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Please apply in writing, enclosing a C.V. to:

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Salary and pension commensurate with position ➤  
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Please forward a brief C.V. to:

John Newton, General Manager, Harpenden Golf Club, Hammonds End,  
 Redbourn Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 2AX



## DEPUTY COURSE MANAGER & EXPERIENCED MECHANIC/IRRIGATION ENGINEER

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The requirements for the position of Deputy Course Manager are:-

- Minimum of 10 years links course experience
- Holder of relevant qualifications
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- Ability to work alongside junior staff, coaching and training to our set objectives
- To be able to produce work of a high standard
- Be an excellent team player
- Ability to deputise in the Course Manager's absence

The requirements for the Mechanics position are:-

- Able to maintain and service a large fleet of course maintenance equipment
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- Able to work unsupervised applying at all times current health & safety regulations
- Ability to work within set budgets
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- Have a full understanding of Toro Automatic Irrigation System

If you think you have got these and more to offer and you are up for this exciting challenge, write to me enclosing your CV and a brief resume as to why you are the person for these positions. Send to:-

The Course Manager, Kingsbarns Golf Links, Kingsbarns, Fife, KY16 8QD  
Closing date for applications 31 January 1999



## WESTERN GAILES GOLF CLUB

Applications are invited for the post of

# HEAD GREENKEEPER

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The successful applicant must have the appropriate greenkeeping qualifications together with a thorough knowledge of modern greenkeeping practices with a wide experience of equipment, machinery and computer controlled irrigation system.

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Applications in writing with full CV by 21st January to:

Andrew McBean C.A.  
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**Peter Mansfield, General Manager, Turf Division Lely (UK) Limited on Phone 01480 476971 or E-mail: peter.mansfield@lely.co.uk**



## Greenkeeper

Applicants are invited for the above post. The successful applicant will be responsible for developing and maintaining a 9 hole pay as you play golf course scheduled to open in the year 2000.

Applicants must be qualified and have extensive practical experience in the maintenance and presentation of a golf course and be interested in training young people.

**For further details and an application form contact; Personnel Officer, Oatridge Agricultural College, Broxburn, West Lothian Tel (01506) 854387**

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Mike Wattam, Course Manager, East Sussex National Golf Club,  
Little Horsted, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5ES



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## WILLIAMWOOD GOLF CLUB

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Applicants must be qualified to NVQ Level 2.  
A minimum of 5 years Golf Course experience is required.

Salary and conditions are negotiable but no accommodation.

Please reply in writing, enclosing a full CV to:

The Course Manager, Williamwood Golf Club,  
690 Clarkson Road, Glasgow, G44 3YR

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## HEAD GREENKEEPER

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The candidate must have the ability to lead and motivate staff, works programming and a sound knowledge of health and safety requirements.

Salary negotiable. No accommodation available.

Please apply with full CV to: The Secretary, Keswick Golf Club Ltd,  
Threlkeld Hall, Threlkeld, Keswick, Cumbria, CA12 4SX.



# HEAD GREENKEEPER



## Stockwood Vale Golf Club

BRISTOL, SOMERSET

A top quality candidate with a proven track record as a Head Greenkeeper is required to manage this busy and successful Golf Club. The selected candidate will be responsible for maintaining the golf course in pristine condition. We are looking for a strong team leader with a thorough understanding of golf course maintenance and the ability to produce good putting surfaces. Full spraying certification and NVQ or City and Guilds to at least level 3 is required.

The Championship length, golf course is superbly located on the edge of Bristol and is just three miles from the City centre. The Club is also only 8 miles from the beautiful and historic City of Bath. The golf course is full of interest; the fairways cross streams and stunning natural features and no two holes are alike.

The majority of the course has been built to full USGA specification and is complemented with a computerised irrigation system. The course has been fully and successfully drained. The greenkeeping budgets are substantial and the club has recently purchased all the latest quality green keeping machinery.

The existing five greenkeepers are all enthusiastic and have between two and ten years experience each.

The Golf Club is privately owned and, therefore, there are no Committees. The Head Greenkeeper will report to the Club's General Manager.

The salary package will be between £22,000 and £24,000.

