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Duke to present Environment Award

His Royal Highness the Duke of York has accepted an invitation to open officially the Askham Bryan College Golf and Environment Conference on Wednesday October 21.

As part of his visit to York His Royal Highness has also agreed to present the winning golf club with the 1998 BIGGA Golf Environment Award, in association with Amazone and Rhone Poulenc.

"We are delighted that the presentation to the winning golf club will be held during the Conference and the fact that the Award will be presented by the Duke of York will be an extra incentive to golf clubs to do well in the competition," said BIGGA's Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson.

Last year, Hankley Common GC, in Surrey, won the award as a result of the extensive work carried out by Course Manager, Ian McMillan, and his team.

The two day conference includes papers from Dr Roger Bennett, Principal of the College, David Stubbs, Executive Director of the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, golf ecologists Bob Taylor and Jonathan Smith, architect Jeremy Pern and Chief Scientist of English Nature, Dr Keith Duff.

Princess Royal opens new John Deere headquarters

The opening of the new John Deere £2.5 million British Headquarters and Training Centre was a Royal occasion with the day being graced by a visit from the Princess Royal.

Fog delayed the Princess' arrival as her helicopter had to divert to East Midlands airport but she spent time viewing the new building, admired the range of old and new John Deere machinery on display, watched some students in action in a training room before unveiling a plaque to mark the occasion.

The offices, which are a short distance from the previous building, are "state-of-the-art" with five training rooms - four with adjoining workshops - and all with the most up to date equipment. The new facility will be used to assist the company with its 5000 training days covering 40 different courses per annum.

The administration department and restaurant for the 98 staff is found on the first floor with a huge open plan format with glass fronted individual offices around the perimeter.

Before leaving The Princess Royal was presented with a gift of two model tractors mounted on a plinth



by the company's longest serving employee, Marjorie Watchorn.

Around 500 people attended the event and were treated to an excellent buffet lunch and had the opportunity of also being shown round the new building.

"We are very honoured that Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal agreed to officially open our new premises," said John Deere Ltd

Managing Director, Alec McKee, who has just been elected President of the Agricultural Engineers Association.

Picture shows Her Royal Highness with John Deere Ltd Managing Director, Alec McKee (extreme right); Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Deere & Co, Robert Lane, and Director of Marketing of Deere and Co, Paul Enz.

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1. Pattisson's 'Aqua Pack'

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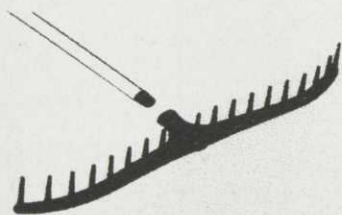
Set of replacement tines - £20

Tricoflex 3/4" 50m hose - £68

2 Snap fast hose tails - £5.90

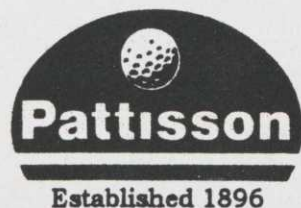
TOTAL VALUE -
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Promotional
price - £160!!!



2. Pattisson's are selling their Bunker Rake with black screw in head and white fibre glass handle

for just £5.95.



Westurf celebrates 10th birthday in style

By Paula Humphries

On the Saturday before the big day I arrived to look at the site and began marking out but rain which fell as stair rods and mud that sucked in my wellies drove me quickly back to my hotel for a rethink.

On Sunday morning the rain was still falling but more gently and Ivor Scoones, Peter Baynton, Robin Greaves and I got busy with measuring machines, white lines and marker posts. During the morning the first of the lorries bringing the marquees arrived, pulled through the gate and immediately got stuck! What a start to the week!

"I thought that would happen," said Ivor, matter-of-factly and went off to get a tractor to drag him out.

Tuesday came reasonably dry and pretty windy, which helped no end, but still vehicle after vehicle became bogged in the heavy ground. Much of the traffic had to be redirected to the club car park and the equipment transported to the showground by tractor. Ivor and his staff were magnificent with their help. I cannot thank them enough.

On Wednesday the sun shone, the sky cleared and although it was a bit chilly, generally it was all that could be hoped for. Visitors from all directions told me of torrential rain they had come through but it did seem as though someone "up there" was holding back the rain clouds from the exhibition.

