

Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 70 new members to the Association and explain the courtesy golf scheme.

Membership Update

BIGGA policy on courtesy golf

We have decided to publish guidelines on the use of courtesy golf to clear up any confusion amongst BIGGA members and golf clubs. We are aware the majority of members do behave sensibly when seeking courtesy golf.

The guidelines are as follows:

- Only those with full greenkeeper membership should seek courtesy golf.
- Courtesy golf is only given at the discretion of the individual golf club, and is not an automatic benefit of membership.
- Members wishing to seek courtesy golf at a club should contact the club at least 24 hours in advance of wishing to play.
- On arrival at the club, members should report to the Secretary/Pro Shop and follow normal procedures for playing golf.
- Members should always produce a valid membership card as proof of status to the club.
- Members should make a point of thanking the club for their courtesy on completion of their round of golf.
- Members should not seek courtesy golf at any one golf club more than twice per year.

Golf clubs wishing to verify membership or requiring further details should contact BIGGA on 01347 833800. All suspected abuses of the card should be reported immediately to BIGGA headquarters where such complaints will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

BIGGA welcomes...

SCOTTISH REGION

Richard Barber-Fleming, Ayrshire
Alan Hogg, East
Dave Morris, Ayrshire
Kris Nicol, North
Cameron Scott, Ayrshire
Colin Smith, Ayrshire
Allen Whellans, East

NORTHERN REGION

Jason Banks, Northern
David Callaghan, North West
Robert Cooper, North West
Paul Danskin, Northern
Dan Johnson, Northern
Sam Langford, Sheffield
David Moss, North East
Leslie Tate, North East
Ross Wilson, North West

MIDLAND REGION

Kevin Baker, Midland
Stephen Chambers, Midland
Nicholas Chapple, Mid Anglia
Richard Evison, Midland
Tony Hinds, Midland
Anthony Jenkins, BB&O
Kristopher Lovell, BB&O
Ian Mawer, East of England
Peter Roberts, Mid Anglia
Daniel Scott, Mid Anglia
Tony Sittton, BB&O

James Wheatley, East Midland
Alexander Wren, East of England

SOUTH EAST REGION

Darren Abbs, East Anglia
Dean Churchill, Surrey
Shane Dawkins, Kent
Graham Goodall, Surrey
Antony Hill, Surrey
Guy Newton, Surrey
Joaquim Reis, Kent
Andrew Scott, East Anglia
Daniel Sharp, East Anglia
Nicola Shepherd, Sussex
Graham Standing, Sussex

SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Mark Blake, South Coast
Richard Blizzard, South West
Shawn Cailles, South West
Neil Crawley, South West
Joe Curtis, South West
Peter Handford, South Coast
Nathan James, South Wales
Ben Ludwell, South Coast
Jeremy Pentecost, South Coast
Raye Phillips, South Coast
Lee Portrey, South West

NORTHERN IRELAND

William Gilmore

SOUTHERN IRELAND

Andrew Wray

INTERNATIONAL

Neil Dowling, Norway
Vicki Perlini, Canada

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David Colyer, Kent
Adrian Cooper, BB&O
Jeremy Furley, Kent
Thomas Halford, Northern
Donovan Hunt, Devon & Cornwall
Duncan Mutton, Mid Anglia
Andrew Turnbull, Midland
Gordon Wilkie, London

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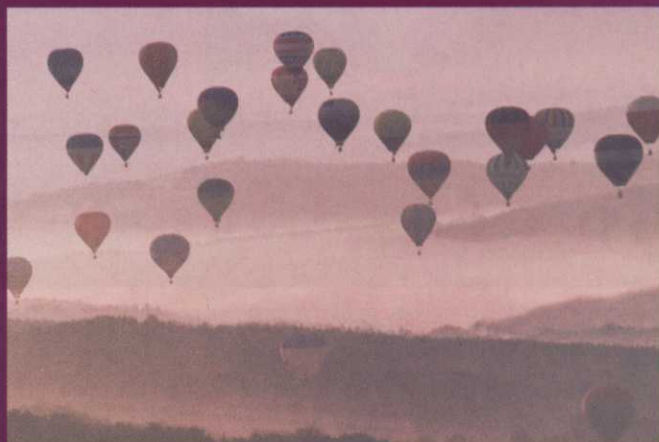
STUDENT MEMBER

Ying Kang, China

GOLDEN KEY MEMBERS

Michael Fance, Essex
John Noyce, Kent
Mark Rayner, Midland

WIN A CHAMPAGNE BALLOON FLIGHT



Imagine soaring through the skies watching the sunset on a perfect evening. To be in with a chance of winning a balloon flight at one of over 50 locations UK wide just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA. Make sure you write your name on the application form as the person who referred them and we will enter you into the prize draw. The more new members you refer the more chances you have to win.

