

At 3.20pm on Wednesday, October 21, His Royal Highness The Duke of York unveiled a plaque in the foyer of the new Association headquarters and BIGGA HOUSE was officially christened.

Open for business



HRH, The Duke of York officially opens BIGGA HOUSE

It was an occasion for which many people had waited for a very long time, and a few never thought they would see, and it certainly didn't disappoint the members, dignitaries and industry representatives who attended.

The warmth generated by the Duke, and his genuine affection for BIGGA, and the game of golf in general, was obvious and quite infectious and he made the assembled gathering over around 120 feel as comfortable as they were welcome.

The ceremony was started by a few well chosen words from BIGGA Chairman, Gordon Child, during which he outlined just how far the Association had come in its short 11 year existence. The Duke then made his own personal contribution before the clicking of cameras heralded the

drawing of the cord to unveil the engraved slate plaque.

The Duke was followed by R&A Secretary, Sir Michael Bonallack, who thanked His Royal Highness for finding time in his busy schedule to perform the opening ceremony and, on behalf of the R&A, paid tribute to the work and development of the Association

The whole ceremony had taken less than 10 minutes but in that time BIGGA had grown up and will face the future with its reputation, as a body highly regarded and respected within the game of golf, enhanced and as solid as the foundations which hold up its impressive new building.

After the official element of the visit The Duke toured the building in the company of the Chairman and Executive Director Neil Thomas, and

assisted with the production of a page of this magazine, before retiring to Aldwark Manor Hotel for a reception.

"This was a historic day in the life of the Association and I was extremely proud to be here to see BIGGA HOUSE opened by His Royal Highness," said Gordon Child, later.

"I'm also pleased by the reaction of those people who have had a chance to visit BIGGA HOUSE. To a man they have been delighted by what they have seen," he added.

Neil Thomas reflected on BIGGA's progress since 1987, "From a room in the STRI at Bingley, a Portakabin and then rented offices at Aldwark Manor and finally to BIGGA HOUSE - the Association has come a long way and now has the facilities to enhance further its services to its members and the greenkeeping profession."

A huge thank you to all the Golf Clubs who have contributed to the building of BIGGA HOUSE, without whose help and support, this momentous occasion could not have taken place. Our appreciation is shown here on these pages, with the listing of all contributors, among a selection of poignant photos of the official opening.

- Addington Palace Golf Club
- Alton Golf Club
- Atwoodley Golf Club
- Aroot Hall Golf Club
- Army Golf Club
- Ashton-in-Makerfield
- Baldon Golf Club
- Banchory Golf Club
- Beaconsfield Golf Club
- Bedale Golf Club
- Beeston Fields Golf Club
- Berkhamsted
- Bingley St Ives Golf Club
- Birchwood Golf Club
- Bishops Stortford Golf Club
- Blackmoor
- Blackwood Golf Club
- Blyth Golf Club
- Brancepeth Castle Golf Club
- Bristol & Clifton Golf Club
- Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club
- Bromborough Golf Club
- Brookmans Park Golf Club
- Bungay & Waveney Valley Golf Club
- Burford Golf Club
- Burhill Golf Centres
- Burnham Beeches Golf Club
- Bury St Edmunds Golf Club
- Bush Hill Park Golf Club
- Canterbury Golf Club
- Cardigan Golf Club
- Cathcart Castle Golf Club
- Cawder Golf Club
- Chestfield Golf Club
- Chigwell Golf Club
- Chipping Norton
- Chorlton-Cum-Hardy Golf Club
- Ghurston Golf Club Ltd
- Clitheroe Golf Club
- Conwy Golf Club
- Cooden Beach Golf Club
- Coombe Hill Golf Club
- Coombe Wood Golf Club
- Coventry Hearsall Golf Club
- Coxmoor Golf Club
- Graham Hurst Golf Club
- Crompton & Royton Golf Club
- Denbigh Golf Club
- Doncaster Golf Club
- Dore & Totley Golf Club
- Drayton Park Golf Club
- Dunfermline Golf Club
- Edenmore Golf Club
- Enfield Golf Club
- Epsom Golf Club
- Fairhaven Golf Club
- Fereneze Golf Club
- Fishwick Hall Golf Club
- Flamborough Head Golf Club
- Gerrards Cross Golf Club
- Glenbervie Golf Club
- Goodwood Golf Club
- Goring & Streatley Golf Club
- Habberley Golf Club
- Haggs Castle Golf Club
- Halifax Golf Club
- Hallamshire Golf Club
- Haltwhistle Golf Club
- Ham Manor Golf Club
- Hampstead Golf Club
- Handsworth Golf Club
- Hankley Common Golf Club
- Harpندن Golf Club
- Hawkstone Park Golf Club
- Haywards Heath Golf Club
- Henley Golf Club
- Heswall Golf Club
- Hickleton Golf Club
- Hillside Golf Club
- Hindhead Golf Club
- Huddersfield Golf Club
- Ipswich Golf Club
- John O'Gaunt Golf Club
- Kilmarnock (Barassie) Golf Club
- Kirby Muxloe Golf Club
- Knole Park Golf Club
- Knowle Golf Club
- Letchworth Golf Club
- Lincoln Golf Club
- Lindrick Golf Club
- Little Aston Golf Club
- Littlestone Golf Club
- Loch Lomond Golf Club
- Longniddry Golf Club
- Macclesfield Golf Club
- Malone Golf Club
- Manchester Golf Club
- Mapperley Golf Club
- Masham Golf Club
- Maxstoke Park Golf Club
- Meltham Golf Club
- Mendip Golf Club
- Merrist Wood Golf Club
- Moor Hall Golf Club
- Moortown Golf Club



