



"These areas were infested by the plant, and we pushed it back into the tree lines where there is less light," recalled Mark.

"Ideally, the bracken needs to be actively growing, but not too tall. Once it's reached waist height, treatment becomes difficult and a health and safety issue arises. In some places, as the plant was four to six feet high, we used telescopic lances, working from the boundary."

The trials included treatment of all bracken present in the heather, to create space, encouraging dormant seeds of the endangered plant to germinate.

Weed Free returned in January this year and applied one application of an approved pesticide for grass control in heather, at the full recommended rate, spraying the heather from ATVs with specially adapted small booms, to compensate for the terrain. Mark says that the turf tyres, which were fitted for this particular job proved ideal.

"Although wider than standard they give light ground pressure, and the plant just springs back upright with no damage done. The vehicles themselves cope well on undulating surfaces, and in this case they were important for our own safety. Heather is notorious for covering hollows."

Mark found that in many places the company were treating relatively small patches of heather, which were surrounded by grass.

"In this situation, when applying a powerful herbicide, it is important for the operator to choose all routes to ensure that neither he, she or the ATV comes into direct contact with the grass. Once the operation is complete, it is essential that all golf traffic is kept away from treated areas so as to minimise the risks of the chemical being transported onto the fairways."

Having treated bracken during the semi trials of 2001, the company found further tree and shrub clearance, predominantly pine, silver birch and gorse, (undertaken by the club as part of the heathland conservation programme), had encouraged another influx, which needed attention. In all, around three hectares of bracken were treated.

Returning in May, Mark was gratified to find that the company's January heather application had done its job.

"All the weeds, mainly cats ear, sheep sorrell, thistles, and rose bay willow herb had gone, leaving voids for new growth," he remembers. "Grass removal was almost as good, with the exception of the purple moor grass which was still present, but less dense."

By August, the heather was responding to treatment, producing new growth, formerly blocked by weeds and grasses.

"Inspection revealed a denser plant, which confirmed our

theories and answered any questions I might have had about the effectiveness of the process. Everything was as it should be," said Mark, "but much better."

Meanwhile, Harry had been continuing to implement other aspects of his heathland rejuvenation programme.

"Once the scrub clearance and selective tree felling is complete we will begin to reseed and strip back areas of turf adjacent to the heather to encourage further dormant seed germination," he says.

Harry would like to thank Clive Osgood, Course Manager of Walton Heath, (which is involved in a major heather regeneration programme) for his valuable technical input. Harry is due to spend additional time at Walton Heath, gathering further information and exchanging notes.

Bob Taylor warns of the pressures on golf courses of golfers trampling over the plant, which is a slow grower and takes years to establish.

"Footpaths across heather, even in upland areas soon revert to grass," he says. "Purple moor grass is the main culprit, but on golf courses bents and fescues can put up strong competition. Not only can they tolerate trampling, which the heather can't, but they also produce thatch. Once the heather disappears, this leaves the ground open to tree regeneration and the whole area reverts to woodland. Even Ilkley Moor has experienced this threat to some degree, with an influx of Silver Birch, Pine and Oak. It must be remembered that heather has a life cycle of 20 to 30 years, and new growth must be given space to develop."

Following progress at Blackmoor, last reviewed in October by Harry Davies, Mark Mason and Michael Cave, Chairman of Greens, the club would appear to be heeding these warnings, and winning the battle to preserve their heathland against considerable odds.

Michael Cave reports compliments on the heather from the club's membership, stating that in his opinion the heather has been better this year than in the last 20, Harry Davies, aware that this is the beginning of a long process, professes to be delighted with the immediate improvements, and Weed Free have had their efforts rewarded, with a booking for more treatment this winter.

But perhaps the strongest confirmation that this particular fragment of vulnerable southern heathland has a firm future comes from the measured reassurance of the STRI. Neil Squires, Regional Agronomist for the South East who visited Blackmoor on behalf of the R& A. to ensure that the standard of the course reached Open qualifier requirements, (it did,) reports that the club are "approaching the management to heather in a professional manner."

Could it be, that in the south at least, the safest place for our endangered heather is in the rough?



SCOTTISH REGION
Peter Boyd
Tel/Fax: 0141 616 3440

East

Well it's Febuary already and a new season is on the horizon so hopefully we will get a good spell going into the spring. As I sit and write this we have two inches of snow covering the course so at least the course is getting a rest as we've been very lucky with the weather in the last couple of months of 2002 and are well on our way to completing our winter programme. Hopefully you are all in the same position as it's good to get most of our work done quickly as you don't know what the weather will throw at us in the next few weeks.

The Section is quiet at the moment but the committee are hard at work putting together the fixture list for this year with only a few dates to be confirmed and then the fixture list will be with you as soon as possible. At the end of December Jackie Dalrymple retired after 40 plus years at Baberton Golf Club. The Section would like to wish Jackie all the best in his retirement and we look forward to seeing you at all future Section events. The Section are going to give him a presentation at the spring outing so I look forward to that. We will have a more detailed report on Jackie in next month's magazine.

Well that's it for this month. If you have any news for the Section please get in touch you should all know the numbers etc by now so I'm waiting.

Chris Yeaman

North

No new members to report this month, but hopefully that will change as the year goes on. As the winter starts to grip up north, the cold weather is becoming the norm, and, as it has started later this year, hopefully will not go on for so long.

Good news to report on Ross Macrae, from Oldmeldrum Golf Club, whose children had been struck down by illness, is that they are all on the way to a full and complete recovery. Best wishes from the North Section, Ross, to you and your family.

A couple of greenkeepers on the move are Steven MacIntosh, formerly of Blairgowrie Golf Club, who has now taken over as Course Manager of Torvean Golf Club, in Inverness. Steven was Head Greenkeeper at one of the courses at Blairgowrie.

The town desperately needs another quality course to play, and we wish Steven and his

team all the best. Also on the move is Graham Flett, formerly Head Greenkeeper of Newtonmore Golf Club. Graham has moved on to Gordenstoun, to supervise the construction of a golf course there.

The 200 Club will this year be run by Andy Wilson, from Brechin Golf Club, and there will be letters arriving through the post shortly concerning this. It is the main fundraiser for the Section, so if you don't think you will be rejoining then send your tickets back to Andy as soon as possible in order to give him time to resell them.

The Scottish Conference is on March 4, at Dunfermline College again, and will cost £28 for the day and your food. Hopefully there will be a strong support from the North Section, and the weather on the day will make travelling easier.

Not much else to report this month, but anyone with any info they would like to give can contact me on 01997 420155.

