

# LAKE LINERS

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Oxfordshire Golf Club: 1991 Project



London Golf Club: New Lake Liner



Eyhurst Golf Club: Reservoir Liner (exposed)

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## Rain Bird crack code



The new DC-200 central control for Rain Bird's Golf Division is designed to deliver flexibility and water savings for golf courses with decoder-based irrigation systems.

A wall-mounted unit, DC-200 combines the reliability of two-wire technology with the proven in-field communication of buried field decoders. It is compatible with rain Bird FD-210 and FD-610 decoders which can operate from one to six valves without the use of a field satellite.

In addition it can store five separate irrigation programmes, plus one test schedule, while the Water Budget button helps save water by increasing or decreasing the watering times of all decoders in a schedule.

For further information Tel: 00 1 800 984 2255

## Millennium status for Doggy bins



Glasdon Retriever Dog Waste Bins have been granted Millennium Product status by the Design Council.

The bins are purpose-designed dog foul containers with a secure metal chute ensuring hygienic operation, a pivot action for fast and effective emptying and a completely removable door.

For further information Tel: 01253 600400

## New products from Rigby Taylor

Amino-sorb is the latest addition to the Mascot Specialties range from Rigby Taylor.

It is an amino acid based supplement that gives turf maximum protection and recovery from stress.

The two products Amino-Sorb R (root acting) and Amino-Sorb F (foliar acting) are ideally applied as a programme through the year to enhance recovery from stress, increase photosynthesis and chlorophyll content as well as enhancing germination and increasing root growth or stressed turf.

With another product launch, Rigby Taylor has also introduced Integrate Soil Conditioner to the UK market.

Applied to the turf as a conventional high volume spray the polymers in Integrate unwind and move down through the soil profile, penetrating layers and solid soil structures. The "fines" that are clogging the pore spaces are then solubilised by Integrate which draws together the clay and organic soil particles into soil aggregates with the same and the silt.



Following a programme of treatments the turf manager will see the results in reduced soil compaction and lower bulk density.

Integrate is a product manufactured by Milliken Chemical, the supplier of Blazon Spray pattern indicator. It is

totally non phytotoxic and has no potential for "burn".

It is supplied in 10 litre packs and costs between £75 and £150 per hectare.

For further information Tel: 01245 222750.

## Iseki launch new mid-size tractor

Iseki has launched a new addition to its tractor range with the introduction of the TR63.

The TR63 is a mid-sized tractor offering power and versatility for a range of turf care and agricultural applications.

Powered by a new 66hp Iseki designed Perkins, direct injection 4-cylinder diesel engine, it gives a cleaner 'burn' and low exhaust and noise emissions.

The bonnet with quick lift-off side

panels gives easy access for routine maintenance.

Synchronesh transmission provides 25 forward and 25 reverse speeds with a maximum road speed of 24 mph (40 km/h).

To keep the TR 63 moving the tractor has push button electro-hydraulically engaged 4-wheel drive and simultaneous locking of front and rear differentials.

The hydraulic lift capacity is 2100kg making it capable of han-

dling most mounted or trailed equipment with ease. Optional lift arms are also available to boost the capacity to a hefty 3400kg. The Iseki TR 63 is ideally suited to be fitted with the Ransomes Hydraulic 5/7 using a specially designed adaptor kit.

Textron can now offer one-stop shopping for a high output mowing combination.

For further information Tel: 01473 270000

## Safer surfaces pave the way at KSM

KSM Ltd has launched a selection of eco-friendly rubber slabs which are soft on steel and other rubber commonly used as spikes in golf shoes.

The slabs are available in three standard sizes and three colours - charcoal, terracotta and emerald. The can easily be laid on concrete, hardcore, sand or wood using cement, epoxy resin or other bonding agents.

For further information Tel: 01376 515164.



## Velvet Bent: Not the answer

I would like to take issue with the article in the April issue of Greenkeeper International in which we were told that velvet bent is the 'in' grass. In my view it makes extravagant claims and displays little knowledge of greenkeeping.

Can I also point out that *A. capillaris* is the old specific name for *A. tenuis* browntop (the new name was substituted in 1918! ref. Beard).

*A. canina* is indeed a lover of (very) wet soils. It was rejected many years ago, before New Zealand and Oregon browntops formed a reliable seed source for a better grass. If you think this is an opinion and not a fact, let me quote Professor Vargas (not unknown to some of your readers) on the subject, relating to Kingstown velvet bent, of which Avalon is only an improved strain.