Above: Past and Present Chairmen, Pat Murphy and Gordon Child

Left: BIGGA HOUSE in all its splendour

Below: Sir Michael Bonallack addresses the invited guests

Bottom: The Duke greets Viscount and Lady Whitelaw





Top: Design Editor, David Emery, and Editor, Scott MacCallum, explain the production processes involved in publishing Greenkeeper International

Above: The Duke leafs through the finished magazine

Left: Neil Thomas and Gordon Child explain the naming of The Key Room to the Duke

- Moray Golf Club
- Mullion Golf Club
- Murrayfield Golf Club
- Royal Musselburgh Golf Club
- Newbury & Crookham Golf Club
- Newcastle-Under-Lyme Golf Club
- Normanby Hall Golf Club
- North Hants Golf Club
- North Oxford Golf Club
- North Wilts Golf Club
- Northenden Golf Club
- Old Fold Manor Golf Club
- Cradoc Golf Club
- Penrith Golf Club
- Peterborough Milton Golf Club
- Pleasington Golf Club
- Pollok Golf Club
- Potters Bar Golf Club
- Purley Downs Golf Club
- Puttenham Golf Club
- Pyle and Kenfig Golf Club
- Ranfurly Castle Golf Club
- Ravelston Golf Club
- Ravensworth Golf Club
- Reigate Heath Golf Club
- Ringway Golf Club
- Roehampton Golf Club
- Romsey Golf Club
- Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club
- Royal Burgess Golf Society
- Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club
- Royal Guernsey Golf Club
- Royal Jersey Golf Club
- Royal Liverpool Golf Club
- Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club
- Royal Porthcawl Golf Club
- Royal Portrush Golf Club
- Royal West Norfolk Golf Club
- Royal Wimbledon Golf Club
- Rugby Golf Club
- Sandy Lodge Golf Club
- Scarcroft Golf Club
- Seacroft Golf Club
- Seaton Carew Golf Club
- Sedbergh Golf Club
- Sherwood Forest Golf Club
- Shipleigh Golf Club
- Sitwell Park Golf Club
- Skipton Golf Club
- Sleaford Golf Club
- Sonning Golf Club
- Spalding Golf Club
- St Andrews
- St Austell Golf Club
- St Bees Golf Club
- St Enodoc Golf Club
- Stafford Castle Golf Club
- Stand Golf Club
- Stanmore Golf Club
- Stanton on the Wolds Golf Club
- Stocksfield Golf Club
- Sundridge Park Golf Club
- Sunningdale Golf Club
- Sutton Coldfield
- Swinley Forest Golf Club
- Tain Golf Club
- Tandridge Golf Club
- Taunton & Pickering Golf Club
- Temple Golf Club
- Tenby Golf Club
- Tenterden Golf Club
- The Childwall Golf Club
- Copt Heath Golf Club
- Dyke Golf Club
- Eastwood Golf Club
- Erewash Valley Golf Club
- Knutsford Golf Club
- Lees Hall Golf Club
- Long Ashton Golf Club
- Moffat Golf Club
- Nairn Golf Club
- Northumberland Golf Club Ltd
- Plassey Golf Club
- Ross-on-Wye Golf Club
- Royal Birkdale Golf Club
- Royal St Georges Golf Club
- Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club
- West Derby Golf Club
- Sussex Golf Club
- The Wisley Golf Club
- Worcestershire Golf Club
- Worksop Golf Club
- York Golf Club
- Thorpeness Golf Club
- Tidworth Garrison Golf Club
- Tulliallan Golf Club
- Turnberry Golf Club
- Tynemouth Golf Club
- Tyrrells Wood Golf Club
- Uttoxeter Golf Club
- Verulam Golf Club
- Wakefield Golf Club
- Walmley Golf Club
- Walsall Golf Club
- Walton Heath Golf Club
- Wentworth Golf Club
- West Byfleet Golf Club
- West End Golf Club Halifax Ltd
- West Essex Golf Club
- West Hill Golf Club
- Whitchurch (Cardiff) Golf Club
- Whitley Bay Golf Club
- Whittington Heath Golf Club
- Willingdon Golf Club
- Woburn Golf & Country Club
- Woking Golf Club
- Woodbridge Golf Club
- Wortley Golf Club