We were honoured with the presence of the Chairman, Gordon Child, together with Marion, and John Cox, the Captain of Long Ashton. The three of them very kindly judged the best stand prizes.

The day started with the Chairman officially opening the exhibition by cutting the red tape...well he tried to but the scissors were blunt and the tape a bit tough! He managed eventually but the photographer missed it and he had to hold it together and pretend for a retake.

There were a lot of changes this



Gordon & Paula cut the cake, flanked by Ivor Scoones and Robin Greaves

year - new marquee suppliers and a catering marquee complete with licensed bar. The BIGGA marquee, too, was much larger and provided courtesy wine and also a slice of 10th anniversary birthday cake which was officially cut by the Chairman and the Regional Administrator. When you see the photos - No, we were not getting married!

Traders really seemed to have pulled out all the stops to make their stands really attractive and to complement the day there were competitions of putting and pitching plus a special "Spot the Thing" competition to encourage visitors to visit each of the stands.

In the BIGGA marquee you could also "Meet the Experts." A panel of experts from all fields of the industry were there to answer your questions and give advice. My special thanks to all of them for being there especially Jim Arthur, who seemed to be conducting his own

personal fan club as he signed many copies of his book.

Neil Thomas, Ken Richardson and Jenny Panton came down from HQ and many members had the opportunity to meet them and talk over queries and educational needs and purchase merchandise.

When the rain eventually arrived at around 3pm it brought the exhibition to a natural close but filled the beer tent and BIGGA marquee and anyone else offering free food and drink!

All in all it was a successful day and has raised enough money to be able to offer members in our Region a truly remarkable package to BTME '99. Together with Amenity Technology, who are generously sponsoring the coach(es), delegates can go for £95 which includes three nights B&B, coach travel and entry to all seminars. A second delegate accompanying his Head Greenkeeper is £85 and we have 20 places for greenkeepers

under 21 to go at £45 (Details and application forms from Paula).

It was both nerve wracking and challenging organising this event for the first time and a daunting exercise trying to emulate Gordon and Marion's previously wonderful successes.

I hope I did you justice, Gordon.

Competition Winners

"Spot the Thing" - Paul Williams, Salisbury & S. Wilts

Putting - Sponsored by Vitax. 1. N. Powell, Belmont Golf and Leisure Club; 2. M. Todd; 3. R. Neale, Taunton Vale.

Chipping - Sponsored by Amenity Technology. 1. T. Glover, Axe Cliffe GC; 2. A. Chant, Farrington GC; 3. G. Higgins, Vivary Park GC.

Best Covered Stand - Pencoed College; Best Uncovered Stand, Pro-Seed Equipment

Amenity Technology and Pipewise were very close runners-up.

New products launched at Iseki conference

Jacobsen held a Conference recently at Highgate House, Creton, Northamptonshire for their Iseki Dealer Principals and their Sales Managers. The event was well attended by Iseki Dealers both existing and new and Mr Hamada, Managing Director, Mr Takemoto, Manager of Planning and Administration, and Mr Debar, Product Manager, from Iseki Europe also made a major contribution to the event.

After global overviews on Textron from Peter Bell and an Iseki global

overview on Iseki from Mr Hamada, future plans for improving parts and warranty procedures were outlined. This was followed by an outdoor session where the new products along with modified existing products were demonstrated to the Dealers.

The TM 223, a 23HP compact tractor complete with 54" side discharge deck made its first appearance as did the SF230, a 23HP out front mower complete with 54" side discharge deck and 500 litre high lift collector.



The ● daily grind

"The fun of the game only begins when you can see the hole, and the real sport when you are on the putting green; it is after the cards are dealt that the excitement commences."

John L. Low,
 "Concerning Golf", 1903

Make no mistake about it, Mr Low summed up the situation perfectly in speaking of cards being dealt, yet with the best will in the world the greenkeeper, as croupier, cannot deal four aces to every player, every single time.

While it isn't possible, it doesn't entirely matter, the game of golf being something of a lottery anyway, though the greenkeeper who disregards the fact that over 50% of golf is played on the putting green is dicing with danger.