Iain Gunn

Ayrshire

Not a lot to report this month with Harrogate three weeks away at the time of writing. An attempt at a comprehensive round-up of all the action (well the stuff allowable for print) will be available in next month's column. It is hoped that those first returned have enjoyed some interesting agronomic discussions while avoiding the gastronomic repercussions of late night kebabs consumed while attempting to locate the only invisible hotel in Harrogate – Yours!

The Scottish National Conference will be held on Tuesday, March 4, at Lauder College, in Dunfermline, and, having attended the previous two, I can honestly say it is well worth a visit.

Give me a ring on 01292 478606 if you've got news of any kind or words of encouragement and, if anyone stumbles across Juninho on a baked Brazilian beach, tell him to make his way back to the frozen wasteland immediately. Thanks!

Dennis Tweddell

NORTHERN REGION

Northern

Hope you all enjoyed your time at Harrogate last month. I hope you have not all gone mad and spent all your budgets already?

Don't forget about the annual dinner dance at Otley Golf Club on March 1. Start time is 7pm for 7.30. There is the usual three course meal followed by a Salsa night for you and your loved ones to shake your thong too. I am informed that Steve Heaton will be giving us all a master class in the art of this type of dance. There will also be instructors around to put us all on the right path. Ticket price for this event is only £19 per head, which can be purchased from any committee member. I hope to see you all there.

Places on the Ransomes Jacobsen visit to Ipswich are all but full. The itinerary is as follows: Feb 25 pick up at 8am; arrive at factory around 1pm; Buffet lunch on arrival; go to Portman Road for tour of stadium facilities and machinery; arrive at hotel 5pm check in; evening meal 7.30pm; Feb 26 Breakfast then on to Ransomes Jacobsen factory, including power point presentation, tour of factory and spare parts and design operations. After a buffet lunch we will depart for home around 2pm.

There may be places left on this so if you have not booked and are a Head Greenkeeper then give me a call.

We have had several new members to the Section these being. Jonathan Conway, Forest of Galtrees Golf Club; Gary Rollinson, Cockford Golf Club; Andrew Hunter, Northcliffe Golf Club; David Gardner, Kirkbymoorside Golf Club, and Ben Besau, also at Kirkbymoorside.

16 Westwood Ave, Eccleshill, Bradford, West Yorks, BD2 2NJ. Tel: 01274 640739 Mob: 07976876264 E mail ; Dthackray@aol.com

Dave Thackray

North Wales

Welcome to February in the greenkeeping calendar. Just how many of those New Year's resolutions have you kept? Be honest! Well, I've not kept mine, I'm still writing these notes, with no news, no views and no information from our now 188 strong membership! But it's a good job and I enjoy it.

Another Harrogate has been and gone and thanks once again to Danny Tomkins Amenity Technology for sponsoring the coach up there from all who travelled and enjoyed a 'wave at the rave' as well as a look around the show. There are a few more tales to tell but these

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FOR GREENKEEPERS
BY GREENKEEPERS
CHAT GREENKEEPERS

are unprintable, sorry! This Show for most of us kick starts the year followed by the careful planning to get the greens and the rest of the course into shipshape condition for the first April Medals – I say the greens because that is all any golfer talks about, that they are bumpy, patchy, good, fast, slow, great etc, so the main thing seems to be if the greens are right the rest of the course is good as well. BTME gives you the choice of what's new in the industry, what to buy and why and how to apply it to your specific needs to gain the best results – you can never stop learning.

Our first committee meeting of the new year was held at Carden Park on January 7. We have three confirmed venues for the Golf days in place - the Spring will be at Ian Beckett's Mile End GC; the Autumn will be at Chris Peddie's Wallasey GC (might be a few playing here as this may be a named second qualifier for Hoylake 2006) and the Christmas will be at Darren Anderson's Abergele GC, with its reconstructed USGA spec sand greens.

A couple of sponsors I forgot to thank from our Christmas tournament were North Staffs Irrigation and Bathgates. The notes were a rush to get in, with the tournament being over the press deadline, but this may not be a problem in the future as we are asking companies to be 'Patrons' of our Section which will tie up their sponsorship for the year and have their name put on a 'Patrons' board put out at each event.

Also a correction to the scores. The best guest winner turned out to be a member, so the prize went to second place in the guests, who became the guest winner with the member then being joint 6th in the members... if you can grasp all that?

A further date for your diaries will be a Spring Seminar to be held at Carden Park with a host of high calibre speakers. This will be held on Monday, March 31 and your contact will be Andy Campbell on 01829 731601 for registration. Full details will be in next month's issue.

And, finally, we are trying to organise a triangular golf day with two other BIGGA Sections. The Midland Region would be prepared to offer a venue at South Staffordshire GC, organised by Rhys Thomas, and would require an eight strong team from each corner. More details to follow.

Any views, news or information, please contact me on: Home 01925 263394 - Fax 01925 269622 Mob 07778 162162 e-mail acorngolf@supanet.com

Mesen Cymru
Andrew Acorn

Cleveland

Good news for Tony Mears, of Dinsdale Spa Golf Club. After filling in an application form in Greenkeeper International and then attending an interview at Headquarters 'Big Tone' has been selected as one of 10 delegates to represent the Association on the Bernhard's Scholarship at the GCSAA Conference and Exhibition in Atlanta. Roll on February big man!

Staying at Dinsdale, the lads have recently celebrated Colin Tinkler's 21st birthday with a 'bit of a night out'. Apparently a good time was had by all.

Congratulations must also go to Ian Pemberton, of Bedale Golf Club. "Pembo" completed 'The Great North Run' in late 2002 and raised £264 for the Cleveland Branch of the ME Association. Well done!

Bedale have recently constructed a pond on the first hole so if anyone has any spare plastic ducks send them to Ian. I don't think they should have trouble filling the pond if this rain keeps falling.

The only bad news is that 'The Greenkeepers' lost the Turfcare Quiz to 'The Groundsmen' yet again. We really need more support next December. Watch this space for more info. Come along this year 'cos it's a really good night!

By the time you read this, Harrogate will have come and gone. It seems that BTME is now regarded as the premier exhibition for Greenkeepers. Please support our exhibition if you can.

Finally if any members have any news, serious or comical, for future section notes, please contact me on 07831 214 879.

Cheers,

Terry "L. Prez" Charlton

North West

Well that's Christmas over, and I hope you all had a good time and a few days rest. The weather of course over the last few weeks has been so bad that even though the body may relax, the mind will be ever active trying to plan the next move. The weather has been so divers, with snow in the north, and flooding in the south, you just cannot win. A comment from one golfer on the course that I am a member was "the greens look green, so why are we on temporary greens?" the frost at the time was one inch into the ground. At least if the course is flooded, or covered in snow, they will understand why the course is closed.

