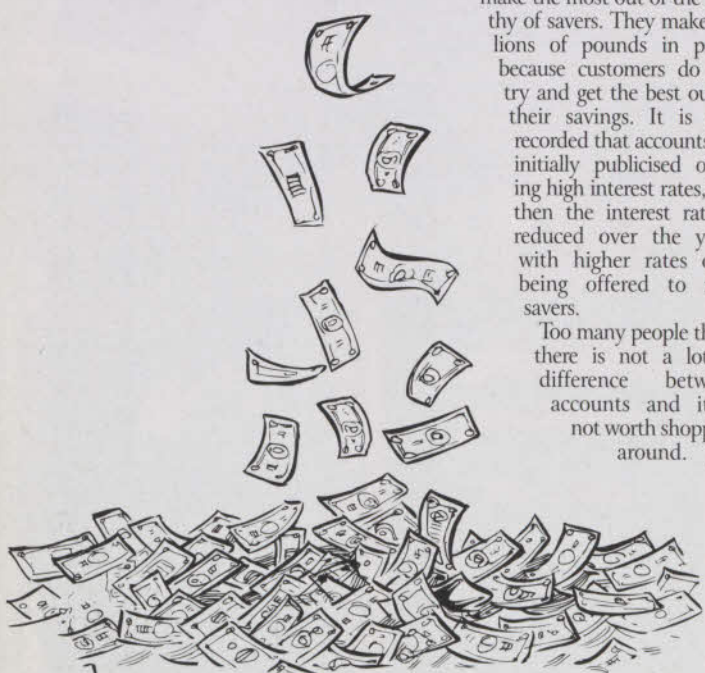
There is still a prevailing attitude that the bank knows best; we have been customers for a long time so we trust them and I'm sure my bank will do the best for me as a customer. By taking this attitude, customers only have themselves to blame when they find out the bank is acting in its own interest in preference to the customer.

The best interest rates are often obtained from Telephone banking accounts can offer the best interest

rates and are much easier to use than many people think. It is quite easy to transfer money between accounts on a telephone call to the bank. Well-known organisations are establishing themselves as banks and are offering bank accounts with good interest rates; Tesco; Sainsbury; Scottish Widows and Standard Life are a few of the better known ones. I can provide a list of current interest rates, for all banks and building societies, if required.

There are still too many customers who trust the bank or building society to act on their behalf. Unfortunately, the world is such that large institutions are continually under pressure to make the maximum profit, which means making the most they can out of each customer. As their customers, we can only obtain the best by shopping around.

Geoff Steel is an Independent Financial Adviser with Walsh Lucas & Co and he welcomes comments from readers. His freephone telephone number is 0800 7835132.



Address your letters to the Editor, Greenkeeper International, Aldwark Manor, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF. You can also fax them to 01347 838864, or e-mail them to bigga@btinternet.com

A sad loss

Steve Devlin lost his battle for life against cancer at the age of 31 in May after being diagnosed just four weeks earlier.

Steve started in greenkeeping while still at school when he worked at Downfield for work experience. He fell in love with the job and such was his enthusiasm that he spent all his free time at Downfield even bunking off school. When he was offered an apprenticeship he jumped at the chance and never looked back.

At that time he was under the watchful eye of Head Greenkeeper, Bill Milton (now retired) and when he attended Kingsway College in Dundee he passed all his exams with flying colours. Steve was a keen golfer and footballer winning many medals and trophies.

When Bill retired Steve served under Ian Menzies and Paul Murphy at Downfield before joining me as Deputy Head Greenkeeper at Drumoig Golf Club at the start of 1996 where he will be sadly missed by all staff.

Our thoughts go out to his family and fiancée, Hayley. I have lost a good friend and workmate.

Malcolm Hall
 Head Greenkeeper
 Drumoig GC



Thanks to Volvo PGA Support team

On behalf of the European Tour, please pass on our thanks to all the Golf Course Managers for all their time and assistance put into the upkeep of the bunkers around the course during the event.