It cannot be over-emphasised, regardless of all other architectural golfing niceties, that your putting surfaces will be the most remembered aspect of your course after the round is done. Reputations are won and lost upon them, so before a single blade of grass comes under attack make certain that your mowing units are given VIP (Very Important for Putting) treatment, not just occasionally but on a routine, regular basis.

While not every club afford themselves the services of a full-time mechanic, (though the practice is growing), it is upon the shoulders of such an individual - in-house or dealer provided - that a great deal rests.

Competence goes without saying; the best mechanics being those whose empathy for the job is a mixture of understanding grass, the agronomics of growing and mowing, and the eye of a golfer in realising the premium placed on the putting surface. Above all, they should understand the machinery and be able to explain its use and care to others.

In the field, each operator should be tutored in the specific use of each item of grass-cutting machinery, be it walk-behind or triplex unit, such that any risk of second-rate results is minimised. Not every trainee greenkeeper will feel confident the first time he is set to the task of cutting greens, thus it is important that tuition be taken at a

pace which permits minimal error.

Being accompanied by a seasoned operator; one who is willing to explain the difference between a good or mediocre cut and how potential mistakes may be avoided will prove profitable. In the very beginning such tasks are best learnt on temporary greens or upon nursery turf.

The formula for obtaining good results every time a mower is used is easy in the extreme, yet so often is overlooked. Understanding first that any cutting unit in daily use will eventually wear out, every operator, no matter how pressed, should follow a routine of stop, look and listen.

Stop

In practice this means not starting the machine unless it's proven fit to the job. A daily visual check should include inspection of cutting knives and bottom blades, checking for nicks, dull spots or signs of a blade having been bent, indeed any damage that may have occurred from previous mowing or off-course transportation.

Look

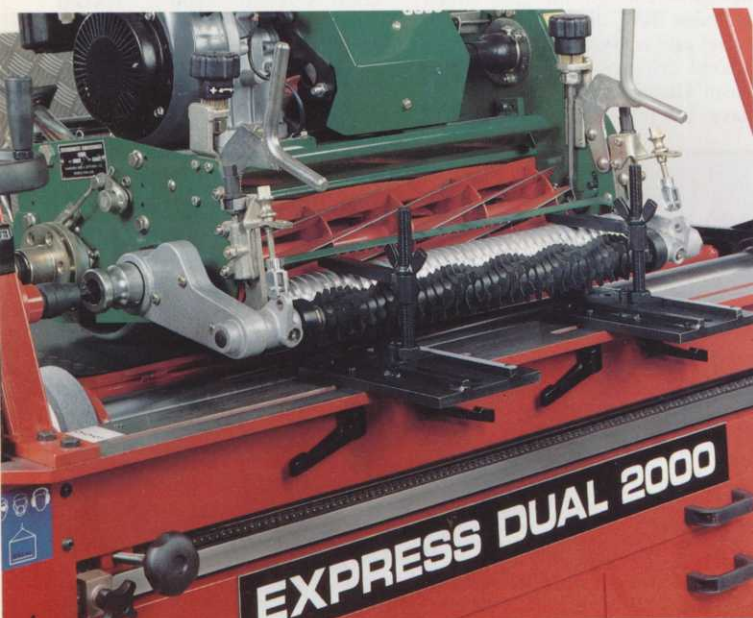
While the machine is stationary, check fuel lines, grasp each cutting blade unit and try to wriggle it, checking for anything that may have worked loose. Excess grease or dripping oil/fuel lines are tell-tail signs that all is not well. Do not allow any machine that is below par to be used.

