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1

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2

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3

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GreenTek

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Greenkeeper INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association

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Advertisers' Index

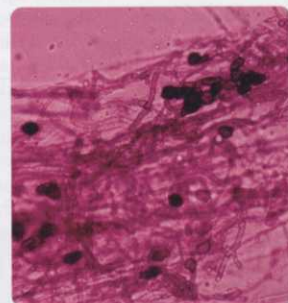
Advertiser	Page
Allett Mowers	29
Aventis	18
Bernhard & Co	25
Cranfield University	11
Dennis	11
Greensward	2, 13
Haztek International Ltd	11
Kubota	52
Scotts	51
Tillers Turf	6
Toro Irrigation	13
Total Irrigation Solutions	29



9 Calabria - A new frontier



14 Greetham Valley Golf Club



19 Finding Fungi



22 Tyres: Inflated ideas?



26 Looking after lakes and perfecting ponds

June 2002

Your next issue of Greenkeeper International will be with you by July 6, 2002

Regulars

News

Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7

8 Letters

10 Education

Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, highlights some of the training courses that are available to you this season

12 Membership

30 Talking Heads

Six top men talk about their likes and dislikes when it comes to golf course trees

32 New Products

Showcasing some of the great new products recently released onto the market

36-40 Around the Green

50 Features Listing

Helping you track down some of Greenkeeper International's past articles

62 As I see it...

BIGGA National Chairman, Richard Barker, remained firmly in the UK last month but still found time to play in his own Section event; a John Deere event; watch a little golf at The Belfry and have lunch at The Savoy

WIN A UNIQUE 'DESIGNER' GOLFING UMBRELLA

This is your chance to win a superb, ProBella, 'soft feel' Designer golfing umbrella in our exciting new Buyers' Guide competition in association with GreenLink International & Blazon

SEE PAGE 42

'THE TURFTIME TEASER'

PLUS The first 10 lucky entrants will receive this fantastic electronic data bank calculator

Features

9 Calabria - A new golfing frontier

Much travelled Arne Van Amerongen reports from his latest port of call

14 The Club which never sleeps

Scott MacCallum visited Greetham Valley where the team would make an army of ants look lazy

19 Finding Fungi

Dr Kate Entwistle looks at disease outbreaks - and how they are inevitable, but not straightforward, for the fungi

22 Inflated ideas

Roland Taylor looks at the development of the tyre and how it has brought about the increased use of the ATV

26 In at the deep end

Michael Spencer gives some excellent advice on the maintenance and upkeep of lakes and ponds

34 Poa Annua can be controlled

Jim Arthur hands out some advice to those who feel living with poa is the only answer

Visit www.bigga.org.uk and check out the latest chat from the greenkeeping industry

FOR GREENKEEPERS BY GREENKEEPERS

TIME TO TALK
www.bigga.org.uk

Free the Titleist One?

Last month saw a great deal of news print devoted to one John Collinson. Does the name ring a bell? Well he is the guy who was jailed for three months for gathering thousands of golf balls from golf club lakes up and down the country.

His case was highlighted as one of these situations where this country gets things so wrong. How could a guy who collects lost golf balls be sent to prison while so many more heinous crimes go unpunished? The fact that he declared his earnings to the Tax Man was also made to reinforce the point that here was a legitimate business and that Mr Collinson was a legitimate businessman.

There were radio phone-ins devoted to the case while a website ran a poll which found 90% of those who registered wanting him to be released. From memory even the Prime Minister got involved.

By the end he was being seen as a sort of Robin Hood figure providing lake balls for the poor impoverished golfers at the expense of the wealthy ball manufacturers.

Well, in the end such as the weight of opinion the Titleist one was released and justice was seen to be done.

But what did you think?

I must admit, without seeing all the facts, I did feel the sentence was a bit steep but that he did deserve punishment. He was going into golf clubs in the dead of night without permission from the clubs and taking balls that may have been declared lost, but were certainly not his property.

Trespass is just one of the crimes he committed and the fact that he was seen to be making such a decent living from his chosen career might well encourage others to take the same action and our golf courses could end up busier in the middle of the night than they are during the day. Where would that leave us?

With so many ecology and environmental projects being carried out on our courses the last thing we want is rubber clad, flipper wearing ball collectors damaging our flora and scaring our fauna, never mind our greens and bunkers.

And another thing...

What would you think if you arrived at the course early one morning to find a submerged body tangled up in weeds at the bottom of one of your lakes? I'd say that would be quite traumatic, and with the diving going on in the middle of the night together with the levels of stealth required it is not outwith the realms of possibility.

Yes, perhaps Mr Collinson didn't deserve his prison sentence but he certainly isn't an innocent party in the whole affair.

This is the final magazine to be designed by David Emery who is leaving the Association to further his design career with another company. David has worked on every magazine since February '98 and done much to ensure a professional look to the rest of the Association's literature. I would like to wish him well for the future and thank him for his outstanding work over the last four years.

Scott MacCallum
Editor

Continuing to set high standards

The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC) is smoothing the path to the introduction of revised Sports Turf vocational qualifications in July. National Vocational Qualifications and Scottish Vocational Qualifications in golf greenkeeping and ground maintenance are being updated to take in the latest advances in technology in the amenity horticulture world. The GTC has taken a lead role in this in collaboration with the two Awarding Bodies, City and Guilds

and the Scottish Qualifications Authority. A network of training providers guide students to the qualifications and it is essential that these providers all work to the same standards. The GTC has therefore been encouraging the Awarding Bodies to develop standard documentation covering the learning programme.