"Velvet bent (Kingstown) lacks the disease resistance and competitive ability necessary to make it a

desirable turf grass species. It is even more susceptible to disease than Penncross; is not very tolerant of high temperatures and has a tendency to lie flat in summer time thus making an undesirable putting surface. It simply will not compete with *Poa annua*, which eventually will take over".

Advice to feed velvet bent more and especially to LIME(!) greens will be regarded by all greenkeepers as very dubious.

In short velvet bent is emphatically not the answer. *A. canina* has been tried and found wanting for at least 65 years. A comparison could be made with Penncross which was considered to be the answer to all our prayers, more than a decade ago. It certainly is not now, nor indeed its successors.

J.H. Arthur,  
 Budleigh, Salterton

## Welsh Open at Celtic Manor

Celtic Manor, in Newport, South Wales is to host the Welsh Open for at least three years from next year, as the first step towards its new 7,450 yard Wentwood Hills course becoming a contender to host the 2009 Ryder Cup.

The new course was opened by Wales' new First Minister Alun Michaels following an exhibition match between Ian Woosnam and this year's Ryder Cup Captain Mark James.

Director of Golf at the Resort is Jim McKenzie who was recently promoted to the post having previously been Course Manager.

## New features for Pattisson's aluminium hole cup

H. Pattisson & Co, which has recently become a distributor for the Standard Golf range, has launched a new aluminium hole cup.

Sporting a new and improved design the new hole cup is a copy of the polymer bogey hole cup with anti mud features, while a new and improved hole club is available is available in plain and white lined.

For further information Tel: 01494 79 46 46.

## Re-election for Howard Swan

Howard Swan has been re-elected as President of the British Institute of Golf Course Architects for the forthcoming year with Jeremy Pern as Vice President.

"I look forward to a second year as President and, with our Committee, the progress that we shall be striving to make to advance the profession and the

Institute throughout Europe and elsewhere in the year to come," said Howard.

The most important issue facing the Institute in the year ahead is the possibility of a merger with the European Society and the French Architects' Group and the debate will continue towards a coming together in the Millennium.

Another example of  
 perfect spacing

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Through the platform of the Learning Experience Jim Arthur talks about the need to be sensible when it comes to watering...



# It never rains...



As a life-time student of Homo Sapiens or even that aberrant strain, H. Viridis, or 'Greens', I am always fascinated by reading between the lines of articles or speeches and to identify the obvious breaches of the first law of logic, ie correct observation must be followed by correct deduction.

When it is not, problems remain unsolved, vast sums of money are spent (or advised to be spent) quite ineffectively because the true cause has not been properly identified.

We are informed that rainwater is acid, so golf greens will naturally become more acidic. Quite apart from the fact that we would need to live in monsoon conditions for much of the year for there to be significant acidification, no account is taken of the fact that today's bought-in top dressings are mostly on the alkaline side (the best around pH 6.8) so very little top dressing would soon neutralise any acidification by rain.

In passing, the whole argument is academic because "the ideal pH is the one you have" - so don't try to waste time and money altering it - certainly never, ever lime fine turf; the result is not just lush grass and earthworms but 'Take-All

Patch for which only time is a cure.

Similarly with irrigation, quite unsustainable claims are made and an enormous pseudo-science has arisen to complicate an essentially simple operation.

I have been wrongly accused of saying that pop-ups have ruined more greens than any other single factor. It is the misuse of pop-ups which is the true problem - and the fact that they make it so easy to over-water at the turn of a dial.

The temptation is greater because too many of today's golfers equate quality simply on the basis of colour - "if it isn't green it must be dead".

In truth "beautifully lush" is a contradiction in terms and anyone who prefers the viridian green so often seen on televised golf to the terre verte of natural courses (which are rarely uniformly green save when over watered, by rain as well as pop-ups!) needs counselling.

All we are aiming at in irrigation is simplicity itself. We need water merely to keep the grass alive, not to make it green, not to make it grow and certainly never to make greens soft and holding.

There are a few simple rules which are so logical as to defy contradiction. The first law is to start late and finish early. April is a winter month and if one falls for the temptation to water in an early dry spell - the usual false spring - then sure enough the weather will deteriorate, as we saw in this and many other springs.