Look again

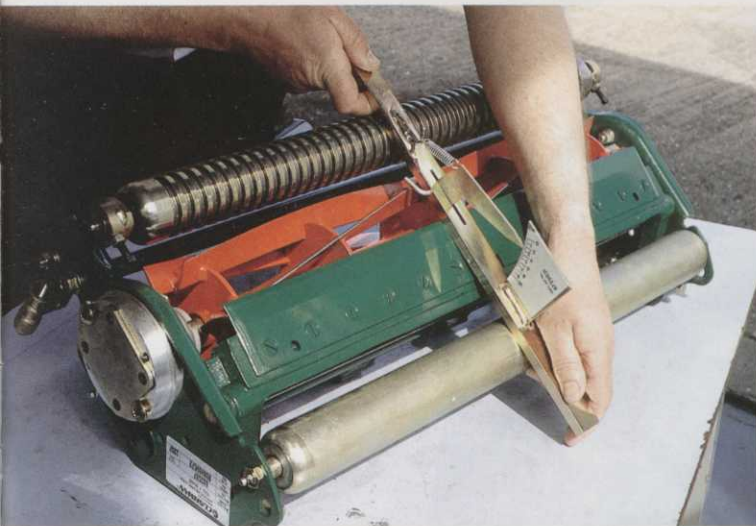
On the green this time, be vigilant concerning debris, stones, discarded shoe spikes (the greenkeepers' curse), or coins used as ball markers. Switch the surface with a suitable nylon pole.

Listen

The motor will tell you if something is wrong, as will the cutting unit. If an engine's purr becomes a growl, be suspicious; there might be bearing problems, worn bushes, or worse. If the cutting unit sounds 'off', (a different pitch, perhaps),



A Ransomes Greens Super set up on an Express Dual cylinder grinding machine.



The levelling bar, used here on a Ransomes Greens unit, provides spot-on accuracy when setting height of cut.

this will indicate an inferior contact between top and bottom blades. While your ears are doing their work, your eyes also should be scanning for any irregularity of cut either high spots left or low spots scalped, all an indication that something is amiss. While cutting greens, observe the grass box and empty it before it becomes necessary. A weighty box of grass clippings can seriously affect mowing height.

Reference to handbooks will reveal the importance placed upon replacement of filters with OEM (original equipment manufacturer) equivalents, also the vital part clean oil plays. It is dicing with disaster to prolong such vital work. The manufacturer also will tell of an equal priority, that of ensuring each bottom blade matches and mates perfectly with the top blade.

Perfect mating of blades calls for expert grinding and sharpening, with grinding of the bottom blade necessary each time a refit is called, often after topdressing or as a routine fortnightly schedule. Current thinking suggests that backlapping – using a fine, emery-based compound to lap against both mated blades while they spin – still provides the keenest edge while avoiding shearing the grass.

Selection of the bottom blade is all important, dependent always upon cutting requirements. In general, the lower the cut, the thinner the blade, with regular, thin, or even a championship blade. OEM blades are best, made to factory specifications and with specially hardened steel. Checks for accuracy (no bends) will ensure the bottom blade is properly matched to the mower, a perfect fit (no dragging) being another essential in the quest for cutting perfection.

If bottom blades are the key to success, the fine tuning of reel blades by grinding and sharpening is an equal. These blades begin life in perfect shape, yet in time and

with rigorous work over a season a cylinder may become slightly tapered, effectively shrinking the unit. Help is at hand, however, for by sharpening the unit, especially on an automatic spin grinder, the blades take on a new lease of life. A blessing for the turf professional, spin grinding virtually eliminates human error. Modern thinking again suggests backlapping after a spin, removal of high spots or burrs to produce the desired effect.

If all this appears routine, that's exactly what it is. Consistent cutting quality comes only with perfect matchmaking, this vital adjustment of blade to blade alone determining the quality of cut. Many greenkeepers swear by a method of checking accuracy know, as the DT (or Daily Telegraph) method. A page of newspaper folded in two and placed between top and bottom blade should produce a cut to the top and a fold to the bottom. Nothing else is acceptable. A little fine-tuning of machinery, along with implementing this foolproof method, will produce perfect results every time.

The greenkeeper or mechanic should check daily the cutting height settings, having first established that rollers and drums are undamaged and free from end play. These must be aligned before setting takes place. Height should be uniform at each end of the bottom blade, checked before tightening and checked again to ensure that such tightening has not caused movement. Be sure to check height settings when the blades are cold, not immediately after grinding.

Bernard Darwin, greatest of all golf writers, once wrote: "We ought not to regard the putting green as a kind of lucky bag out of which we may draw a good or bad putt by mere chance." With modern technology and good greenkeeping sense, the element of chance now rests in the hands of experts, dealing aces galore.

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Scott MacCallum sat down with Nick Park, Vice Chairman of the R&A Golf Course Advisory Panel, and discussed its work – and how greenkeepers can assist by providing research data.