The GTC's Education Director David Golding said: "The GTC is committed to setting high and common standards in the UK and Ireland. This is why we have

been at the forefront in setting out the knowledge and practical standards for the revised NVQs and SVQs "

The GTC is golf's independent advisory service for both employers and employees with regard to greenkeeper education, training, and qualifications. It aims to persuade employers of the necessity for learning and acquiring new skills throughout life and encourage more people to get the qualifications they need for working.

Chipping Norton GC wins first Deere qualifier

A four man team from Chipping Norton Golf Club is heading for the famous Brabazon course at The Belfry, having won the first British regional qualifier in the inaugural 2002 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament.

The team - consisting of Club Secretary Simon Chislett, Club Captain/Chairman, Keith Willis, Greenkeeper, Steve Doyle, and Club Professional, Neil Rowlands - beat off the challenge of 14 other teams in the competition, which was organised by Peter Helps, Sales Manager at John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare of Bledlow, Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire.

He was assisted on the day by John Deere representative Henry Bredin and BIGGA's Midland Regional Administrator Peter Larter. The winners finished on 20 under, two shots clear of the field. The competition is based on a modified scramble, with the professional playing his own ball throughout the 18 holes, and the other three players forming the scramble. The team then takes the lowest score at each hole of either the professional or the net scramble team. Chipping Norton GC made the most of a little local knowledge - the qualifier was held at the club's own course in Southcombe, Oxfordshire on April 25. The team now goes through to the Great Britain and Ireland national final at The Belfry



From left to right: Henry Bredin, John Deere Limited; Simon Chislett, secretary of Chipping Norton Golf Club; Peter Larter, BIGGA Midland regional administrator; Peter Helps, sales manager of John Deere dealer Turner Groundscare (Aylesbury branch)

on August 19, to play for a place in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA in November.

"We've run a great many tournaments here, but never one quite like this, or with teams made up in this way," said Club Secretary Simon Chislett. "It was a long and nervous wait to see who won, as we teed off first, but it was worth it - and I have to say, we'd happily host the competition again! We're all looking forward to playing at The Belfry, but there won't be any advantage for us this time as none of the amateurs have played it before."

Now in its 16th year, the John Deere Team Championship has traditionally been open only to

teams from the USA and Canada. Last year invitations were extended to Germany and Australia, and this year teams from Great Britain and Ireland are also included. After the national final at The Belfry, two winning teams - one from Great Britain and one from Ireland - will travel to the USA with the chance to be crowned John Deere World Team Champions 2002.

John Deere Limited is also making a donation of £25 for every British and Irish team entered, to support the educational activities of BIGGA (British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association) and GCSAI (Golf Course Superintendents Association of Ireland).

Twenty years of success for Charterhouse

Charterhouse Turf Machinery recently celebrated 20 years of supplying equipment for greenkeeping and grounds maintenance tasks. The company is best known for the Verti-Drain range of deep aerators, manufactured by Redexim of Holland. This product revolutionised turf management when it was introduced to the UK in the early 1980s.

Charterhouse subsequently expanded into emergent niche markets, with ranges such as overseeders, scarifiers, corers, core collectors and pedestrian turf aer-

ators. The company also diversified into consumer-orientated products, including DR wheeled trimmers and brushcutters. In 1999, Charterhouse bought the Michael Richmond Ltd business, specialising in the supply of arboricultural and forestry equipment, broadening its market reach still further.

Most recently, Charterhouse added the Antonio Carraro 'supercompact' tractors and the Rogers Windfoil shrouded boom sprayers. To mark their 20th anniversary, Charterhouse recently held a special dinner attended

by past and present employees. A special feature was a commemorative cake baked by Secretary Barbara Jarman.

"Having identified the turf equipment market as a specialist sector, and sourcing high-quality products, Charterhouse quickly became recognised as experts in our field," says Philip Threadgold, a founder of the company. "Our ongoing flexibility has enabled us to develop the business to meet trends in new and existing markets, and we can look forward with confidence and excitement to the next 20 - and beyond."

English Golf on course with Nature

Golf clubs across England stand to benefit from free environmental management advice thanks to an innovative scheme to be launched this summer.

The English Golf Union and the government's wildlife advisers, English Nature, have provided joint funding for this new scheme, to be delivered by STRI, the golf industry's independent advisory and research specialists.

An additional ecologist will be employed to work under the guidance of Bob Taylor, STRI's Senior Ecologist, now well established in golf course ecology circles. Over the next two months details of the scheme with an application form will be sent to all English Golf Union affiliated clubs. In July STRI will begin visiting up to 70 golf clubs assigned by representatives from EGU and English Nature from applications received by 28 June. This service is specifically designed for golf clubs who have had little or no ecological or environmental input, to raise awareness of ecological issues relating to their golf courses. An STRI ecologist will spend a day walking each course with green-keeping staff and club officials before preparing a detailed report offering professional environmental management advice.

Participating clubs will benefit from ongoing support from STRI for an 18 month period. At the end of which they will receive a free follow-up visit to assess progress and, hopefully, a certificate to acknowledge their envi-



Dr Gordon McKillop, Dr Keith Duff and Colin Spurr announce the launch of the new scheme

ronmental commitment and showcase wildlife gain.