Open for business

BIGGA is also indebted to the many companies and individuals who donated money to The Building Fund and in particular the Golden and Silver Key supporters whose donations helped to fund the new state-of-the-art training room. In addition Rolawn supplied the turf for the surrounds of the building and many many thanks must go to the Elvington-based company.



Above: Mrs Betsy Walkington, Chair of Hambleton District Council, with her Consort, Mrs B. Kendrew, and Sales & Marketing Assistant, Cheryl Broomhead, enjoy the reception buffet

Above right: A delighted Elaine Thomas after meeting the Duke of York

Right: The Duke takes time out to chat with Board of Management members, Richard Barker and Robin Greaves





Facts

not

fiction

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After nearly 6 months in his new 'Italian Job', Peter Bradburn reports from his new post in Italy, and on his change of lifestyle.

Georgio Armani all-weather gear?

As one of the most southern members of the European community, Italy has a certain style of doing things which sets it apart from many of its neighbours. This is evident as soon as you arrive at Milan's Linzite airport. Instead of the usual welcome sign above the main terminal building, there is a sign in ten feet high letters which spells out "Georgio Armani". There is no mistake. You're in the style capital of Europe.

The country has a wide diversity of cultural identities and regional differences, as contrasting as our own in the United Kingdom. Also similar is the north-south divide only with the more affluent north of Milan and Rome dominating the rule of the country.

The sporting interests of the people centre, not surprisingly, on football, which is quoted as being the only thing on which the country is united. Cycling also raises a certain passion followed by food and wine as major leisure activities. Golf is low on the list of sporting

priorities, at the present time at least.

The success of Costantino Rocca has done much to spur younger generations to join the sport but it is the demand of tourism which has created the need for more courses to be built over the last five years.

There are a number of clubs which date back to the turn of the century. Roma is the oldest established club - 1903, but there are only around 237 golf clubs nationwide.

The main golf organisation, the Italian Golf Federation was founded in the mid 1970s, and from small beginnings is expected to increase in popularity in the next century. The annual invasion of other Europeans will ensure interest from the hotel golf chains for years to come.

As one of the few "ex-pats" to work in the golf industry, it certainly has its pros and cons. The main influence on the management of a golf course is the lack of skilled staff within the country. In-house training is a big priority. In my experience employees remain loyal

to their roots with the importance of their family and leisure pursuits dominating their lifestyle.

Outside influences effect the running of a golf course too. Even large multi-national companies - familiar to everyone in the UK are slightly diluted by the Italian style of how they operate. For example ordering and purchasing any products in August is a definite no-no. As I soon found out, Italy packs up and heads for the coast for the entire month. There are certain attributes you develop in time here - one is patience and the other is a sense of humour. It helps when all else fails.