I would like, once again, to remind the younger greenkeepers just how important it is to take advantage of the education being

offered from the colleges in your area. To gain N/SVQ 1 & 2 is not so difficult as you may think. If you are capable of doing most jobs on your golf course that is the standard that is required to gain the qualifications, so go for it and don't just be a grass cutter, prove you can make yourself a better greenkeeper. More and more golf courses now see the advantage of having their staff educated, because they eventually reap the benefits.

On Tuesday, March 18, we have the annual seminar at Mere Golf & Country Club, and our Chairman, who is this year organising the seminar, tells me that it will prove to be a very educational day, with some fine speakers. The seminar is also open to non-members, so bring along your greens chairman, or any other club member. The cost of the seminar is £22, which also includes coffee on arrival, lunch and afternoon tea.

To register please send a cheque payable to BIGGA N/WEST for £22 to:-

Bert Cross, Harthill Lodge, Harthill Road, Liverpool, L18 3HU.

That's it for now but you can contact me on 0151 724 5412, Mobile 07761 583387

Bert Cross



MIDLAND REGION
Peter Larter
Tel: 01476 550115

BB&O

By now many of you will have visited the BTME and ClubHouse exhibition. This show really does express just how successful BIGGA has developed as an Association in world trade. It seems ever more important that we, the members, are seen in a professional capacity at our workplace and this exhibition allows us to show what can be done with the myriad of products and expertise available to get great results. I guess we will all be looking forward to the spring this year after such a wet December and January. In November we recorded 22 consecutive days of rain with a minimum of 2mm and considerably more than this most days. As Bart Simpson would say 'It just gets worse!'

Hopefully by the time you read this article the BIGGA AGM will have voted unanimously in favour of introducing a minimum qualification for a recognised greenkeeper. This sets a new precedent for our future success in the greenkeeping industry with a view to developing our own professional

standing in this industry. The fixture cards mentioned last month are with me now and they will be sent out to you by the end of February so keep them in a prominent position. It would be great to see some new faces playing this year so try to pencil in at least one of these fixtures into your 2003 diary. These golf days are a great way to meet with fellow, like-minded greenkeepers who enjoy a chance to banter on all aspects of the work we do so come along and join the fun. I have no news from members in the section so I wish you all a good month ahead trying to complete any major winter projects started in earnest several weeks back.

David Haskell-Craig MG

Midland

It's somewhat strange to me that it doesn't matter how cold it gets, I am still unable to drink unchilled beer. Must be a consequence of my time in Osterreich. In fact, in Austria it is illegal to drink beer unless it has been stored (Lagern) for a fortnight, 10 kilometres inside an ice-cave in the Upper Alps prior to serving. After that trek I hope it's not British lager in there!

The Christmas tournament was held at Stratford-on-Avon GC on December 10. Although it was bitterly cold, a great day was had by all. Our most gratuitous thanks to the Club for its hospitality and super meal. The wonderful condition of the course during the most difficult time of year can only serve as a testament to the efforts of Howard Middlebrook and his fine team. Well done chaps. The winning pair of the day brings to mind the old doctrine "Never the twain shall meet". A Villain with a Blue Nose, never! Results: 1. V. Lee & S. Mucklow, 43 pts; 2. R. George & T. Cheese, 43 pts; 3. E. Stant & N. Tyler, 42pts; 4. L. Swann & D. Gibbons, 39pts; 5. P. Larter & S. McDade, 37pts.

Thanks to T. Webb and M. Chamberlain, of Tacit, for the main prize table. Thanks also to J. Sketton of Rufford's for Nearest the Pin and Longest Drive prizes, winners, M. Brian and V. Gilroy respectively. Wine on the table was sponsored by the Midland Section Committee. No wonder it was Australian. Finally, well done to M. Hughes, of Edgbaston, for both best gross and nett aggregates over the year. Well played, Mike. The best aggregate gross and nett trade went to A. Corns and N. Tyler respectively.

After the tournament, and prior to the meal, the AGM was held. One of the issues raised from the floor being that the format of the three major competitions might include a Stableford style of scoring so as to afford the

higher handicapped players a greater chance of being within the prizes. Personally I do prefer Stableford, as one can have a few poor holes and yet still enter a respectable card. It's great fun. The motion was voted on via a show of hands and carried and you shall be advised which as soon as it is known. Also, may I leave Committee changes and welcomes until after the next Section Committee Meeting. After such, delegations shall be fully known and their fields realised. The minutes of the AGM were kindly taken by E. Stant, as P. Gates was unable to attend.

As the elected composer of the Midland Section "Around The Green", I would like to inform other greenkeepers of your personal events and general goings-on. I don't care whether it's your sister's hockey team winning an accolade; a colleague's promotion, or academic achievements, or indeed a few words of support to friends in difficult times. It's nice to be considered and recognised within an international magazine. Please inform me of your news, on 0121-414-0637 (home) or 0781640552 (mobile).

Finally, well done to W. Wood on his return to employ at Fulford Heath GC., for his third stint. Obviously, (think about it Bill) the last chance for a hat trick. Also accompanying Bill is Karl Williams. Geoff Andrews and his fine team at North Worcestershire GC. would like to convey their best wishes to you both for the future.

Lastly, please do not forget to respond to the flier you should have received. I am hopeful that both forward ideas and indeed criticisms shall be received. I look forward to your responses and counsel.

Sean McDade

Mid Anglia

Well, the snow has now gone, and temperatures have gone from -4 to 10 degrees in two days. It's amazing what my Poa will put up with.

In the last Section news Gerald failed to mention our Autumn meeting so he has therefore been fired as the Section scribe and "Scoop" Cassidy has taken over. Now to the news. Our Autumn meeting took place on October 10 with 31 competitors playing the lovely Stocks G&CC. Our thanks go to Mark and his staff for presenting a fine course and to everyone else there for making us so welcome. It was also good to see our National Chairman, Richard Barker, and Regional Administrator, Peter Larter. The champion golfers were 1. Steve Mason; 2. Gerald Bruce; 3. Gary Boulton. Following the presentation and a fixed raffle our AGM took

place with many members doing a runner before it started. For those who did not attend it all went quite smoothly with the election of officers as follows:

Chairman, Jim Cassidy; Vice Chairman, Steve Mason; Secretary/ Treasurer, Gerald Bruce; Match Secretary, Richard Saunders; Regional Board representative, Frank Scullion; Other members, Mark Ellis, Colin Robinson, John Wells

All the above are on this committee to try and help this Section's members so if you feel that there is anything else we should be planning or doing for you then please don't hesitate to contact one of us.