Reply with full CV and any reference to: Mr M Ramsay, Managing Director, Stockwood Vale Golf Club, Stockwood Lane, Bristol, BS18 2ER

## DUKINFIELD GOLF CLUB

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### ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Applicants must have a minimum of 5 years experience in Golf Course Maintenance and be able to use all Modern Day Golf Course Equipment.

Applicants should apply in writing together with their C.V. to:

Chairman of the Greens, Dukinfield Golf Club,  
Lyne Edge, Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield  
Cheshire SK16 5DB

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### Head Greenkeeper

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We require two greenkeepers, one of whom must be experienced and qualified with a minimum of NVQ Level 2/Phase 2. Also fully conversant with all aspects of course maintenance. Chainsaw and spraying certificate an advantage. The other applicant should preferably have golf course experience or be working towards the relevant qualifications.

Applications in writing with CV should be sent to:  
The Secretary/Manager, Rowlands Castle Golf Club, Links Lane,  
ROWLANDS CASTLE, Hants PO9 6AE

## Inverurie Golf Club

Applications are invited for the position of

### Deputy Head Greenkeeper

The suitable applicant will be experienced and qualified in all aspects of green keeping. A practical knowledge of turf management, machinery maintenance and irrigation systems are essential.

Good man management skills and experience in course improvements would be an advantage.

Salary and conditions are negotiable.

Please apply in writing enclosing a full CV by 8th February 1999 to:

The Secretary, Inverurie Golf Club,  
Blackhall Road, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB51 5JB



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**This month I would like to turn my attention to a greenkeeping matter. This is something I have always endeavoured to stay clear of. After all what do I know about greenkeeping? In fact what do any of us know about greenkeeping?**

# Sand Green. Destruction

I still wince at a memory I have of once playing golf at a course with the most perfect fescue greens the world has ever known. Desperate to meet the genius responsible for these greens I located him and started the interrogation. "What fertiliser do you use" I asked. "Is the N source derived from aerobically composted organic matter?" "Oh I don't know much about that," came the reply. "I'm sure we used some back in the spring but I'm not sure which." "But what about your aeration technique? Do you deploy the high pressure water injection method?" I enquired. "The what?" came the reply.

As my questions became more and more fevered in a desperate attempt to learn the secrets in his possession, so his answers became shorter and shorter until I was confronted with a series of incoherent grunting noises. At this point the truth dawned on me. Here I was attempting some sort of communication with the man that I was sure had information on the most advanced and detailed turf management methods in the known universe and yet in reality he was a couple of chromosomes from being the village idiot. Depressing, is it not?

But to get back to the greenkeeping matter in question. I recently played a course in my area, which had 17 excellent healthy greens and one green that looked close to giving up its battle with life. This

green although dominated with fine fescue grass was weak, patchy, full of pitch and spike marks, slow to putt on and generally not too well. It was the only green on the course, which was built to a sand based or USGA specification method, and this brings me to the greenkeeping matter I would like to discuss.

After decades of initial research, experimentation, fine tuning and quite literally thousands of working examples we have evolved a method of greens construction that one would expect to be about perfect. Having worked with such greens for several years now at Sludgecombe Pay and Play I have come to the conclusion that the people who invented them are having a laugh. Either that or I am a bigger idiot than I thought.

To start with, USGA spec greens perform brilliantly. The grass is quick to establish and drainage is incredible. You get a rapid poa annua free sward and the members believe you to be God. The problems start when golfers feel the time is right to start playing on them. I should have had my suspicions when the first ball landed on the 1st green and left a huge splat of a pitch mark that required several minutes of delicate surgery in which to repair. Then to my horror I noticed a mass of spike marks appearing around the hole. I was not used to this on my previous clubs 100 year old greens. But never mind I thought, recovery

would be quick and complete. How naive I was. Recovery came only after the application of what I considered to be obscene quantities of fertiliser and as we were now coming into the autumn this was against everything I had previously been taught.