The draw will take place on the 15th October 2004 and the winner will be announced in the November edition of Greenkeeper International.

Please call Rachael or Gemma for application forms or for more details on 01347 833800.

AUGUST'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win an 0.5 litre isolating flask suitable for hot and cold drinks and soups.

Our congratulations go to this month's winner, Tony Witt from Surbiton Golf Club.



Message of the Month Winner

Each month the person who has written the best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, which is found on the BIGGA website www.bigga.org.uk, receives an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack featuring a multi function organiser, two mesh pockets and a grab handle. (Rucksack supplied may be a different colour to that featured).

Our congratulations go to August's winner, Brian Taylor from Sandiway Golf Club whose message was posted on the 23 June 2004 under the 'Talking Shop' section.



Course Feature



▲ Gordon Irvine MG.

No more sinking feelings

Royal Cinque Ports is back on the right lines after losing its way over the last ten years. Scott MacCallum finds out what went wrong and what was done to make sure progress was made.

Royal Cinque Ports has recovered for the errors of the '90s and are now embarking on the long road to a traditionally maintained links course.

Some golf clubs boast an interesting history but there are few which are part of golfing history. Royal Cinque Ports in Deal, Kent, is certainly one of these.

How else could you possibly describe a club which hosted The Open Championship in 1909, when the great J.H. Taylor won the title, and then again when George Duncan won the title on the first time The Open was held after the First World War?

The course has also hosted a roll of other top events including The Amateur Championship, The Brabazon and the public school Old Boys' Championship, The Halford Hewitt, which has been played at Deal since its inception in 1925.

In short Royal Cinque Ports has a historical CV to die for but, as many have found to their cost, a superb pedigree is no guarantee against inferior or outdated decision making.

Today the club is looking forward with confidence. The course policy and management is on the right lines; the management structure has been revised; long term strategies exist and the books are being filled with more black ink than red. In short, they can look back on the hard times and offer other clubs advice they would do well to heed.

A spokesman for the Board explained that droughts in the mid-90's had put the fairways under stress and that £500,000 had been spent on a complete wall-to-wall irrigation system as an insurance against such problems in the future.

This was not the first drought and experience showed that deep-rooted grasses such as bents and fescues would regenerate in the winter rains but the weed grasses (eg poa annua and rye) might well struggle.

At the time great enthusiasm was generated for the new irrigation system, which resulted in over watering of fairways and greens. The greens were cut too low in search of speed and the fairways and semi-rough were wrongly and excessively fertilised to the point where they resembled meadows.

For a time everything in the garden seemed rosy. Golfers - knowing nothing of the STRI or agronomy and having been educated by television to appreciate stripes and pretty patterns created by mowers joined the 'green is beautiful' cult - were not able to differentiate bents and fescues from poa annua and rye or parkland golf from links golf - and this was no surprise.

Steadily the weed grasses began to take a hold and there is even evidence to suggest that rye grass has been used for divotting. It has also been discovered after analysis by the STRI laboratory that the top dressing being used on the greens was more suited to a cricket wicket than a golf green. Surfaces suited to Ray Lindwall or Glen McGrath do not encourage stop on a golf ball.

At the same time other essential work was being neglected and the winter maintenance programme took second place to construction work. Aeration was largely ignored and as a result growth was impaired on the



fairway and in the semi-rough. An effort to encourage growth led to areas of the rough being fertilised resulting in further invasion of weed grasses.

When the course had to be brought up to standard for top events like the Brabazon or Halford Hewitt the mowers were taken even lower to satisfy the demand for 'speed', but this often led to mechanical scarring. Meanwhile members frequently complained that the course was not the same condition for them in the remaining weeks of the year.

