

Rachael and Gemma from the Membership Department would like to welcome 44 new members to the Association and introduce the Summer competition.

# Membership Update

## Latest Privilege Discount Card Offers

Included in your membership package this year is a privilege platinum card allowing you to get a variety of discounts both in your local shops and the National chains. Most of you will have already received your cards with your membership renewal. If you have still not received a card and would like one before your membership is due for renewal please call the membership department.



The latest company to offer discount with the privilege card is powerplay.com. Powerplay is a website offering discounted DVD's, Videos, CD's and games. Typical prices on the site include £8.99 for the new Keane CD, 'Hopes and Fears' (RRP £15.99) and £29.99 for the Lord of the Rings Trilogy on DVD (RRP £49.99).

Members should access Powerplay through the link on [www.discountpages.co.uk](http://www.discountpages.co.uk) to receive a further £1 discount and free delivery.

The supermarket voucher scheme which allows you to make savings at Sainsburys, Waitrose and Safeways has been extended to include Morrisons. For more details call the helpline on 0800 587 8800.

### BIGGA welcomes...

#### SCOTTISH REGION

James Brannan, West  
Gerard Broadley, West  
Darren Leith, North  
Sean McLean, East

#### NORTHERN REGION

Robert McGillivray, North West  
Jeremy Mellor, North West  
Robert Spencer, North West  
Paul Sykes, Northern

#### MIDLAND REGION

Gary Carr, Midland  
Joao Faisca, Midland  
Paul Hedger, BB&O  
Phillip Hutchings, Mid Anglia  
Ray Swift, Mid Anglia  
John Walshaw, Midland  
Trevor White, Midland

#### SOUTH EAST REGION

Ross Dunlop, Surrey  
Daniel Heselden, Kent  
Kevin Hester, Surrey  
Johnathan Keywood, Surrey  
Katurin Mrobert, Surrey  
Danny Perks, Surrey  
James Sear, Surrey  
Kevin Soper, London

#### SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Martin Atyeo, South Coast

#### NORTHERN IRELAND

John Burrows  
Mark Gowan

#### INTERNATIONAL

Philip Rohwedder, Germany  
Timothy O'Neill, CGCS, USA

Mark Woodward, CGCS, USA  
Paul Hahn, Japan

#### STUDENT MEMBERS

Ben Croft, London  
Robert Kelly, East Scotland  
Jari Koivusalo, East Scotland  
Simon Sayner, North East

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Stephen Mona Cae, USA

#### CORPORATE MEMBERS

James Bragg, Kent

#### GOLDEN KEY MEMBERS

Steven Dickinson,  
East of England  
Ian Sumpter, Mid Anglia

# 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 applications forms or for more details on 01347 833800.**

### JULY'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 Andy Paynter from East Brighton 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](http://www.bigga.org.uk), receives an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack featuring a multi function organiser, 2 mesh pockets and a grab handle. (Rucksack supplied may be a different colour to that featured).

Our congratulations go to July's winner, Alex McCombie from Parkstone Golf Club whose message was posted on the 4th May 2004 under the 'Talk about Turf' section.



# Course Feature



▲ Billy McLachlan

Matthew is the youngest member of the McLachlan family and has watched his dad, Course Manager, Billy, prepare the famous old course for the most important Championship in golf.

The family home is right on the golf course, half way along the 16th fairway, and Matthew has seen incredible comings and goings, particularly over the last few months.

"He watched all the staging arrive and be stored outside his front door and he became very protective towards it. He was always checking to make sure everything was ok. He was almost in tears when the contractors came and moved it up to the 18th green," said Billy, who is preparing for his second Open in charge, having been at the helm in 1997.

With two of his four children experiencing their first Open – the other being Laura, aged six – and the other two, Emma, 10, and David, 13, much more able to appreciate what their dad is involved with this time around, you get the impression Billy is relishing the prospect of the world's finest golfers coming to play.

"The kids are excited about all the hype of The Open and, touch wood, at some stage, when the weather is good and everything is under control, I'll be able to get out with the kids and show them what it's all about," said Billy.

With one successful Open Championship under his belt – the course in '97 received rave reviews – Billy and his team are confident everything is and will be done to ensure a successful 2004 Championship.

When we met in early June the weather had been kind, the course preparation was well up to schedule and Billy was ensuring that every element which goes towards building an Open Championship site was well co-ordinated. Nothing being left to chance.

"Not knowing what another contractor has done could cause problems so I'm very big on communications and everyone knowing what everyone else is doing. Otherwise silly things could happen which shouldn't happen but can be done before you know it. It's all down to communication or to be more accurate a lack of it."

During the week itself Billy is keen to ensure that his team are not overloaded with sets of new instructions or jobs to do.

"I've said that when the week arrives I don't want a whole lot of things thrown at me or the team. I want everyone to have their mind on the job

## A Family Affair

Scott MacCallum met up with Billy McLachlan who was deep in preparations for this month's Open Championship

For one little four-year-old this month Christmas will be coming early. Matthew McLachlan wasn't around when the last Open Championship was played at Royal Troon but this year he will be in the thick of the action.



▲ Royal Troon Greenkeeping Team

and not facing distractions and I don't want them arriving in the morning absolutely knackered, or rushing to finish a job, and making a mistake or having an accident. Make it simple and keep it simple is the motto."