Applications unsuccessful in the first year of the project will automatically be carried over to the following year for consideration, alongside opportunities for new applicants. A series of joint newsletters will be published and circulated by STRI to follow the progress of clubs taking part in the scheme.

The joint funding for this free service will also extend to offering

support to all EGU affiliated clubs through telephone and written advice from STRI. A series of advisory leaflets providing conservation advice on issues ranging from pesticides to management of the rough will be made available free of charge.

This three-year project heralds a new era of co-operation between golf clubs and conservationists, and is the culmination of a series of meetings between the EGU, English Nature and the STRI over the last two years.

English Nature's Chief Scientist, Dr Keith Duff, himself a keen golfer, said: "Golf courses, contrary to popular belief, can provide vital green corridors and oases for wildlife amongst an ever encroaching tide of developed land and monocultured farmland. Often relatively minor changes to course management can deliver huge benefits to wildlife and we're delighted to co-fund this ground breaking scheme to provide free tailored expert environmental advice to golf clubs throughout England."

Golf Services Committee Chairman, Colin Spurr, added, "The EGU welcomes the opportunity to join with English Nature and the STRI on this project which will ultimately be to the benefit of both our member clubs and the wonderful habitats that exist on their courses. This can only be good news for golf and conservation."

This free initiative is not intended to replace more comprehensive ecology and environmental services from STRI or other providers.

Roger receives STRI honour

STRI's former Chairman, Roger Robinson, has accepted a position of Life Vice-President of the STRI, offered in recognition of his valuable contributions both as a member and as Chairman of STRI's Executive Committee.

Roger became a member of the committee in 1986, then known as the STRI Board of Management and Executive Committee, as a representative of the R&A. In 1992 he was elected as Vice Chairman, becoming Chairman in 1995, working closely with Dr Mike Canaway who had been appointed to the new position of Chief Executive. Roger retired as Chairman in September 2001, having supported for over 12 months Dr Gordon McKillop, STRI's current Chief Executive, whose appointment he oversaw in June 2000. Roger's experience and connections with the golfing world extend far beyond the STRI including both the R&A and BIGGA.

As a member of the R&A, Roger was asked to serve on The Championship Rules of Golf Committee, The Council of National Golf Unions and currently The Membership Committee. It was as an R&A representative that he became actively involved in the formation of BIGGA in 1987 and sat on the BIGGA Board as a Trustee until 1996. Not all of Roger's activities have been connected with the "political" world of golf. His personal love of the game is evident at his club, The Royal Liverpool Golf Club where he was Captain in 1982. In 1952/53 he was an Oxford Blue and later played many times for Cheshire becoming President of the Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs in 1987. Acceptance of this position will enable Roger to stay in touch with developments at STRI even though he has officially retired.



Irritech launched

Roger Davey, Senior Design Engineer and Area Manager for Ocmis Irrigation, has left after 13 years to become Managing Director of Irritech Limited - Independent Irrigation Consultants.

Roger has amassed a vast experience of golf course irrigation design and management projects, both within the UK and in Europe. This helps in understanding each individual client's needs and the ability of different irrigation equipment to meet these needs, concentrating irrigation designs on efficiency, economy and environmental impact.

Irritech will offer independent analysis of existing irrigation systems, provide specifications for new systems and system upgrades, and provide tender evaluation and project management.

Roger can be contacted on Tel: 01823 690216 Web: www.irritechlimited.co.uk

Boughton expands

To keep pace with expansion, Boughton Loam Ltd. have added a further two new machines to its growing contract fleet. A Kubota 4200 series tractor and a Charterhouse 7526-2.5 metre Outfield Verti-drain will be brought immediately into use.

These machines will compliment the existing fleet, increasing capacity in the forthcoming end of season renovation on winter sports pitches. They will also be used in the ongoing maintenance of golf courses and cricket pitches.

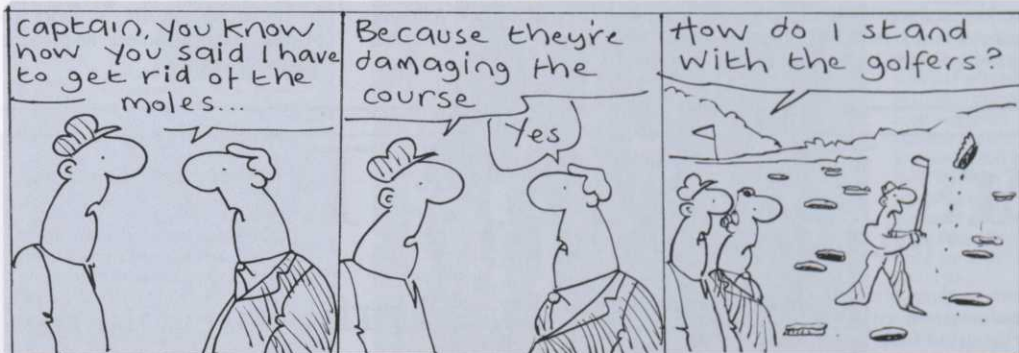
All machines are operated by Boughton Loam's own highly trained staff who have extensive greenkeeping and landscaping experience.



Members of the East of Scotland Section paid a recent visit to Kingsbarns Golf Club. The trip was in association with local Toro dealer, Henderson Grass Machinery (Haddington)

Royal Inverdivot GC...