The positive side to the situation comes in many forms. I'm fortunate to be working with an international staff which allows me to appreciate the continental view of the world. After a certain amount of time the Italian lifestyle does become appealing, but it does have an affect on the waistline.

So, what makes you give up the creature comforts of living in the

UK, and pack up, have to deal with a new job, a foreign employer and a different language?

Frankly I haven't got to the bottom of that one and I may never understand why. But I do believe in the old adage "Travel Broadens the Mind".



In my own experience it is an indicator of how well our industry is fairing in reaching the aim of a respected profession. To be given the opportunity to go overseas benefits the host nation, especially one with an emerging golf industry, but it is also proof that our skills are a valuable commodity, which are sometimes taken for granted in the UK.

To any of those with a sense of adventure - from college graduate to seasoned greenkeeper take a look at what Europe and the rest of the world has to offer.


But don't think too heavily about the implications, or you may well talk yourself out of it.

Peter Bradburn
Arzaga GC, Italy


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An argument? Define your terms

I always read your publication from cover to cover and it is with great interest that I read the letters, sometimes with great frustration. Often when reading or listening to other peoples views and opinions I am reminded of my high school physics teacher who quoted a famous philosopher who once said, "Define your terms, then we will argue." All too often we are guilty of speaking in gross and often misleading generalities. We have come to accept this with our politicians, but we should not accept it within our industry if we are hoping to gain the respect of our peers, our employers and the public at large.

How often do we hear people talk about "soil greens", "sand greens", "U.S.G.A. type greens" or the one that as an American drives me mad "American type greens"! These generalisations conjure up all sorts of thoughts and images, but they mean absolutely nothing!

I have been maintaining golf courses for the past 32 years - 18 years in America and 14 years in the U.K. and I know that greenkeeping is an art. But as an agronomist, I know that science is there to "define

our terms". The art lies in how best to apply scientifically proven principles to your specific and unique problems.

The USGA Greens Section has been providing our industry with scientific data from its research for over 75 years. Of all their research, their recommendation for a method of putting green construction - the "U.S.G.A. Green" - is arguably their single most important contribution to our industry worldwide and definitely its most talked or "argued" about. If I may be so bold as to borrow a phrase from Jim Arthur's last letter where he talks of advising the use of fensoil and fenpeat "with invariably excellent results, provided all other management was equally correct". Excellent results can be achieved with most things including USGA greens "provided all other management is equally correct".

Mr Fletcher failed to "define his terms" in his letter in the October issue. He said that "a high percentage of the expensive fertilisers will find its way very quickly into the drains from where it goes into the stream or pond or even nearby lake. Times this by 18 or even more

greens and I think you must agree the amount of fertiliser finding its way into our waterways is frightening". He is of course referring to that well "defined term" - American type green!

Well, Mr. Fletcher, what you say is frightening - frightening in its bias, its ignorance and in its potential damage to our industry if believed by the wrong people. I am not advocating that everyone rush out and rebuild their greens according to the USGA recommendations - build what you like - I am just asking for reasoned "argument" based on fact.

The art of greenkeeping is alive and well and practised better in the UK than anywhere else in the world and you have taught me a great deal in the last 14 years. But art and science must work in harmony. Let us stop this narrow minded "gossip" and work together toward the common good of our great industry.

Debate and 'argument' can be healthy and good for any organisation or industry, but let us first remember to "define our terms".

Joseph E. Paulin
 Club Secretary, London GC

Fensoil update, Fensoil update, Fensoil update

I write with reference to the recent dialogue within your magazine in relation to the relative use of fensoil.

While many of the issues raised are legitimate, we believe there are several factual inaccuracies contained within the comments made by the correspondent Mr Arthur, a former consultant to Whitbread, which we would wish to address.

It is firstly important to recognise that the Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel & Country Club has successfully staged six European Tour events in its six years of life, four English Opens and two British Masters. As a consequence of this, its course management has been agreed jointly each year by Whitbread, the PGA European Tour and our own agronomist.