"The length of the day is quite frightening. Tired people make mistakes and concentration goes and it might result in cutting into a green a little bit harder, or driving a machine into a bunker.

"It's a case of how are we going to keep the guys going to the extent that they are not walking around on Friday like half shut knives. If I can keep their work load down during the actual week it is a sign that everything is going well and that will please me and keep them fresh."

It is here that Billy is drawing on the experiences of the last Open.

"From last time we have a routine that we know and I know what jobs need to be done, what way to do them and how many bodies I need to do them. Last time I was never sure if I had enough men or, just as bad, too many. What if I had six guys standing around doing nothing?"

"Having done it last time I don't have that sort of worry this time... although we could have a wet week and throw everything out."

One thing Billy was able to do last time and he hopes to maintain this time, is to grab a couple of hours sleep in the afternoon.

"It's exactly the right thing to do. I'm still contactable. If the phone goes I wake up but you need to stay sharp to make the correct calls when you need to."

That's all very well but he perhaps wasn't at his sharpest last time round when, after a quick power nap, he got up, walked back onto the course and promptly left the back door open much to the dismay of wife, Andrea.



▲ The 11th

"She said to me 'There's 40,000 people walking past our house and you left the door open!'," he said smiling ruefully at the memory. The chances of him making the same mistake again must be slim.

He is particularly happy to be able to call upon the BIGGA Greenkeeping Support Team which, in addition to sending out a man with each group to rake all the bunkers, will prepare all the bunkers before the start of play each day.

"Golf starts at 6.30am on the Thursday and Friday this year earlier than the last time we were here and knowing that the Support team will be doing the bunkers allows us to concentrate on the cutting programme," said Billy, who recently took delivery of seven new John Deere hand mowers.

The greens on Royal Troon and its sister course, the Portland, have been regularly hand cut recently and Billy is delighted that he is in a position to do just that.

"We are very fortunate as others may want to hand cut but not be able to."

It is all part of a very progressive policy put in place by the club.

"I have a very positive committee and every Greens Convenor I've had since I've been here has been excellent. This year's Captain, Arthur Dunsmuir was Greens Convenor at the last Open while the current Greens Convenor, Ken Arthur, is another excellent guy.

"I'm very lucky with the people I work with. The Committee, the members and my own team are all great," he said, before pausing, laughing and adding. "Something is bound to go wrong now."

He has a staff of 14 including his two Deputies Gary Ross, who works on Royal Troon and his brother, John McLachlan, who works on the Portland.

The team was given a recent taste of a high profile event when it hosted the 2003 Amateur Championship and they treated the event as a dress rehearsal for this month's Open.

"The course will be set up the same as it was for the Amateur, although I'd say the rough might be less than last year, because it's been a little colder this year," said Billy, who recalled a white frost and a -1 degree temperature at the end of May.



▲ The 4th



▲ The 18th



▲ The 5th

Indeed the course won't have too many dramatic changes from the '97 Open other than a few new tees and revamped bunkers.

"The 1st tee is the biggest change as it has now moved to the right giving the hole a new shape and perspective. It is set up into the shore and more along the shoreline.

"As for the bunkers we've done all the faces since the Amateur. We've not heightened them but just taken the crown off and straightened the angle a little bit. Some of the members have mentioned to me that they can't get out of them. I can understand where they are coming from, the bunker faces are steep, but it is The Open."

Ten new bunkers have been built bringing the total for the course to 93.

Billy retains two strong memories of his last Open Championship. One was the wonderful way the Champion, Justin Leonard, took time to sign a complete set of flags for Billy to give to his team just a few minutes after being presented with the Claret Jug and the second is another lesson he has learned from for this year.

"On the final afternoon it was fairly relaxed and I sent the team home for a few hours and went for a walk. Then I noticed these huge dark clouds moving towards Troon.

"Twenty-four hours later the course was evacuated because of the rain and it would have stopped the golf that final afternoon had it been a little earlier. I would have had all sorts of trouble and my team wouldn't have been on hand immediately. It was a silly mistake."

Despite all the pressure which goes with the territory of managing an Open venue Billy is looking forward to his second Championship in charge.

"It sounds daft, but I am looking forward to the week, getting it done, enhancing the reputation of Troon; suffering no disasters and everyone getting something out of it."

Perhaps no-one will get more out of it than young Matthew, who, you never know, might put all his experience of this year to good use when he's Course Manager for the 2034 Open Championship.

*Photographs courtesy of Brian Morgan.*



▲ The 6th



▲ The 8th

# Your Letters...

## The Greens Really Are Grassier!

As a newcomer to the greenkeeping industry, I thought you might be interested in my story. Last Easter, my life changed forever. My wife and I had just moved from London to Saffron Walden in search of a more peaceful and fulfilling life. I had made some enquiries into part time study of arboriculture or greenkeeping, something that maybe one day would take me out of the stuffy offices of banking and into a more natural environment. As I have always played sports; cricket, football and golf, one of my dreams has been to work in that field in some way. Until an interview at Writtle College in Chelmsford, with Richard Hughes and Stuart Brown, lecturers in Sports Turf, I had no idea that I was qualified enough to study for a degree, let alone my favourite subject, Sports Turf! However, with plenty of encouragement from tutors and my wife, my application to Writtle college was successful, with a start date of September 2003.