So I was now left with the dilemma, do I feed those suckers as all the reps were telling me to do, or do I leave them to die under the mass of overweight golfers desperate to destroy my once beautiful greens. The problem was the speed in which all colour and growth disappears from them. One minute you have Florida in England, then the next it looks as though someone's gone out and sprayed growth retardant at quadruple rate. Eventually I bowed under the pressure coming at me from every angle and resorted to the fertiliser bag and the inevitable fusarium attack, which followed. So then I was out there spraying copious quantities of hugely expensive fungicides while still desperately trying to keep something resembling grass on the surface.

But there must be a plus side I hear you say. What about aeration, surely that is not required in such intensity? Don't you believe it. When do you come across black layer on those old established soil greens? You have got to do as much if not more of that operation that annoys golfers than any established greens. If you do not, they puddle



# Sand Green. Destruction

up, turn a horrible brown colour and exude noxious fumes when ever you attempt a hole change which should be after every other fourball given the spike mark problems.

Now you may call me a whinging old git but I have not finished yet, not by a long shot. Further problems arise when you are forced to close the course due to the wear received on them. "But we have spent all this money on getting the very best construction so as to keep them open," say the owners. But grass does not grow in the winter whatever the soil underneath. To keep the course open, temporaries are hastily built so the seniors can get their daily inoculation of golf. Then the ladies complain to you through the February blizzard saying "Don't you know we've got our second mid week medal on today?" when you are forced to bring into play a temporary green or two. Then there is thatch build up. You may think this to be impossible given the free draining nature of the root zone but remember, for the first few years the sandy soil is devoid of those loveable little bugs that break thatch down, especially if you have been killing them off with fungicide.

Now given that

you come out of the winter with disease scarred, worn out, pitch marked, thatchy efforts masquerading as greens what grass do you think comes in to the gaping holes after the first application of spring fertiliser? Yes that's right annual meadow grass. But not the poa annua that we have come to accept with all its innocuous little faults. No, this is a huge, ugly, monstrous carbuncle type of poa annua that possesses several hundred permanent seed heads on every conspicuous tuft. You might as well plant flashing neon lights given the way it blends into the rest of the sward.

McDivot, you whinging old git I here you say again. But there is more, quite a lot more as it happens. Just when you think you are getting the hang of them, the poa is blending in a bit, the bugs are now starting to multiply and breaking down the thatch and you can actually get a reasonable amount of nutrient retention, suddenly you get a visit from the dreaded Take All Patch.

When I got this disease all over my greens I immediately buried myself in the textbooks and they all said the same thing; I was stuffed. Sure you could think about a hugely expensive acid injection system, or you could add phosphate, which encourages the poa, or you can throw on vast quantities of manganese which probably won't make any difference but basically you are well and truly stuffed.

The only thing to do is wait the two or three

years for it to go on its own. In the mean time the members think you are deliberately doing nothing about what they believe to be a virulent form of ringworm on their greens. Actually between you and me there is something you can do if you have Take All Patch. Go to one of those old clubs that still has a store of that highly illegal mercury based fungicide.