What exactly is the Advisory Panel and what are its aims?

The Panel has evolved from the original Greenkeeping Panel, set up by the R&A in 1985. Tim Taylor has been Chairman since 1988 and has provided the continuity so badly needed in this whole area. We now have a wide brief to work with interested authorities and organisations to facilitate improvements on our courses. The R&A is keen to ensure that profits which flow from the Open Championship are put to the best possible use - within the Panel itself are four Working Parties which take a closer look at specific areas.

Which one are you involved with?

I am Chairman of the Research and Advisory Working Party, a bit of a mouthful, which covers a great deal. Luckily I have a formidable team to help in both practical and theoretical matters. Walter Woods

and George Brown represent the best of what has happened with greenkeeping in the last 20 years. They have so much experience and it is now being put to use at the highest levels in the game. It is interesting to reflect that when I was first asked to sit on the Greenkeeping Panel in 1986 there wasn't a greenkeeper on it! We also have Mike Canaway, Chief Executive of the STRI, David Stansfield, of PSD Agronomy, and Mike Schofield, former Assistant Director of English Nature.

What about the others?

The other Working Parties deal with three areas: European and ecology issues, chaired by Jaime Ortiz-Patino, President (and Head Greenkeeper!) of Valderamma Golf Club; Construction and Design, headed by Donald Steel, and the most recently introduced, Communications, chaired by David Marsh.

How often do you meet?

The working Parties are in constant touch and meet at least twice a year. Also the full Advisory Panel meets twice a year.

What sort of issues do you look into?

As an example, the R&A continues to grant some £35,000 per annum for research into the earth worm problem and ways in which to combat the menace if (more probably when) our chemical weapons are banned. I have a horror that we could at some point head back to

the sort of mayhem we saw in the 1920's when fairways became muddy pathways for much of the year.

You obviously see this as potentially a huge problem.

I don't want to exaggerate it but on the other hand I don't want to underplay it. This is something we must prepare for because I can tell you, if it got really bad it could shut

The R&A Golf Course Advisory Panel

a substantial portion of the game down for four to five months of the year. However, it is one thing to see the problem coming; quite another to resolve it.

What have you discovered so far?

It seems clear from what the STRI has already done that there will be no "one-shot" answer but there may be a variety of methods which will have some effect. Our findings to date are contained elsewhere in this issue of Greenkeeper International - to clubs already experiencing problems I would say to take independent, specialist advice before embarking on a long term strategy of control. But don't ignore it! Remember, there are few alive today who can remember what it was like in the 20's and 30's. Go and read the journals of the period if you want to see what it was like.

We define two types of research: strategic and demand-led. Strategic research refers to broad brush areas like water conservation and usage. This is often pure research where you are not looking for a specific answer to a specific question but want to improve your stock of knowledge in an area. This does not necessarily mean we commission it ourselves - research useful to the game may be done by other industries (eg the water utilities but we have to be alert and organised enough to tap into it.

Demand-led research is the area in which I would ask BIGGA members to play a major role. We need to get a better picture of problems throughout the country and the best way is to fill in the questionnaire which is included in this issue of Greenkeeper International. I can assure all greenkeepers that the answers will be totally anonymous

and cannot be tracked back to their clubs - I would be most grateful for a few minutes of their time - and at least the postage is free! By analysing what comes back it will enable us to direct research funding into the areas which cause greenkeepers the greatest headaches. In turn this will get best value for money invested - the governing body would much appreciate support from BIGGA members in this matter.

You mentioned water, what are your feelings about that?

The questions coming to golf clubs from the regulatory bodies are getting louder, especially in the south east. I cannot see how, in the longer term, clubs will be allowed to use the amounts of water they currently use. I have watched this happen in the USA: No matter what you are prepared to pay for water, the rest of the water-using community will not allow you to have it. Clubs could waste a lot of money installing redundant systems, especially on fairways. I think we will head back to drier, firmer, faster golf courses - a different form of golf to what we are used to but certainly the sort of golf I prefer to play. A good golf course, in my definition, is intrinsically environmentally responsible. Whether you can still use broad-soled, cavity back irons and solid balls on such courses is another matter!

These are all technical problems - what about the golfers?