If there is any news that you feel should be shared then please contact me on 01442 842627 or

jim.cassidy@ashridgegolfclub.ltd.uk

Have a happy month
Jim Cassidy

East Midlands

This season's Christmas Tournament was held at Greetham Valley GC in Rutland. Although the course is situated right out in the sticks so to speak, it is an excellent Winter venue, as I am sure all those that played in the competition would agree. On a cold crisp but dry day, 24 keen golfers contested for prizes, which consisted of a singles Stb format. The scores were as follows.

Category 1. 1.. Carl Chamberlain, Glen Gorse, 28pts; 2. Adie Porter, Greetham Valley, 28pts; 3. Antony Bindley (Kirby Muxiloe) 28pts.

Category 2. 1. Gavin Robson, Lingdale, 28pts; 2. Mark Bindley, Kirby Muxloe, 28pts; 3. Derrick Foster, Cosby, 26pts.

Trade & Associate. 1. Simon Hedley, Boughton Loam, 34pts; 2. Simon Banks, Banks Amenity Products, 28pts.

I would like to thank Greetham Valley GC for allowing us courtesy of their fine course, and also thank the Steward and Stewardess for a great meal. Also I would like to congratulate Adie Porter and his staff for preparing such an excellent golf course. Finally a special thanks should go to Rigby Taylor who kindly sponsored the day.

The Christmas 100 draw was as follows. 1. No. 24. £100 Tony Stimpson; 2. No.85, £75, Simon Hedley; 3. No. 61 £25, Richard Barns. If you would like to purchase a number for the coming golf season please ask Gavin Robson or Jeff Dickinson.

Once again could I remind all members to please return your entry form and payment before the closing date if you wish to attend

section events. Our Spring tournament will be held at Ashbourne GC on Thursday, May 5. If you wish to attend please inform me and I will gladly post you a form.

Finally, If anybody would like to participate on a two day grinding course, please contact me for more details as we are hoping to run a course if we receive sufficient interest.

Antony Bindley



SOUTH EAST
Derek Farrington
Tel: 01903 260 956

Essex

A happy belated New Year to you all. I hope 2003 is the year that you will reach your goals and ambitions. First of all I would like to thank John Selwood and John Sinclair who are standing down from the committee. Many thanks for all of their hard work.

We open up this year's events with an educational day on March 12th at the Burstead Golf Club. The subjects are Manual Handling and Fire Training with the cost being only £30.00 for the day which will include tea/coffee and lunch. Please contact Martin Forrester on 01245 603131 or on 07984 867939 to book your place. I would highly recommend these courses as over the last few months we have had a visit from the HEO at the Essex Golf and Country Club. Their representative informed me that they are increasing their visits particularly to all local golf clubs in the next 12 to 18 months.

Our first golf outing is the Spring Tournament to be held at Benton Hall Golf Club on April 15. Further details will be sent nearer the date.

For those who ventured north for the long journey to BTME perhaps you have a story or two to tell. If so please would you pass these on to myself or Steve Crosdale on 07773 125354 and share them with the rest of us.

Let us hope that the weather has improved by the time you read this!

This year the Christmas Tournament was staged in the illustrious grounds of Stock Brook Manor Golf and Country Club. The competition was very close to having no sponsor but as always Steve Denton and Rigby Taylor came through with some great prizes for the top three finishers in each of the two categories. Greenkeeping Supply Company yet again sponsored the Longest Drive and Nearest Pin.

Category I winners in the 0 — 14 handicap range were:- 1. Richard Dunmow, 38pts; 2. Dominic Rodgers, 34pts ACB from 3. Steve

Crosdale, 34pts.

Category 2 winners in the 15 — 28 range were:- 1. M. Dillaway, 35pts; 2. Keith Chinnery, 30pts; 3. Course manager at Stock Brook Arnold.

Guest and Trade prizes went to J. Winters and Mark Day respectively, both notched up 34 pts.

Longest Drive, which must have been hit before the wind got up, went to D. Reale and Nearest the Pin on a tricky hole to J. Collantine. As usual the trade did us proud in both playing numbers and raffle prizes so thanks are extended to UAP, Wax, DFL, Sherriffs, Banks and Tuckwells.

The day went very well with golfers and trade alike being afforded a high standard of golf and food, Arnold and his greens staff are to be congratulated on a well presented and maintained course along with the catering and bar staff who served up a lovely meal.

The AGM, which followed the meal and prize giving was fairly well attended and allowed members to voice their opinions on the year's golf events and put forward any proposals. As with most years their silence rang through and the meeting swiftly moved on to the election of officers to the committee. All but John Selwood, treasurer, and John Sinclair, education, remained in their positions.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next golf day.

Martin Forrester and Steve Crosdale

East Anglia

Another year looms, let's hope it's a good one. The Turkey Trot/AGM at Thorpness came and went and we nearly had an election (election, I said).

The golf itself was pretty good and so indeed was the course thanks to Ian and the lads.

First prize was won by Messrs; Verley, Bartham, King and Cocker with 59 points.

Second was Messrs Lemmon, Elliot, Farrington and Clarkson 60.5 points. Third Plummer R, Hawkins, Stewart and Plummer S, 60.7 points. Nearest the pin prizes were 2nd Mark Day, 7th Roger Plummer, 10th Paul Gould, 16th Neil Worger. Longest Drive:-1st. B Cameron, 4th. Mark Teasel, 18th Mark Broughton.

The Ernie Hart prize was presented to Peter Howard for being a most professional greenkeeper. A very popular award to someone who is greatly respected and a true ambassador for our section.

The election we nearly had was for a new President, following the sad loss of Ernie.

There were four nominees to start with but three stood down to make it easier for us. So, by popular request and a unanimous decision Colin Rushbrook is our President. We wish him well.

We had a big white chief from BIGGA observing "the rustics". The National Chairman, Richard Barker, must have been pleased with what he saw as it was our biggest turn out yet, a massive 84 people, all being directed calmly and efficiently by the man who makes us tick, Ian Willett.

If the Christmas pudding and the wine won't come to us we shall go to them, as it has been proved!

BIGGA are sending a delegation to Atlanta, two of which are from our Section, they are — Kerran Daly and Kevin Hodges. Well done to them.

Bernhard & Company are keen supporters of education and training for greenkeepers. Our own section sponsors are many as you are about to see. Our main sponsor for the Turkey Trot was C.M.W. the other equally important sponsors are:- Rigby Taylor, Rushbrooks, SISIS, Bartram Mowers, TORO Consultants, Clarkson, Ben Burgess, Prime Irrigation, Tacit Turfcare, Greenkeeping Supply Company, Colliers, Atterton & Ellis, Textron, Bayer, Tomlinson Ground and anyone else who knows me. Seriously we do appreciate all you do for us.