Having spent 19 years in the banking world, I could stand it no longer. So Easter 2003 I quit my job as a management accountant. My resignation was met with astonishment and envy by my colleagues. My wife had already resigned the previous year, after 22 years in the same bank, in order to study the Alexander Technique (something to do with pain, posture and performance). Which has come in really handy as she gets to straighten me out after a hard days work! So with five months before I start college, my wife and I spent much of the summer getting to know the beautiful countryside that is North West Essex.

Well, things just keep getting better and better. It turned out that our next door neighbour is a tree surgeon. A fantastic guy, who, after knowing me for only a few weeks, offered me some part time work with him during the summer. He also made his extensive horticultural library available to me to aid my future studies. He even gave me copies of trade magazines, so I could drool over the delights of tractors, grass cutting machines and other amenity machinery.

Even more good fortune was to come. One of my college courses required me to compile a conservation evaluation report on a golf course. So, a couple of months ago, I went to Saffron Walden Golf Club to seek some assistance for their management team. I was met by the Course Manager, Ray Goodsall, who couldn't have been more helpful. He gave me a guided tour of the course, lent me their STRI reports and other publications to help with my report. I was allowed to choose and photograph an appropriate site, and Ray spent much of his valuable time with me discussing his plans for the course and how he could help me in my assignment.

Then, much to my delight, he offered me a part time position on the greenkeeping staff. The position, which has been mine now for a month, and comes complete with the nickname Friday (as so far I mainly work on Fridays). My new colleagues and club members have all been fantastic, making me very welcome and answering my endless questions. They did get their own back by allowing me to clean the ladies loos on my first day (rotten lot!).

Still more good news was heading my way! After becoming a member of BIGGA, I recently saw an advertisement in Greenkeeping International for volunteers to help out at the Volvo PGA tournament at Wentworth in May. I sent off an e-mail, and to my surprise, Derek Farrington, South East Region Administrator, contacted me to invite me to be part of the team. As a complete novice to greenkeeping, Derek offered to arrange a master class in bunker raking at a friendly golf club before the tournament. As it turned out this was not necessary, because I have received extensive training on how to rake bunkers "Bermuda style" at Saffron Walden Golf Club. Derek also sent me a couple of complementary tickets so that both my wife and father could join in the experience of attending a professional golf tournament.

There is, however, only one downside: as member of BIGGA, every month when Greenkeeper International arrives through the post, I have to fight with my wife to read it first!

I am so grateful to everyone that has given me support over the past year. Not once have I regretted my change of career, even though there is still a long way to go. At 37, I am nearly one of the youngest "mature" students at Writtle college and I do not think I have left it too late to change the course of my working life. I am sure I will find a great job when I qualify in three years time.

One last word: on my leaving card, presented to me by my banking colleagues, one of them said they hoped the "greens would be grassier". Well, next time I see him, I'll have to say "so far, so good!"  
John Coote, Undergraduate at Writtle College, Great Sampford, Saffron Walden

Letters continued on page 40

## YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

# Physiological Response of Grasses to Mowing

Lawns and sports fields are mown for aesthetic reasons. Grasses that are properly mowed form a dense, uniform, and visually appealing turf. Sports fields are also mown to accommodate play of activities such as, football, golf, tennis and, here in the USA, American football and baseball. Grasses are clipped to provide a uniform surface for ball roll and bounce, as well as for movement of athletes.

*Continue  
to learn*



However, mowing is a destructive process that wounds grass plants, altering plant growth and development, and increasing susceptibility to other stresses. It is essential, therefore, that appropriate mowing practices are developed to ensure plant health and vigor. In this article, we will discuss physiological and morphological responses of grasses to mowing practices, like height-of-cut, mowing frequency, and mower maintenance that should be considered when developing a mowing programme.

## PHYSIOLOGICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL RESPONSES OF GRASSES TO MOWING

Plants harvest energy from the sun in a process known as photosynthesis. The net result of photosynthesis is manufacture of carbohydrates that are analogous to food in humans. Carbohydrates can be broken down to provide energy for processes involved in the growth and development of the plant. Plants store carbohydrate reserves when production exceeds requirements of the plant, much like humans store fat when food intake exceeds needs. These carbohydrate reserves are used to provide energy for metabolic processes at night or for use during periods of stress.

Mowing removes leaf tissue that grasses use to acquire solar energy, effectively lowering the rate of photosynthesis and limiting the ability of the plant to synthesize carbohydrates. Re-growth and initiation of new leaf tissue after mowing is necessary to develop the photosynthetic leaf area required for production of carbohydrates. Grasses often increase leaf and shoot density below the height-of-cut to re-establish leaf surface area. Plants rely on carbohydrate reserves to provide energy and raw materials required to redevelop leaf and shoot tissue.

Redistribution of carbohydrate reserves for shoot re-growth occurs at the expense of root formation. In general, root growth decreases as mowing

height decreases. Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.) clipped weekly at 6.2 and 2.5cm developed 41 and 76 per cent less root mass, respectively, than non-mown controls two to four weeks after the first mowing. Researchers also observed shorter total root length of creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* L.) mown at 3mm compared with grasses mown at 4mm. They also noticed a reduction of root mass in creeping bentgrass mowed at 3.2mm compared to turf clipped at 4.0 or 4.8mm.