I know what you're driving at and I agree, in far too many cases courses have problems imposed on them by individuals or committees acting with a lack of expertise. It is ten years since "The Way Forward"

identified this as perhaps the biggest problem facing our courses. I have to say that ten years on, progress in reforming club structures has been painfully slow. A few clubs have shown the way but it remains to me a great source of frustration that the cycle of mistakes is still repeated at so many clubs. This is an area to be pursued by David Marsh's Communications Working Party. It is really a parallel process with the technical problems which occupy my time.

How does UK research fit into the world-wide situation?

A very good question. The ability to reinvent the wheel is enormous and we are trying to stop the game wasting precious resources. I think it is perfectly natural that some countries would want to replicate research that has already been done, simply to prove its validity in their situation. But we must try to stop duplication of work; to this end we commissioned the STRI to pull together a database of research around the world, excluding the USA and Canada. They came up with a weighty file which we now plan to update continuously. I hope it will shortly be available on the Internet - and national golfing federations will receive a copy to see if a subject is being covered, before deciding to invest money in research. All this will be a useful adjunct to the USGA's Turfgrass Information File at Michigan.

What happens in the United States?

The USGA has a different approach from the R&A, though they tend to work on strategic issues - not surprisingly water conservation is a big one for them. They put the work out to tender for an Institute or University to bid for the money to carry out the research. Their whole research effort

has been admirable for many years and has brought benefits to the game way beyond the boundaries of the USA. I think we will see greater co-operation between the two bodies in this area in years to come - we already have a link through Jaime Ortiz-Patino, who sits on the USGA Turfgrass Research Committee.

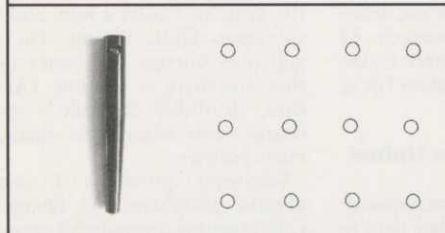
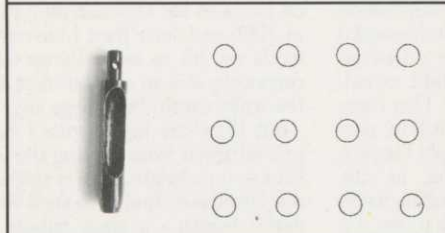
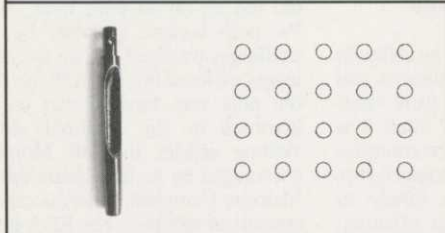
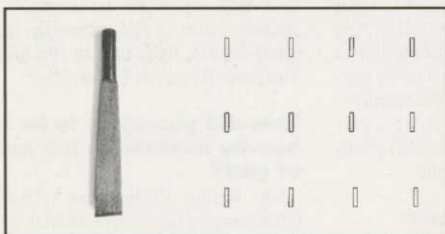
How did you come to be so heavily involved in the game of golf?

My father, Eddie, was a former Chairman of Green at Lindrick and I did the job for six years from 1977. We both became absorbed by the challenges we faced but by the challenges we faced but by 1983 felt that the only way forward was to get involved in the national scene. Writing articles in Golf Monthly, encouraged by its far-sighted Editor, Malcolm Campbell, caused a certain amount of mischief. The R&A invited me onto the Greenkeeping Panel in 1986 and since then I have tried to do my bit to move things on. I cannot say it is an easy business, but few really worthwhile things are.

But there are high spots: I have just returned from playing the Old Course on a bright, breezy day and was thrilled to find it in such wonderful health - a great tribute to the years of Walter's rule, and his successor, Eddie Adams. For me golf does not get any better than this, anywhere at anytime. Quick, firm, devilishly difficult - on a course with sustainable management policies.

Whatever problems I might observe elsewhere, the Home of Golf is setting a wonderful example for all to see. Getting the lessons we learn there applied across the game is still the ultimate challenge for all of us. Please get your pens out for that questionnaire and many thanks for your help!