Our thanks go to Thorpness for looking after us all so very well, see you in December 2003.

Mick Lathrope

Surrey

Well, the rain did stop eventually and was replaced at the beginning of January with the frozen version. While typing this I am also looking out onto my garden which is covered by four inches of snow. On my travels today all the courses I visited in Surrey were closed but I can imagine the thousands of golf club members all wondering how and why greenkeepers control the weather with the sole intention of spoiling a golfer's divine right to play their course at all times. Greenkeepers, stop upsetting your membership, take up your brooms and go forth from your mess rooms and sweep the snow from your fairways and greens and remember that your members are not just ordinary people like you and me but a gift from God.

Yes, you've guessed it there is very little to write about this month, so it was with much relief that I was given yesterday the event information for 2003. Please note in your diaries the following dates. March 17, Walton

Heath Golf Club; March 13, Cuddington Golf Club; May 29, Old Thorns Golf Club; June 17, The Drift Golf Club; September 25, Richmond Golf Club; October 17, Wimbledon Common Golf Club; December 4, Royal Epsom Golf Club. The dates for Sunningdale and Hankley Common to be announced. The events list is being printed and will be with you soon.

Finally a little information from Hindhead Golf Club. Steve Holmes has told me that his First Assistant, Matt Crawley has moved to Los Angeles Country Club in the USA so James Norris has been promoted in his place and that Lee Blackburn has joined his team from Gleneagles. Please let me know about your staff or any other information for the magazine.

Brian Willmott



SOUTH WEST & SOUTH WALES
Paula Humphries
Tel: 01288 352 194

Devon & Cornwall

For my final meeting as Section Administrator, 90 members attended the PJ Flegg Ltd Christmas meeting held at Okehampton Golf Club on Wednesday 10th December. This year we were delighted to have Scott MacCallum as our guest for the day and just to make Scott feel at home we laid on the snow. As in previous years two starting points were used for the PJ Flegg greensome format competition. Richard Wisdom, as always, offered our non-golfing members a guided course walk, but with the snow and bitterly cold wind members headed to the now traditional PJ Flegg refreshment tent by the 6th green. Inside, Patrick and his staff treated members to snacks and drinks which set the Christmas atmosphere for the day.

After an excellent Christmas lunch, Paul Watson presented the morning's golf prizes for the PJ Flegg Trophy to.

1. M. Child, Saunton & N. Eastman, Saunton, 33pts; 2. J. Phillips, Ilfracombe, & T. James, Killiow, 32pts; 3. N. Kent, St Enodoc, & M. Bosley, St Enodoc, 31pts

Richard Wisdom donated a special prize for the best effort which went to J. Mills & T. Bennett.

Before the after dinner entertainment the Chairman, Cary Rawlings, presented Richard Whyman with a gift on behalf of the membership for his efforts over the last 13 years as administrator.

The one and only Tank Sherman was back by popular demand and had us all laughing during his after dinner cabaret. The raffles

concluded our day, the Avoncrop hamper presented by John Palfrey was won by Richard Slade, the final raffle of the day consisted of more than 40 prizes donated by members and trade.

The Section would like to thank Okehampton Golf Club and all their staff who made our day so special, with a special mention to Richard Wisdom and his staff who, as always, had the course in great shape.

A big thanks to Patrick Flegg and PJ Flegg Ltd for sponsoring the day and providing the wonderful snacks and drinks on the course, also thanks to our President, Clive Ralph, who supplied the wine at lunch. Also to all of you who donated prizes for the day.

Please support Steve Evans, your new Administrator, as you have supported me over the years. Thanks to you all.

Richard Whyman

South West

Happy New Year to you all. Around the Green is brought to you by Guy Woods and Robin Greaves. I'm the straight man and Robin the comedian.

The year certainly ended on a high with the Christmas tournament at Cirencester. What a great day! Shame about the course. Only joking, congratulations to Dave and his team. The course was in superb condition and had it not been for the arctic conditions one could have been fooled into thinking we were playing summer golf, fast true greens and not a mat to be seen. However, the greatest respect must go to the bloody surgeon who cut the Christmas pud. Well done Nobby, great organisation - 50 plus and 12 on the walk round thanks again Dave for the guided tour and the supplied feed and machinery inventory. Don't forget the walk round can be just as good an experience as playing. The results are as follows:- The fastest round of the day goes to Nigel Howe and his playing partner not a pretty sight but two hours 14 minutes 29 seconds fair play. Results here - 1. R. Hook & M. Anderton, 42pts; 2. J. Keenaham & D. Warden, 41pts; 3. M. Hawker & P. Gibson

Training. Still two places left for BIGGA run two day Tractor Driving course at Bath Golf Club Feb 18 & 19 £70 including lunch for both days.

I would like members to be aware of the 'Golden Key Training Voucher Scheme'. This allows vouchers to the value of £35 to be obtained from Golden Key members and used for regional courses and/or workshops/BTME. I have seven kindly donated by Scotts and Handys (Toro) to be redeemed by September

30. Contact me! The link with Training Express is going well and we have successfully run a number of courses. Please remember these courses are run from your requests for training so please tell me what you need or would like.

We would like to thank the continued efforts of our Captain, John Keenahan, and the new Patronage scheme members which is now fully subscribed. More on that next month.

See you at Mendip on Feb 27 P.S. don't mention the war, sorry I mean rain. P.S. Congratulations to Guy Woods who got married during the Christmas Holidays.

Guy Woods and Robin Greaves

South Coast

For those of us who made the journey north to Harrogate and BTME we can reflect on what was a great week! The theme, as ever, was 'continue to learn' a simple but powerful phrase. The week started with the National Education Conference and day one concentrated on people management. We were inundated with superb presentations from the likes of the dynamic Frank Newberry, Brin Bendon and a superb look at politics within the workplace by David Bancroft-Turner and two great presentations from Course Managers Tony Mears and Kerran Daly MG.

The highlight of the day for many was our former Section Chairman, Kerran Daly MG. Kerran is a very different man than the confessed coward who was unable to speak at his own wedding. His superb presentation is a great credit to him and a great advert for Frank Newberry who tutored Kerran on the art of public speaking. His wonderful stage presence and passion for professionalism was relayed superbly to a spellbound audience but the best was left till last. Kerran is truly a very talented poet and received a great ovation on his latest poem, which he recounted to us magnificently. Well-done Kerran!