Cold wet greens take far longer to warm up when the weather improves than cold dry ones, so growth is delayed. Equally at the other end, it is sound practice to stop all irrigation after the end of August, whatever September brings.

The aim is to go into winter with dry greens and a weeks watering in early September absolutely guarantees the next weeks are torrential, just as cleaning one's car invites rain. Early May is not too late in most years, and only optimists go on watering after the end of August.

If you really feel that greens are being over-stressed in a very early spring, then water (sparingly) in the day, not at night when the effects of late frosts and irrigation can be very unhappy.

So much for timing - what about quantity. A huge industry has arisen,



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based on computer science and nit-picking measurements, calculating the short-fall and reckoning precipitation rates to mini-seconds duration. Many greens on the same course have different irrigation requirements, linked to exposed versus sheltered sites, the permeability of the root zone and related drainage.

Experienced course managers know these different requirements (and less experienced ones can learn) - and set the controls accordingly. However 'scientific' systems may

be, there is no better way of checking than going out and seeing for oneself. How many course managers actually check that five minutes on the dial equate with five minutes actual delivery.

No one suggests spending all night with a stop watch. When I was helping with the presentation for Open Championships, I used to go out, alone or with the head man, at night randomly picking say four greens.

We both got considerable surprises at times - with old control systems failing to deliver or to stop! Look especially for the green which is starting to shine, or conversely one which looks too wet - but all set at the same control time.

Look also for missed areas indicating multifunction heads, remembering that each head waters the far side of the green, so a dry area relates to the head opposite.

I well remember going round a neglected Irish Championship links, where the pro was in charge, pointing out to him at a distance of 100 or more yards which heads were blocked. He didn't last long and the appointment of an experienced links man revolutionised not just the irrigation system but the presentation of the whole course.

Frankly - and do not dismiss my views as those of an old fogey - I have little time for such precision, even if it is really achieved in practice. What we are aiming at is the effect of a good shower once a night every night in drought, not a thunderstorm every three to six days. In practice a good guide is about 4-6 minutes with standard heads delivering 30-40gpm for a 600 m<sup>2</sup> green - but this is only a guide.

If in doubt, don't water, or use less water. "Over-watering is the cardinal sin of greenkeeping" is a remark made, believe it or not, by revered American Al Radko, late National Director of the USGA Green Section.

There are of course other aspects of irrigation such as syringing to cool greens in day time in summer heat, and watering in dressings. To do this effi-

ciently, it is highly desirable for the irrigation system to be so designed that all the heads come on simultaneously on one green.

To save money by falsely economising in pipe sizes, some systems are designed to use limited flow, by one head coming on at a time in say four different zones of the course. This makes visual control impossible - and many other snags connected with weather and play mean such systems should be outlawed or modified.

Similarly all heads should be easily and quickly adjustable, to cover say surrounds periodically but not permanently - and if you have to wear a wet suit just to adjust a head with the system operating, it simply does not get done.

On this topic, the old idea of watering approaches with greens has long been condemned.

Inherently poorer drainage on approaches and the need to retain firmness while maintaining grass cover means they need far less - usually only three times a week, even if other areas e.g. tees, demand attention.

This brings us to fairway watering - a vexed question. I suppose, where money is no object and proper controls ensured, wall-to-wall fairway watering is not such a criminal waste of money as it would be where budgets are more straitened.

It is all linked to this mistaken chase after colour. If fairways do go brown in a long summer drought, does it really matter, when a few days rain will soon turn them green again?

Watering does not really improve wear resistance, but it may speed up recovery. Fairways which thin out badly in a normal dry summer are likely to be dominated by *Poa annua* - indicative of insufficient aeration and inadequate top-dressing with moisture retaining materials such as fen peat or green waste.

Fairway watering is not an absolute essential unless outside factors prevail e.g. the need to tart a course up for a televised tournament. If it is installed, clearly one must be sure of adequate water supplies.

Water authorities in almost all areas, including those like the South West, with a chronic history of hose-pipe bans, have guaranteed their golf course customers supplies save only perhaps for restrictions over at almost 2 weeks of extreme drought in one year out of 5 or 6.

There are serious objections however to mid-seasonal extraction - most authorities allow water to be held back in storage reservoirs only during winter.

The cost of constructing such features is very considerable, quite apart from siting them.

Maintaining them is not cheap either. Do not be tempted into making them a feature of the course, as when they are partly exhausted at the end of a dry summer they have all the appeal of an African watering hole at the end of the dry season.