Strip Cartoonist of the Year www.tonyhusband.co.uk



New appointments at John Deere

Three senior appointments have been announced at John Deere.

Graham Williams has left Langar to replace Joe Weegenaar as International Marketing & Sales Director for the commercial & consumer equipment (C&CE) division, based in Mannheim, Germany. Graham will be responsible for continuing to drive the growth and profitability of Deere's international business.



From left: Graham Williams and Pieter Nel

As C&CE Division Sales Manager of the UK & Ireland branch at Langar, Nottingham since 1993, Graham oversaw a fivefold growth in the grounds care business, making this the largest C&CE branch outside North America.

Graham attended both Lackham and the West of Scotland agricultural colleges, obtaining an NDAgE. He joined John Deere Limited as a territory manager in 1979, and became sales promotion manager in 1987.

Pieter Nel succeeds Graham Williams as C&CE Division Sales Manager for the UK and Ireland, based at Langar. Pieter originally joined the branch last year as Business Development Manager from John Deere (PTY) Limited in Nigel, South Africa, where he served as Manager, Product Support. Pieter joined John Deere in South Africa in 1989 as a Territory Manager and was appointed Manager, Product Support in 1993.

Keith Clayphan succeeds Pieter Nel as Business Development Manager for John Deere Limited. In this position Keith will supervise the company's complete goods department, and will be the branch expert in process management, working with all departments.

He will also lead the development and implementation of quality initiatives such as ISO certification, and will be responsible for managing and co-ordinating the branch's internet activities. Keith returns to Langar from Deere & Company's corporate headquarters in Moline, where he was a Project Manager on the order fulfilment team.

New amenity grass seed group formed

The major breeders and suppliers of amenity grass seed have formed the Amenity Grass Crop Group (AGCG). Members include Advanta Seeds, Barenbrug UK, British Seed Houses, Cebecco Seed Innovations, DLF Perryfields, Nickerson and Semundo. Paul Johnson, Managing Director of Barenbrug UK, has been appointed as the Chairman and representatives will meet regularly with staff of STRI, at Bingley, which currently undertakes the independent evaluation of newly developed grass cultivars.

The Group will review with the STRI, the existing varieties available and fine-tune testing procedures. Its members will also liaise with end-users to ensure that the needs of industry professionals are being met in terms of amenity grass cultivar performance and will meet under the auspices of the respected British Society of Plant Breeders.

"Developing new grass varieties takes typically 15 years, and it requires a long-term view to ensure they meet the user's requirements," said Paul.

"The AGCG's role is to monitor industry issues and listen to the views of amenity turf professionals, so that we can effectively set the standards that tomorrow's varieties, and appropriate evaluation procedures, should meet. The Group has already held fruitful meetings with several influential trade groups, and we look forward to gaining the views of others so that breeders and testers fully understand their exact requirements."

Toro dealer celebrates anniversary in style



Toro north of England dealer Cheshire Turf Machinery, in Stockport, has celebrated its fifth anniversary as an independent concern, with the sale of its 1000th machine - to the golf club to which it made its first sale, a Reelmaster 2300-D mower.

The club in question is Birchwood Golf Club, an 18-hole parkland course in Warrington.

Steve Halley, of Cheshire Turf Machinery, said: "The company was established to focus on the grounds care

professional, with the belief that if we did our job properly the customer would remain loyal. It's therefore especially satisfying to reach this milestone by supplying our original customer."

Head Greenkeeper, Adey Holt, who has built up his Toro fleet over the years, said, "I've always been a Toro fan, they make the most reliable machines on the market. Our Reelmaster 2300-D has done over 2,000 hours since we bought it and it's still going strong."

Alan appointed Area Sales Manager

Dennis has appointed Alan Ronaldson to their sales and marketing team.

As Northern Area Sales Manager, Alan will offer product advice and service back-up to Dennis' customers and dealers throughout the North of England, Scotland and Ireland. They will benefit considerably from Alan's extensive knowledge and experience. This year, Alan celebrates 30 years of working in the grounds care industry, many of which have been undertaken at the highest level. Most recently,



he established a complete Northern dealer network for a New Zealand-based grounds care equipment manufacturer.

He is a founding member of the IOG's Scotsturf exhibition committee, and has worked closely with the IOG and BIGGA.

Commenting on the appointment, Dennis' Managing Director, Ian Howard, said, "Alan is dedicated to sharing his knowledge with others, and he is ideally suited to Dennis' commitment to supplying premium products and service to our customers. In the same spirit, he has also promised to give his new colleagues a practical demonstration of his bagpipe-playing skills!"

Tee 2 Green in link with ETT

Tee 2 Green and European Turf Technology have announced a collaborative partnership to market several grass seed varieties in the United Kingdom and Middle East.

"We have conducted extensive market research over the past two years through our UK subsidiary and have established that we certainly produce a range of varieties ideally suited to these markets. We need to involve ourselves with a company with direct links to the country's leading golf clubs. ETT fit the bill with their outstanding contacts and highly technical approach they are the ideal partner," said Agostino Gaude, Tee 2 Green, Corp. Sales Manager for Europe.

The agreement covers a complete range with several specially designed mixes as well as a custom mixing service and the popular A4 creeping bent. Richard Lawrence Managing Director of European Turf Technology said, "Our philosophy has always been to bring to the market products that have a distinct technical advantage, we have achieved this through our associations with Floratine Products and Norsk-Hydro the world's largest fertiliser company. The Turf-Seed and Tee 2 Green ranges are an ideal addition to our range."