Day two concentrated on Course management with some very good presentations from the likes of Simon Barnaby and Ken Siems. We were treated to a superb presentation from Steve Cook MG, Superintendent at Oakland Hills Golf Club, which is the venue for the 2004 Ryder Cup. He relayed to us some of the extraordinary things that are done in preparation for the Ryder Cup. We look forward to seeing the finished product and wish Steve well for what, I'm sure, will be a memorable week for him and his team.

Wednesday saw the start of the BTME seminar programme after the presentation of the BIGGA awards. I was fortunate to go up

and receive the South West Environment award for Parkstone Golf Club, an award we are very proud of. We were then treated to an inspirational story of self-motivation from Debra Veal who rowed single handed across the Atlantic Ocean. Her talk centred on the need for a first class team and impeccable preparation in the quest to succeed. Having rowed across the English Channel myself, I was able to fully understand the magnitude of her superb achievement and her presentation was very well received. The many seminars and the exhibition followed. The show was bigger and better than ever with the inclusion of the ClubHouse show covering areas relating to Club management. All in all a great week! The Harrogate week is something you don't want to miss. Meeting old friends and making new ones, finding out that the problems we all have to deal with are the same all over the world. It's just how we overcome them that are sometimes different. So make sure you are there next year. It needn't cost the earth, as there are a number of packages to suit all pockets. Be a part not apart!!

February 26 sees our Section seminar at Canford Magna and details should be with you now. Speakers include Stella Rixon, Kate Entwistle, Tom Mackenzie, Ed McCabe, Stuart Ashworth, Gavin Robson and Ken Richardson. The theme for the day is 'in pursuit of excellence' and the cost is members £10 and non-members £15. Make the effort to come to what will be an excellent day. Places will be limited so get your completed forms back to Fred Deamen quickly to avoid disappointment. I also have two places available on one of Frank Newberry's public speaking courses, which will be held in the Bournemouth/Poole area. Please contact me if you wish to attend on what will be an excellent two-day course.

Lastly, let me pass on our best wishes to our Regional Administrator Paula Humphries and her family as she recovers from what we understand has been successful treatment. Our thoughts are with you as well as Gordon Child who has also had successful treatment recently. If you wish to contact me concerning anything then please call me on 01202 661106 evenings, 07813 841714 mobile or email me @ alex@mccombie.fsbusiness.co.uk. I'm off to Atlanta in two weeks for the GCSAA show and conference and will report in full next month

Until next month
Alex McCombie



A dry New Year to everyone, I could have said "happy", if it dries up we all will be. Isn't it surprising to learn that we have just ended the wettest year in history?

I know it's a waste of time me telling you how wet it's been, I often wonder how you ever manage to maintain your golf courses. Which brings me to the first of two points I would like to write about. Although I am closely related to your profession I am quite on the outside and this does not give me an opportunity to see all aspects. Not only do I have great respect for your profession, it's also not much fun being a golfer in the rain and at the end of the day everyone suffers – club-pro-bar-the trade, there isn't much we can do about the weather but we could start to educate golfers, management committees, Captains etc. and give them some understanding of managing the weather and a golf course.

David Ryan and Ian Harrison at Bangor have made a start. I wonder how many golfers have a practice putt or have 50 or so of their friends walk their front lawn on a wet January morning.

Secondly, Golf Days, I consider these to be of great importance and I don't mean just a day out. I believe a lot can be gained by visiting other courses, seeing how they are set up and managed, and most of all by meetings and talking to your colleagues from around the

province, so do try and support them and remember that your host has gone to a lot of trouble, so give him your support. Nothing in life is ever wasted, it could be your course one day.

The conference was a great success, everyone I spoke to commented on the high quality of all the speakers. Many thanks to them and well done committee for your organisation. Thanks to Massereene Golf Club for their hospitality and to Frank Ainsworth and The Hilton Hotel, Temple Patrick for their first rate hospitality.

Finally a thanks to the sponsors, without their contribution the show would not go on. Namely:-

David Laird, Grass Machinery; GUI; David Richardson, Horta Soils; John Lindsey; Lely Ireland; Stanley Emmerson; Textron, Brodericks; Tacit, Graham Prosser. Many thanks.

The AGM took place in December and thanks to Lisburn Golf Club for the venue. (Emmett Curran, Andrew Kerr and myself won the quiz quite easily) Your officers for the new year are: Chairman, Ken Henderson; Secretary, Michael O'Neill; Education, Andrew Kerr; Match and Handicap, Terry Crawford; Jonathan McCabe and Mark Riddle.

Welcome to new members, Robert White, Royal Portrush; John Kennedy, Royal Co. Down; Chris Larmour, Malone and Raymond McVeigh, Silverwood.

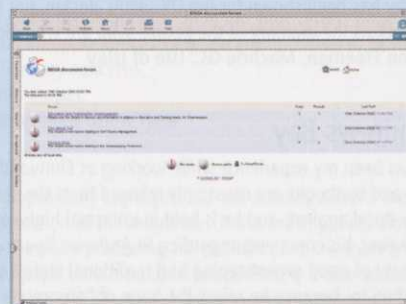
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Happy Days
Graham Prosser



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The One Over-riding Parameter

I was thinking recently that the content on your letters page was getting a bit thin on the ground; but when I saw Jim Arthur's controversial (as usual!) letter get printed in December I knew the tide would soon turn!

It is always difficult to disagree with the principles behind what Jim has to say, and I have to say in his defence that the condition of my course has improved 100% since I read Practical Greenkeeping again and implemented most of Jim's back to basics ideas. I owe him a great deal of the praise I am currently getting for the condition of my greens.

However, it would be very easy for me to sit in my ivory tower, lord of a piece of ground tailor-made to make best use of his principles (perfect sandy rootzone, wall to wall fescues and bents - any encroachment of poa here is MY mistake -, and only around 12000 rounds a year), and criticise others less fortunate than myself. While I think Jim and all the people who responded to him make perfectly valid points, I think there is one over-riding parameter by which we, as greenkeepers, can all judge our successes in our "individual" situations, which surely ends this long running feud once and for all.

"Do you, as a greenkeeper, maintain your course in the way it was originally intended by the architect to be maintained, and are you sympathetic to how much impact the way you look after your course has on the way your course plays? If the architect who designed your course, be it 110 years ago (as in my situation) or two years ago (as in Neil Ballingall's situation), returned to play it tomorrow, would he be pleased, or would he be disgusted?"