Meanwhile, the Captain of the day was faced with a serious shortfall of revenue in the winter of 2000/1, accentuated by the loss of green-fee income caused by heavy rains.

A problem existed in that the organisation of the club relied on one committee answerable to the Captain, who in turn acted as Chief Executive Officer for his year in Office. A new Captain would then replace him the following year and so on, each with his own plans and ideas for what he wanted to achieve during his term. This committee was responsible for all aspects of the club life and business. There was a lack of continuity and no long-term plan.

After a study of the operations of various clubs perceived to be among those most successfully run it was decided to set up a Board of Management. This Board would run the business side of the club and the Captain's committee would run the 'golf and fun'. The green was to be the responsibility of the Board.

The Captain is seen to be the front man of the club during his year in Office, operating the golf and fun and in the background should be the Secretary, who is Chief Executive Officer reporting to the Board. The Board was first selected by a special sub-group and then voted in by the membership and the new constitution put in place in 2002.

This has resulted in the business being under control, the club being marketed effectively, the revenue altered so that a handsome, sensible profit is being made. There is now a long-term plan in place of which the members are aware of and have commented, and a plan exists to restore the course to its true heritage.

During 2000, and coincidentally with the organisation studies, the Captain, aware that all was not well with the course, asked for a report from Malcolm Peake a member well know for this work at Temple Club. Malcolm has over many years developed a wide knowledge of traditional golf course management and also a wide circle of friends and acquaintances involved in the industry.

Following this, and the decision to return the links to their true heritage, Gordon Irvine MG, who was already know to Malcolm, was taken on as Course Consultant to assist with putting the course back onto the correct path.

Gordon, who can be found on the course dusk to dawn, reported to the Board in April on what he was doing and what he had found. In May he met 100 members in a meeting which lasted about one and half hours. He briefed the membership on his actions and then answered questions. His straightforward and blunt approach was well received and the reception he got was very good indeed.

The changes Gordon has made to the course in the short term have been very noticeable with more traditional links style management in place, closely mown run ups to greens allowing for the use of putters and pitch and run shots and properly defined semi-rough. Construction work has been carried out professionally and in keeping with the rest of the course.