Considering the hectic final day on Monday, from what I gather there were no problems and the whole operation was run very smoothly. I know that Chris Kennedy and his team very much appreciated the help and support; it took a considerable burden off their shoulders.

Edward Kitson
 PGA European Tour

Left: Ross Wilson (Donnington Grove Country Club) 'does the business' for Tony Johnstone and Andy Sherbourne at the greenside bunker on the first at Wentworth

Can't get no satisfaction...

I have been an avid follower of your monthly magazine and in particular the recruitment section. I feel that by advertising a job in a national and international basis the company advertising has every chance to obtain the desired appli-

cant and by using Greenkeeper international they should achieve this.

My gripe is that if a company is going to the trouble of advertising in such a professional magazine, seeking the desired applicant, then should the applicant fail, he at least deserves the decency to receive a knock back letter.

I have applied for several posi-

tions in your magazine over the past few months and after discussions with a few colleagues they have found the same, that they never receive a letter in reply, not even just saying "thanks but no thanks".

I just wonder if this is common place in the UK, not to let the applicant know where he stands. I realise I have only eight years expe-

rience, on "Top 100" golf courses in three different continents, one of which being America, in which case this would not happen.

With so many trying to emulate the American standards, maybe a few should start with their recruitment techniques.

Steve Johnson
 Auchterarder

Gala Opening ceremony at Woodhall Spa

The new Donald Steel-designed Bracken Course at the National Golf Centre at Woodhall Spa was opened officially by the English Golf Union President John Scrivener at the end of May. The ribbon cutting had followed an Opening Day Invitation tournament during which the delights of the new course, which adjoins the world renowned Hotchkin Course, were experienced. Significantly different from its older neighbour the Bracken is a fine addition to a

Centre which also boasts state-of-the-art training facilities and practice ground which are regarded as the best around. The opening was graced by the presence of Neil Hotchkin, who sold the land to the English Golf Union, and the Bracken Course architects, Donald Steel and Tom McKenzie. Picture shows EGU President John Scrivener cutting the ribbon flanked by John Flanders, the EGU Honorary Treasurer and Neil Hotchkin.