The reason I believe this point to be the crux of the argument is because, as Paul Copsey quite rightly points out, golf has become horses for courses. Not everyone enjoys playing on threadbare links courses, while many (myself included) are not big fans of parkland golf. I don't think this matters, but what does annoy me intensely is when a fine design is ruined by an unsympathetic greenkeeper who has no idea about the intricacies surrounding the design. My course is most fun when it plays as it was intended to play, ie. hard and bouncy - and it would therefore be the cardinal sin for me to turn my greens to poa sponges. The challenge and subtleties would disappear, as they have on so many links. This is what has annoyed Jim Arthur all along.

But I don't know how Neil Ballingall or anyone else in his position can be criticised for maintaining their courses in the way they were designed either. After all, Bruce Devlin and Sam Torrance would have been fully well aware that the fairways and tees were going to be sown with ryegrass before they finalised their designs, and would have designed the subtleties around the grass. Neil should certainly be receiving nothing but praise for the condition of his very new greens, either. I haven't played the courses yet, but I did walk the Devlin and the surfaces looked tremendous.

Right, that was going to be my rant over, but seeing as it was you who opened the can of worms about the road hole bunker, and seeing the subject ties in perfectly with the rest of my argument, I'm going to throw my hat in the ring before I sign off! I haven't seen the modification yet, but I always thought the bump that was obviously created by thousands of golfers splashing sand onto the green in a vain attempt to extricate themselves from this hell-hole made that side of the green a bit of an unusable mockery. If, as I suspect has been the case, the committee who decided on this change (be that Eddie, Gordon or whoever) have gone back and studied old pictures of what that area of the green looked like originally, and have simply recreated this, then I applaud that wholeheartedly. Once again, a bit of sympathy has been shown for the ORIGINAL design, not the one that only exists for as far back as the memory of the people who are whinging about it.

Simon Freeman, Machrie GC, Isle of Islay

St Andrews Bay

It has been my experience while working at Elmwood that Mr Jim Arthur's articles and textbooks are constantly referred to as the standard by which new ideas have to stand against, and he is held in universal high regard.

However, his comments regarding St Andrews Bay and the observation that it is "a travesty of good greenkeeping and traditional standards" I believe needs responding to, because he raises the issue of "progress", which is at the heart of the future direction of the greenkeeping industry. I am writing from two perspectives, namely the game of golf itself and education.

Firstly, having played the courses at St Andrews Bay I can assure your readers the inherent challenge of golf is alive and well. The fairways have the density and uniformity required to allow the ball to be worked, strategy is paramount, and perhaps not enough was made in the original interview of the selection of

traditional grasses in the greens, which are among the firmest and fastest in the area, which is saying something. When I played, hitting the green didn't mean you stayed on the green, and this from a course that doesn't claim to be a links. Colour was irrelevant.

From a wider industry perspective if the UK greenkeeping industry is going to achieve the regard and respect it craves, (reference numerous letters in past issues) then it must realise a more customer focused mentality is needed to establish relations between the committee/boardroom and the greenkeeping facility. Regarding the golfer as an uneducated job is simply going to alienate Course Managers and their staff from the very people they are working so hard for in the first place. We regularly visit St Andrews Bay with students to witness not only from Neil, but all his team, professionalism, standards of workmanship and dedication to the cause that is second to none. The cause, mind you, is golfer satisfaction. Elmwood is indeed fortunate to have such a location on its doorstep.

Whether it is appreciated or not, the demands of the modern golfer are driven by the spectacle of tournament golf. This can be a good thing in two ways. Many tour events are set up to challenge the skill of the golfer through firm and fast conditions. Montgomerie described Sawgrass as "total golf" and even Nick Faldo in last month's Golf World complained of watering heathland courses, recognising how British courses put an emphasis on shot making skills. "Let it be natural". Are these not the conditions Mr Jim Arthur has been battling for over the years, and on this evidence has been largely successful.

Secondly there will be greater emphasis on course presentation, hence the colour green at St Andrews Bay. However, the selection of recent cultivars, and indeed their colour, is no big deal if the ultimate challenge of golf is remembered.

Providing the game of golf, the greatest game of all, is a constantly evolving challenge. In order to meet modern demands, greenkeepers need to be innovative with resources, creative with advances made in turf culture and, above all, enthusiastic about improving on what has gone before.

And if traditional practices and turf species are to survive they need to stand up to comparison with what is being exported from the US. Personally, I believe the local traditional courses around St Andrews are stronger for the comparison, but to decry the dedication and management skills of Neil Ballingall is to ignore the demanding environment the modern Course Manager faces.

Ian Butcher, Lecturer in Greenkeeping, Elmwood College

Many Thanks

May I take this opportunity to thank the Northern Region for the support I have received over the past five years that I have served on the Board of Management. I have enjoyed my time immensely.

There have been many high points over the years. One of the most memorable is having our own Headquarters owned by the Association. If we could all just reflect on how far the Association has come since the formation of the three Associations joining, we are now accepted as equals with other professional bodies in the world of golf.

This is borne out by the ClubHouse Exhibition being held at Harrogate at the same time as our own Turf Management Exhibition. Education of green keepers with the GTC (Greenkeepers Training Committee) and Colleges has enhanced our credibility in the world of golf.

We can all be proud of the Association and its members. The Open Championship, the most prestigious Golf Tournament in the world where we have our support team, only enhances our standing in the world of golf.

On a low point, more and more greenkeepers through no fault of their own are having unrealistic targets placed upon them by unprofessional people who have got themselves into a position on golf club committees, who think they know better than the qualified and trained staff. Fortunately, these golf clubs are in the minority and most golf clubs take notice of their Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper. Unfortunately some do not. Sorry about my little whinge.

I pass my best wishes onto the staff at Headquarters who sometimes get criticised unnecessarily. The Board of Management and regional committees do an excellent job along with the section committees who are there for the sole purpose for the benefit of the membership. The Association is and always will be a membership run by Association.

May I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year and I wish Bert Cross every success as the new Northern Regional Board of Management Representative. Once again I would like to thank the Northern Region for their support in the five years that I have served with them. I am really honoured to accept the post of Northern Region Chairman.

Ian Holoran, Middlesbrough

St Andrews Bay Follow-up

In response to Neil Ballingall's letter (Jan issue) the connection which he, unlike many others who have contacted me, claims not to understand is that in both cases a combination of power and ignorance results in either an unsatisfactory end result or damage to an experienced and professional Course Manager's career. Too many American inspired extravaganzas have gone or are going broke to doubt this.

Perhaps it is unfair to blame someone who knows what he wants - and perhaps even what his 'clients' want i.e. lush green conditions all year round but not how to get it.