## MOWING PRACTICES THAT AFFECT GRASS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The height at which grasses can be maintained differs among species. Growth habit by and large dictates the height at which grasses can be clipped. It is not uncommon for creeping bentgrass and hybrid bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon* [L.] Pers. x *C. transvaalensis* Burt-Davy) to be mown as low as 2.5-3mm. Lateral stems, or stolons, formed by these grasses result in a dense turf canopy, even at low mowing heights.

A dense turf canopy ensures that the rate of photosynthesis will be sufficient to supply carbohydrates to the shoots and roots. Grass species with an upright growth habit do not tolerate low mowing heights as readily as stolon-forming grasses. Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea* Scrb.) are examples of grasses that develop an upright growth habit. Low mowing heights reduce the number of tillers formed in grasses with this growth habit, limiting the ability of the plant to increase leaf density below the height-of-cut.

This diminishes the photosynthetic capacity of the plant and its ability to provide carbohydrates for shoot and root growth. Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua* L.) and perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne* L.), bunch-type grasses with upright growth habits, are notable exceptions. Annual bluegrass is often observed in golf course greens mown at heights of 2.5mm, whereas perennial ryegrass can be maintained at 6 to 6.5mm under favorable conditions.

## MOWING HEIGHT

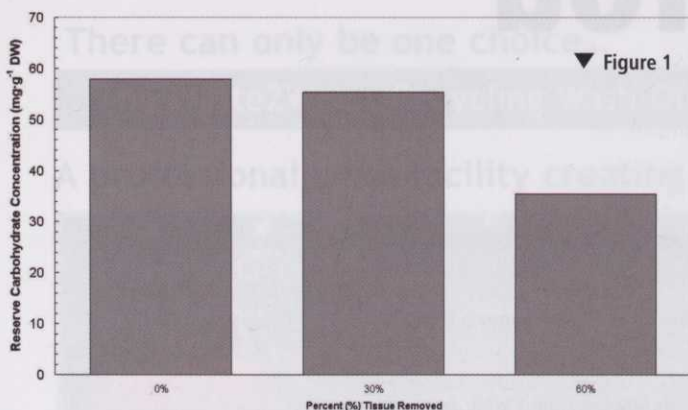
Recommended mowing heights have been developed that best meet the agronomic needs of grasses. In general, Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue are clipped at the highest mowing heights, whereas perennial ryegrass and fine fescues (*Festuca* spp.) may be mowed at lower heights. You are advised to consult turf experts in your region to determine mowing heights pertinent for your geographical area and environment.

Sports play, however, often dictates that grasses be mown lower than recommended. In these instances, special attention must be given to water, fertility, pest, and pathogen management because at lowered mowing heights the ability of the plant to tolerate stress is reduced. Disease severity often increases in grass mowed at lower than recommended heights lower during warm, summer months. Lower mowing heights are also associated with increased infestation of weeds, like crabgrass and annual bluegrass.



Count on it.

Mark Howieson and Nick Christians, of Iowa State University, take a scientific look at mowing



### FREQUENCY OF CUT

Growth rate and mowing height dictate the frequency that grasses should be clipped. No more than 30 - 40 per cent of leaf tissue should be removed in a single mowing during periods of active growth. For example, if the desired mowing height is 5cm, grasses should be clipped when they reach 7cm. Similarly, mowing height should be gradually reduced to allow grasses to increase shoot and leaf density below the height-of-cut.

In a study performed at Iowa State University, 'L-93' creeping bentgrass maintained at 1.25cm was not mown or mowed at heights of 0.88 and 0.50cm to remove approximately 0, 30, and 60 per cent, respectively, of leaf tissue. Carbohydrates were extracted from leaf tissue collected 36 hours after mowing and were analyzed by using high performance liquid chromatography. Grasses mowed at 0.50cm had 36 per cent less reserve carbohydrates than grasses that were mowed at 0.88cm (see Figure 1). Excessive tissue removal also reduced visual quality (see Figure 2).

The results of this study demonstrate the importance of proper mowing frequency. Severe defoliation limits the availability of carbohydrates for shoot and root growth and development.

### MOWER MAINTENANCE

Regular mower maintenance is essential to achieve the best possible quality of cut. Dulled mower blades tear and fray leaf blades, resulting in brown and ragged leaf tips that reduce the visual quality of the turf. Moreover, grasses mown with dull mowers are subjected to more stress than grasses mown with sharp mowers. Rotary mower blades should routinely be inspected and sharpened by using a file or bench grinder as necessary to produce as clean a cut as possible.

Several methods of sharpening reel-type mowers exist, including single-blade grinding, spin-grinding, carbide-milling, back-lapping, and facing of the front face of the bedknife. The decision on which method, or combination of methods, to use often depends on economic, labour and time factors, as well as desired cutting quality and personal preference.

There is no set standard regarding how often reel-type mowers should be sharpened. That depends on several factors, such as the area of turf to be mowed, the regularity of cutting, the species of grass being cut, the method used to sharpen the mower, and the adjustment of the reel to the bedknife. A goal of a research project at Iowa State University is to develop general guidelines to determine how frequently reel-type mowers should be sharpened. Several mowers will be sharpened by using different sharpening techniques and will be used to mow a known area of turf each week. Measurements of leaf blade tissue damage, carbohydrate concentration, photosynthetic yield, and cutting surface geometry will be used to quantify mower sharpness over time.

### CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

The goals of our current research projects are to identify physiological mechanisms that allow creeping bentgrass to tolerate close and frequent mowing. In addition, we would like to identify wound responses that may contribute to overlap marking, the unsightly groove that develops between successive passes of walk-behind mowers, or among the overlap area of reels in multiple reel, or gang, mowers. Primary areas of interest include carbohydrate metabolism and activities of antioxidant enzymes.

As mentioned previously, carbohydrates play an important role in regeneration of shoot and leaf tissue after mowing. Carbohydrate concentrations are altered in response to common mowing practices, like mower sharpness and mowing frequency. Preliminary results indicate that grasses that are mowed with dull mowers contain less carbohydrate reserves than grasses mowed with sharp mowers.

Grasses maintained on sports fields often are double-cut, or mowed twice in different directions, to create a more uniform playing surface. This practice is especially prevalent on golf course greens. Results from our research, however, have demonstrated that grasses that are double-cut have less carbohydrate reserves than grasses that are mowed once, or single-cut. Reduced carbohydrates levels observed in double-cut grasses may contribute to the severity of overlap marking.

In response to wounding, plants generate reactive oxygen species that kill plant cells. Plants produce several antioxidant enzymes that breakdown and detoxify reactive oxygen species to limit tissue damage. The activities of antioxidant enzymes may be an indicator of the severity of mowing stress.

▼ Figure 2



### SUMMARY

Development of a practical mowing programme that balances agronomic requirements with sports play demands is important to produce dense, uniform and visually appealing turf. When possible, clip grasses within recommended mowing height ranges. If grasses must be mowed at heights lower than recommended, careful attention should be paid to water, fertility and pest management because grasses will be less tolerant of environmental stresses.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### AUTHOR INFORMATION

Mark Howieson is a graduate research assistant at Iowa State University. Nick Christians, PhD, is a university professor with the Department of Horticulture at ISU.

# See Yourself as Others See You

Colin Callander, former Golf Monthly Editor and golfer, takes a personal look at greenkeepers

I wonder if I am alone in believing that a lot of golf club members treat their Head Greenkeeper a bit like the manager of their favourite football team.

All too often, it seems to me, greenkeepers receive little or no praise when things are going well. But, invariably, at the first sign of trouble, they are apportioned the blame, usually by misguided members who, a bit like football pundits, have little or no idea about what they are actually talking about.

Nor is it an isolated problem. It's endemic and will continue to be so until amateur golfers understand better what their greenkeepers are trying to achieve.

**38 Scottish Club Staffer**

## The Ups and Downs of the Scottish Greenkeeper

**S**OTTISH greenkeepers believe modern-day greenkeeping equipment is making their jobs easier than ever before.

In an exclusive survey carried out by *Scottish Club Golfer*, the greenkeepers highlighted certain pieces of machine equipment that were making every day tasks around a formally. Our survey found that 47% of club greenkeepers believed achievement in the manufacture of modern aeration equipment was the single biggest improvement in technology. In second place, on 30%, was the improved design and workability of lawnmowers. And progress in the development of greens equipment was voted the best improvement in recent years by 17% of greenkeepers.

However, club golfers who believe their greenkeeper knows little about actually playing the game of golf may be surprised to learn that a massive 90% of Scottish greenkeepers play golf regularly, and a significant percentage play off single figures.

Amazingly, a total of 73% said they took up the profession because of their love of golf while 21% said they took the job because they wanted to work outdoors.

On a less positive note, our survey revealed that 50% of club greenkeepers had been on the receiving end of verbal abuse from a club member. A high percentage, though, said this figure would probably drop if clubs realised the importance of good public relations between the two parties.

According to those who took part in our survey, the most common complaint by a golfer is the condition of the course. A massive 80% said just that. Sixty per cent said golfers complained about the state of the greens while the condition of bunkers and rough also figured prominently.

One greenkeeper said: "Where would you like me to start? They golfers complain about the greens being too slow, the rough being too thick, bunker sand too soft, greens too fast it goes on and on."

The strain between club greenkeepers and club green committees was also brought to the fore as 17% of greenkeepers said they wanted to either abolish club green committees altogether or make sure that the position of the greenkeeper was not alienated every two years.

One unhappy greenkeeper said: "I would like to have better communication with the green committee and, preferably, have just one person to answer to."

Seventeen per cent of Scottish greenkeepers said they would like to see a change in their salary while, if a little optimistic, a total of 20% suggested a better climate would make their job a whole lot easier.

And, on a topical note, nearly 90% claimed today's golf courses were becoming too easy for top players and that technology needed to be restricted.

"The art of shot making is no longer relevant," said one greenkeeper. "It's a shame some great courses like the Kings Course at Glenelg and Royal Melbourne are regarded as too short for top-flight competition."

"I think the trend will go for full circles and smaller undulating greens will

become an urgent and high priority and positioning will be given even more consideration."

Alan Carruthers in 1988 for example. Everyone on the first tee on Thursday has the same score of 117 - the lowest score on Sunday was, maybe the scoring doesn't reach 20-under-par - but does it have to?"

38 Scottish Club Staffer

I first became aware of the sort of treatment meted out to greenkeepers when, as a youngster, I supplemented my meagre student's grant by working at the local golf club.

Subsequently, I learned a lot more about the difficulties they endured while helping to edit the excellent Nick Park series, entitled *The Management of British Golf Courses*, which appeared in *Golf Monthly* during the early 1980s.