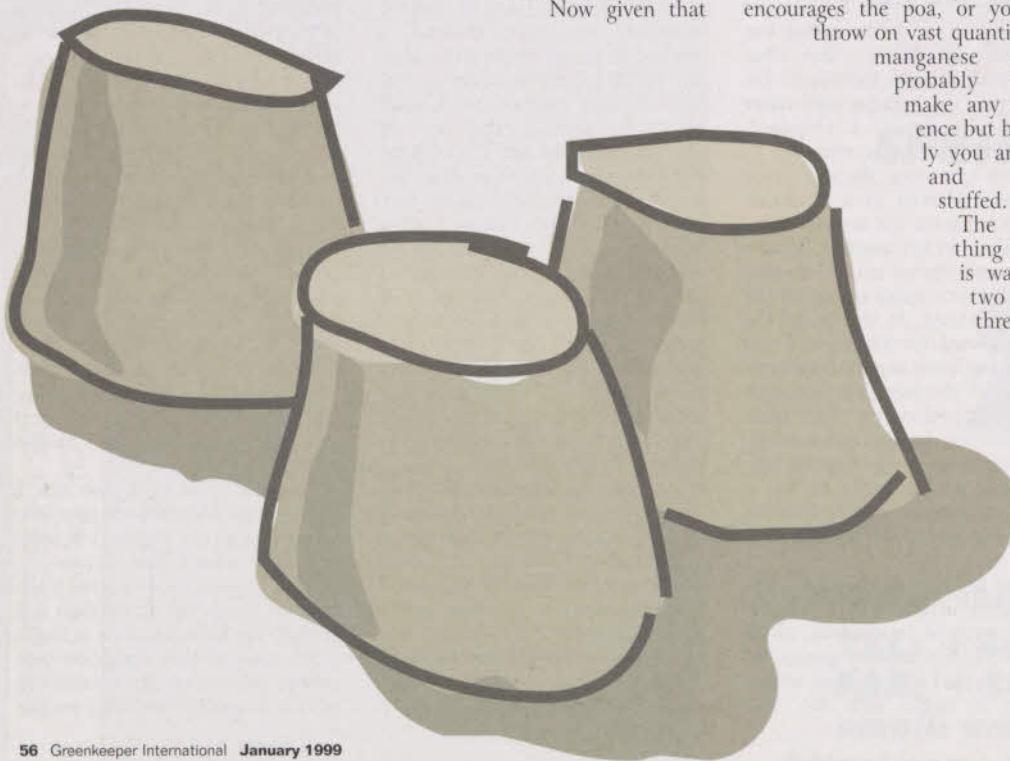
Having obtained some, don't bother spraying it on your greens, just drink it neat. At least it will put you out of your misery quickly. Either that or resort to that traditional old remedy - the bottle. Then when the disease goes by itself, you will only have chronic alcohol dependency to cure, which should be an absolute doddle, compared to Take All Patch.

You may say that I am a whinging old git but wait, let's look at how to cure some of these problems. Firstly there is the spike mark problem.

(Are the perpetrators of sand based greens in collusion with the soft spike manufacturers?) Do not think that this problem is still associated with creeping bent grass greens because mine are bent/fescue and I still have greens that are ridden with ruinous spiked up areas following the first swathe of daily fourballs.

In an effort to solve this problem of global proportions I rang up the STRI. What has their extensive research on the subject revealed? Well actually it appeared that no such research was being done (please correct me if I am wrong STRI). "It could be verticutting," they said to me. "Are you doing enough?" "Well I used to double verticut every other week and the spike marks were deplorable" I told them. "Are you doing too much they enquired?" "Well I now do no verticutting whatsoever and the spike marks are deplorable" I replied. So there is no answer there. But how about soft spikes, that will solve the problem. Well maybe, but I want to solve the problem on the surface of the green. After all links greens are effectively built on sand and they do not spike up so why do mine.

The question of soft spikes has even come up on TV's "Watchdog" programme; clubs are now banning people from their course without them. Well I don't





know about you but I would not like to be charged £6 for a round of golf and have all my spikes changed over. After all I'm a greenkeeper! No, it seems to me this whole matter is getting totally out of hand. Surely there is an answer.

In recent months we had a golf course on the telly with limited golf, highly expensive sand based greens, a very intelligent Course Manager that had access to the best information and he had greens that looked like they had been in a war zone. A short while later we went to The Open at Royal Birkdale only to be confronted with greens that were as perfect at the end of the day as at the beginning. Yes the greens were sand based and fairly newly constructed but the turf was re-laid from the old greens.

Perhaps that was the answer; it is the grass on top that counts. If that is the case, then why are seed companies not collecting this elixir of the turf world at our best courses and growing it on ready for wholesale distribution? I know a great deal of it was poa annua but at other heavily played links and even parkland courses the grass is dominated by bent and fescue species and spiking up is not a problem. Then look at Birkdale's Chris Whittle's account of his own greens in this magazine. He recognised that his new greens are a real headache compared to his old ones at Muirfield. It can't be that we are all idiots. Even Augusta with its frightening budget and the colossal expertise at its disposal has greens that at the end of the day, to be quite frank can look a bit spiked up, especially when they are compared to some of our better links and heathland tracks.