My advice is to thoroughly investigate and cost 'mains water' before wasting money on a reservoir. It always pays "to ask the expert" but do see he is truly independent and not a camouflaged representative of an irrigation company - who, however competent, is liable to offer biased advice.

Finally we come to water quality. In this country there are few causes for concern - all that water needs to be is wet. In some mining areas there may be toxicity problems - but a quick test for toxic and saline contamination is not expensive. In the states, it is often a different question.

Using water derived from what they call sodic soils, one sees pH figures greater than 9, high salinity and nice little surprises such as high aluminium and copper.

Desalination plants are essential - but luckily we do not have this problem here. I never cease to stress that green-keeping is simple common-sense and

**If fairways do go brown in a long summer drought, does it really matter, when a few days rain will soon turn them green again?**

those who strive to make mysteries where none exist, do neither the game nor themselves a service.

Defenders of mystiques try to explain that it is all the extra traffic that makes it necessary to apply magic mixtures or apply everything to the level of several decimal points.

They do not fool well trained greenkeepers, brought up on the need to keep courses of the poor side; use water sensibly; aerate like mad (never mind the golfers, they will forgive you when the courses are open when others are shut in winter) and generally follow tried and tested methods proven by a century of research and practice.

Much is talked of thatch and black layer! Water less and make sure it goes deep by aeration and both will disappear - especially if you cut out phosphatic fertilisers!

But that's another story...



**Over 100 new members joined BIGGA in April. Tracey Maddison, Membership Services Officer, welcomes them on behalf of the Association and highlights a money saving membership benefit...**

Do you pay your own subscription fees?

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If you pay for your own subscriptions, then you can apply to the tax office for a refund of 23% of the subscription amount. For example on a Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper fee of £73 that's almost £17! And a potential saving of £11.50 for an Assistant Greenkeeper.

Really? What's the reason?

Well, because BIGGA is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a legiti-

mate professional body, and membership fees to such bodies are eligible for tax relief.

I haven't got the time to complete lots of complicated forms ...

You don't have to! All you have to do is to inform your local tax office that you are paying your own fees and, to make life even easier, BIGGA has a simple form you can complete and send to your local tax office. So go on do it now, after all the money is yours!

Start saving yourself money, telephone 01347 833800 and BIGGA will send you a form today.

(BIGGA regrets that the Association is unable to trace membership payments prior to 1996)

**BIGGA welcomes...**

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Check out July's edition for May's new members!

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Information on tailor-made courses at your own venue is available on request.

**For further information or to register course attendance contact Jan Pullen 01626 892639 or Ed Allan 01303 863948**

Ad Ref 299

**This month, Ken Richardson, BIGGA's Education & Training Manager, takes a look at the need for continual training, and outlines some of the training courses on offer**

# Continuing PROFESSIONAL development

Are you fully trained? Are you competent to do all of the tasks set by your management? If you can answer yes to one or both of these questions then either:

- a. You did not understand the question; or
- b. You think that you know more than you do.

In the rapidly changing, cost conscious, quality led business environment in which golf greenkeepers work, success and in some cases survival can be achieved only if the need for training, development and continuous learning are seen as essential.

BIGGA can help greenkeepers with their development through its Regional and BIGGA HOUSE Training Courses. These courses are designed to meet the needs of greenkeepers wanting to improve not only their supervisory and management skills but also their knowledge of computing, health and safety, turf science and golf course design.

Courses planned for 1999/2000 are:

## **BIGGA HOUSE**

### **Managing People Module 1 11-15 October 1999**

This course introduces a range of interpersonal skills needed in supervisory management and includes: time management - planning and prioritising - setting objectives - the importance of delegation - Gantt charts and time planners - overcoming procrastination - action planning. Team work - identifying strengths and weaknesses - ensuring effective teams - delegating - motivating - team briefings. Leadership skills - action centred leadership - leadership styles - practical leadership exercises. Computers in greenkeeping management - introduction to the use of digital computers.

### **Managing People Module 2 18-22 October 1999**

This course builds on the knowledge gained in Module 1 and includes:

guidance skills - listening - questioning - summarising - paraphrasing - giving information and advice. Appraisals - appraisal interviews - guidance strategies - constructive feedback. Grievance and discipline skills - employment protection - formal and informal warnings - assertive communication. The use of computers in management - written communication.