Any which way you choose



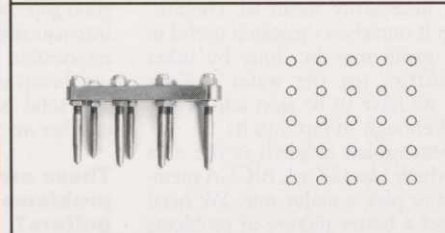
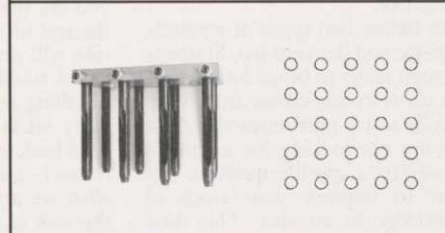
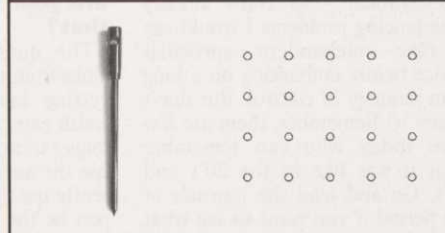
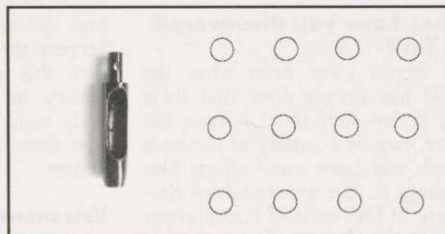
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An ATV is unique – it will go where other vehicles fail to tread. Mountainsides, moorland and sand dunes. It takes it in its stride. Roland Taylor investigates...

Access all areas



A mobile servicing unit for greens, tees and bunkers saves time. Cost effectiveness and productivity are two of the most important sectors of modern management. A major contributor to achieving these is the use of time – something that for most of us in today's fast moving environment quickly runs out. Bearing this in mind, it is always worth investigating the possibilities that can save time and increase productivity by releasing staff or equipment for other jobs. One piece of machinery that could fall into this category is the All Terrain Vehicle (ATV), a prime mover that one suspects many greenkeepers dismiss, yet on closer examination they would discover a workhorse that could be of considerable benefit around a course.

Access all areas



However, getting the okay to buy one past a greens committee might prove no easy task as some members may well have preconceived ideas. These are largely a result of the image created by the consumer media of a cross between a scramble bike and a racing buggy. In the commercial world this is far from the truth, as users quickly discover. An ATV is unique - it will go where other vehicles fail to tread. Mountainsides, moorland and sand dunes it takes in its stride. While there are few golf courses in these types of location, the majority of readers are not faced with this situation and could be forgiven for asking the question, "What benefit would one of these vehicles be to me?" The answer is that they are

light on their wheels and so are ideal on turf, especially where the problems of compaction are a constant headache. In addition these compact workhorses have much more to offer and it is these qualities we now investigate.

Since the ATVs introduction just over two decades ago, manufacturers have developed its role from being a simple go-anywhere passenger vehicle to a power source for towing a range of attachments or transporting staff and equipment between sites. It is these features that will be of most benefit in saving time and costs on a golf course.

Travelling between greens can absorb a lot of unproductive time in a year. The reasons may be the

actual layout of the course or the fact that to drive a tractor and trailer over certain parts adds to the problem of compaction. The low ground pressure tyres on an ATV are inflated at between 2 and 5psi. This means the vehicle can cover areas of water-logged ground without sinking or over delicate turf without damage. This is especially important during winter or a wet spring such as we have experienced this year. From this it can be seen that there is the opportunity to take a direct route, thus reducing travelling time.

Another area where savings are likely to be made is fuel. This is due to the engine sizes used on ATVs compared to those of a conventional tractor. It should also be

remembered that it would also release these larger pieces of equipment for other work.

The following scenario illustrates how an ATV would fit into a golf course application.

Known as the greens, tees and bunkers servicing unit, the ATV, is either fitted with a cargo bed or a more specialist model is used that will take two people plus tools chemicals and fertiliser. It carries all the necessary equipment required to carry out maintenance operations on these three playing areas. Within a few minutes the unit can be on site and the work carried out.

Having this type of mobile unit means that should a problem develop out on the course, it can

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