McDivot, you whinging old git you may well like to say, but wait, I have one other point to make. One of greenkeeping's greatest mysteries must be the STRI's handbook on turfgrass seed. Why on earth do they assess grass cultivars for such things as summer and winter colour or freedom from dollar spot, which nobody gets or freedom from red thread, which is never a problem? Who cares if it's free of red thread? Freedom of being totally knackered after the first 50,000 hackers have dragged their spiked clodhoppers over them would be a bit more appropriate.

No, no, there are times when I

can sometimes believe the best sand based greens come when they have been massively overplayed from day one and the man in charge has then responded to his rapidly dying fescue and bent by applying fertiliser with a size nine shovel. The consequence of this is a rapid take over from our old friend poa annua. Then within a couple of years all you have is uniform poa that still manages to drain pretty well. At that point, fertiliser levels are reduced dramatically and the bent and fescue is reintroduced at its own rate to create something similar to those old established greens that can produce such excellent all round surfaces.

At Sludgecombe I have members, bless them, that have excitedly told me about a relatively new course with the most superb surfaces. "It's all fine grass," they say. So I have paid a visit only to find a uniform 100% perennial poa surface that I have to admit does look good even though I know it isn't right. Then who am I to argue?

Now before I get publicly flogged to death by Jim Arthur's pen, I would like to point out that at Sludgecombe I have attempted to keep them lean and hungry as the books tell us. But you should see my greens after a full days golf has been through them. Somewhere between ghastly and hideous would sum them up. I am hoping that one day they will settle down and have a vague resemblance to those superb links greens that are fed just once a year. Sometimes in the morning just after they have been cut, in certain lights and if you squint slightly and lower your line of sight so as you can't see the pitch marks and use your imagination, they can look quite good. But I fear I could be in for a long wait before I reach my goal.

So, if you are looking to take on a new, heavily played course with sand based greens then all I can say is, I hope you like a challenge.

There, I've got it off my chest, now you can call me a whinging old git.

**Sandy McDivot.**  
**Head Greenkeeper:**  
**Sludgecombe Pay and Play**

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## Feature listing from December '96

**December '96:** Maintenance Facilities; History of the Mower; Mentmore Golf and Country Club

**January '97:** Trees; Tenby GC; Communication; Addressing the imbalance in Sports Turf; Hiring Equipment

**February '97:** Attending to the Details; Computers; Fertilisers; Ridding Park

**March '97:** Making Machinery Last; Computers; Irrigation; Musselburgh Old Links; STRI; Defining Playing Performance; Compact Tractors

**April '97:** Turf Quality; The London Club; Computers; Electric Greens Mower; Course Accessories; Ecology; Aerators

**May '97:** Data Tagging; Naunton Downs GC; Alternative Spikes; Suspended Water Table Greens; Shallow Aerators; Working in Germany

**June '97:** Drought Survival; Cooden Beach; Monitoring the Weather; Slitters

**July '97:** Royal Troon GC; Speed of Putting Surfaces; Mowers

**August '97:** Maintenance Facilities; Heather Management; Bunker Rakes; Workshops; Architecture; Kedleston Park GC

**September '97:** Accident Reporting; Greens Mowers; Valderrama GC; Links Courses

**October '97:** Environment; Recruitment; Abbeydale GC; Rough Mowers; Soil Analysis

**November '97:** Environment Competition; Bank Cutting; Risk Assessment; Pumps

**December '97:** Seed Development; Longhirst Hall GC; Toro Awards; Fertiliser Spreaders; Communication

**January '98:** FEGGA Conference; Buying Power Equipment; Elmwood GC; Mobile Phones; Traffic Management; Spraying; Environment

**February '98:** BTME Review; Overseeding; Royal Mid Surrey GC; Drainage; Thatch

**March '98:** Trees, Golf Course Accessories, News from GCSAA, Leamington & County GC, Trevor Smith's BTME Talk

**April '98:** Gleneagles Hotel, Compact Tractors, Environment, Protective clothing, Rain bird, Internet

**May '98:** Greens Mowers, Suspended Water Table Greens, Seeds, Letham Grange Resort, Charterhouse profile, Security and BIGGA's Fund Raising Campaign