Finally, all my worst fears were confirmed when, a couple of years later, I was persuaded to become the Greens Convenor at the club in Glasgow where I was a member at the time.

My stint as Greens Convenor, which lasted for about two years before I moved south for business reasons, turned out to be even more demanding than I thought it would be.

At the time, much to his credit, the Head Greenkeeper at our club was doing his utmost to rid the course of the poa annua that infested it and made the greens virtually unplayable for most of the winter months. However, he was also facing a mounting backlash from a section of the membership that did not understand his aims.

My role, at least as I saw it, was to deflect that criticism, thereby allowing him the time to complete the job. I was, to all intents and purposes, his buffer. It was a painful task, one that I now know I should have handled better.

Nick Park, in his aforementioned *Golf Monthly* series, made it quite clear that, at golf clubs, most problems are caused by golfers' misconceptions, not greenkeeping ones and he was quite right, of course. The problem was that, at the time, I didn't understand how crucial that distinction was.

### HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THEM HAD TO SAY

Questions	John Gallagher 10 years	Jim Paton 23 years	Simon Freeman The Maitie Golf Club 5 years	Douglas McIntosh Cairn Ross Golf Club 6 years	Brian Hillen Dumfriesshire Golf Club 8 years	John Hillen Hawick Golf Club 14 months
How long have you been at your current club?	10 years	23 years	5 years	6 years	8 years	14 months
What made you become a greenkeeper?	Wanted to work outside in a sporting capacity	Wanted to work in golf environment	I've always loved golf	Outdoor environment and enjoyment of golf	I was looking for an outdoor job	I have a passion for golf
What piece of equipment has improved the most?	Greens-cutting equipment and attachments	Greens mowers and aeration equipment	Aeration equipment	Drainage excavator	Aeration equipment or rolls on mowers	Top-dressing equipment
Have you ever been the subject of verbal abuse from a member?	No	Not to my face	Yes, I don't mind when I'm working - but not on my day off	Not yet!	No. PR is part of the job	Often. It's always the greenkeepers' fault for your play!
What is the most common complaint you receive from members?	Slow greens	Condition of bunkers	Condition of greens	Why is our course not like Augusta?	Bunkers	Pin positions, rough, fairways and greens
Do you feel you waste a lot of time dealing with personality members?	No	No	No	No	No	Yes. Lowest handicap being 2
Are you a grinder?	Yes	Yes	Yes - current handicap 1.7	Yes. Handicap 2	Yes	Better understanding of my job
What single aspect would you like to change in your job?	To be answerable to one man	The weather	The weather	Better communication with members	To work in a better climate	No. Technology has advanced so far but non-golfers can now play for extra
Are courses becoming too easy for top players?	Yes	Yes	Totally	Yes	Yes	Yes. My industry buddies and sales reps are very helpful
Do you feel you receive enough help with your job?	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes



# Waste Water Management?

There can only be one choice...

**The Waste2Water Recycling Wash-Off System & Environmental Activity Centre**

A professional wash facility creating...



... an Environmental Activity Centre



#### NO CONTAMINATION PLUS MASSIVE WATER SAVINGS

The Waste2Water biological wastewater treatment system removes any risk of groundwater contamination. It rapidly breaks down a wide range of organic contaminants including oil, petrol, diesel, grease, pesticides, fungicides, degreasing agents etc into Carbon Dioxide and Water. By continuously re-using the same water, this saves a massive 90% in wash water usage.

#### MORE THAN JUST A WASH-OFF STATION

Waste2Water strongly recommend that you install their system at the heart of your course management operations. This avoids the potential for any contamination arising from day-to-day activities within your maintenance facility. This can be as simple as installing your diesel tank on the edge of the wash pad to treat any spillages, up to a full blown system with chemical mixing and storage activities also included.

#### THIS SYSTEM DOES WHAT IT SAYS IT DOES AND MORE..

The Waste2Water system does exactly what it claims to do – a refreshing change in this marketing lead world. Years of experience and customer feed-back has evolved a superb system which is both easy to use and

very reliable. The standard maintenance time each week is less than 20 minutes! Features include a Self-Cleaning Sump (no volunteer needed) and a Dirt Settlement System to remove the dirt and keep the recycled water clean.

#### CUSTOM DESIGNED ACTIVITY CENTRE...

Waste2Water will design your concrete operations area so that everything slopes into a collection sump. The system takes care of spillages of oil, petrol, diesel and chemicals etc. Degreasing? No problem. You can even wash your own sprayer off! The wash hoses provide a superb wash facility which automatically transfers the grass clippings from the self-cleaning sump to a wheelbarrow for you.

If you require further information on the Waste2Water system or the new Pollution Prevention Guidelines please call 01782 373878.

Waste2Water's expertise allows them to give you a 'no spin' appraisal of the options available to you with a free site visit and advice.

**ESD Waste2Water**

If you would like further information:

**Tel: 01782 373878**

Email: [info@waste2water.com](mailto:info@waste2water.com)  
Website: [www.waste2water.com](http://www.waste2water.com)

Waste2Water Europe Ltd  
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## STOP PRESS

NEW SOUTH  
WALES  
COURSE  
FOUND  
GUILTY!!