Secondly, in response to the statement by the correspondent that gross overwatering was practised, we

write our greens independently of our green surrounds and therefore green watering does not impact on greenside bunkers.

Thirdly, it is quite untrue to claim that "management banned routine aeration" at any time. In fact hollow coring has taken place on at least four occasions during the summer months, supplemented by intensive slitting at all other times.

Finally, our current top dressing policy is based on decisions taken between ourselves and our own accredited agronomist.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to update your readers about recent and current developments at the Marriott Forest of Arden. Over the last 12 months Whitbread has continued to invest significantly in our golf courses, improve drainage with a considerable new system, installing a quality

irrigation system and rebuilding and relocating three new greens with a fourth now being planned for this winter. All of this action has taken place in six years after the original rebuild back in 1992.

This course of action has been taken because we are running a commercial concern and have over the last six years, succeeded in satisfying the expectations of our members, visitors and guests and Europe's premier professional golfers.

In order to succeed in the modern golfing world, the modern manager and business has to move with the times, something all of our best agronomists surely also practice.

Raymond Hunt
 Golf Estates Manager
 Marriott Forest of Arden Hotel
 and Country Club

Before I comment on three letters published recently in Greenkeeper International, I must draw your attention to the fact that I was not given a chance to see the article entitled "Hey Big Spender" prior to its publication - and by the way you misspelt my name.

Had I been given the opportunity to read the article prior to publication I would have only made minor changes. These minor changes would have made

clear the points which Messrs Arthur, Banks and Steel do not seem to acknowledge.

Bunkers which do not drain, usually mean that no drainage is installed or it is blocked. In the case of the Forest of Arden, it was the former. Our strategy for top-dressing has proved successful, the delivery of successful tournament putting surfaces and an overall improvement in the condition of our greens across the

Whitbread estate, has been seen as a result of our policies. Our decisions are all based on the advice of our agronomist, and the expertise and experience of our ten golf Course Managers, who rate among the best in the UK.

It is interesting to read that Mr Arthur feels that my opinion is dogmatic, as opposed to encouraging open discussion on a subject which any client or customer is entitled to, before deciding how to

Ghostly problem at Nuneaton

I wish to write regarding a disorder that appears to be affecting Poa Annua greens during this very damp and humid season.

The only way to describe this disorder is to say that it looks like Ghost Grass. White or yellow etiolated shoots that do not seem to contain any chlorophyll. It grows a centimetre in one night and the condition is worst after a heavy downpour.

I actually experienced this condition seven years ago in Switzerland and an agronomist thought that it might be a Magnesium deficiency.

On a recent trip to Switzerland I talked to a plant pathologist about this disorder and he asked me if I had been applying Potash to my greens.

I replied that I had, as I took over the greens at Nuneaton only 12 months ago and found them to be lacking nutrients.

He explained that there is a four to one ratio between Potash and Magnesium.

Outside of this ratio and the Magnesium could be blocked so the plant cannot take this up although there may be sufficient reserves in the soil.

Thinking this could be a problem I had some soil tests done only to discover that I was low on Potash and that Magnesium levels were correct.

That blew my theory out of the window.

I have talked with an agronomist from the STRI about this disorder and unfortunately they cannot throw any light on it at the moment.

Through talking with other Course Managers some thought it was an excessive take up of nutrients while others who spoon feed their greens were experiencing the same Ghost Grass disorder.

I would very much like to hear from anybody who has come across this disorder and if they have found a solution to it.

Ian Tomlinson
 Course Manager, Nuneaton GC

plan, design, construct and maintain their golf course.

As a developer of golf courses, I am entitled to court the views of as many designer, constructors, greenkeepers and agronomists as I chose. I expect a free choice based upon, impartial, practical and contemporary best practices within the industry.