**June '98:** Interview with Nick Park, Earthworm special, ATVs, Royal Porthcawl, Grinding

**July '98:** Aeration, Royal Birkdale preview, The importance of research, Architecture

**August '98:** Mill Ride, Fescue, Blowers, Textron, Open Review, Nematodes, Training

**September '98:** Nine holers - Tolladine and Fingle Glen, Turf, Steve Clement profile, Drainage, World Scientific Congress report

**October '98:** Saltex Review, BIGGA Retrospective, Stirling GC, Toro Awards Preview, Tree grants

**November '98:** Royal Opening, Ramsdale Hall GC, Gang Mowers, Hayter International report, Irrigation Systems

**December '98:** Toro Awards, Environment Awards, The Appliance of Science, Engines, Architects, BTME Preview



# McMillan who?



Starting this month's notes I realise just how much time I have spent in the company of one or other of the McMillan family. But then as you go round the seminar circuit it's hard not to see at least one.

First I had just come back from the FEGGA Conference with Ian two days before the Midland seminar, and the very first speaker of the day was Billy. His paper was one of the best of a very good day of learning, well organised by Peter Larter and chaired by David Walden. The only disappointment was that more members did not support this excellent event. However, thanks must go to the trade for their support and stand displays, and I enjoyed talking to most of them at break times.

Then it was on to Cannington for the South West & South Wales seminar, and once again Ian McMillan was a speaker and how nice to see Jack and Rita there in support. The highlight of the seminar was Frank Newberry, and that is not taking anything away from the other speakers, but Frank is so good, and entertaining with it, that he will always be the star of the show.

The day was well run by Paula and Ivor, and once again I thank the members of the Region for their support. I believe 130 attended. The sponsors were Supaturf and Roffey Bros to whom we are all indebted for

their efforts. I was only sorry I had to leave a little early to catch a train to York for the GTC meeting.

My next trip is by invitation of the PGA European Tour to Dubai for the 1998 Greenkeeper Conference, which will be held in the Jebel Ali Hotel from 9th to 12th December. There are three days of lectures and practical demonstrations including a visit to the Emirates and Creek golf courses, hosts to the Dubai Desert Classic, so I am looking forward to that.

This year has passed by so quickly we are already looking the BTME 99 in the face. I have been to so many greenkeeper events over many years and particularly in my year as your Chairman, but I can honestly say that I look forward to the greenkeepers week in Harrogate more than any other on our calendar. The BTME has got better and better over the years.

The week begins with the National Conference and workshops, followed by the Exhibition and seminars, with the BIGGA AGM early evening on Wednesday, and the BIGGA Banquet on Thursday evening. The week takes in an educational experience you will not find anywhere else, an Exhibition which is the premier indoor show in Europe, and on top of that, it's in Harrogate where you will find a warm welcome wherever you go. Harrogate is also blessed with some of the finest restaurants to suit all tastes. This historic town with its elegant architecture offers you a week to remember. You can walk in the Valley Gardens by day if you want to take in the fresh air or visit the superb shops just a few minutes away. By night there is a variety of night clubs for your entertainment. Wherever you choose to go

you will meet greenkeepers and tradesmen to chat and socialise with, in fact even if you arrive on your own it won't be long before you will make lots of friends, and I can guarantee once you have been to Harrogate for the BTME, you will return time and again.

With Christmas and New Year gone we all tend to feel a bit flat and there is no better pick me up than the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition from the 20th to 22nd January. Make the time and come along. I'll see you there.

With 1998 at an end I would just like to thank you all for the warm welcome you have given me wherever I have been. I have tried to attend as many events as I could, but it's impossible to be at them all, so on a few occasions I have had to rely on Board members to help me out. Their support throughout the year has been great. I would also like to thank the staff who have given me and you excellent help and service all year, and I am sure they will continue to do so.

Last but not least to my wife, Marion, who has given me support and encouragement throughout a year in which she has had her own difficulties to cope with. I wish you all a happy New Year for 1999.

**Gordon Child**



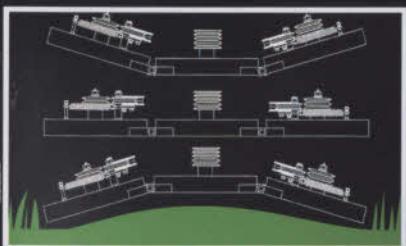
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