SGM investment

Scottish Grass Machinery has invested £250,000 in two new workshops in Inverness and Aberdeen to support contracts recently won with Highland and Aberdeenshire Councils.

The new facilities will provide equipment and a full customer service, delivered by two dedicated engineers in each depot, supporting both the two council contracts as well as providing on-site support to SGM's golf customers across the North of Scotland.

Tillers Rootzone Turf

(est. Apr.'02 - rdy. Oct.'02)

This autumn you can buy greens turf grown on three different rootzones, two of which are to USGA spec. In addition, our custom-grown service allows you to order any mixture of grasses on any rootzone. For details call Tillers Turf on 01652 678000.



Tillers Turf growers of fine turf

John Deere launches Turf Tech scheme

A major new training scheme for the UK groundcare machinery industry is being launched by John Deere Limited, in conjunction with Brooksby Melton College in Leicestershire, with the approval of BAGMA and the City & Guilds of London Institute, and the support of the Learning & Skills Council.

The only scheme of its kind in the groundcare industry, the John Deere Turf Tech apprentice engineering training programme has been developed to assist dealers and their service departments in the recruitment and training of suitably skilled technicians. It is based on a similar John Deere scheme that has already been operat-

ing successfully in agriculture since 1992, and which won a National Training Award at the end of 1997.

Turf Tech is a four-year block release course at Brooksby Melton College, leading to the BAGMA/ City & Guilds of London Institute 4024 Agricultural / Groundcare Service Engineers NVQ Level 2 & 3 Certificates, and the John Deere Turf Tech Certificate. The standard three year apprenticeship will cover all the normal engineering principles and systems, and include regular sessions at the John Deere Training Centre in Langar. During the additional fourth year, the trainee works at the sponsoring John Deere dealership, and attends at least

three service schools at the John Deere Training Centre.

Successful completion of the fourth year of the scheme also qualifies technicians for Associate Membership of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers, and registration as Eng Tech with The Engineering Council.

The first intake of students, who need to be resident in the UK, sponsored by a John Deere dealer and aged 16 or over, is planned for September 2002. Anyone interested in applying will be able to obtain a brochure outlining the scheme from Brooksby Melton College, area careers officers, John Deere Limited at Langar, Nottingham, and John Deere dealers nationwide.

Trilo buys Long Equipment range

MJT Contracts Ltd and Trilo have added the Long Equip range to their own range of Trilo Vacuum Sweepers. All production has been moved to the factory in Holland with MJT continuing the supply of parts and machines to the UK. The range has been "thinned down" to the successful collectors and sand spreaders, other machines may be made on request as



all drawings are held by Trilo. The company is hoping that the reputation of both TRILOs and Long machines will go hand in hand for a stable future and ask customers to bear with them while we gear production of machines and parts up to the standard expected by existing TRILO customers. They are holding some parts in stock and hope to have things back in operation within six to eight weeks with full production being resumed by Saltext at the latest.



Sportsworld seminar a great success

David Bates (left) gets up to his elbows in a demonstration of hydraulic conductivity at the Sportsworld Amenity-sponsored North Wales Section Seminar at Carden Park. Chaired by Bill Lawson and with speakers including Peter Wisbey, of the EGU; Duncan McGilvary, of Potters Bar GC, Ken Richardson, of BIGGA, several speakers from Sportsworld Amenity as well as Colin Hood, from Turftrax, the audience was treated to a wide ranging array of topics.

Great news for Woodlands

The Forestry Commission has changed its Woodland Improvement Grant giving more opportunity to golf courses to access grant aid for the management of their woodland.

The grant is split into 3 units: - WIG1 for Public Access, WIG2 for Undermanaged Woodland and WIG3 for Biodiversity. It is WIG 2 and WIG3 that are generally of interest to golf clubs, previously uneconomic thinning was not applicable for grant aid under WIG2. This has now changed and therefore golf courses with woodland should now be eligible for 50% of the agreed costs to bring their woodland back to environmentally acceptable levels. This

grant has a ceiling limit of £10,000 in grant assistance.

WIG3 has also been restructured with a new ceiling limit of £50,000 in grant aid. This is available to clients wishing to improve the biodiversity of their woodlands providing it is in accordance with either, the National or Local Biodiversity Action Plan, a Habitat Action Plan or a Species Action Plan. The grant gives a 50% contribution towards agreed costs. For further information please contact John Nicholson Associates at:-

John Nicholson, John Nicholson Associates, 18 Douglas Gardens, Durham, DH1 3PT Tel: 0191 3842556

South Wales Seminar well supported



Pictured at the South Wales Seminar are Professor Bill Adams, David Ward, Head Greenkeeper at Royal Porthcawl GC, Simon Barnaby, Scott's Technical Manager and Martin Townsend, Scott's Sales Manager. The event was very well supported and the South Wales Section would like to thank Scotts for their very generous sponsorship of the event.