Steve Clement, Golf Development
 Manager, Whitbread Hotel Company



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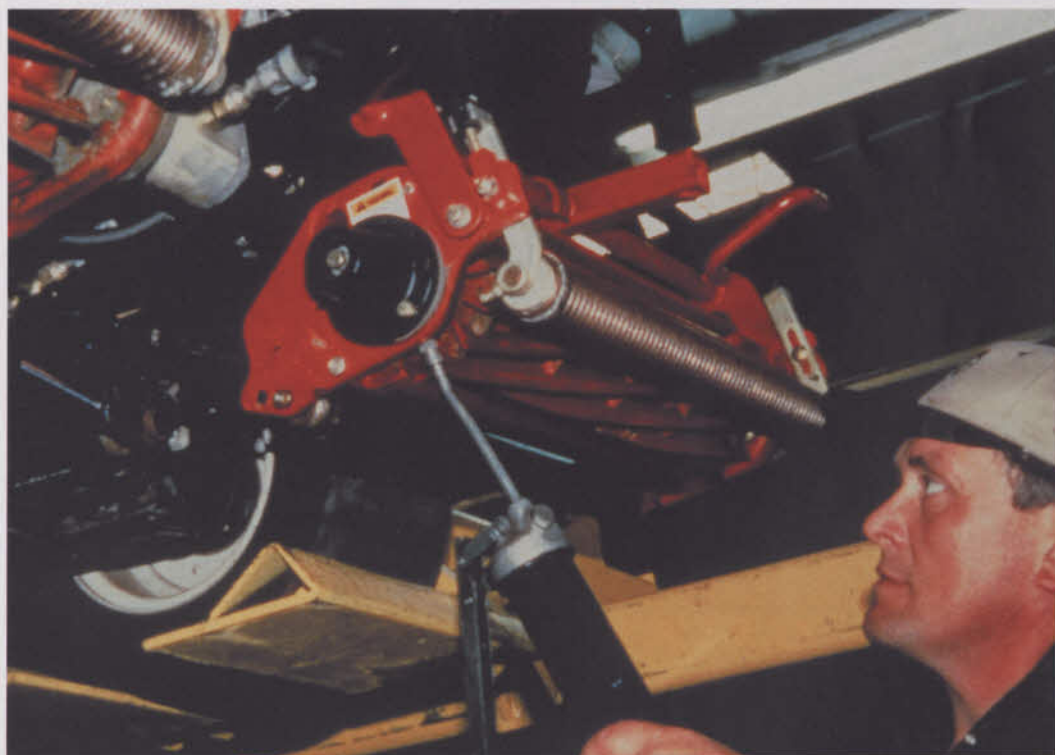
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Appointing an equipment mechanic is a trend which has been on the increase in recent years. Laurence Pithie, Director of Maintenance at American Golf investigates...

Nuts and bolts



The expectations as regards golf course condition and presentation have reached a level where no club can afford to have broken down equipment, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the local service engineer to put it right.

Even the average 18 hole golf club is likely to have equipment with a replacement value of at least £170,000. This has to be maintained in a responsible manner to achieve the machine's maximum life span and make certain of good investment.

The need to keep this equipment fully operational is paramount. It will operate better and more efficiently and contribute greatly to the successful management of the golf course.

Nuts and bolts

First steps towards appointing a golf course mechanic

When considering the appointment of a golf course mechanic, it is essential to weigh up the pros and cons involved in such an undertaking and investigate the implications.

On the plus side, the obvious benefits are that the equipment will receive regular preventative maintenance and will be serviced according to the manufacturers guidelines. Machinery will last well beyond the length of any lease term, repairs can be made almost instantly - assuming of course that the relevant parts are held in stock - reducing down-time. Last but not least, the cost of repairs will be considerably less than if charged for by the local dealer.

Naturally, there are many other hidden advantages to employing a skilled mechanic, such as innovative

The importance of mechanics for American Golf

American Golf views the appointment of a mechanic as one of the key roles within the staffing structure. This is why one is employed at each of the 12 sites in the UK. Our parent company in the United States, the American Golf Corporation, shares our view.

The role of the equipment mechanic is defined in our Job Description as follows:

"An equipment mechanic is primarily engaged with the servicing and repairs of all golf course equipment and golf cars and, if necessary, the daily requirements on the golf course where this position is regarded as being one of a dual appointment."

The mechanic will also ensure that all equipment is maintained within the manufacturers guidelines and that it is in accordance with current safety legislation. Safety switches, guards and covers all need to be regularly checked and made good if required.