The real blame lies with those advising him, many of whom lack experience and often are motivated by a desire to be instigators of 'new' ideas, which prevents them warning their clients of the known inherent risks. As Paul Copsey (of American Golf) admits, some (many!) high cost ventures have folded or are in severe financial difficulties. Part of the reason may be wrong location, but the commonest causes are bad specification or bad construction or bad post-constructional management (or all three). Building courses in the wrong place admittedly pulls the plug quicker than bad building and bad specification, but the latter faults add huge and insupportable costs for repairs, rebuilding and just plain too expensive maintenance. In the foreseeable future golf, already commercially in decline, will predictably suffer more and only those who cut back or manage on sensibly low budgets will survive. Low budgets do not mean poor condition, often the reverse.

I have a copy letter addressed to all the members of a club that I used to advise (needless to say on a 'nitrogen only' diet but now with a new greenkeeper who has switched to heavy NPK) explaining that part of the reason for the adverse balance sheet was the "steep rise in the expenditure on chemicals".

By implication, I am accused of being old fashioned and out of date but I would point out that I am not concerned with detail but with principles. Paul Copsey may well have progressed from a Cortina but he is still driving a car with four wheels powered by an internal combustion engine, not a Tardis.

It is unrealistic to make comparisons between tee mats, worn out bent fescue and dwarf rye. Good management will ensure traditional winter tees in good order, but not if 'green-mad' golfers prevent any operations, that may temporarily inconvenience them, being implemented in summer.

The secret of good all year round condition lies in following basic principles which, like the grass, have not altered since greenkeeping began; avoiding gimmicks and educating both the members and too often the greenkeepers and their advisers, few of the latter seeming to agree among themselves.

This does not mean condemning every new idea, but it does mean evaluating them as few survive the test of time and performance but some have.

As an indication that the majority agrees with this philosophy a survey shortly to be published on fertiliser and fungicide use conducted for the R & A shows that 91% of clubs use under three tonnes - for everything - with 21% well under one tonne and only 2% used in excess of five tonnes p.a. per 18 holes. A majority (65%) use nitrogen or nitrogen with a little potash, and of the 35% using NPK more than half use very low phosphate mixes e.g. 10:2:10.

I ought also to stress that tradition is not linked solely to links and heathland. There are hundreds of first class courses, both old and new in superb condition all year round which have been maintained on sound traditional lines often for 30 years and more. Their secret is a first class greenkeeper who has the benefit of working for a convinced and intelligent club and often no green committee but a management structure.

J H Arthur, Honorary Member

Contribution to the Debate

May I contribute to the current debate initiated by Jim Arthur?

As a supplier, I visit many golf courses. There are some excellent Course Managers, and there are some poor Course Managers. The former are good at communicating, delegating, and planning. The latter are not, and will not survive today's demanding standards and resulting pressures.

Successful Course Managers realise that "new golfer" is the life blood of the industry, and they have the confidence, born of experience and professional training, to put forward their case and to compromise if necessary. The key is an understanding between the Chairman of Green and the greenkeeper about what is expected and what is possible.

How can we progress? By attracting the highest calibre into the greenkeeping profession, and giving them a first class training.

Tim Fell
Managing Director, Tillers Turf Company Ltd

Health and Safety Considerations

The recent cold snap has highlighted a concern I have had for sometime and I am hoping that through your pages a little light can be thrown on the subject.

The course closure variances from course to course undoubtedly give rise to numerous problems. Many clubs have adopted a no closure policy to avoid the aggravation of disgruntled golfers. However in this ever increasing culture of blame and litigation imagine the following scenario.

Frosty conditions underfoot and the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper keeps the course open for play. During their round a golfer slips and sustains a nasty injury and decides to sue the club for neglect on the grounds of allowing play in dangerous conditions.

The question is then asked who is responsible for deciding if the course is fit for play etc. I would hazard a guess that the finger would point in the direction of the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.

As the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper is responsible for all matters relating to health and safety on the course, is it a fair assumption that he will have been expected to have made a risk assessment as to this hazard. If this is so how many have?

If a risk assessment has been carried and the dangers identified would it be expected that the club inform their insurance company.

Every Owner/Manager of a golf club should surely have some kind of ruling to refer to. If it already exists please excuse my ignorance and if it does not, do you think now is the time for a golfing body to establish a clear definition of when a course is fit for play.

I look forward to any comments.

One other point that you might like to include now or at some other stage, again related to health and safety, is the hazard of dog excrement. In this age of increasing environmental concerns how many other courses suffer from this unnecessary problem. The environmental impact and health implications should surely warrant greater attention from the Managers who are being faced with the problem. Has anyone done a risk assessment with regard to contamination of machinery? As I say, it is a concern but I'm not too sure where I should go with it for fear of upsetting the dog owning community.

If any of your readers has any experience of dealing with this problem I would be most interested to know. I can just imagine some of the thoughts going through your head as you read this and as funny as they are there is a serious health issue attached to the problem.

Paul Seago, Course Manager, Gullane Golf Club, East Lothian

Inappropriate Photographs

I write, outlining concerns that I and many of my colleagues have regarding pictorial adverts, which often appear in the Greenkeeper International Magazine, which show a complete disregard for basic Health & Safety Regulations.

In particular I refer to female models operating machinery dressed in street clothes wearing inappropriate footwear and without facial and ear protection.

(Pages 39 Dec, 2002 and page 38: Jan 2003 are examples)

I understand fully however, that the client provides these pictures for you and is no doubt a valuable source of revenue. However, as the magazine is obviously proud of its award winning status (front page) and representative of the industry, I feel that more cognisance should be taken of the content of these pictures by your staff prior to publication and how that reflects upon the industry in general.

BIGGA has many female members and adverts such as these do nothing to help their integration within an industry, which has been a male bastion for many years. I personally find these adverts insulting and no doubt somewhere across the industry inappropriate references will have been made to the embarrassment of our female colleagues. I ask you to review this and hopefully reconsider your advertising policy and take appropriate steps to rectify the situation.

I hope that you feel this is worthy of publication in the Your Letters page of the Magazine which will give you an opportunity to explain your position to BIGGA members, many of whom share my concerns.

Tony McLure, Head Greenkeeper,
Whickham Golf Club, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Editors Note:

Editor's Note: The photographs Tony highlights are not actually adverts but were included in the New Product section of the magazine. These are supplied, along with a press release, by the company producing the product or its PR agency. In an ideal world the perfect photograph would be used but often it is a case of using the supplied picture displaying the new product or showing no photograph at all. I have taken the view that it is better to show the product even if the photo supplied has contained the elements to which Tony refers. However, should Tony's views be shared by a significant number of others it is a policy I may review.

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This competition is not open to BIGGA Staff or non-members. The solution to the January Turftime Teaser was 'The Power Brush Company'. This was correctly answered by Barry Gardner of Maidenhead Golf Club.

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