As necessary Gordon is working in conjunction with Donald Steel on design



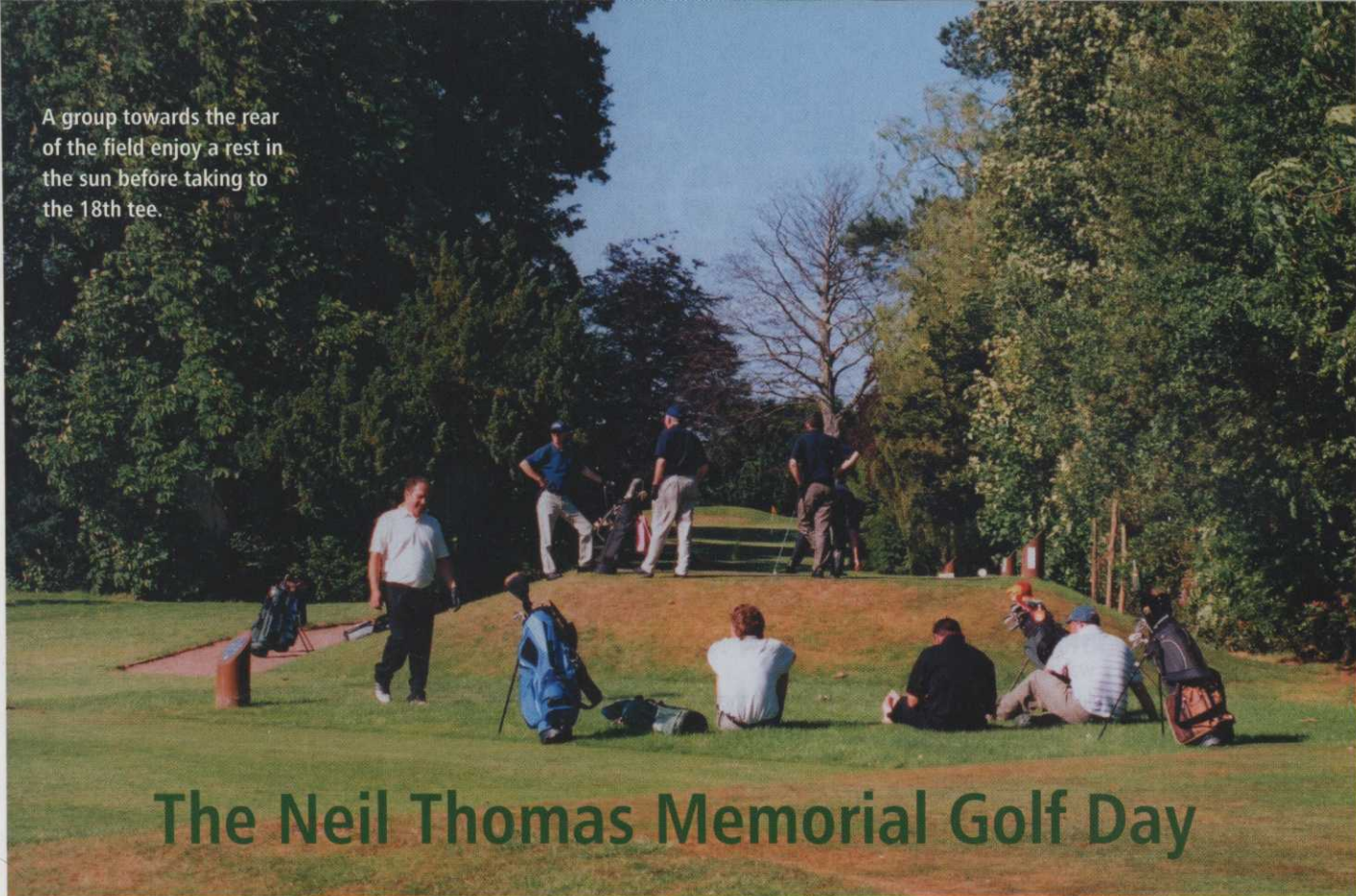
matters and a leading agronomist is to be appointed. His greenkeeping team is right behind him and he is right behind them, Gordon has stressed the importance of educating and training them correctly.

Gordon has the full support of the Board in the selection and provision of capital machinery and in the approval of the programme for the following winter. It is appreciated that it will take a number of years for the course to return completely to its natural roots, but such is the superb nature of the layout that however long it takes it will be a worthwhile, if painstaking, project.

An awful number of golfers are happy with pretty, green fairways, striped and patterns that are full of weed grasses, over watered and fertilised largely because television leads them that way. To protect and deliver these conditions requires fungicides that may not always be available as we move to a more environmentally friendly society.



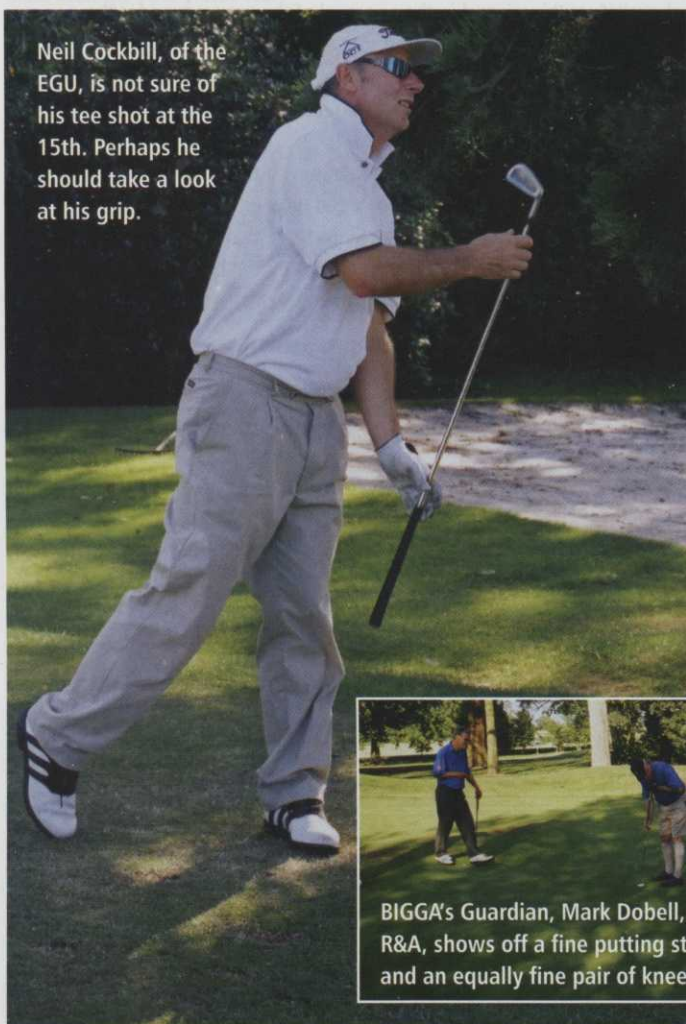
A group towards the rear of the field enjoy a rest in the sun before taking to the 18th tee.



The Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day

Golf day success

Neil Cockbill, of the EGU, is not sure of his tee shot at the 15th. Perhaps he should take a look at his grip.



Scott MacCallum reviews the annual BIGGA Golf Day, held at Aldwark Manor

The 2004 BIGGA Golf Day was different from the previous eight that had been played.

Sure, as usual the sun shone, the golf was scintillating and smiles and laughter were the order of the day but this time there was one name at the forefront of everyone's mind and Monday, June 14, 2004 was a particularly poignant occasion.

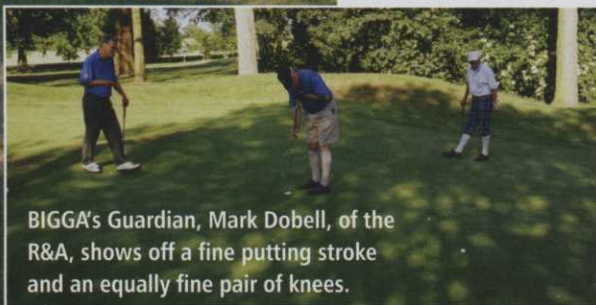
Neil Thomas' final day in BIGGA HOUSE before the illness which was to eventually take his life, took too great a hold on the previous BIGGA Golf Day, so it was particularly fitting that BIGGA's Board of Management should decide to rename the event which has become a fixture in the calendars of so many people within the fine turf industry The Neil Thomas Memorial Golf Day.

It was therefore a great pleasure to welcome Neil's widow, Elaine, and three of their four children Grant, Adam and Natalie, to the occasion and for Elaine to present the prizes.

Elaine was also on hand to receive a painting which had been donated to BIGGA by the Association's Master Greenkeepers which will hang in BIGGA HOUSE as a permanent memory of the Association's first Executive Director.

One of Neil's greatest loves was rugby union and the painting, entitled "The Greatest Try" by Robert Highton, depicted the most famous try ever scored - by Gareth Edwards, for the Barbarians against the All Blacks at Cardiff Arms Park in 1973. Neil had been lucky enough to have been at the match.

On the golfing front we had a shock, the scale of which we hadn't seen since Scotland



BIGGA's Guardian, Mark Dobell, of the R&A, shows off a fine putting stroke and an equally fine pair of knees.



lost 3-1 to Peru in the 1978 World Cup. Lincsgreen didn't win. The team who had scorched their way to victory the previous two years with amazing scores, could only come second!

Their crown was seized by BIGGA's Surrey Section, comprising, Ian Sellars, Tony Bremeer, Antony Freeman and Brian Wilmot who pipped the Lincsgreen 2 team with a superb score of 53.75 in the blustery conditions.

What made the feat all the more remarkable was that the team had driven up to North Yorkshire from the South East in the early hours of the morning and were due to drive back later the same day. It was fitting then that Antony Freeman also won the Longest Drive.

The day, which was again sponsored by the "A" Group of Harrogate Hotels, was topped off by a barbecue prepared by Aldwark Manor Hotel

Tony Bremer, Brian Wilmot, Ian Sellars and Antony Freeman, of the Surrey Section, receive the Neil Thomas Memorial Cup from Elaine Thomas.

during which BIGGA's First Chairman, Walter Woods, recalled Neil Thomas' input into BIGGA and described the drive which had been so instrumental in making the Association the success that it is.