### **Managing Operations and Resources 25-29 October 1999**

This course looks at financial planning, project management and the effective use of resources. It includes:

basic financial management - estimating costs - budget forecasts - cash flow forecasts - managed delegated budgets - production and maintenance of financial records. Project management - objectives and specifications - estimating time - milestone plans - critical path analysis - network diagrams and Gantt charts - project reviews and evaluation. Planning and control of resources - maintaining services and operations - improving customer service. The use of computers in greenkeeping management - spreadsheets and project management.

### **Managing Information 1-5 November 1999**

This course looks at methods of communicating information to others and includes:

Writing memos and letters - writing reports, storage and retrieval of information - electronic communication. Managing meetings - agendas and minutes - oral communication - audio visual aids - delivering presentation - coping with questions. The use of computers in communication.

### **Managing Golf Course Development 8-12 November 1999**

This course is aimed mainly at those delegates who have completed Weeks 1 to 4 and looks at: Health and Safety Update - Developing Working Relationships - Soil and Plant Analysis - Defining Seed and Turf Quality - Computers in greenkeeping management.

The cost of each course including four nights' accommodation, meals and all tuition is as follows:

**BIGGA Members £525 + VAT (£616.88)**  
**Non Member £625 + VAT (£734.38)**

All delegates will receive a certificate of attendance which can be used as part of an N/SVQ portfolio of evidence.

**Further details and a booking form are included in the leaflet, distributed with this magazine.**

The BIGGA 1999/2000 Regional Courses are being finalised and full details will be enclosed with the July copy of this magazine. Planned courses include:

**Budgeting and Finance  
 Project Management  
 Health and Safety  
 Soil Science  
 Golf Course Design  
 Essential Management Skills  
 Computing for Greenkeepers**

Thanks to the contributors to the BIGGA Education and Development Fund the cost of Regional Courses is kept very low thanks to a massive subsidy. Make sure of your place by booking early.



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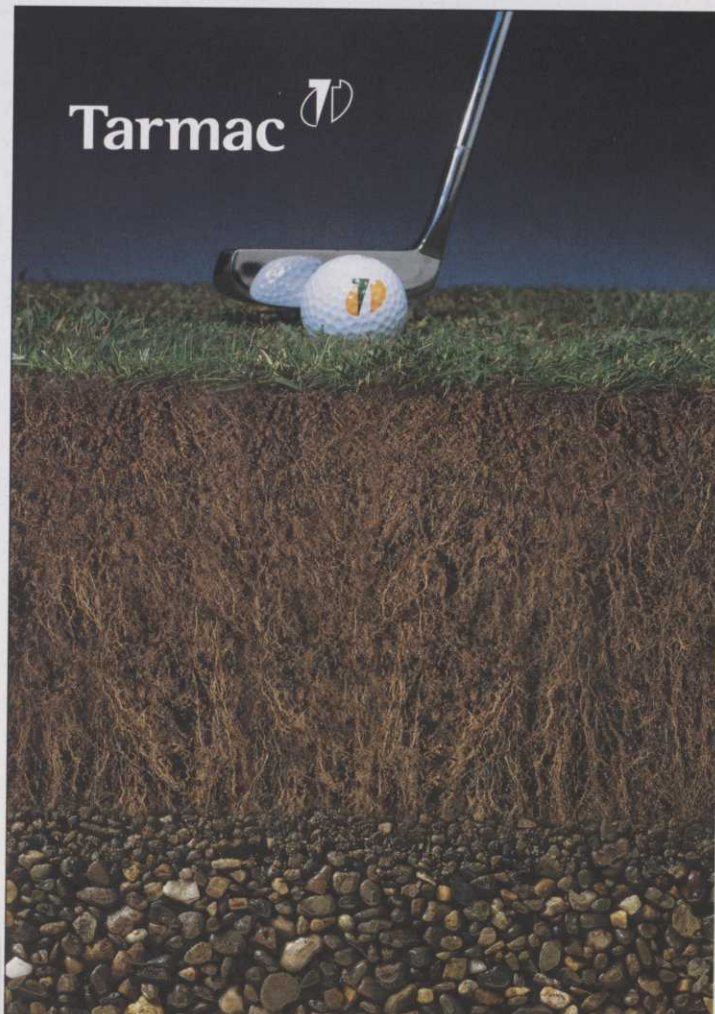
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Ad Ref 576



**What has BIGGA  
got to shout about?**

**Find out in next month's magazine**