Take a time-honoured look back through the pages of Greenkeeper International from a decade ago



JUNE 1992

Greenkeeper International reported that golfers at Aldwark Manor, built in 1876 and headquarters of BIGGA, had to give way to a giant crane recently as a 30 tonne 60 metre span bridge was eased into place between the fairways. Engineers used a 500 tonne mobile crane to lift the steel frame timber decked bridge, which now stands as a splendid course feature and access for golfers and maintenance machinery over the River Ure, running through the picturesque 6,171 yard par 71 parkland course. This operation brings to an end a two-year project to extend the original nine holes (opened in 1978) to eighteen, and is the first new bridge to span the Ure since 1887, when Aldwark Toll Bridge was reconstructed.

In an article on 'Vandalism', David White asked, Why do vandals especially target golf courses? Is it that they mistakenly perceive golfers as some kind of rich kids on the block: hurt the rich and you hurt ordered society? I have a theory that vandalism stems from the attitudes of couldn't-care-less parents, giving vent to violence, anger and frustration from their unloved offspring. Theories apart, if you are victim to vandalism and all else fails, consider the course of action taken by one club, that of vigilante patrols over the peak hours of 10pm to midnight. Even the most persistent vandal jobs at being caught and a posse on the war-path will often prove the ultimate deterrent.

Neil Baldwin described some of the more common sources of injury to golf greens and ways of minimising the danger should a problem occur. Under the heading 'Chemical Scorch', he pointed out that perhaps the most important consideration when using pesticides is to read the label and follow the instructions carefully. Under normal use chemical scorch due to over application of pesticides is rare. However, over application due perhaps to incorrect sprayer calibration may cause severe problems. Certain turf treatments such as wetting agents are widely known to scorch fine turf if not watered in after application. Thus the correct use of pesticides and other chemical treatments must be emphasised. Extreme care must be taken in the use of total herbicides as these chemicals will kill any turf in which they come into contact. For example, heavy rain shortly after application may wash the total herbicide off the path or other area to which it has been applied, especially if the treated area is on sloping ground.



What a whopper!

Mark Cox, an assistant of 23 years standing at Long Ashton GC, in Bristol, became an overnight star in the angling world when he hooked this 10lb 2oz rainbow trout near the club. The catch came as Mark was giving a lesson in the art of fly fishing to a friend. His story was recounted in the fishing column of the Bristol Evening Post.

Key Skills corner

Reply to Daniel Lightfoot's letter in May's magazine

I am sorry that the Key Skills Corner has caused you embarrassment. Key Skills are an essential part of N/SVQ Level 2 for people under 25 years of age and include Communications, Calculations and IT. Greenkeeper International is meant to be informative and educational for all members at all levels and information on written English may or may not be of use some of our members. Finally, the English Language continues to develop and rules that may have been extant 10 or 20 years ago may have changed eg. all abbreviations used to have full stops between each letter eg. B.I.G.G.A. whereas it is now acceptable to write BIGGA.

Reply to Colin Mumford's letter in May's magazine

As Vocational Qualifications are worked based and show what the holder can do under work conditions, they tend to be the preferred qualification in most industries. Greenkeeping is no exception and, out of a total of 2817 greenkeepers currently in training, 2157 are working towards N/SVQ qualifications. I agree that NC,ND, HNC, HND and degree qualifications have a relevance to greenkeepers and I also agree that they may be equivalent to Vocational Qualifications if they are coupled with relevant experience. You may have formed the opinion that my article placed less importance on NC, HNC, HND and degree qualifications but that was not my intention. Greenkeepers and the greenkeeping industry are well served by a wide range of relevant qualifications, but, as my article tried to make clear, it is up to head greenkeepers and course managers to decide which course or courses is most relevant for themselves and their staff. Finally, I was a little baffled about your comment about attending courses on a part time basis as all VQ courses are attended part time as assessment must be 'at work on a number of occasions'.

Ken Richardson, Education and Training Manager, BIGGA

Note: Due to problems outwith BIGGA's control the email system hasn't been working properly intermittently over the last month. Apologies if your letter hasn't appeared as we may not have received it at this end. I would be delighted if you would resend any letters which you had expected to appear this month and apologies for the inconvenience. **Editor**

In defence of the Higher National Diploma

With reference to the April issue of the magazine, I was pleased to read the letter written by Ian Chenery. I fully endorse Ian's comments and wish to portray my experience in trying to fulfil an ambition of making my passion of golf into a career.

At the age of 18 and on completion of my A-levels I attended a full-time Higher National Diploma course in Golf Course Management at Cannington College. The three-year course consisted of six monthly study periods followed by six months working on a Golf course to gain valuable practical experience. In reading Ian's letter it is disappointing to learn that BIGGA were not aware that HNC/HND courses also provide those, like myself who wish eventually to aspire to managing golf courses, the opportunity of gaining practical experience. Perhaps this lack of recognition is a contributory factor to

Vandalism – What can you do?

The day after Easter Monday Jon Selwood, Course Manager at Abridge Golf Club in Essex, returned to work after his Easter break. It started off as a normal day but during the afternoon Jon walking past the 13th green, the nearest to his sheds, noticed a zigzag strip of discoloured grass right through the heart of the green and from one end to the other. A closer inspection made it obvious that the green had been sprayed with an unknown chemical which turned out to be paraquat. Jon hoped that as the green was quite close to a country lane with easy access to the course that the 13th was the sole victim of the attack.

Jon and his Deputy, Geoff Smith, did a tour of the course and the full extent of the attack was slowly revealed - 11 greens, seven tees and three approaches plus various other areas of fine turf on the golf course had been attacked by a person or persons unknown using a knapsack sprayer full of paraquat. Generally all of the spraying had been done in a zigzag although some across tees were in a broad straight line.