**ESD** Waste<sup>2</sup>Water

## LETTER TO THE GOLF CLUB SECRETARY & COURSE MANAGER

Dear Sir or Madam,

### THE LEGISLATION.....

You will have read this year in the trade press about the impact of the new groundwater regulations that now exist. This has now made it a CRIMINAL offence to allow certain substances, including mineral oils and chemicals such as Pesticides to enter surface waters, groundwater or even a Soakaway.

### SELECTING YOUR SUPPLIER....

You may have already discussed the issues at committee level and made the decision to install a new Recycling Wash-off System to comply with these new regulations. Here comes the tricky stage : selecting your supplier and ensuring that you have made the correct choice.

### INTRODUCING WASTE2WATER..

We are the European operation of the leading supplier of biological wastewater treatment systems in the U.S.A., with thousands of systems installed world-wide. We became aware of impending European legislation three years ago and opened our UK facility in January 2001.

The groundwater legislation has now arrived and with this a number of other potential system suppliers. So how can you make an informed decision?

When assessing potential suppliers we suggest you ask a few questions:

A few questions you might ask your supplier...	Waste2Water	Supplier X
<b>Your Potential Supplier</b>		
Is waste water treatment your main business?	YES	
Number of years supplying golf course wash systems?	12	
Golf wash-off systems installations worldwide?	2,000+	
Golf wash-off systems installations UK?	40+	
<b>Your proposed System - does it include...</b>		
Frost & security protection for outside installation?	YES	
Above-ground installation for ease of maintenance?	YES	
A Self-Cleaning Sump and Dirt Settlement Tank?	YES	
Is it UK assembled with European components?	YES	
A 10 year system guarantee?	YES	

Call us now to find out why we are the market leader and arrange a free presentation and site visit.

**Call Maria or Carol on 01782 373878**

or Fax: 01782 373763 Email: [info@waste2water.com](mailto:info@waste2water.com)

Waste2Water Europe Ltd, 102a Lonton Road  
Barlaston,  
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**Saltex  
stand  
F53**



We got so bogged down with our poa problem (and I use that phrase advisably) that we forget to tell the membership why we had to combat it. What's worse, as we began to see progress, many members believed things were getting worse. They had been indoctrinated into believing they should have a "nice green golf course".

Thanks to watching TV, and in particular the annual Masters tournament at Augusta National, many of them equated "green" with "good" so, when the course began to take on a more natural hue, their alarm bells started to ring even louder than before.

Nowadays, a few more amateur golfers understand how the trend towards "Americanisation" has damaged our traditional British courses. Unfortunately, though, they remain a small minority. The rest, still influenced by misguided comments in the media, demand the unattainable.

They want their courses to be lush and verdant in summer but also playable in the winter months. Obviously, of course, that isn't going to happen. Inevitably, too, it is the greenkeeper who bears the brunt.

Frequently, greenkeepers find themselves at odds with their members, often through no fault of their own. The more fortunate will have a supportive Greens Convenor willing to fight his corner.

However, more often than not, the Convenor will have been voted on, not because of his knowledge of agronomy, or his desire to maintain the status quo, but because his mates want him to "sort things out".

When a greenkeeper finds himself in this sort of situation, I can't help but feel the best thing to do is to attempt to take the initiative. Obviously, that is easy for me to say because my livelihood does not depend on it.

But think about it, if you choose to acquiesce to the demands of a Greens Convenor who does not understand sound greenkeeping practises, the chances are that all you are doing is postponing the inevitable difficulties. It is better, surely, to put your case firmly at the outset. Who knows, you might even persuade him to give your way a try.

If I was a greenkeeper, an unlikely scenario I admit, the first thing I would do is purchase a copy of Malcolm Peake's "Confessions of a Chairman of Green" and present it to my Green Convenor. Come to think of it, I would buy several copies and leave them dotted around the clubhouse for members to read.

# What do people think of greenkeepers?

Greenkeeper International also asked some well known golf writers and a few other people besides what they thought of greenkeepers and the greenkeeping profession and got some interesting responses.

While millions of people would love to work out in the open rather than stuck in a factory or office, it takes a real dedication to duty, almost a passion, to be a good and successful greenkeeper.

The hours are long, their work is not always appreciated as much as it should be, but the best greenkeepers don't need a pat on the back. They know when the job is well done.

**Mark Garrod, Golf Writer for the Press Association**

I first hit a golf ball at the age of 11 in 1949 at a public course in Birmingham. Our junior class became reasonably proficient having been given lessons by the professional before being allowed onto the course itself, but this was not good enough for one particular greenkeeper who clearly hated the thought of small children, let alone small children on a golf course.

He terrorised us, haranguing us and making all sorts of unrepeatable remarks. Once, when one of the kids answered back, he charged at him with his hand-held mower.

It could have killed our interest for good and thankfully it did not. Out of that junior class there emerged an Amateur Champion (John Beharrell), a Midland Amateur Champion (Martyn Edwards) and a would-be Open Champion who somehow metamorphosed into the golf correspondent of The Guardian.

It could not happen today for the behaviour of that man would not be tolerated. In fairness, in 1949 it was hard to get workers for any line of work and greenkeepers were regarded more often than not as menial labourers.

Not now, when it is a pleasure to "fall into chat" as my Irish wife would call it, with any of the groundskeeping staff at any golf course. In fact if the Chairman of Green at most courses would fall into chat with the Head Greenkeeper more often it would be beneficial all round.