His remarks were sincerely delivered and welcomed by all in attendance, particularly Elaine, Grant, Adam and Natalie.

Results:

1. BIGGA Surrey Section. Ian Sellars, Tony Bremer, Antony Freeman, Brian Wilmot, 53.25; 2. Lincsgreen 2, 55.375; 3. Hunter Grinders, 57.625

Longest Drive: Antony Freeman Nearest the Pin: Ian Semple

Putting Competition: Andy Norton.



▲ Past Chairman, George Brown, receives a plaque to commemorate his year in office from current Chairman, Andy Campbell MG.



Elaine Thomas and Vice Chairman Kerran Daly MG with the picture donated in Neil Thomas' memory by the Association's Master Greenkeepers.



The need for backup

Roland Taylor continues his look at cylinder mowers and assesses the importance of local manufacturer support

The Royal Worlington Golf Club, where Prince Albert and Queen Victoria's son played golf while regularly attending shoots at the Elvendon Estates in Norfolk, is a nine-hole course opened in 1893, and is situated on the edge of the Norfolk Breckland, which is renowned for its sandy soil.

As a result the club has taken on the mantle of an inland links course. Since the course was built there has been little alteration and the wide undulating fairways abound with bunkers for the unwary player. Cambridge University practice and play all their home competitions on this course.

Head Greenkeeper Bob Gee has been at the club for forty-five years and for cutting the large raised tees around the course he uses a Sisis Teestar triple that was bought just over two years ago.

Bob said: "Previously we had a Huxley triple which we were very pleased with. When it came to replacing this mower we tried a number of other machines before deciding. We found the Teestar was easy to operate and above all the operator visibility was excellent.

"You can clearly see, even with the boxes on, the edge of the tees, which avoids dropping down the slope. All the controls are within easy reach and the driving position is ideal, like armchair mowing.

"The only criticism I have is the positioning and poor design of the throttle control. For a machine of this quality it certainly could be improved. However, this is relatively minor compared to all the advantages we find when operating this piece of equipment."

The greenkeeping team carry out daily machinery maintenance. For repairs and other service work they use a local technician who calls regularly, or in an emergency, to carry out necessary work.

Bob went on to say that they have found this method of maintaining and caring for their equipment works exceedingly well. He also added that because he supports Ipswich Football Club he would like all his machinery

to be in blue and white livery. There would appear to be a very slim chance of this ever happening.

The Sisis Teestar has three hydraulically driven, floating cutting heads that give a 1.82 metre mowing width. There is a choice of six or ten bladed cylinders so the machine can be used on greens as well as tees.

The three-wheels have permanent drive to provide traction and reduce turf damage and the mower has a low centre of gravity to give it stability on slopes. If grass collecting is needed then the boxes and concaves are said to be easy to fit or remove when not required. The Teestar is designed and built in the UK.

Thorpe Wood Golf Club originated as a part of the Peterborough Development Corporation project back in the 1980s. It is a two 18-hole course split by the River Nene.

Head Greenkeeper Dave Walden and his team have their work cut out keeping both these courses in tip-top condition. Up until two years ago they cut their fairways with gangmowers. After having demonstrations of virtually every fairway mower on the market it was decided to buy two Roberine 1903s.

"We have found a considerable difference since using this type of machine. One of the main changes has been their machines' manoeuvrability compared to gangmowers and this has enabled us to create tighter fairways. Cross cutting is regularly carried out and this has added to the aesthetic quality of the courses," said Dave.

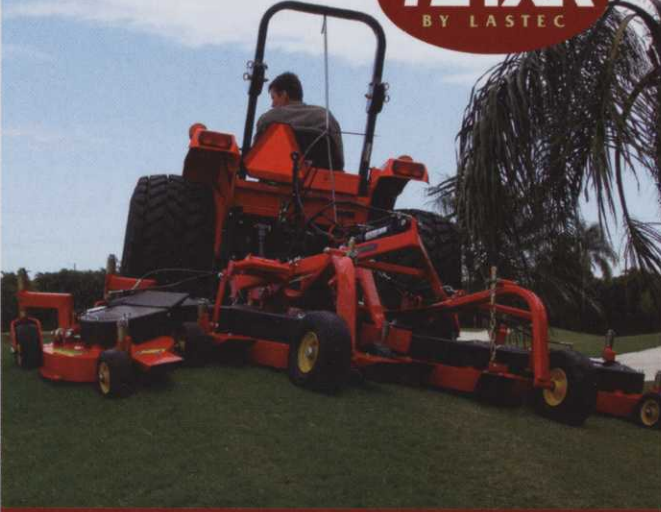
Another reason they selected these particular mowers is the backup support they get from their local dealer, Peterborough Garden Machinery.