Who was responsible for this attack? The fact that whoever did it was well equipped and not without some knowledge of the equipment and the chemical he was using probably rules out "spur of the moment" vandals finishing up a good night out on the beer. But, of course, the deeper that you look the more sinister it becomes.

Abridge Golf Club is a Jewish Club just outside Epping Forest set in very attractive countryside. They have hosted BIGGA events and are great supporters of the Association. With all of the troubles in the world at present the fact that the club has strong Jewish connections might be relevant.

But there is more! The Club is about to undergo considerable changes which have been widely reported in the local press. A deal has been struck with

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club whereby Spurs will be entitled to 55 Corporate Members. Spurs have bought land adjoining the Golf Club and are planning to build new training grounds, soccer academy and other facilities there. The name of the Golf Club is to be changed to Tottenham and Abridge Golf Club and the Club will receive a substantial amount of money. These changes alone provide a motive for another several thousand rival football fans!

There are also other possibilities. The list goes on and on. Not knowing the source of this attack on his course is one of the most worrying to the Course Manager. Will they strike again? When will they strike again? Where will they strike next time? It is impossible to know the answers and almost impossible to guard against any future attack. As all connected with golf realise a golf course in a rural area is an extremely vulnerable target in the dead of night.

Jon has been Course Manager at Abridge for five years. Each year the standard of the golf course has improved and it would be fair to say that it was following a Tottenham Hotspurs FC Golf Day at the club a year or so ago that the Football Club including the Manager, Glen Hoddle, were so impressed with the course that negotiations were started culminating in the current deal between the two clubs.

Technically Jon is qualified and experienced enough to get his course back in to pristine condition as quickly as possible. If he doesn't know the answers he knows how to get them and I am sure that any forum started within these pages would provide a mountain of sound advice. He has done his "cress tests" to indicate when the soil has recovered sufficiently to work on but his main problem is allowing the new seed to establish while cutting heights are reduced for summer play. With zigzag lines through the centre of the green it

is almost impossible to protect these very vulnerable seedlings.

As nearly all Greenkeepers have to work within their budgeted resources the time spent by Jon and his staff on this calamity has meant that his normal spring programme of work has been even more frantic. The Club, of course, is sympathetic to his problems, but I am reminded of the story told by a Surrey greenkeeper last July when he went to his Club Managers to report that the fairways were growing at three inches per week and his rough at inches and inches a week and due to an epidemic of staff sickness, staff on holiday, a 'Work Experience' lad who took up a lot of his time, he was down to himself only and couldn't cope. The Club replied that they understood, he was doing his best and as long as everything was all right for the Captain's Day on Saturday don't worry about it!

I'm sure that Abridge will be more supportive than that but Club golfers can be a funny lot and I am sure that they will soon start to notice if things fall behind in his spring work programme. Club golfers will cope with the tees and approaches looking unsightly but they can be very unforgiving if they can't putt! Perhaps the introduction of a local rule similar to standing water on a green would help.

The one hope of Jon and his staff is that the sad person who was responsible for this criminal act has wreaked sufficient vengeance from the Golf Club and does not strike again. Even better would be that he is apprehended and punished by the justice system. In the meantime let us all hope that the weather conditions that have been so extreme and unpredictable in recent years relent and give a perfect spring and early summer to get everything back to normal as quickly as possible.

Derek Farrington

the fact that only 20% of those, who completed their HND in my year, are still in the Industry.

BIGGA should be encouraging Greenkeepers and Course Managers to improve their knowledge and experience. I have been very fortunate as I received continued support from all the staff on the courses I have worked on during my training period and, more recently, from the respective managers at Minchinhampton and Cirencester Golf Clubs. I have also had the opportunity to obtain my spraying certificates and participated in NVQ2 qualifications 10 supplement my HND.

This leads me to the next point of NVQ versus HND/HNC/Degree qualifications. I have been a member of BIGGA for five years and enjoy reading the magazine and, like most ambitious people, keep an eye on the job page!

I have noted that NVQ 2 is used in most adverts as the "desired qualification" even for Supervisory/ Management posts. Ian mentioned in his letter that NVQs are "the flavour of the month". NVQs are a competence based assessment and, provided

people are assessed and Approved by qualified Trainers (e.g. D32), I have no problem with this approach as an Industry competence based qualification.

I have recently compared BIGGA job adverts with other professional/technical magazines and noted that for Supervisory/ Management posts the norm is to request the highest appropriate Industry recognised qualification followed by a lower level qualification plus practical experience as an alternative. Why does this not happen within the Greenkeeping Industry? I believe that, until those in responsible positions within the UK Golf Industry stop looking to pay the minimum wage for "grass cutters" the Greenkeeping profession will not attract the young people who could help it flourish and receive its due recognition.

A casing point was in the same edition of the magazine where one of the UK's most prestigious courses advertised for Greenkeeping staff, "with no experience necessary"!

If the prestigious courses do not ask for qualified staff / qualifications what direction is the profession going?

This sort of statement also totally disillusioned those of us who would love to work at such a golf course and apply their theoretical knowledge and training to ensure an environment where presentation and quality of work is a primary objective.