**David Davies, Golf Correspondent, The Guardian**

I joined a Lurgan Golf Club and my predecessor (Sean) was Head Greenkeeper and a member of the Club. This made him less subtle when addressing members complaints.

On one occasion when spraying a green, one of the jack legs on the sprayer fell and left a lovely furrow from the front of the green to the back. Looking down the fairway a golfer was coming in our direction.

"It's the Doc," Sean muttered

When the 'Doc' came on to the green he made clear his feelings that this really should not have happened if we were professional and had we followed correct procedures. (in not so many words)

"That's the difference between your mistakes and mine, Doctor. Yours are buried where no one sees them," replied Sean.

Priceless.

**Kyle Irwin, Head Greenkeeper, Lurgan Golf Club**



Scottish Club Golfer produced a survey recently which asked greenkeepers from north of the border a series of questions relating to their work. Hats off to the magazine for taking the time to canvas opinion from greenkeepers and passing on the results to club golfers.

Among the results was the sad statistic that 56% of greenkeepers had been on the receiving end of verbal abuse from a club member and that the main reason for complaint was the condition of the course, which accounted for 82% of the total. Sixty percent of golfers complained about the state of the greens while the condition of the bunkers and rough figured prominently.

It was also revealed that 73% took up the profession because of their love of golf with 21% saying they wanted to work outdoors.

According to 47% of the greenkeepers surveyed the single biggest improvement in technology belonged to modern aeration equipment with 30% feeling that the improved design and workability of the fairway mower and 11% believing greens equipment to be the greatest advancement.

**Thanks to Martin Dempster and Scottish Club Golfer for making the results available to Greenkeeper International**

I always wave to greenkeepers. I think that's because I don't generally feel they get the recognition they deserve. We have a regular column in Golf Weekly now called GUR which is written by Chris Lomas, Course Manager at The Berkshire. It is intended to educate golfers about the work that their green staff get up to.

**Peter Masters, Editor, Golf Weekly**

Before I got involved in golf I thought a greenkeeper was somebody who just produced highly manicured turf. I didn't even consider the rest of the golf course. Most but not all, televised golf concentrates on the playing area you hardly ever see natural habitat. If you are as ignorant as I was then you think that's all there is green, fairway tee and a bit or rough.

A Course Manager is a person manager; he maintains the golf course, including the non playing surface; he's got to liaise with Joe Public - the golfers; he's got to liaise with the committee. He's got about five different roles and it's a terribly sophisticated job and the amount of training which goes into that is extraordinary.

I've been walking round the golf course with a greenkeeper and people have come up and been really rude. I think that's outrageous they just don't understand what's gone into the production of that green. Not even grateful, they are antagonistic and really horrible, haven't the faintest idea and I think it's dreadful.

**Dr Alan Gange, Royal Holloway College**

"Confessions", which is published by the STRI, is a marvellous book and one that should be made required reading for all prospective Green Convenors. In it, the author tells how he supported his Course Manager, Martin Gunn, in his quest to return his club, Temple Golf Club, near Maidenhead, to its former glory. It wasn't easy.

After years of over-watering, too much fertiliser and not enough aeration the course was in a sorry state. It took several years to rectify but the transformation is now complete. Put simply, Temple, as it is now, is arguably the best conditioned inland course in the British Isles.

Peake's book teaches the aspiring Greens Convenor a great deal. For starters, the author questions a new Convenor's right to dictate to his head greenkeeper on matters appertaining to agronomy.

He tells that when he started: "I thought I knew about golf courses, but how could I? I only played golf - I didn't have any qualifications. But I, like every other golfer, had an opinion on the golf course. I had a lot to learn - first lesson"

As it turned out, numerous lessons had to be assimilated, another being how important it is to keep members informed about progress, what was to happen next etc, etc.

In the end what Martin, Malcolm, and numerous others have found is that communication is vital if the grumblers are to be silenced and the relationship between the greenstaff and the members is to be improved.

I have no doubt that communication of this sort has improved markedly in recent years but still I believe more can be done.

Take my new club as an example. There, both the Course Manager and the Greens Convenor do an excellent job keeping the members informed about when the greens are to be aerated and when other major projects are to be undertaken.

But seldom, it seems to me, do they go one stage further and tell us why the work is being done. For that reason, they leave themselves open to criticism, however misguided it might be.

Frequently, when I arrive at the club, I hear members moaning about "the greens being dug up again". That criticism comes from golfers who have no idea about how important it is to aerate greens on a regular basis but that is beside the point. Disquiet can be inculcated and problems can brew as a result.

Let's return to the football manager analogy for a second. At the Conference club I support, the Manager and his Chairman have started to stage regular Fans' Forums during which they outline plans for the future and deal with an assortment of questions from supporters.

To date, these sessions have proved hugely successful, to the extent that I cannot help but feel they could be copied in a golf environment.

Nowadays, numerous clubs stage Rules evenings, when a resident, or visiting, expert answers questions on the Rules of Golf.

That being the case, why shouldn't clubs also hold a separate Course Maintenance forum, specifically set up to allow the greenkeeper and the greens committee to explain their policies.

In my experience, the aforementioned Nick Park was quite correct when he suggested that most greenkeepers came under fire, not as a result of their agronomic policies, but because their members failed to understand what it is they are trying to achieve.

Sort that out and I believe greenkeepers would go a long way to reducing the unwelcome, and in most cases, unfair criticism they all too often receive.