Bob Gee of the Royal Worlington GC with his Sisis Teestar . Pity it is not in Ipswich Football Club livery.

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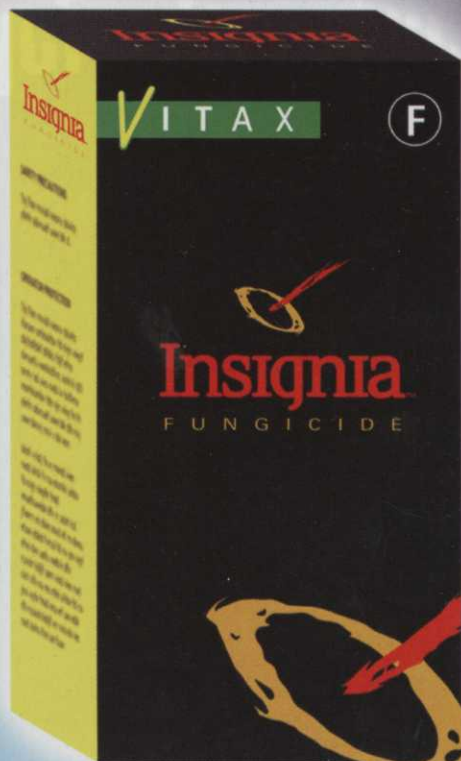
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The Allen Power National 68V Triple Mower is put through its paces at Thorpe Wood Golf Club.

Dave said: "They are only a few miles away and if we have a problem they react immediately. We cannot afford to be waiting for a dealer miles away to fit us into their service call schedule or wait days for replacement parts to arrive."

Dave added: "For the tees and the grass around bunkers we have been using Allen National triples for a number of years. Their low centre of gravity makes them very stable when working on bunker slopes and the sides of tees. They are very simple mowers to operate and for us ideal workhorses."

The Roberine has a Peugeot diesel with front wheel hydraulic drives and differential lock. There are five cutting units, giving an overall working width of 3.45metres.

The units have five-bladed reels and the cutting height ranges from 13mm to 70 mm. A joystick provides the facility of being able to mow with any number of units engaged or disengaged.

Ergonomic design is evident in the whole layout of the control centre and the seat's air suspension and automatic height adjustment provides adequate comfort during long periods of mowing.

Allen Power Equipment say they have been selling the National range of cylinder mowers for over 30 years. The machine is relatively simple in its layout, which for many is seen as a big advantage.

On good ground conditions a top mowing speed of 4mph is said to be achievable. A Briggs & Stratton engine provides power and the three free floating cutting units give a total mowing width of 1.72 metres.

Down on the south coast, a few miles from where the Normans landed in 1066, is Cooden Beach Golf Club which was opened in 1912. This 18-hole course is built on land that was once under the sea. The site is below sea level and as a result the water table is high.

"This can sometimes create problems, but there is also a plus side as we virtually never have to irrigate. The underlying soil is clay, so it also holds the moisture well," said Course Manager Stefan Antolik, who has been a greenkeeper for over 32 years, fourteen of them at Cooden Beach.

For his wide, long fairways and rough Stefan uses Lloyds Leda gangmowers. He explains his reason for this choice of mower, "Managing a golf course in today's climate is all about finding the most cost effective methods of producing quality playing surfaces.

"It all boils down to what a club can realistically afford, because there is a limit to how much members are prepared to pay. We have looked at alternative methods of mowing our fairways, but it is difficult to justify the cost of self-contained machines."

At Cooden Beach three sets of gangmowers are used and the fairway units are fitted with nine-bladed reels.

Lloyds Leda gangmowers look after Cooden Beach GC fairways and rough





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