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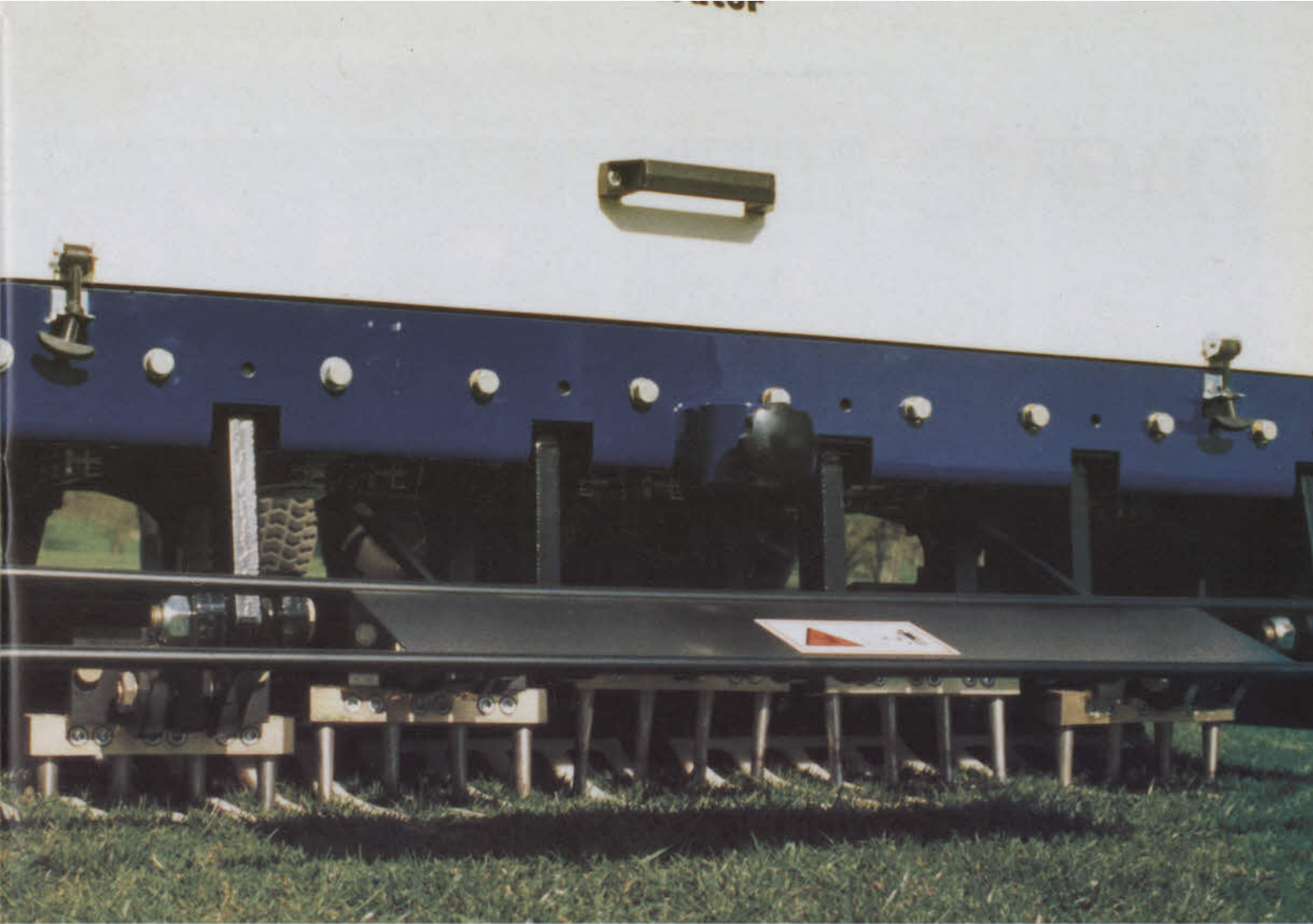
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Roland Taylor takes a look at aeration and the developments which have made it such a technically advanced operation...

Making the earth move

Aeration – the dictionary defines this as “to supply or impregnate the soil with air”, but traditionally this is not what is actually done by most equipment that carries the title of ‘aerator’. What in fact is carried out, is the opening up of the soil to allow for the passage of vital elements to create healthy growth.

Soil basically only provides a support and anchor for plants, the important part in its structure is the gap between each particle. This determines how much water, air and nutrient reaches the roots and thus controls their development. Tightly packed particles restrict growth, cause drainage problems and minimise the amount of air and nutrients that reach the plant.

Making the earth move



The result is poor turf that is highly susceptible to disease and which cannot sustain heavy traffic.

The free movement of water is vital. Where soil has become compacted the flow is drastically reduced and in severe cases water runs off the surface and is completely wasted. In these situations the plants quickly become

starved. Alternatively, saturation occurs leaving the plants standing in stagnant water which is far from conducive to healthy growth.

In an ideal world, the answer would be a friable soil structure that allows the root systems to develop freely and has a constant supply of all the plants' requirements. In addition, it needs to con-

tain plenty of micro-organisms to deal with the rotting down process of organic material.

Unfortunately, there are many outside influences that affect this balance, a major one being compaction. To help alleviate this problem, engineers have devised a wide range of machinery that is now readily available.

Somewhere at some time a greenkeeper discovered that by periodically sinking a fork into a green there was an improvement in the turf - aerating had been discovered to be beneficial.

Throughout their development and use the one underlying factor is the amount of disruption they cause to the golfer and no doubt

over the years some heated discussions have taken place between golfers and greenkeepers.

Needless to say, manufacturers have addressed this problem and introduced machines to minimise the affects on the playing surface. This has led to some interesting developments in recent years, more of which later.

Tines

There are basically three types of tines: solid, hollow and chisel. It is their depth of penetration and how they are propelled introduced into the ground that will vary between each piece of aerating equipment. These machines also fall into three categories: pedestrian, tractor-

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