My final point concerns the UK Greenkeeping Industry as a whole. Generally, Greenkeepers have little status or receive any recognition for the work they do from the users of their product, ie. the Club Members. I believe it's time we took a leaf out of, dare I say it, the Golf Industry in the USA and Canada where the efforts are more rewarding and recognition forthcoming.

I feel strongly about the present and future of the UK Greenkeeping Industry as I wish to return to the industry when I complete my degree course at Plymouth University. I hope my letter if published as I believe if Greenkeeping continues to be seen as unattractive to the young generation, the industry is in for a rude awakening in the not so distant future.

Graeme Percival, Plymouth University

Arne Van Amerongen reports from his latest port of call – Calabria in Italy

CALABRIA

A NEW GOLFING FRONTIER

Photo 1: Hole 1



I did not know this region of Italy when I arrived to oversee the construction of the nine hole course in Southern Calabria so it was a real challenge and a very gratifying experience for me.

The population of Calabria is approximately two million and the project is being built in a region with a precarious economy. The city of Reggio Calabria boasts a national airport with daily flights from Rome and Milan and a population of 180,000.

The Montechiarello golf course which brought me to the area is being built in a small village called Orti in the hinterland of Reggio and mainly due to the initiative of nine local investors.

The project is at an altitude of 750 metres with a magnificent view over Sicily. Furthermore the Straits of Messina, the Etna and the Eolie islands can all be seen from the clubhouse from where you can also see the magnificent view which

embraces the 1st hole with its artificial lake, the Calabrian coastline and the Straits of Messina (photo no.1).

One of the first problems I encountered was the recruitment of experienced personnel and related machinery. Some of the work was executed manually, as big stones were transported with wheelbarrows to the shores of one of the three artificial lakes (photo no. 2).

One of the three artificial lakes was completed after 2 weeks work and has a total surface of 5000 m² with a total volume of 25,000 m³.

Water is extremely important in this type of climate in order to maintain the turf to a high standard.

The two photographs show the 6th hole before (photo no. 4) and during construction (photo no. 5). The 6th is a Par 3 of 121 yards. Each hole was designed and integrated into the existing landscape in order to preserve a complete harmony with the surrounding environment.

It took just five months to construct the driving range, six holes and the irrigation system. As is usual in Calabria, and especially after such a lot of hard work, a break with good wine and excellent food is organised by the construction personnel

(photo no. 6). The golf resort of Montechiarello will also include tennis courts, a swimming pool, horse paddocks and a hotel which still have to be constructed.

It is just the first of a number of similar developments intends to build six new 18 hole courses in Calabria over the next few years.

The Calabrian climate allows golf to be played for 12 months in the year. Calabria could really become a new promised land for golf.

On the left, we can see Peter Harradine the Golf Course Architect who designed this course, on the right



Above: Photos 4 and 5

Photo 2: Installation of the lake shores



Photo 3: Works on the lake are completed



Architect Filippo Barbaro the Promoter of the project and in the middle Arne Van Amerongen the Project Supervisor and author of this article (photo no. 7).



Above: Photo 6 and photo 7 below



BIGGA Education and Training Manager, Ken Richardson, highlights the latest education and training available to BIGGA members

Education and Training Feedback

Sami and I are very busy putting together the Education and Training Programme, Continue to Learn 2003, which will be held, in Harrogate from 20 to 23 January 2003.

Following the success of Continue to Learn 2002, the education and training programme for BIGGA's week in Harrogate, in January 2003 will continue to offer delegates plenty of choice.

The week commences on Monday, January 20, with the National Education Conference and Workshop Programme. Planned Workshops include two 2 day Workshops: Golf Course Design and Construction 2 and Environmental Management. There will also be a one day Soil Science workshop held on both Monday 20 and Tuesday, January 21. A further option for all greenkeepers involved in or contemplating joining the Master Greenkeeper Scheme, will be a one day Master Greenkeeper seminar.

The Programme has, again, been designed to give delegates plenty of choice to make the most from their

time in Harrogate with speakers from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and Australia.

Remember that BTME opens on Tuesday, January 21. BTME Seminars will be held on Wednesday, January 22 and Thursday, January 23. Seminars will be concentrated around the middle of each day, giving delegates the chance to visit the Exhibition and take in some or all Seminars.

The National Education Conference includes four sessions over two days covering Management Skills for the Golf Course Manager and Practical On -Course Management

Watch out in further editions of this magazine and on the BIGGA Web Site for more details of speakers and how to book your place.

This month sees the start of the journey to select the TORO Student of the Year 2003, when the judges will visit Scotland, the North, the South East, the South West and the Midlands to interview 33 Students. Up to eight Regional Finalists will be selected to progress to the National Final, which will be held at BIGGA

House on Monday, September 23. The judging tour begins in Edinburgh on Monday, June 24.

We are still waiting for your requests for training in the Sections and Regions to come pouring in. We have had a good response from some sections and from one Region. However, if you want training at a very low price, thanks to subsidies from the BIGGA Education and Development Fund then contact your Section Secretary, Regional Administrator or us here at BIGGA HOUSE to make sure that your course is provided. Remember that all Golden Key companies will have £30 training vouchers to give away to their customers from September. These vouchers can be used to pay for BIGGA Training Courses or be used towards the cost of Workshops, the National Education Conference or Seminars at Harrogate next January.

Due to popular demand, I have decided to end the Key Skills Corner. Anyone wishing to obtain the answer to last month's poser should contact me at BIGGA HOUSE.



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