Other responsibilities include the ability to deal with hydraulic systems, cutting units, both petrol and diesel engines, welding and cylinder reel grinding.

The need for maintaining servicing schedules and maintenance records is also part of the mechanic's role as well as ordering parts as required within budgetary limitations and to approved company procedures. In some instances, the mechanic may also be involved with the maintenance of the irrigation system but another person is usually entrusted with this work.

In general, the mechanic plays a dual role on an 18 hole course and must be flexible in accommodating the needs of both equipment and golf course, whereas full-time machinery maintenance work is the order of the day on 36 hole golf courses.

It is also an advantage if the mechanic periodically operates the equipment in order to ensure satisfactory performance and to understand what is required from the perspective of an operator. This also serves as a break from routine servicing.

Finding your mechanic

Enlisting the services of an

experienced and qualified person is not always an easy task since few mechanics are trained in this type of work. However, this is not really seen as a disadvantage since our mechanics have quickly adapted to their new environment.

Our experience is that most of the mechanics employed within American Golf have come from a background of mechanical engineering, plant hire fitting or from the motor trade, usually following an advertisement for the position in the local paper. Almost without exception, each appointed mechanic has quickly developed the necessary skills since much of the work involving engines, gear boxes, clutches and drive shafts is only a matter of different sizes.

The intricacies of maintaining and repairing moving cylinders, rotary decks and other items relative to this type of equipment have usually offered a different challenge but new skills are quickly learned and it is here that equipment vendors have played an important role.

Training your mechanic

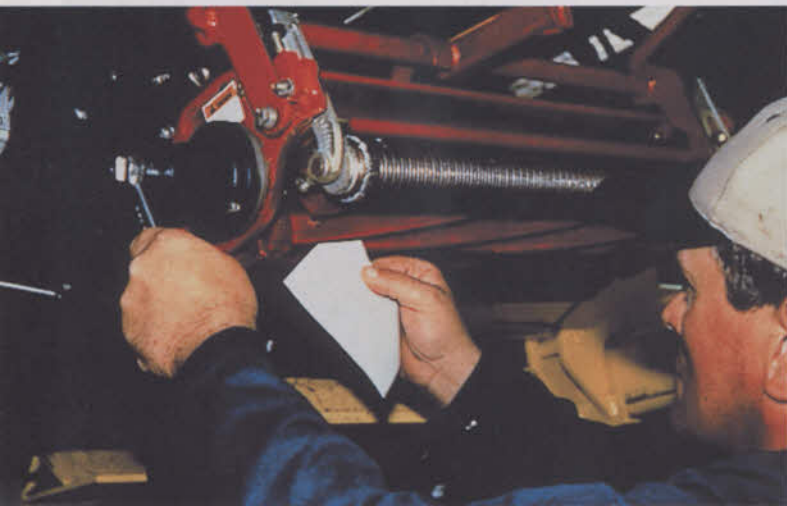
Training is an important part of American Golf's policy and many of our mechanics have benefited from a day or two spent at the local dealer's workshop, gaining first hand experience of the many problems occurring with much more frequency than usual when dealing with larger volumes of equipment.

The real benefit is that, within a short space of time, the mechanic can learn how to deal with and react to many different situations which may only arise once in a lifetime on any one course.

Companies such as Textron have also worked to create better understanding by providing several intensive training days created especially for American Golf's equipment mechanics. These were initially held at Kettering but have moved to the company's Ipswich complex where all future courses are to be run.

This type of training is viewed by American Golf as absolutely essential. It gives the mechanics an excellent opportunity to go into more detail on specific issues regarding individual machines. Experts are on hand to guide and give instruction as to the key areas to identify regarding future wear, servicing and on-going maintenance.

Aimed exclusively at small groups, training of this kind is essential as it



ideas for equipment improvements which greatly increase efficiency and productivity on the golf course. Cylinder grinding is an example of a task which is both necessary and costly but if carried out in-house can be done quickly and efficiently with minimal down-time and at a greatly reduced cost.

The only possible negative side to appointing a mechanic lies with the setting up of a workshop and the additional payroll cost. Having said this, if a mechanic is not appointed, another member of staff will still have to deal with repair work when their time could well be better spent on other maintenance work.